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VOL. 10 NO. 50 FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2005 DHUL HAJJ 17, 1425 A.H. N80

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NEWS Senate shifts budget passage to Tuesday

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L-R: NLC secretary general, Comrade John Odah, President, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, treasurer, Ivor Takor and deputy treasurer, Gidado Hamman, during NLC president's press briefing on National Reform held in Abuja...yesterday. Pic: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Plateau: Civil groups call for probe of Alli's tenure

Human rights groups in Plateau State have called for a probe of the six-month tenure of General Chris Alli (rtd), as Sole Administrator during the state of emergency in the state.

In a petition to the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the civil society coalition, an umbrella for no fewer than eight human rights groups, said that General Alli's tenure was illegal and must therefore be investigated.

The coalition particularly kicked against the award of the contract for the reconstruction of the burnt Jos ultra-modern market which General Alli awarded close to the end of his "care taker" tenure.

In the petition which will be presented to the State House of Assembly today (postponed from yesterday),

From Jibril Daudu,
Regional Editor Uyo/

the coalition urged the legislators to probe the actual value of rebuilding the market and all other details of the contractual agreement with Project Associates, the contractors handling the market.

The coalition noted the discrepancy in the cost of reconstruction pointing out that General Alli had announced that it would cost N4 billion to rebuild the market but that the secretary to the state government, Mr John Gobak, who represented the Sole Administrator, signed a document putting the cost of the project at N7 billion.

"This sudden jump must be explained to the people of the state even as it condemned the build, operate and

Contd. on Pg 2

NLC wants National Confab suspended

YCE will participate - Scribe

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), has called on the Federal Government to suspend the planned national political reforms conference as a result of what it described as lateness in preparations for

By Abdulwahab Ajikbi, in
Abuja & Bala Ogunyemi, in Ibadan

such an important event.

The NLC president, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, said this at a press conference held yesterday at the

NLC headquarters in Abuja after a meeting with the presidents and general secretaries of all industrial unions convened to discuss issues of national importance.

President Olusegun Obasanjo had last year after sustained pressure from various groups in the country, yielded to calls for the convocation of a national conference by setting up a seven man committee to fashion out modalities for a national dialogue.

The presidential committee headed by the Kaduna state Governor, Ahmed Makarf, early this month sub-

mitted its report in which it recommended the convening of a national dialogue, a recommendation which was approved by the National Council of State and named National Conference on Political Reforms.

But at yesterday's conference, Oshiomhole said the timing of the dialogue has

come late considering the fact that President Obasanjo has only two years left to serve out the remainder of his tenure.

He said the modalities for the selection of representatives to the conference as set out by the Federal Government also smirks of a

hidden agenda, a situation which he said was untenable.

Oshiomhole pointed out that rather than electing delegates which was the surest way to ensure credibility of the conference, the Federal Government was instead foisting delegates on Nigerians by way of nomination.

Contd. on Pg 2

FG gives conditions for release of Lagos LG funds

The Federal Government yesterday said that it has directed the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to pay withheld local councils funds to Lagos State Government but upon the fulfillment of conditions attached to the release.

Speaking with journalists after he withdrew the case, Federal Government's counsel, Chief Afe Babalola (SAN), said that his client

Contd. on Pg 2

This was however on the condition that the state forwarded the names of its 20 councils listed in the 1999 constitution for identification, just as the Federal Government withdrew the fresh application filed at the Supreme Court for clarification on the judgement which ordered it to release the allocations meant for the councils in Lagos State.

Excess crude suit: 35 states shun Supreme Court hearing

Thirty four states of the federation which had indicated to join Abia state in a suit filed against the Federal Government seeking to compel the sharing of revenue accrued to the country from excess crude oil totalling N331.5 billion yesterday refused to show up in

By Kemi Ogedengbe,
Judicial Editor

court.

The supreme court, however, decided to shut them out on the grounds that the time within which they could file their memoranda of appearance to defend the suit

Reps shop for N220m unpaid allowances

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Bello Masari, yesterday gave the go-ahead to the management of the National Assembly, to immediately source N220 million to offset outstanding allowances to members.

By Hammed M. Bello,
Senior Political Reporter (Abuja)

Already, a written communication yesterday between the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Umaru Sani, the Clerk of the National Assembly, Alhaji Ibrahim Salim and a following instruction to the directorate of finance and supply, shows that high level arrangements have been stepped up to source money and promptly pay the legislators.

This followed a memo by the chairman, House Services Committee, Hon Ahmed Barata, to the speaker in which all outstanding allowances owed the leadership and members were compiled.

The speaker, had earlier on Wednesday, instructed

the House Services Committee to compile all allowances owed members and report to him latest yesterday. The speaker's prompt action followed complaints by members over several allow-

Contd. on Pg 2



Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari

Contd. on Pg 2

NEWS

Senate approves Nigeria, Sao Tome GDZ treaty

Stops N50bn water projects

By Habibu Pindiga,
Political Reporter

The Senate yesterday approved the domestication of the treaty between Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe on the joint development of petroleum and other resources in areas of exclusive economic zones of both countries.

The approval followed the consideration and adoption of the report of the senate standing committee on foreign affairs on treaty.

Presenting the report, chairman of the committee, Senator Jubril Aminu, said the ratification of the treaty would mark an important step towards improving ties between the two countries.

He said the treaty was passed by the last senate but had lapsed before it got the assent of the president.

He explained further the joint efforts of both countries to explore oil and other mineral resources.

The committee, he added, recommended that the treaty be domesticated for its "economic, political, socio-cultural and security importance to Nigeria and Africa."

Following Aminu's presentation, the senate dissolved into a committee of the whole where it adopted the clauses in the treaty.

Yesterday the senate also

boreholes in their constituency.

Denying such assertions, Shagari, who spent 100 minutes fielding questions from the senators, said "no money was given to any senator, no money would be given because the money is for projects and already, the contracts have been awarded".

But the senators insisted that there are discrepancies in the details of the projects and therefore demanded that the execution should not commence as planned.

Senators Tahir Wada, Sani Kamba and Jubril Aminu among others, said their initial submission on sites for the projects were abandoned. This they contended,

would pitch them against their people.

Many senators picked different holes in the submission and therefore urged that the ministry take another look at its proposals.

Shagari agreed to go back to the drawing board and asked senators to supply the required information on time.

Senator Jonathan Zwingina then moved a motion that the ministry stop plans to commence work on the projects for two weeks for them to provide their preferred sites.

The motion was seconded by minority leader, Lawal Shuaibu and it was unanimously adopted.

Ehindero vows to fight corruption in Police

By Kemi Ogedengbe,
Judicial Editor

The acting Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr Sunday Ehindero yesterday said that the new police management team is determined to fight corruption in the force.

He also announced a ban on the use of mobile policemen as orderlies and escorts for all class of politicians and courtiers.

Speaking during a courtesy visit to the Minister of Police Affairs, Chief Broderick Bozimo, in his office, the acting inspector general said that he would not only tackle external corruption, but he would pay considerable attention to the corruption within the police force.

The acting IG who also unveiled his ten point agenda to the minister said that he was determined to rid the force of bad eggs.

He said, "We are not just talking about external corruption in the police, where our men collect N20, we are also concerned with corruption internally, that is within the police."

We are talking of corruption in the supply of police uniforms, in the supply of accoutrements."

Ehindero said that he would in collaboration with his management team, restore the integrity and discipline in the relationship between the force and members of the public. "Just yesterday, we asked the AIG zone two to raid the check points between Seme border and Badagry. He carried out on the raid between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m., 15 policemen were arrested. They were operating a checkpoint illegally."

Besides, the IG said, "just this morning I have received a report from Lagos that a policeman shot an officer. I am going to make an example of this case. He would be tried publicly so that members of the public will know we are serious."

Responding, Chief Bozimo reiterated government's desire to enforce the complete withdrawal of mobile policemen from escort duties, saying that Mr President had on a number of occasions, said he would like us to give effect to the withdrawal.

ations which is perfect for government's intent to achieve what he called "selfish objectives."

The labour leader who said the proposed conference was more or less another conduit pipe through which tax payers money will be wasted, also added that after spending millions of naira, the federal government will not get anything positive out of the conference unless adequate logistics and machinery are put in place.

The NLC president who said he will inform all allied civil society groups of the outcome of the meeting held by the Central Working Committee on NLC's stand on the political reforms especially towards the 2007 presidential elections, pointing out that the civil society groups will ensure that their members who will participate in the conference are nominated in a transparent manner.

Meanwhile, the Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) rose from its national executive committee meeting yesterday

in Ibadan resolving to participate effectively in the forthcoming national dialogue initiated by the federal government.

The resolution came on the heels of a boycott of the same exercise called by the Pan-Yoruba socio-political group *Afenifere*.

In a four-point communiqué issued at the end of the meeting and read to journalists by the secretary general, Dr Kunle Olajide, the YCE stated that: "It believed that any opportunity no matter its imperfections to discuss the problems confronting Nigeria should be maximised in our bid to produce a truly Federal Republic of Nigeria."

According to the communiqué, the YCE is already collaborating with prominent Yoruba leaders in other organisations as well as royal fathers in the South-West to properly articulate the Yoruba position at the conference.

The council appealed to all political leaders in the South-West to put the long term corporate interest of the Yoruba race above partisan political considerations.

Plateau Contd. from Pg 1

transfer (BOT) system of the project saying that it has committed the people of the state to a 20-year bondage.

The coalition also has harsh words for the state government condemning the alleged decay of infrastructure in the state. According to it, between 1999 and 2004, Plateau state reportedly spent over N25 billion on infrastructure, but that state roads, schools, hospitals, potable water and other social services are still in a state of disrepair.

They therefore urged the Plateau legislature to exercise its oversight functions diligently and ensure that funds meant for development were not misappropriated.

Specifically, they urged that moribund projects like Bokkos Fertiliser Blending Plant and the Plateau state university project which have gulped huge sums of money without visible progress must be reviewed without delay.

According to the coalition in the petition signed by Joseph Songosanya as chairman and Steve Aluko-Daniel as secretary, Plateau State has not published its audited accounts in the last three years, thereby making budgets only an annual ritual.

In this regard, they urged the state House of Assembly to probe the one million naira set aside for project development in each of the senatorial districts of the state.

Although the petition is addressed to the state House of Assembly for action, the coalition however, sharply criticised the Assembly for their decision not to probe allegations of corruption against the state governor, Chief Joshua Dariye.

"It is our humble opinion that your refusal to investigate the governor will amount to contempt of your mandate," the coalition said.

The Civil Society Coalition Company of Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Christian Foundation for Social Justice & Equity, Inter Gender, CBD - NGO Forum,

Plateau Contd. from Pg 1

League for Human Rights, Justice Development and Peace Commission, Plateau Peace Movement for the Sustenance of Democracy, representatives of all the organisations signed the four-page petition.

FG Contd. from Pg 1

had directed the CBN to pay the disputed funds only to the 20 local government councils listed in the 1999 constitution which had been scrapped in Lagos.

He said, "the CBN has been directed to pay money but with a rider that Lagos State Government must forward the names of the 20 councils for identification. "Since they do not have such 20 councils, it is up to them to know what to do. That is why I withdrew my suit."

He said that the revenue law provided that only council chairmen could withdraw the money. "It is not possible for any of the 57 council chairmen to parade themselves as the 20 and then go to the CBN for the money", he added. If the state genuinely wants the money, it was at liberty to take steps to collect it from the CBN.

But the Attorney-General of Lagos State and Commissioner for Justice, Professor Yemi Osinbajo (SAN), disagreed with Chief Babalola, saying that the order of the court to pay the money was very clear.

He noted, "It is that the Federal Government should pay the funds to the state's joint local government account and that it must do so immediately. The court also ordered that no agencies of the Federal Government should do anything to suspend the payment."

Osinbajo said, "The first issue is that they cannot pay the funds directly to the councils. They can't stipulate a condition which the Supreme Court did not stipulate for payment."

"By introducing fresh conditions, they are in contempt of the order of the

court. The judgement they are implementing is no longer the judgement of this court. I am of the opinion that the president, finance minister and the attorney general of the federation will comply with the court's order. After all, they all swore to uphold the constitution," he said.

Earlier, Chief Babalola had asked the court for a short adjournment to enable him react to the court process filed by Lagos, adding that he needed to collect certain documents from President Olusegun Obasanjo who has travelled out of the country which would aid him in the argument of his case.

Chief Wole Olanipekun (SAN) who led other senior counsels on behalf of Lagos state opposed the application while the court, presided over by Justice Mohammed Uwais, said it was also opposed to an adjournment.

The Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), who chaired the panel of justices, said that the court was prepared to hear the preliminary objection filed by Lagos state.

The Lagos State Government, in the objection, said that the Supreme Court functions *officio* and therefore lacked the jurisdiction to hear any other application in respect of an action that had been terminated.

When the court insisted on hearing the objection, Babalola rose to withdraw the suit and Uwais consequently struck out the case.

It would be recalled that the Federal Government went back to the apex court on December 16, 2004, a week after the court delivered judgement, urging it to release the funds to Lagos.

It requested the court to make clarifications on its judgement.

Excess Contd. from Pg 1

the ministry of finance to share the fund.

The court presided over by the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Muhammad Uwais, faulted the attitude of the states after he was told that they did not enter appearance as required under the law after being served the court's processes.

He noted that the period under which they were expected to enter appearances had lapsed.

The only state, which seemed to be willing to defend the suit along side the Federal Government, is Jigawa state.

But the state told the court yesterday that its interest was not even with the Federal Government but with Abia, the plaintiff in the case.

Jigawa state's counsel, Mr. Dole Adesina, told the court that he would file just

Reps Contd. from Pg 1

allowance (at 10% of basic salary).

The Deputy Speaker is said not to be owed anything for constituency allowance. He was owed N158,817.00 for wardrobe allowance (at 20% of basic salary) and N79,408.50 recess allowance (at 10% of basic salary) bringing the total of money owed him to N238,225.50.

No figure was entered for constituency allowance owed members, but each of them is owed N158,817.00 wardrobe allowance (at 20% of basic salary) and N79,408.50 recess allowance (at 10% of basic salary), bringing the total money owed each member to N238,225.50.

Between June and December 2004, the total sum of N217,949,755.60 was owed the 358 members, for the said allowances, in the order of N608,798.20 per member.

The grand total of all the amounts owed for the period stands at N219,444,822.00.



Katsina assembly clerk drags KTSG to court

The Clerk of the Katsina state House of Assembly, Ali Hamza Dalhatu, has dragged the Katsina state government to court for wrongful removal from office and has refused handing over to his successor.

In a suit brought against the state attorney general joining the House of Assembly, the Speaker Katsina state House of Assembly and the State House of Assembly as 2nd, 3rd and 4th defendants, the plaintiff challenged the constitutionality of his removal as the clerk of the state assembly via a letter

From Lawal Ibrahim
Correspondent Katsina

reference no IGS/HOS/S/31/S.VOL. II/486 from the office of the state's Head of Service dated 30th December 2004.

The action brought through an originating summons seeks among others, an injunction restraining the defendants, their servants, agents or privies from removing or purporting to remove the plaintiff as a clerk in any manner howsoever, save in accordance with the combined effects of section 93 of the 1999 constitution and the section 8 of Katsina

State House of Assembly laws No. 5 of 2001.

Investigations carried out by the *Daily Trust* show that a corresponding letter written by the Speaker, Katsina State House of Assembly, Alh. Kabir Ahmed Kora dated 4th January 2005 with reference no S/KTHA/ADM/15/VOL 1 requesting the transfer of the state secretary of the Independent National Electoral Commission (SIEC)'s secretary, Alh. Bello Iro Dabal, to replace the embattled Hamza Dalhatu Batagarawa, as a substantive clerk of the House of Assembly, Katsina.

Three states give N9m monthly to university

Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto now receives a monthly assistance of N9 million from Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara states, its vice-chancellor, Tijani Barde has said.

Explaining that each of the states gives N3 million, he said: "This money has helped us greatly to effectively run the institution."

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), in Sokoto on Wednesday, that "We are getting N9 million monthly from these three states."

He further explained that apart from the contributions, Sokoto state government "routinely" assists the institution.

He stated that the state government recently set up a school of matriculation studies to serve as a feeder to the university.

According to Barde, the Katsina state government has also constructed a hostel for the institution.

"Even the contractor donated five wards for the university clinic as part of his personal contribution," he disclosed.

The National Security Adviser, Gen. Aliyu Gusau (Rtd), he said constructed a N20 million social science building.

Similarly, former deputy governor of the Central Bank, Alhaji Mahe Rashid, donated ten sets of computers to the university.

The case which was first brought through an ex parte order was later causes to be changed to a motion on notice to the defendants, and was before the state chief judge, Hon. Justice Abdullahi Maltuta for determination.

The state government through 1st and 2nd respondents has filled memorandum of appearance from the office of the attorney general of the state (A.G.) and the state Chief Judge has fixed Wednesday 2nd of the February 2005 for mention.

Obasanjo calls for emergency aid to Africa

President Olusegun Obasanjo said Thursday in Davos, Switzerland, that "the situation in Africa must be seen worldwide as an emergency" needing urgent global assistance.

Speaking during a panel discussion at the ongoing World Economic Forum, President Obasanjo said that African nations need a

critical mass of funds to make a difference for their people.

President Obasanjo said that Africa's current priority was to ensure continued peace and security for sustainable development.

Noting that assistance to Africa often tended to be linked to disasters, the president told the audience which included political leaders, captains of industries and civil society that Africa has come of age and pledged that funds raised to solve Africa's problems "will be faithfully utilized."

"There are many successes in Africa," the president said, giving examples like the unity and vision shown by current African leaders in the establishment of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The other panelists were former president Bill Clinton of the United States, prime minister, Tony Blair of Great Britain, president Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft and Bono, the music star.

Minister inspects River Benue ahead of dredging

The minister for transport, Dr. Abiyi Sekibo, yesterday, inspected various areas of River Benue in Makurdi ahead of the proposed dredging and setting up of a river port.

The minister who was accompanied by the managing director of the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Engr. Rabiu Diori Abubakar and the Benue state chapter vice president of the Shippers Association, Mr. Joseph Abokis Kwaghaha as well as other principal officers of related parastatals, first paid a courtesy call on the state governor, Mr. George Akume, during which he announced plans to dredge the river for proper navigation.

The project which, according to him, is covered in the 2005 appropriation bill, includes the River Niger which is billed at the combined rate of N28 billion.

He also said the federal government desires to establish more river ports in the country, stating that his visit to the state was also to inspect areas suitable for the purpose.

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

To that end, Dr. Sikibo visited four abandoned sites which were used as ports in the 70s and early 80s when economic activities and construction of factories were at a peak.

Led by the state's commissioner for industries, Mr. Joe Ahaagu, the minister also visited the newly abandoned railway station in Makurdi where he expressed disappointment with the recklessness at which the officials have been handling the station.

The minister therefore demanded proposals from both NIWA and the railway authorities on how best the ports and railway systems could be respectively revamped for utilisation.

The state governor, Mr. Akume, had assured the minister of support over the proposed dredging of the river and the establishment of a port, saying, "we welcome the partnership of the transport ministry and we will support the execution of the planned dredging as well as the establishment of a port along the River Benue."

APGA faction allies fear over ejection from secretariat

The Victor Umeh-led faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), has refused alleged plans of forcefully taking over the party's secretariat from the embattled national chairman, Chékwa Okorie.

A statement signed yesterday by the party's national secretary, Alhaji Sani Shinkafi, said Okorie's allegation that the faction was

about 500 pilgrims from Bauchi State arrived Kano yesterday from Saudi Arabia after the completion of this year's hajj.

An official of the Bauchi state Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji Abdullahi Dass, who disclosed this to *Daily Trust* yesterday at the Hajj camp, Kano, said Kobo air which arrived Malam Aminu Kano International Airport (MAKIA) at exactly 9:20am was the first to return pilgrims back to Nigeria in the zone.

Alhaji Abdullahi said that despite the problems caused

Bauchi pilgrims arrive Kano

Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim,
Correspondent (Kano)

by some international pilgrims at the screening centres in Saudi Arabia the aircraft would have return more than 500 Bauchi state's pilgrims.

He noticed with displeasure that the current screening process at Saudi Arabia would have caused more delay if the authorities concerned did not take immediate measures adding

added that people could be seen removing the excess luggage out of their handbags in the night at the screening centres before they were finally screened.

Also speaking to *Daily Trust*, another pilgrim from Bauchi state, Alhaji Bakoji Muh'd Adamu, expressed satisfaction with the arrangements put in place for the returning of pilgrims to Nigeria, saying that if the exercise continues like that, everything will be smooth.



L-R: Rawnsley vice president, Sunday Olu, Jetro, Assistant General Secretary, Tommie-Bishop Ekehan, President, HUCPFR, Hany Bori and General Secretary, Henry Odovala during their press briefing on some implementation of monetisation policy by the federal government held in Abuja yesterday, 27-01-2005. Pic: Kennedy Eghonmie

Bugaje chides FG over Nigerians poor living standard

The coordinator of Forum for Democracy and Good Governance and member of the House of Representatives, Dr. Usman Bugaje, yesterday chided the federal government for failing to improve the living standard of Nigerians despite the huge sums accruing from the sale of crude oil, just as he expressed scepticism over the full implementation of the 2005 budget.

In his appraisal of the 2005 budget, Hon. Bugaje said that Nigeria is making more money and yet is wallowing in more misery, a situation which he blamed the executive which he accused of creating a huge democracy deficit.

"It is both depressing and tragic that despite huge revenues that have been accruing into the federation accounts, the present administration has not been

By Zainab Alimi

able to improve the lives of the citizenry," he lamented.

He noted that between 1999 and 2004, the prices of crude oil have more than doubled (from \$11,346 million in 1998 to \$24,047 million in 2003) arguing that this should have translated into the improvement of the quality of life of the average Nigerian but regretted that on the contrary, poverty and misery has been on the increase, with our human development indices on the decline.

He decried an abuse of the due process which saw large sums appropriated to ministries and agencies of government which neither carry out the work appropriated for nor returned the sums or even explained the mystery behind the disappearance of the money.

"It is worrying to discover the continuous absence of transparency and due process in our revenue collection," He added however, that while conceding to the fact that the new economic team has been systematic and has raised more revenue especially in customs and excise, oil bunkering sends out worrying reports.

He wondered why about \$2.0 billion revenue is lost through illegal bunkering annually while nothing is done to curtail the pilfering just as he condemned the submission of the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission for this year when the commission declared that it does not know how much of the controversial fuel tax of N1.5 per litre has been collected, where it is being kept, or whether the collection has even been topped.

Senate shifts budget passage to Tuesday

The senate yesterday deferred the passage of the 2005 budget initially slated for yesterday to Tuesday next week.

By Habeeb I. Pindiga

This is the second time the senate will postpone the passage of this year's appropriation bill. The initial

schedule was to end in December last year, but was shifted to January 27, following an addendum brought by President Olusegun Obasanjo last month.

APGA faction allies fear over ejection from secretariat

planning to storm and take over the secretariat was the product of a "confused, skewed, warped and phobic mind," adding that "APGA is a political party is not anybody's private estate or article of trade," vowing that Chief Okorie "will be evicted appropriately at the appropriate time."

Okorie had early in the week written to the inspector

general of police, raising alarm that the Umeh-faction was planning to use the police to forcefully occupy the secretariat.

But Shinkafi said yesterday that the embattled chairman was "crying wolf where there is none and making baseless allegations to attract undue media attention and publicity, but for record purposes, there is no such plot as alleged."

Briefing senate correspondents yesterday, chairman of the senate committee on information, Senator Tawar Wada (PDP, Gombe South), said the senate appropriations committee is consulting with its opposite number in the House, and hence the delay.

He however assured that the committee will present its report to the senate in a plenary Tuesday next week, and the committee of supply may pass it on that day.

News

Obasanjo urges Afreximbank shareholders to resolve conflict amicably

President Olusegun Obasanjo has urged the shareholders of the African Export Import Bank (Afrexim Bank), to amicably resolve the ongoing conflict over the appointment of a new president, amicably.

President Obasanjo who was represented at the 11th general meeting of shareholders of the bank by the minister of agriculture, Mallam Adamu Bello, said the bank cannot afford another deadlock on the matter.

He urged them to use the spirit of dialogue, cooperation, understanding and harmony to reach a generally acceptable decision on the matter.

According to the president, "it is paramount that Africa enhances its capabilities to manage and minimize conflicts at all levels, including matters relating to economic and business activities."

It would be recalled that the shareholders had made

5,500 youths to benefit from empowerment programme

Ahmed Tahir Ajobe
Correspondent, Lokoja

No fewer than 5,500 youths are to benefit from the first phase of the youth empowerment programme of the Kogi state government.

Briefing newsmen on the outcome of the state's executive meeting yesterday in Lokoja, the secretary to the Kogi state government, Chief Shola Ojo, said the programme will to gulp N25 million in its first phase.

The state governor, he said has directed that all the 21 local government areas will benefit as 15 youths each will be picked from each council.

Each benefiting youth, according to him, would be entitled to a monthly stipend of N4,000 while the training last.

Over 2,000 tricycles, he said have also been acquired for distribution to some youths under the scheme. The state executive also approved the contract for Ohiane erosion site and that of Ogidii in the central and west senatorial districts of the state at a cost of N58 million.

The state executive council also approved the release of N42 million as compensation for traders who will be affected by the construction of the Lokoja international market.

Contractors for the market have already mobilized to site.

By Anas A. Galadima,
Reporter (Business)

an attempt at the last general meeting held in August last year, to elect a new president to replace the outgoing one, Christian Edordu, who has been president of the bank since its inception in 1993.

The move was said to have ended in deadlock due to protests by one of the contending candidates.

Daily Trust gathered that 46 candidates had applied for the post of the president and a while 3 candidates (a Nigerian, Egyptian and an Ivorian) had emerged after a rigorous screening process.

But somewhere along the line, Daily Trust gathered that one of the candidates protested against the entire process.

This was said to have led to the conflict which saw the protesting candidate gaining the support of his country, a move which has been grossly criticized.

Professor Ode Ojowu, the economic adviser to the president, who spoke to

pressmen after the opening session of the general meeting, said all candidates are supposed to be independent without interference from their respective countries but to the dismay of the shareholders one of the candidates has emerged as a national candidate.

Oil bunkering: Again, FG asks court to stay proceedings

The trial of the 13 Russian nationals accused of oil theft may be gradually simmering just as the federal government yesterday asked a federal high court in Lagos to stay proceedings on the matter pending the determination of the appeal of filed at the appellate court.

The prosecution had last November asked the court for a stay following their failure to get an injunction to amend the charges preferred against the accused persons but the trial judge, Mrs. Gladys Okeke, declined and ordered the trial to go on unhindered.

Counsel to the prosecution, Mrs. Patricia Ajoku who by the previous order of the court was billed to address it only, told the Judge that she has a motion for a stay of proceedings at the appellate



Governor Turaki

From Mohammed Shasanya
(Lagos)

court dated December 20, last year.

According to her, the thrust of the motion is for the appellate court to review the earlier refusal of the lower court to stay proceedings in the matter as well as order a stay of proceedings.

She said the motion will be heard on March 7 this year and prayed the lower court to adjourn the matter pending the

Ajoku also submitted that the court has jurisdiction to grant the adjournment and does not have the discretion to grant or refuse it hence cautioned that the court of law should not take any action that will endanger the success of the appeal at the appellate court determination of same at the appellate court.

Students send SOS to Turaki over withheld NECO results

By Hassan A. Karoll,
Reporter (Date)

Fear and confusion gripped students who wrote the last NECO examination in Jigawa state after the examination body withheld their results pending when the state government remits examination fees owed the body, heightening fears that they may lose admissions this year.

The fee, according to Daily Trust investigations amounts to N15m which the state government has pledged to pay on behalf of the students from the state who took for the 2004/2005 examinations.

Already, some school principals who spoke to our correspondent on conditions of anonymity, expressed concern over the possibility of their students losing admission this year as a result of the non availability of the results.

Many students who went to check their results at the NECO website could not access it because the examination body has blocked Jigawa state results claiming nonpayment of fees by the government.

Further investigations revealed that already parents

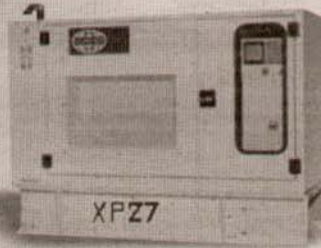
of the students who were at the press gallery of the Jigawa government house to lay their complaints called on governor Turaki to come to the rescue of their wards and save them from missing admissions this year.

According to Mallam Auwalu Mai Kifi who spoke to newsmen, the state government as a matter of urgency would settle the fees so as to allow their wards continue with their education.

Daily Trust investigations at the state ministry of education revealed that disturbed by the possible consequences of the development, efforts has been intensified by officials of the ministry to the settlement of the fees.

However according to Honourable Sule Udi Ringim, house committee chairman on basic education, government has reached out to NECO in order to resolve the impasse, stressing that the students should not worry as government will take all necessary measures to settle the payments.

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COMMONWEALTH BUSINESS FORUM 2005

The Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with Commonwealth Business Council (CBC) is organising "Nigeria Investment Forum". The theme of the Forum is *Trade and Investment Opportunities Growth through global partnership.*

The Forum is scheduled to hold as follows:

Date: Wednesday, 2nd February-Friday, 4th February, 2005

Venue: Abuja Sheraton Hotel and Towers

Time: 9.00 am each day



The President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR is expected to declare the conference open.

The conference is expected to provide a platform for senior executives and potential global investors to interact with Nigeria's democratic administration, entrepreneurs and executives running Nigeria's leading organisations with a view to assessing at first hand progress in implementing Nigeria's Foreign Investment Policy.

Dignitaries expected at the forum include State Governors, Top Government Functionaries, Foreign Diplomats and representatives of the Organised Private Sector (OPS)

For further information, please contact:

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Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC),
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Opinion

The Tafa in all of us

Nigeria is a funny country. Its government is impulsive. It's citizenry dramatic. Nothing illustrates this than Tafa Balogun's case. The former Inspector General of Police had resigned amidst suspicion. The EFCC had laid a complaint against him. The media is awash with speculations and intimidating indictments against him. The government he served maintained sealed lips and the melodrama continues.

I had never been a fan of Chief Tafa Balogun. In fact, I had written previously about the need to remove him from office due to the prevalent insecurity in the country. But when Tafa's case assumed a star and celebrity of organized financial crime courtesy of Nigerian media, I had cause to fear that it is drama taken too far. Despite the damning allegations, his is just like a sift chick of a lay goose in crime.

Before Tafa, there were instances more gruesome that are supposed to hurt us as a nation till date. Tafa is just a fresh graduate of an old school. The idea of comparing Tafa's bulkiness to the quantity of theft he was accused of, looks demented and targeted at a predetermined victim. Even without immunity, a certain Julius Makanjola had pilfered state's accounts to the tune of N480m and is cooling his feet elsewhere. The national ID. Card scam had been a nightmare of a sort, in terms of getting to the crux of the matter. Governor Orji Uzor Kalu had once petitioned the President on the funds mismanaged for construction and rehabilitation of roads under the tenure of Chief Tony Anenih as Minister of works without any response from Federal Government.

There were cases of fund misappropriation in power and steel ministry, alleged in the first tenure of an administration. Even the Ibrahim Ayagi's National Economic Intelligence Committee (NEIC) had highlighted gross cases of pilfering in its report as early as 2001, barely only two years of the inception of the present administration.

At the states level, all you have are gory tales of open theft and 'professionalism' in the art of diversion of public funds for personal enrichment: a certain unfortunate Governor (Dariye) whose sin was

By Paul Mamza

dishonestly misappropriating the N1,161,162,900. He was said to have directed the All States Trust Bank Plc to disburse in the following manner: N250,000,000 to Pinnacle Communications Limited, N550,000,000 to Plateau state Government, N80,000,000 to Union Homes, N100,000,000 to PDP South west, N160,000,000 to Ebenezer Retnan Ventures reportedly owned by Chief Joshua Dariye and N4,300,000 to C.O.T and had boasted that he is a saint amongst his colleagues. In a BBC Hausa service interview, Dariye said that he came to power as an accomplished rich man. He dared the Government of the day. That all of those at the corridors of power are living in glass houses and hence, should not throw stones. I know Chief Dariye as an educated person, so he knew exactly what he is up to by making the statement.

In Anambra State it is an open fight between 'two armed robbers' to borrow from President Obasanjo's words, which is a direct offshoot of the large scale irregularities that marred the 2003 elections, but the state has been allowed to remain in its criminally intact situation. There were several others like Ibori case, Wabara versus Imo case, El-Rufai versus Mantu and Zwingina case etc that are issues underplayed under suspicious grounds. In most cases when searchlights are beamed veraciously it is on perceived political enemies.

Back to Tafa Balogun's case, the erstwhile Inspector General of Police was alleged to operate a N1.2 billion account at the Abuja Branch of Fountain Trust Bank Plc, multibillion naira castles in Abuja and United Kingdom; billion naira shares in banks and more than \$450 million in foreign accounts etc. No doubt, these revelations are

"If it is true that the EFCC had not contacted Tafa, then why are we in a hurry to declare the man guilty as charged in the public realm?"

alarming but why are we behaving as the proverbial lizard that only becomes hungry when it sees a fly? Tafa's case is just one out of millions. To say that Tafa is the only sinner that had embezzled our collective inheritance is to be economical with the truth. Even Tafa himself knew that Nigerians are not serious. In an interview, he alleged that the stories flying round, about his alleged fraudulent acts are nothing but cheap blackmail. Said Tafa: "I know nothing about all the stories flying around, it's all blackmail. I'm on leave and I'm happy to have been given the opportunity to serve". He knew the government he served is impulsive and the citizens are susceptible to a drama of tale-telling. Just like, Dariye, Tafa had through his lawyer, Mr. Tunji Abayomi denied all the allegations of corrupt enrichment leveled against him. According to him "nobody, not even the EFCC has contacted my client over the issue". How ridiculous.

Abayomi also correlated Dariye's earlier point of argument by saying "there is no crime in being wealthy. A man can legitimately acquire wealth. So what they should do is to establish if he acquired his wealth through illegal or dubious means." If it is true that the EFCC had not contacted Tafa, then why are we in a hurry to declare the man guilty as charged in the public realm? Many Nigerians had earlier cried foul over Tafa Balogun's Operation Fire for Fire innovation in the police force, in which both the innocent and the guilty were shot at the instance of the former I.G. The Nigerians blamed the approach as arbitrary and hasty in conduct, so why will the same Nigerians condemn Tafa as guilty when even the charges are not leveled officially. It seems there is a Tafa in all of us. The former I.G. deserves some respect, please.

-Mamza writes from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

A world of pretentious democracies

By Paul I. Adujie

Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the erstwhile Secretary General of the Commonwealth was right, when he criticized the readmission of Pakistan into the commonwealth, from suspension. He rightly condemned the readmission, because, it is wrong, even though, nothing has substantially changed in Pakistan, except for the fact that Mr. Musharraf, the military usurper of political power in Pakistan, has pleased America, Britain and Australia immensely, in the tripartite crusade and culture wars in Afghanistan and beyond.

According to the former Secretary General the move was "a tragic blow to the hard earned credibility of the body as a force for promoting its fundamental principle of democracy."

When political expediencies are superimposed on what ought to be core principles and great ideals of democracy and freedom, it is quite troubling, for libertarians and democrats everywhere; Musharraf has been rewarded for being a "good-boy" and this is precisely the problem! Western democracies, in their indulgent double standards and inconsistencies of policies, send the wrong message, to the world! They pay lips service to the full tenets of democracy and freedom, to peoples of the developing nations. Mr. Musharraf has been acting and continues to act, clearly in complete disregard, for the wishes of Pakistanis!

This is why there is an international treaty to eliminate Landmines, but America is a major producer and proliferate user of landmines, and the only country that would refuse to implement the ban on mines production and use of landmines.

This is equally why Global Warming, responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer, was tackled by the international community through a treaty, and again, America would not hear of such treaty or the efforts it has generated, as America continues to refuse ratifications of these international laws and treaties.

The same have happened in matters of Free Trade, through the World Trade Organization, but we are all familiar, with American observance of these rules, only in breach, as America has been dragged to WTO court several times, regarding US discriminatory rules on Steel and Agriculture.

Americans are usually, the loudest advocates and apostles of wonderful rules and conventions, except that obeying such rules and

conventions, is another matter altogether! Abu Gharib Prison tortures and abuses is one such example. The Americans have been loudest in proclaiming punishments for those responsible for the genocide that occurred ten years ago, between Tutsi and Hutus, and punishment for Charles Taylor for the civil wars and resulting brutalities and deaths in Liberia and Sierra Leone, War Crime Tribunal demands and all, but when are the American officials themselves, facing the War Crime Tribunal?

These tortures, abuses and war crimes occurred, because, the American government, stated from the onset, that prisoners of war (POWs) in Guantanamo Bay, Afghanistan and Iraq, were unlawful combatants, and would not benefit from the Geneva Conventions on POWs. America was saying to its soldiers, the law would not be obeyed. Are the prisoners are less than humans? Or that POWs taken by Pakistan, are outside the purviews and rubrics of laws?

America favors itself and its friends, mostly the dictators of the world, usually with something to offer: oil, or strategic resources-locations, and they do not have to comply with laws, rules, treaties and conventions! And so, Human Rights abuses remain, regardless of what the UN and the rest of the world wants, and corruption endures because of the protection of it, by those who benefit, from it, and injustices, oppression and perversities remain, despite all proclamations!

It will be recalled that the stated pretensions for the American invasion and occupation of Iraq, were the ideals of democracy and freedom for Iraq, hence operation Iraqi freedom, but on Friday May 28, 2004, we learn, that an abridged or adulterated democracy will be given to the Iraqis through an American puppet of Iraqi origin, as Prime Minister Mr. Alawi is a long time Central Intelligence Agency CIA operative, acting for American interests.

He was chosen by the Americans and endorsed by the equally puppetry "Coalition Governing Council" members, and this, without real sovereignty for Iraq.

Clearly, western democracies make certain, that we notice, their embrace of tyrants and dictators, so long as, such tyrants and dictators oblige America, Britain and Australia, with whatever they demand, especially, even when such demands are inconsistent with "the desires" and aspirations of a given local population, say, in this example, the local population

in Pakistan.

We are familiar with the axiom, that in diplomacy and international relations, there are no permanent friends or enemies, but permanent interests, but how about the principle? Why would these same countries loudly proclaim democracy and freedom, and castigate President Mugabe of Zimbabwe for allegedly lacking in these norms, while they embrace a military Musharraf, with all his nuclear weapons, that the world is supposed to be unhappy about?

The Guardian Newspapers reported that, "five years after the Pakistan's suspension, the Commonwealth Secretary General, Don Mckinnon on Saturday announced its readmittance at a news conference in London" And that the nine-member, comprising India, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Tanzania, Lesotho, Canada, Bahamas, Malta and Samoa "welcomed steps taken by Pakistan, but that it had,"continuing concerns in regard to the strengthening of the democratic process" and would keep monitoring its progress". What feeble concerns are these after the undeserved readmission of Pakistan? And the nine-member committee is so pliable to the wishes of America, Britain and Australia!

According to The Guardian reports, "Britain and Australia wanted to reward Musharraf for helping to fight al-Qaeda. Pakistan at the moment is seen as a key ally in the United States-led war on terror." But is anyone really surprised? I guess not. All these, despite "Musharraf has successfully excluded from the country, the leaders of Pakistan's main political parties, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. A senior opposition leader Mulkhadoom Javed Hashmi is presently in jail." And despite the fact that, the "U.S. State Department has said the prospect of democracy in Pakistan remain poor." What gives? Musharraf gets a pass, thanks to Musharraf's powerful friends? The message in all of this, is glaringly clear.

No dictator or tyrant survives in the world, without the tacit support and endorsement by the "masters". The dictator must have oil or some strategic value to "the masters" of course! Of genial tyrants and their foreign friends and overlords?

But why are those with pretensions to democracy and freedom, always willing to sacrifice high ideals on the altar of pittance and short term parochial benefits? Why would lovers of democracy and freedom, cuddle some dictators and tyrants?

Adujie writes from Lawcenter@msi.com New York, United States



YOUR LETTERS

Mahmoud Atta: Implacable opponent of injustice

The news of the death of Alhaji Mahmood Atta was painful. Although he had been sick for sometime, nonetheless, he was ever so high-spirited, giving one good hope that he would regain his health. Mahmood had the gift of making friends easily. This talent blossomed in his protocol work in the Northern Nigeria Ministry of Internal Affairs where he served as a Protocol Officer. This brought him close to the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauta of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria and the vast array of the Premier's own friends and associates. Mahmood was at home with princes, as well as with the lowly, diplomats and generals; the rich and the struggling poor. He gave everyone his deserved respect and despised no one. A man of strong views, Mahmood was easily roused to anger at the sight of evil. He would always speak up for the little man whom he felt had been ill-used and would be implacable until there was redress of injustice. He had little patience with merchants of untried ways, always preferring systems and methods that had served us well in the past. In politics, he was an unrepentant advocate of the British Parliamentary system of government for Nigeria. He believed we were familiar with the system and that, it

had served us well. He was sure, and always tried to persuade anyone prepared to listen that the Presidential System imposed on us was unsuited for our country. It was costly, rigid and tended towards autocracy particularly in the hands of a bad leader with a fixed constitutionally guaranteed tenure of office. He always gave the example of how the British Conservative Party, because of their Parliamentary System, kicked out Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of Britain in November 1990, when she became a liability to the Party and the country, because of her growing autocratic intolerance, and replaced her with John Major, in spite of her great power and influence and the great service she had rendered Britain and her party. Mahmood was a committed Northerner and at the same time a great lover of his country. He was a founding member of the Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF. He believed in the objectives of the Forum and hardly ever failed to attend any meetings of the Forum. His valuable contributions in many ways to the Forum will be sorely missed. May the Almighty grant him eternal peace and uphold the family he left behind. **Chief Sunday Awoniyi (Aro of Mopa) Chairman, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF)**

A legend of our time

The Americans especially the Blacks must remember Martin Luther King Jr. for his untiring role as a renowned Human Rights fighter, advocate of justice and equality. King must be remembered for his role and contribution towards the development of America as a free state and an example to other nations. King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, he was in the position of second child in the family of three, to the family of a Baptist Reverend Minister, Late Reverend Luther King I and later married MRS Coretta Scott in June, 1953. He attended public elementary and high schools as well as the Private laboratory High school of Atlanta University. King entered Morehouse College at the age of 15 in September 1944 as a special student. He received a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1948. He later enrolled at the Crozier Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania and received his Bachelor of Divinity Degree three years later. He bagged Doctorate Degree from Boston University in 1955. Early in 1954, King accepted his first Pastorate at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery. He joined Montgomery in Alabama as a community member and that was less than a year when Mrs. Rosa Parks defied the ordinance regulating segregated seating arrangement on municipal transportation. King took up the leadership responsibility as the prominent black community

and Baptist Minister in the south Montgomery to assume a larger role in the struggle for black civil rights during a successful protest in respect of bus boycotts of 1955-1956 in Montgomery, Alabama. The dream begins when Mrs. Rosa Parks a black woman said her firm and profoundly significant "NO" it ignited the long patient black of Montgomery, Alabama, in an almost volcanic show of solidarity. Mrs. Rosa Parks a 42 years old woman, had refused the laws of Alabama decree that say's white citizen should be given preference for the seat in the front of any bus. A white male citizen boarded the bus with Mrs. Rosa Parks but the driver of the said bus informed Mrs. Parks to move to the rear the woman refused to obey the driver, and later arrested and charged for violation of a city ordinance. Her simple act, though not the first of its kind but, this struggle forcefully United 45,000 blacks citizens of Montgomery of 120,000 population in 1955 roused in a successful massive resistance that eventually caught the attention: the whole of the United States of America. The King Jr. in the forefront and other prominent black citizen, organization such as National Association for the Advancement of coloured people (NAACP) later organized a boycott protest against Montgomery bus Company for 12 months, efforts which forced the company to a legal battle with the public. On 21st December, 1956, the United States Supreme Court ordered the bus system desegregated; that the policy violated the

fourteen amendments of the US laws which forbids the states from denying equal rights to any citizen. This was just like what Chief Gani Fawehinmi, (SAN) did in 1993 in a case suit No M/132/93. Chief Gani Fawehinmi VS Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida when he challenged the illegality, illogicality, uncertainty, absurdity and incongruity contained in a number of decrees made by General Babangida which showed that some decrees had the same number with different dates and different titles. Dr. Martin Luther's struggle for Education has no equals for Blacks in America in a Landmark 1954 case called Brown Vs the Board of Education when Justice Earl Warren in his pronouncement said "in the interest of public Education, the doctrine 'of separate but equal' has no place separate education facilities are inherently unequal, therefore we hold that the plaintiffs and other similarly situated are deprived of the equal protection as laws guaranteed by the fourteen amendment." In September, 1957 after the Supreme Court ruling, the Federal troops entered Little Rock central High school in Arkansas to protect black students and to enforce a federal court order desegregating the schools. The Federal Government

set up a judicial commission of enquiry headed by Justice Oladiran Kazeem, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, SAN defended the students and when the reports of the commission of inquiry was released, more than 30% of the students demands were met. In Nigeria either their enemy like it or not, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Amadu Bello, Gani Fawehinmi, Wole Soyinka, RTD Justice Kayode Eso, Femi Aborisade, Beko Kuti, Tai Solarin, M.K.O Abiola, Kudirat Abiola Alfred Riwame etc had their name written in history and this can not be taken away. There is a need for the generality of people and the Government to fashion out method of improving the condition of living of the citizens of Nigeria and for security agencies to respect the Human Rights laws. Incessant attacks on journalists by the police is hereby condemned in its entirety. Nigerian and Government should take a cue from the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who demonstrated an exemplary leadership qualities and was part of the struggle for the emancipation of the people and establishment of modern America through the instrumentality of justice. **Chief Amiololu Shimi is an Osoybo based Human Rights Campaigner.**

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

Our Unforgettable Mama!

- Virtuous woman • Caring mother • True companion • Friend indeed

Your loving memory will always remain with us.
Sleep well, our dear Mama!



Chief (Mrs.) Priscilla Rakiya Ogbaha (nee Johnson)
(Aged 81 years)
Died - Saturday, January 22, 2005

Obsequies

Lying-in-State

Date: Friday, February 04 - Saturday, February 05, 2005
Venue: Family Residence - 20, Bye-field Street, Lokoja.

Christian Wake keeping

Date: Friday, February 04, 2005
Time: 7.00p.m. - 9.00p.m.
Venue: Senator Ogbaha's Residence, GRA, Lokoja.

Funeral Service

Date: Saturday, February 05, 2005
Time: 10.00a.m.
Venue: Cathedral Church of Holy Trinity, Lokoja.

MRS. BEATRICE L. PWAJOK	Children	SENATOR TUNDE OGBEHA	MRS. GRACE GOT
MS CAROL PWAJOK	Grandchildren	MASTER NDANIUSA OGBEHA	MASTER BALA OGBEHA
MR. DINJU PWAJOK		MASTER SELE GOT	
MR. JIUCHONG PWAJOK			
MR. SIMBABI OGBEHA			
			SUSAN PWAJOK Great Grandchild for the family

Trust International

Renewed fighting kills 105 in Darfur

Just after a WHO report of subsiding humanitarian crisis in Darfur, renewed fighting in the region may have killed up to 105 civilians and displaced more than 9,000 last week, the United Nations said Wednesday.

"It has been confirmed that the village of Hamada was nearly totally destroyed and that up to 105 civilians may have been killed, with the majority of victims being women and children," U.N. spokesman George Somerville told a news conference.

A U.N. assessment team was sent last week to the area of Hamada, Juruf and Gemeiza villages in South Darfur state, where the government launched a military campaign in December it said was to clear the roads of bandits.

Aid community sources and rebels have said government planes bombed the area on Jan. 19.

Somerville did not know who the people were killed, who the fighting was between or if aerial bombardment had caused the high number of casualties in Hamada.

Aerial bombardment would be a direct violation of security protocols signed between the government and the two main Darfur rebel groups in November.

The government said it uses aircraft to protect key supply routes and civilians from rebels, but it denies dropping bombs.

Somerville said 8,000 refugees had fled the fighting to Menawashi and 1,250 to Mershing, both nearby in South Darfur state. But he said the withdrawal from Darfur of Save the Children UK late last year had left the areas with "serious gaps in health and nutrition."

Save the Children was the only international agency working in the areas. Others are now looking at taking over.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA) said three of its Sudanese workers had been kidnapped in December in rebel-held Labado to the east of South Darfur state, where they were trying to drill wells.

"ADRA is appealing for the release of three agency workers that were abducted at gunpoint along with ADRA project vehicles... while traveling through the then rebel-controlled area of Labado," said the statement, posted on ADRA's Web site on Tuesday.

Aid agencies often try to secure the release of kidnapped staff using mediators, away from media attention.

The government occupied Labado during the December campaign and has so far refused to withdraw to previous lines, unless the African Union takes up positions there to prevent rebels retaking the area.

Darfur peace talks in the Nigerian capital Abuja are due to restart in the first week of February, but there is some doubt over whether one rebel group will attend. The previous round collapsed in December with rebels blaming the military operations in South Darfur.

The AU monitoring mission has expressed concern over the fragmentation of Darfur's two main rebel groups. There are now four known armed factions in Darfur, with many armed gangs also operating.

The Darfur conflict was not covered by a peace deal concluded this month between Khartoum and southern rebels ending more than two decades of fighting in southern Sudan.



Joseph Kabila

DR Congo denies assassination attempt

Congo's interior minister denied a rumour circulating in the capital on Tuesday that President Joseph Kabila had been shot a day earlier.

"It was nothing but a rumour, Kabila is alive," Interior Minister Theophile Mbemba told reporters in Kinshasa.

Kabila's father, rebel leader-turned-president Laurent Kabila was gunned down by his own bodyguard in January 2001.

Kinshasa Gov. Kimbanga Mudikela also went on state radio to deny the alleged shooting on Monday.

Vice President Abdoulaye Yerodia said Kabila spent Tuesday in a meeting with the country's four vice presidents in Kinshasa.

Kabila heads a power-sharing government formed in the wake of Congo's five-year war. The government is struggling to end sporadic bouts of fighting in the country's mineral-rich east.

Somali militia build mosque on Italian cemetery

Somali militiamen have begun building a mosque on the site of an Italian colonial-era cemetery in Mogadishu, which they desecrated last week.

The BBC's correspondent saw a small corrugated metal structure amid the coffins which litter the area.

He said the capital has been very tense since the armed militia group occupied the cemetery last week.

The Italian government has described the graves' desecration as barbaric.

The decision to build a mosque has been condemned by many local residents, as well as by local Islamic authorities.

The militia exhumed the human remains of some 700 graves and dumped them near Mogadishu airport.

The chairman of the Somali Clerics Council, Sheik Nur Barood Gurhan, said under Islamic law the militia men were not allowed to construct

the mosque without the permission of the land's owners.

The militiamen told BBC correspondent that they were building the mosque for local people.

But residents near the cemetery said they were unhappy with the situation and threatened to kick the militia out.

Mogadishu was under Italian colonial control until World War II and many of the graves belong to Italian soldiers and expatriates.

Somalia has not had a functioning national government since 1991 and rival militias have divided it into a patchwork of fiefdoms.

A new Somali government has been named and is due to start relocating to Mogadishu from Kenya on 1 February.

But Mogadishu remains a dangerous city and its chief of police, in charge of investigating the cemetery's destruction, was assassinated by gunmen last week.

UN neglects Uganda war - Group

Distracted by Iraq and the Asian tsunami, the United Nations is ignoring a flare-up in Uganda's 18-year-old civil conflict, an aid group said yesterday.

"The United Nations Security Council has been appallingly negligent of the conflict in Uganda, failing to pass a single resolution," said Emma Naylor, head of Oxfam in Uganda.

The UK-based group said the Security Council should

use a meeting on African humanitarian issues in New York on Thursday to focus on one of the continent's longest-running wars.

"The meeting comes as northern Uganda teeters on the brink of a full return to war," Oxfam said in a statement.

The most significant peace talks between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) for a decade stalled on Dec. 31 and fighting has resumed in the remote Kitgum district.

Tentative contacts have continued, but Uganda's army says it has killed about

30 rebels in several clashes in recent days.

The cult-like LRA, led by self-proclaimed prophet Joseph Kony, has never given a coherent account of its aims beyond opposition to President Yoweri Museveni. He called on Wednesday for the LRA to lay down arms and accept a government amnesty. Oxfam urged the United Nations to launch a public push for peace.

"This meeting must herald the start of a united drive for peace with high-level international support. It's not too late to resume the ceasefire and move towards peace, but we need action now," Naylor said.

"The UN must do everything in its power to ensure that the recent breakdown of peace talks does not signal a return to all-out war. With the tsunami and Iraq dominating the news, Uganda mustn't become the silent victim."

The United Nations has also been criticised by some for allowing the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region to overshadow other major trouble spots on the continent like Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The nearly two decades of fighting in Uganda have displaced some 1.6 million people into refugee camps and left the once-fertile north of the country barren and deserted.

Moving on foot through the northern region's thick forests and rolling hills, the LRA rebels have spread fear through a campaign of mutilations and the kidnapping of thousands of children as fighters, porters and sex slaves.

Oxfam urged the Ugandan government to commit to a "meaningful extension" of the ceasefire and the LRA to "respond constructively" to a new draft peace agreement.

"The ceasefire must be given another chance. The six weeks before the ceasefire broke, saw enormous progress and raised hopes, they must not be dashed now," Naylor said.

Gaddafi calls for Iraq hostage's release

Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi on Wednesday called on Iraqi insurgents to release a US hostage, responding to the captive's plea for his intervention.

In a videotape broadcast

Tuesday, Roy Hallums asked Arab leaders, singling out Gadhafi, to save his life. The video showed Hallums, 56, speaking with a rifle barrel pointed at his head.

"As a response to the begging, we ask the Iraqi resistance in the name of Islam and Arabism to free him, implementing the principle of forgiveness," the Arab satellite news channel Al-Jazeera quoted Gadhafi as saying in a statement.

Gunmen seized Hallums in November with Robert Tarongoy of the Philippines at their compound in Baghdad's Mansour district. The two worked for a Saudi company that does catering for the Iraqi army. The Filipino was not shown in the video.

Hallums said he had been taken by a "resistance group" because he worked with American forces. No group has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping.



Moammar Gadhafi

Burundi warn president over constitution

Burundi's transitional President Domitien Ndayizeye has been warned against changing the draft constitution to allow himself to run in elections.

The chief mediator in Burundi's peace talks, South African deputy President Jacob Zuma, said the move could damage efforts to end the 10-year war.

About 5,000 United Nations peacekeepers are in the country to support the South African-brokered peace process. President Ndayizeye's supporters staged a protest earlier this week. They were demanding the constitution be amended to allow him to contest presidential elections due to be held later this year.

Mr. Zuma has just concluded two days of talks with Burundian leaders.

Meanwhile, the only rebel movement still active in Burundi, the National Liberation Forces of Agathon Rwasa, said it is ready to hold

talks with the government.

FNL spokesman Pasteur Habimana told local radios in Bujumbura that international efforts were under way to boost the talks.

The Burundian government ended talks with the FNL in April last year after it claimed responsibility for a massacre of refugees.

A presidential spokesman said the government would set up a commission to pursue the negotiation process.



Domitien Ndayizeye

Trust International

US soldiers raid Baghdad mosque

US soldiers have attacked a mosque in Baghdad's Sadr City, violating its sanctity and arresting 25 Iraqis, Iraqi sources said.

Shaikh Abd al-Hadi al-Daraji, a top aide of the Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr, told Aljazeera.net that what happened in Masjid al-Rasul (the Prophet mosque) revealed the real intentions of the US occupation forces.

He accused a US soldier of urinating on the Quran and another of consuming alcohol within the chambers of the mosque.

"[This] is a great sin in Islam," al-Daraji said.

"The action of the US forces just days before Sunday's election is a serious

provocation and it reveals that the US is serious in insulting the Islamic values and imposing its culture on us."

"They claim they are democratic people, but they are targeting us because we boycotted the elections and said it should not be held under occupation."

Another official in al-Sadr's movement, Naim al-Qaabi, also accused US and Iraqi forces of tearing Qurans during the operation and arresting 21 al-Sadr supporters.

However, neither claims could be immediately verified and the interim Iraqi government issued a statement saying it was investigating the incident.

The US military has not yet commented on the incident.

Al-Sadr led a fierce anti-US uprising last year before toying the pro-election line, then changed his position again later and vowed to boycott the elections as long as foreign troops remained on Iraqi soil.

Earlier this month, thousands of al-Sadr supporters demonstrated in several cities to protest against petrol and electricity

shortages, accusing the interim government of ignoring the people in favour of Sunday's elections.

Meanwhile, six Iraqis and one US Marine were killed yesterday as resistance clashed with US troops and blew up a school slated to serve as a polling centre, pre-election violence that followed the deadliest day for US troops since the war's start. Another US soldier died in an accident.



Ariel Sharon

Israel blasts critics over holocaust

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon branded as anti-Semites those critics of Israel who liken its crackdown on a Palestinian revolt to Nazi efforts to exterminate Jews.

Speaking on the eve of a gathering of world leaders in Poland to mark the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz, Sharon said on Wednesday the lessons of the Holocaust were still ignored by the world.

"This phenomenon, of Jews protecting themselves and fighting back, is deemed outrageous by the new anti-Semites," he told Israel's parliament.

"The legitimate self-defence measures which Israel takes in its war against Palestinian terror measures any sovereign state would be obliged to take in order to safeguard its residents are presented by sundry anti-Semites as Nazi-style acts of aggression," the right-wing former army general said.

Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and killing of more than 3,000 Palestinians in violence that erupted in 2000 have drawn comparisons in parts of the Arab and European press to Nazi actions.

"Sixty years after the liberation of Auschwitz, the evil that begat the horror still exists, and still poses a threat," Sharon said. "We know we can trust no one but ourselves."

More than 1,000 Israelis have been killed in Palestinian suicide bombings and other attacks during the 4-year-old Palestinian uprising.

Some 1.5 million people, 90 percent of them Jews, perished in the gas chambers and crematoria in Auschwitz during the World War II Holocaust that killed 6 million Jews in all.

While leaders of France and Germany recalled that Auschwitz taught mankind never to let hate and genocide rise again, small groups across Europe showed that, 60 years on, not everyone was united on the lessons of the Holocaust.

Russian Jews were outraged after a letter signed by about 500 people including 20 nationalist and

Communist parliamentary deputies charged that Jews themselves provoked anti-Semitism.

The deputies later retracted their call, and Russia's Foreign Ministry denounced its "openly anti-Semitic views."

In London, Muslim leaders said they would not attend a British Auschwitz commemoration, arguing that Holocaust Memorial Day should commemorate victims of genocide everywhere.

Ariel Sharon

Jordan to introduce democratic reforms

King Abdullah II, while urging citizens in neighbouring Iraq to vote in this weekend's elections, said he would introduce some limited democratic reforms in his kingdom.

In a televised speech, Abdullah said he wanted to "address all our brethren in Iraq, of all groups and spectrums, and call on them to take part in the elections to be held in a few days."

The king then unveiled plans to establish elected councils to oversee development in Jordan. He did not explain how the new councils would work with existing local authorities, half

of whose members are appointed by the government.

"I assert here that political development should start at the grass roots, then move up to decision-making centres, and not vice versa," the king said.

Abdullah spoke only hours after President Bush urged him at a Washington press conference to "make sure that democracy continues to advance in Jordan."

Jordanian government officials, insisting on anonymity, stressed that Abdullah's announcement was not linked to Bush's call because the king had recorded his speech much

earlier.

Bush made the statement in reply to a question on whether he would condemn the Jordanian government for arresting a man and charging him with slander after he delivered a lecture called "Why We Boycott America."

Regarding the vote in neighbouring Iraq, Abdullah's reference to "all groups" appeared to be an implicit appeal to Sunni Muslims who have threatened to boycott Sunday's polls.

"The elections are the only realistic way for the Iraqis to achieve security and stability, rebuild their country, and ensure that Iraq regains its natural and special status within the region," added Abdullah, whose country is concerned that Shiite victory in the polls may ultimately lead to the emergence of an Iranian-style strict Islamic state in Iraq.

Abdullah angered Iran last month, when he warned of a possible Shiite hegemony in the region. In an interview with the Washington Post, the king accused Shiite Muslim-dominated Iran of trying to influence the elections in Iraq, where Shiite candidates are expected to fare well.

Since ascending to the throne five years ago, Abdullah has sought to press ahead with reforms introduced by his late father, King Hussein, who died in 1999. A computer and Internet enthusiast, Abdullah wants to make Jordan a regional information technology hub. He also wants to see his nation geared toward open-market economy and globalization and has introduced relevant legislation in recent years.

Odd World

Man pays for advert to win wife back

When five dozen roses didn't work, an estranged husband took out a full-page newspaper ad to ask his wife for forgiveness.

"Please believe the words in my letter, they are true and from my heart," read the ad in Tuesday's edition of The Florida Times-Union. "I can only hope you will give me the chance to prove my unending love for you. Life without you is empty and meaningless."

Larry, who declined to give his last name, sent the \$17,000 apology to Marianne, his wife of 17 years. She left him almost two weeks ago, he said.

"It was a culmination of things," he told the newspaper. "But I am desperately trying to save our marriage."

Larry, who lives in Orlando, said his wife is staying with her parents near Jacksonville. But they blocked him from entering their gated community and she changed her cell phone number so he can't contact her.

A relative told him that Marianne saw the advertisement. "She said my wife read the ad and started crying. But so far I've had no response from her," Larry said.

But the ad drew the attention of many other readers, who contacted the paper.

"They want to know if she has responded and if they have worked things out," said Jay Weimar, director of display advertising. "We tell them we are pulling for him."

Examiner finds man breathing in morgue

A medical examiner studying a body in a morgue was startled when the man took a shallow breath.

Emergency medical technicians had declared 29-year-old Larry D. Green dead almost two hours earlier, after he was hit by a car.

Medical examiner J.B. Perdue was called to the accident scene Monday but did not examine Green then. Later, he was documenting Green's injuries when he noticed the man was breathing.

"I had to look twice myself just to make sure it was there, that's how subtle it was," Perdue said.

Green, 29, was taken to Duke University Medical Center in Durham, where he was in critical condition Wednesday.

Several members of the Franklin County emergency medical service have been suspended pending an investigation, said Darnell Batton, the county attorney.

Fire service to charge for services

Residents will be charged a service fee for using the Iowa fire department's services. City Council voted Monday that the service fee will be effective immediately. Previously, there was only a charge for cleaning up hazardous material spills.

Now, when the fire department responds to an accident and extracts someone from a vehicle, there will be a \$500 charge. Responding to a vehicle fire will cost from \$150 to \$500.

The charge for responding to a grass fire will be up to \$300. The charge for a house fire will range from \$300 to \$500 and a commercial building fire will range from \$300 to \$1,000.

"I believe this is something that we've needed in place for quite a while, and it would be beneficial for the city to utilize this and to utilize it now," Hamilton said.

Had the fees been in place last year, the fire department would have taken in about \$15,000, Fire Chief Ralph Hickenbottom said.

Many of the fees will be covered by people's homeowner or vehicle insurance policies, rather than by individuals themselves, Hickenbottom said.

Farmer on trial for feeding worker to lion

A South African security guard took the stand Tuesday in a trial of a farmer accused of feeding a former employee to lions, saying he witnessed the attack but was too far away to intervene.

Police said during a labour dispute Mark Scott-Crossley, owner of the Engedi Game Farm, and two of his workers beat, lugged with a machete and tossed Nelson Chisale over a fence into a park where rare white lions are bred. Police later found bones, torn clothes and a skull in the enclosure.

The trio faced murder charges and one of the workers - Richard Mathebula - entered a surprise guilty plea Monday, saying he was merely following Scott-Crossley's orders.

A security guard at the game farm, Forget Tsaku Ndlovu, testified Tuesday he saw men assaulting Chisale. Ndlovu said he was too far away to help and had no cell phone to call police, the South African Press Association reported.

Ndlovu said he later saw the third suspect, Simon Mathebula, at the farm gate with blood on his sleeves and hat. The Mathebulas are not related.

The trial has caused a stir in the usually quiet farming region northeast of the capital Johannesburg and has attracted protesters from South Africa's governing African National Congress and the South African Communist party.

Trust Classified

TOPE OJO MEMORIAL WELFARE FOUNDATION

The general public is hereby informed that the above named Foundation has applied for registration to the Corporate Affairs Commission under Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Decree of 1990.

The Trustees are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. DR. ANTHONY OLUWOLE OJO | 2. MRS. OLUWAKEMI OJO |
| 3. MR. OLAWALE FRANK OJO | 4. BARR. YETUNDE OLUWATOYIN ODUNAYO - SEC. |
| 5. CHIEF MRS. ALICE FOLASAYO OJO | 6. ENGR. JOSEPH OLUWAKAYODE ODUNAYO |

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
SECRETARY

MISSING DOCUMENT

This is to inform the MFCT/FCDA and the general public that the Original Offer of Terms of Grant/Conveyance of Approval (Letter of Allocation) in respect of Plot No. 305 covering 1,100m² at Jabi District Abuja belonging to Mr. Sunday Edes Akpan has been reported missing. If found, please return it to the nearest Police station or the address below:

Mr. Sunday Edes Akpan
Suite 118 Lazzmba Commercial Complex
Area 10, Garki,
Abuja.

FOUNTAIN OF DOMINION MINISTRIES

The general public is hereby informed that the above named Ministry has applied for registration to the Corporate Affairs Commission under Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Decree of 1990.

The Trustees are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Pastor Rotimi Dalami | 2. Pastor (Mrs.) Hiewumi Dalami |
| 3. Engineer Segun Agui-George | 4. Mr. Gbadebo Otonija |
| 5. Mr. Sunday Idewa Dalami | |

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
SECRETARY

MISSING DOCUMENT

I, Sidi H. Ali chief Executive of Heluix NIGERIA LTD., hereby inform the general public of the loss of the original letter of offer of a commercial land Ref No MFCT/LA/92/MISC 8335 in respect of (Plot No De 683) within Gwarinpa District of Abuja.

All efforts to locate the document have been unsuccessful. If found please return to Hon Sidi H. Ali or the nearest police station.

Signed: Sidi H. Ali

HEROES CHAPEL INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

The general public is hereby informed that Heroes Chapel International Ministries has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission Abuja for registration under part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

The trustees are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Rev. Joseph Ogburn | General Overseer |
| 2. Pastor (A/C) Innocent Icha | Member |
| 3. Pastor (Mrs.) Esther Ogburn | Member |
| 4. Mrs. Yvonne Isaac Eno | Member |
| 5. Elder (ASIP) Samuel Oshin | Member |
| 6. Evangelist (Dr.) Peter Lobo | Secretary |

Any objection to the above registration must be in writing and addressed to the Registrar - General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja and should reach him within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
Idang Alibi

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DIGITAL SCIENCE ACADEMY AQ11, Gamagira Road,
Unguwar Sanusi, Kaduna
Tel: 0803-453-2048, 0804-315-0086, 0805-455-2220

THE DIOCESE OF MAIDUGURI ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

This is to inform the general public that the Annual General Meeting of the Diocese of Maiduguri (Roman Catholic Church) held at ST. PATRICKS CATHEDRAL Bishop House, P.O. Box 58, Opposite State Secretariat, Maiduguri on the 1st day of May 2003 the present Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Matthew Man-Osu Ndigoso of the Bishop's House Maiduguri was elected to be the Trustee of the Diocese of Maiduguri to replace Right Reverend Timothy Cotter now deceased. Anybody who has any objection to his election as Trustee should contact the Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed
C.A. Adolor & Co. Legal Practitioners
100/104 Murtala Mohammed Way,
P.O. Box 4131, Kano.

ASSOCIATION OF SURGEONS OF NIGERIA

The general public is hereby informed that the above named Organization has applied for registration to the Corporate Affairs Commission under Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Decree of 1990.

The Trustees are:

- Dr. E. Ameh - President
- Dr. H.N. Mithu - Secretary
- Dr. Heta B. Sheta - Member
- Dr. Z. F. Yerimu - Member

Any objection to this registrations should be forwarded to the Registrar General Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
Al'qasim Jafa's & Co.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We wish to notify the public that Center for Public Probity Studies is in the process of registration as an Incorporated Trustee with the Corporate Affairs Commission, Zone 5, Abuja. The Trustees are Mr. Damian Ogbonna, Ms Mercy Ogbonna, Barrister Ike Uko, Mr. Jonah Ajiga and Ms Esther Eboh.

If any person has any objections towards the registration, he/she should send it to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
Ugwuanyi J. O., Esq.
(Legal Officer)

Plot 225 Cotonou Crescent, Wuse Zone 6, Abuja

MISSING DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public, especially Ministry of Federal Capital Territory of the loss of the Original Land Documents (Certificate of Occupancy, Power of Attorney, Deed of Assignment, etc) with registration number FCT/ABU/BO.58 in respect of Plot No. 589, situated at Maitama A5 issued to Alhaji Mohammed Alhaji Lawan which were discovered missing on 23/01/05. All efforts to locate the documents proved unsuccessful. Please if found return to Alhaji Mohammed Alhaji Lawan 08033145388

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public of the Original Land Documents belonging to Alhaji Gujj Tom of Plot 31 Oka Akoko Close Garki II Abuja. With Original Document of No. BO. 136 of the plot No. M886, located at Dape District measuring about 1300m² has been declared missing. Whoever transact business with the above document does so at his/her own risk.

Signed
ALH. GUJJ TOM.

LOSS OF LAND DOCUMENTS

This is to notify the general public of the loss of Right of Occupancy in respect of Plots No. 208 of about 535m² and No. 214B of about 500m² off Gado Nasco Road in Kubwa by NEPA Road, belonging to HUSSEINI MOMOH. All efforts to trace the missing documents prove abortive. Please if found contact Husseini Momoh on 0803 3146187 NTA Abuja or the nearest Police station

Signed
Husseini Momoh

MISSING DOCUMENTS

This is to inform the general public of the Loss of Original Letter of Right of Occupancy granted in favour of Dr. Timothy Ndubisi Menakaya with Ref. No. FCT/ABU/AN 1195 for Plot No. 440 Cadastral Zone A7 and Ref No. FCT/ABU/AN/5686 for Plot No. 1220 Maitama District, Cadastral Zone A5. If found please contact Dr. Timothy Ndubisi Menakaya of Plot 690 Durumi District Area 1, Garki, Abuja.

Signed
Dr. Timothy Ndubisi Menakaya

CHANGE OF NAMES

I, formerly ONYEDIKACHI CHIBUOGWU IBE, now to be EMEH ONYEDIKACHI CHIBUOGWU. All former documents remain valid. Public to note.

I, formerly known as EJEME A.A. PEACE, now wish to be called MRS MOSES. A.A. PEACE. The general public to take note.

I, formerly known as MISS ANTHONIA OCHEMBA, now wish to be addressed as ANTHONIA AGU. Former documents remain valid. The Public to please note.

I, formerly known as GAMBO UMAR, now wish to be known as USMAN GAMBO MOHAMMED and public to note.

I, formerly known and addressed as BIDE MI TAI RAT OYINDAMOLA TAIWO-AYODELE, now wish to be known and address as BIDE MI TAI RAT OYINDAMOLA BOLARIN. All other documents remain valid. M-Tel and general public to take note.

I, formerly MISS AKHIGBE LOUISA FATIMA IMOSEME ELABOR, now wish to be known as MRS. OHAKU ELABOR LOUISA ESEME. All former documents remain valid. JAMB and Public to note.

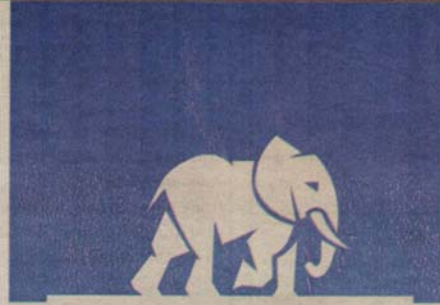
I, formerly MRS. FATIMA MA'ALI, now to be called MRS FATIMA A. AHMED. All former documents remain valid. Federal Housing Authority Abuja and public to note.

I, formerly MISS OLUNKE OLAYOADE SANGODELE, now wish to be called and addressed as MRS OLUNKE OLAYOADE OLUWAYEMI. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly FOLAKEMI MARY AINA, now wish to be called MRS. FOLAKEMI MARY DAMOLEKUN. All former documents remain valid and public to note.

I, formerly BAYETEMISI CAROLINE, now wish to be called MRS CAROLINE B. OYEFENA OLALEKAN. Former documents remain valid and public to note.

I, formerly known as FAROUK AMINU MOHAMMED, now FAROUK HESLTON. All former documents remain valid. F. mobile please take note.

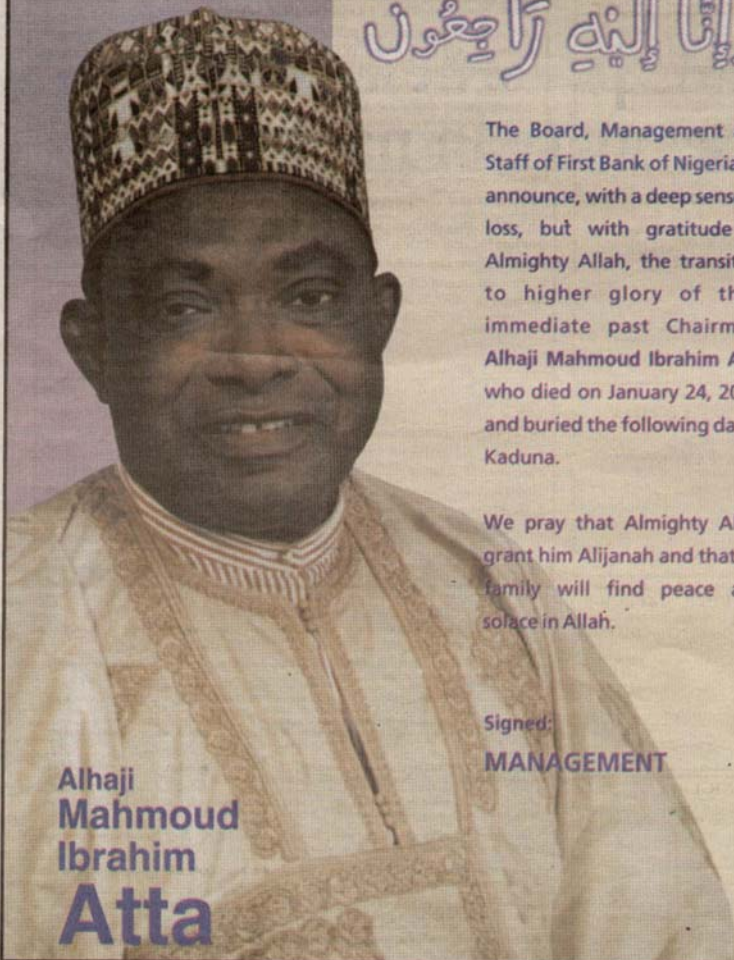


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Alhaji
Mahmoud
Ibrahim
Atta

The Board, Management and Staff of First Bank of Nigeria Plc announce, with a deep sense of loss, but with gratitude to Almighty Allah, the transition to higher glory of their immediate past Chairman, Alhaji Mahmoud Ibrahim Atta who died on January 24, 2005, and buried the following day in Kaduna.

We pray that Almighty Allah grant him Aljjanah and that his family will find peace and solace in Allah.

Signed:
MANAGEMENT

Business Trust

NNPC, Total, others plan 3 new IPPs

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and three of its partners, TOTAL, Chevron-Texaco and Exxon-Mobil, have begun discussions for the establishment of three gas-fired Independent Power Plants (IPPs).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) learnt that the four oil giants conceived the idea of the project as part of efforts to substantially increase gas utilisation and monetisation.

"The project would undoubtedly increase power generation and distribution in the country," NAN quotes NNPC Group Managing Director (GMD) Funsho Kupolokun as saying in Abuja.

NPA introduces air patrol

In compliance with the International Security and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has commenced regular air patrol of the nation's waters for operational efficiency.

NAN learnt that areas of surveillance of the patrol programme would include the anchorage and the channels.

He said government has initiated the National Gas Strategy aimed at realising the full potentials of the nation's gas sector.

According to him, the gas policy was meant to present a roadmap on the future of gas investment in the country.

"It will also promote rapid development in the sector and also reactivate the industry," he said.

NAN gathered that the present NNPC management was determined to generate as much revenue from gas as from crude through the establishment of various gas projects.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the operational patrol of the Lagos Ports was carried out today with an helicopter on lease by Caverton Marine a shipping firm with NPA.

Lagos Port expects 11 cargo vessels

NAN gathered that the first flight operation took place on Dec. 23, 2004, while the second one was done today.

The Lagos Port Complex (LPC) is expecting 11 cargo vessels containing bulk cement, fish, rice and bulk wheat.

The expected vessels are: MV Desert Sun; MV Ivan Pribylskiy; MV Green Summer; MV Cos Lucky; and MV Irene.

An authoritative source at NPA told NAN that the patrol programme was part of the requirements of the ISPS Code which took effect worldwide on July 1, 2004.

The shipping position made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos on Monday showed that the cargoes include 166,150 tonnes of bulk cement in four of the vessels.

Other vessels expected are: MV Nova Cura; MV Tai Hawk; MV Frontier Angel; MV Baltic Prosperity; MV Wana Naree; and MV Green Tundra.

The source explained that the air patrol was meant to monitor and track movement of ships on Nigerian waters.

Five of the vessels are expected to sail into the port with 10,265 tonnes of fish.

Meanwhile, three vessels already within the port: MV St Jerneberg; MT Torrent; and MT Anias are awaiting the necessary documentation before they could berth.

"It is another step in port and channel security," the source said.

It also showed that one



(L - R): Dr. Pat Utomi, chairman, Platinum Bank and Dr. Christopher Kolade, Nigerian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom at a conference organised by the Centre for Values in Leadership held in Lagos..... recently

Total takes stakes in Australian exploration blocks

French oil company, said on Monday it signed agreements that would give it stakes in two deep offshore exploration blocks in northwest Australia.

Under one agreement with Australia's Woodside Total would take a 30 percent interest in the WA-269-P exploration block located

150 kilometres from the shore. In water depths between 300 and 1,500 metres. Total said under certain conditions it could get an additional 10 percent stake in this block.

The other deal with Woodside, BHP Bilton and Japan Australia LNG (MIMI) Pty Ltd would give Total a 50 percent interest in the WA-297-P exploration block located 200 kilometres from the shore in water depths between 1,000 and 2,000 metres.

Total said exploration activities were planned in both blocks this year

Total said exploration activities were planned in both blocks this year

Association wants more cocoa drinks introduced to markets

Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN) has called on beverages companies to introduce more cocoa products into the market to beef up price of

cocoa in the international market.

cocoa farms and engage corps members in cocoa farming using modern machinery.

The president of CAN, Mr. Victor Iyama, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in an interview in Lagos on Monday that if the local market outlets for cocoa increased, there would be less of the commodity for export, thereby forcing the price to appreciate.

"Right pricing of cocoa will attract more investors to the sector and farmers will also have more value for their effort," the CAN president said.

Iyama also suggested that for cocoa to regain its lost glory of being the mainstay of the nation's economy, research institutions should be adequately funded to develop high yielding and disease resistance seedlings for farmers.

Such development, he said, would also protect local farmers from unfavourable cocoa pricing in the international market.

In addition, he urged the government to support technology transfer and also improve infrastructure in farm settlements.

Also speaking, Mr. Akimwade Ojo, CAN executive Secretary, emphasised the need to replenish cocoa tree stock, saying that a good number of such trees were now old after several years of usage.

"For now CAN is giving free cocoa drink to about 20 selected primary schools in the Southern part of the country," he said.

He said that the bulk of cocoa produced in the country was being exported, adding that of the 220,000 tonnes of cocoa produced annually, 80 per cent was exported.

To boost cocoa production in the country, he urged the government to establish



(L - R): Dr. Godwin Oboh, group managing director, Union Bank of Nigeria (UBN) Plc, Professor Musa Yakubu, chairman of the UBN group and Mike Okonkwo, executive director at the 2004 extra-ordinary general meeting (EGM) of the bank held in Lagos to seek shareholders' approval to raise funds from the capital market. Pic: Oluwapo Olanrewaju

Business Trust

IST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
CUTIX P.L.C.	3	1.30	2,850	3,705.00
Sector Totals	3		2,850	3,705.00
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY P.L.C.	27	16.52	115,831	1,946,717.99
PRESCO P.L.C.	14	10.85	51,101	563,398.99
Sector Totals	41		166,934	2,510,116.98
AVIATION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY P.L.C.	1	1.00	1,500,005	1,500,005.00
Sector Totals	1		1,500,005	1,500,005.00
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA P.L.C.	53	1.99	833,343	1,640,913.48
E. T. BRISQDAH P.L.C.	5	7.22	37,011	267,231.86
Sector Totals	58		870,354	1,908,145.34
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK P.L.C.	8	3.42	47,444	162,258.48
AFRIBANK NIGERIA P.L.C.	26	6.43	102,926	662,399.18
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK P.L.C.	1	3.41	10,000	34,100.00
CHARTERED BANK P.L.C.	5	3.90	89,600	349,440.00
COOPERATIVE BANK P.L.C.	5	1.92	45,786	87,909.12
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA P.L.C.	577	23.22	4,687,773	40,677,531.40
FSD INTERNATIONAL BANK P.L.C.	38	1.40	1,719,067	644,517.14
GIARANTY TRUST BANK P.L.C.	319	11.98	2,331,764	27,745,815.20
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK P.L.C.	14	0.69	1,900,619	2,063,425.79
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) P.L.C.	14	1.28	1,123,473	1,398,757.31
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK P.L.C.	7	0.75	1,200,000	171,120.00
LIBERTY MERCHANT BANK	11	0.84	975,000	819,000.00
LENN BANK OF NIGERIA P.L.C.	10	0.86	250	215.00
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA P.L.C.	12	1.58	5,750,524	6,210,588.32
NAL BANK P.L.C.	141	2.67	10,443,475	27,327,293.48
OCEANIC BANK P.L.C.	4	1.71	2,953,317	47,754.00
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) P.L.C.	9	1.16	50,928	59,078.88
STANDARD TRUST BANK P.L.C.	41	7.41	913,922	6,772,162.02
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK P.L.C.	14	1.80	1,275,888	2,295,398.52
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA P.L.C.	90	10.00	3,608,271	36,082,710.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA P.L.C.	464	20.40	2,235,488	45,104,831.53
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK P.L.C.	14	1.00	369,510	90,510.00
WEAMA BANK P.L.C.	22	3.93	1,300,949	9,042,729.57
ZENITH BANK P.L.C.	104	15.69	1,116,838	11,116,838.00
Sector Totals	1,987		36,837,730	224,687,669.10
BREWING				
GUINNESS NIGERIA P.L.C.	209	101.50	295,601	29,631,477.26
NIGERIAN BREWERIES P.L.C.	407	35.86	1,038,008	38,286,522.79
Sector Totals	616		1,333,609	67,917,999.55
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT P.L.C.	60	23.64	488,273	11,578,787.22
RENUK CEMENT COMPANY P.L.C.	14	4.51	175	1,691.50
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. P.L.C.	16	7.07	154,750	1,112,797.48
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. P.L.C.	55	11.40	252,284	2,945,649.80
Sector Totals	132		895,682	15,638,925.75
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS P.L.C.	17	5.83	93,090	538,782.15
CAP P.L.C.	7	6.70	13,574	90,945.60
D. N. MEYER P.L.C.	2	4.77	9,044	44,634.88
NIGERIA GERMAN CHEMICALS P.L.C.	12	3.78	9,000	352,004.00
Sector Totals	38		209,008	1,036,366.83
COMMERCIAL/SERVICES				
TRANS-NATIONWIDE EXPRESS P.L.C.	6	1.00	4,890,000	4,890,000.00
Sector Totals	6		4,890,000	4,890,000.00
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY P.L.C.	1	0.91	400	164.00
Sector Totals	1		400	164.00
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA P.L.C.	3	1.10	38,972	64,869.20
C.F.A.O. NIGERIA P.L.C.	2	6.18	7,000	43,260.00
EDIN BOLT P.L.C.	1	1.00	900	900.00
INSEVER NIGERIA P.L.C.	200	16.16	876,043	14,675,978.64
F. Z. INDUSTRIES P.L.C.	19	15.10	560,531	7,722,009.14
S.C.O. NIGERIA P.L.C.	10	1.53	59,638	70,869.22
U.A.C. NIGERIA P.L.C.	36	14.17	133,831	1,896,385.27
U.T.C. NIGERIA P.L.C.	10	1.18	13,800	50,647.90
Sector Totals	402		1,830,005	24,675,864.37
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) P.L.C.	10	0.95	34,249	32,428.15
G. CAPPA P.L.C.	7	2.23	33	73.59
JELBUS BERGER NIGERIA P.L.C.	10	14.50	45,573	225,718.50
Sector Totals	21		49,855	288,228.24
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE P.L.C.	5	0.78	38,477	29,612.06
Sector Totals	5		38,477	29,612.06
FOODS/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY P.L.C.	26	24.60	77,935	1,945,842.50
CADBURY NIGERIA P.L.C.	141	58.52	174,284	9,986,622.15
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA P.L.C.	19	16.61	161,461	2,500,906.21
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY P.L.C.	73	50.63	107,696	5,467,973.40
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA P.L.C.	146	148.00	151,836	21,667,834.46
Sector Totals	405		543,112	39,089,178.72
HEALTHCARE				
CHERISTEEL P.L.C.	2	0.52	935	482.20
EVANS MEDICAL P.L.C.	15	1.40	131,435	446,988.25
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA P.L.C.	5	5.70	153,636	886,465.00
NEWMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. P.L.C.	16	1.15	146,046	453,837.60
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. P.L.C.	44	8.70	403,315	3,352,992.86
Sector Totals	98		835,367	5,140,766.51
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA P.L.C.	7	1.06	160,000	168,756.79
B.O.C. GASES P.L.C.	2	2.85	37,406	105,484.92
NIGERIAN YEAST & ALCOHOLIC MANU. P.L.C.	18	4.71	48,134	114,127.04
VITAFAM NIGERIA P.L.C.	21	3.61	219,375	791,943.75
VONO PRODUCTS P.L.C.	9	1.90	23,800	47,391.00
Sector Totals	52		409,005	1,263,783.50
INSURANCE				
ACE'S INSURANCE COMPANY P.L.C.	1	0.60	7,000	4,200.00
ABCO INSURANCE P.L.C.	3	2.15	1,000	2,150.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. P.L.C.	16	1.23	275,837	349,589.51
CRUSAIDER INSURANCE P.L.C.	1	0.86	7,116	6,012.20
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE P.L.C.	1	1.47	1,000	1,470.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE P.L.C.	6	1.90	168,936	328,690.20
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) P.L.C.	5	0.82	25,819	21,187.98
NIGER INSURANCE CO. P.L.C.	10	3.83	1,876,641	7,187,535.03
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE P.L.C.	1	1.97	2,900	4,925.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE P.L.C.	6	3.49	67,683	235,361.71
INDIC INSURANCE P.L.C.	6	1.00	45,000	45,000.00
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. P.L.C.	11	2.60	74,177	198,695.20
Sector Totals	69		2,552,928	8,385,316.85
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING P.L.C.	8	1.59	57,331	89,666.34
Sector Totals	8		57,331	89,666.34
PACKAGING				
AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS P.L.C.	3	0.97	61,171	59,355.87
NAMPAK NIGERIA P.L.C.	2	1.22	2,500	3,080.00
BETA GLASS COMPANY P.L.C.	10	4.71	28,178	126,968.18
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) P.L.C.	8	0.65	51,086	32,895.59
STUDIO PRESS (NIGERIA) P.L.C.	1	1.62	4,800	7,776.00
Sector Totals	17		147,735	230,855.84
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROL P.L.C.	10	0.89	426,502	379,586.78
AFRICAN PETROLEUM P.L.C.	117	68.90	275,602	18,440,322.72
ETERNA OIL & GAS P.L.C.	18	1.80	372,532	770,773.79
MORU OIL NIGERIA P.L.C.	10	180.00	4,763	4,763.00
CONOIL P.L.C.	37	126.50	91,604	11,609,191.14
TEXACO (NIGERIA) P.L.C.	35	168.50	19,087	3,160,987.66
TOTAL NIGERIA P.L.C.	20	74.50	54,044	9,443,192.21
OANDIO P.L.C.	293	97.00	288,334	28,135,832.79
Sector Totals	679		1,554,377	76,773,659.99
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
ACADEMY PRESS P.L.C.	3	1.90	10,900	19,000.00
LONGMAN NIGERIA P.L.C.	3	2.25	7,250	16,095.00
UNIVERSITY PRESS P.L.C.	7	1.89	121,000	228,690.00
Sector Totals	14		138,150	263,785.00
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT P.L.C.	62	8.61	1,112,950	9,795,522.27
Sector Totals	62		1,112,950	9,795,522.27
TEXTILES				
ABA TEXTILE MILLS P.L.C.	1	0.91	40	36.40
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES P.L.C.	13	2.76	148,500	413,276.00
Sector Totals	14		148,540	413,306.40
Overall Totals	4,729		56,224,507	486,581,148.64

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VALUE	TRADES
FIRSTBANK	1,719,007.00	40,677,533.40
NIGERINS	1,876,611.00	7,187,535.01
UBN	2,235,468.00	45,104,831.53
WEMABANK	2,300,949.00	9,042,729.57
GIARANTY	2,331,764.00	27,745,815.20
IMB	3,000,619.00	2,063,428.29
ULFA	3,608,271.00	35,082,710.00
TRANSEXPR	4,890,000.00	4,890,000.00
MANNYBANK	5,790,524.00	6,210,588.32
NAL	10,443,475.00	27,327,293.48

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLO	CHANGE
NESTLE	144.00	148.00	+4.00
TEXACO	166.00	168.50	+2.50
CADBURY	56.01	58.52	+2.49
MORU	178.00	180.00	+2.00
NEC	52.00	53.65	+1.65
AP	66.90	68.00	+1.10
GUINNESS	100.98	101.50	+0.52
UBN	20.00	20.40	+0.40
BERGER	5.56	5.83	+0.27
ROYALEX	3.33	3.49	+0.16

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLO	CHANGE
NE	37.50	35.86	-1.64
NOLTHEAM	128.00	126.50	-1.50
UNIPETROL	98.49	97.00	-1.49
LEVERBOS	16.98	16.16	-0.82
7UP	25.25	24.60	-0.65
FIRSTBANK	23.80	23.22	-0.58
PRESCO	11.45	10.85	-0.60
UAC-PROP	9.00	8.61	-0.39
PZ	13.88	13.50	-0.38
OKOMUOIL	16.90	16.52	-0.38

Oil prices up amid Iraqi election worries

Crude oil futures prices rose yesterday amid worries there could be more violence in advance of elections in Iraq on Sunday and uncertainty about the outcome of a weekend OPEC meeting.

Light, sweet crude for March delivery rose 38 cents to \$49.16 a barrel in electronic trading at midday in Europe ahead of the opening of the New York Mercantile Exchange. February heating oil was up by just over 1 cent to \$1.40 a gallon.

Brent for March delivery rose 34 cents to \$46.85 a barrel on the International Petroleum Exchange in London.

Traders said the market was most nervous about the Iraq elections as pressure eased over the meeting of ministers from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, following comments from several key players that the group is unlikely to cut output quotas.

Table with 4 columns: No., Name, Address, and Phone No. Lists various individuals and their contact information.

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CRSS River Basin Development Authority, Mile 11/12/13/14, Calabar, Contact: Elder Itu R. Ezer.

Table with 4 columns: No., Name, Address, and Phone No. Lists various individuals and their contact information.

49/ Utting Aba, Iyo.

Table with 4 columns: No., Name, Address, and Phone No. Lists various individuals and their contact information.

Redjo-Jawa's River Basin Development Authority, Madagat Road, P.M.B. 3168, Borno - Kano.

Table with 4 columns: No., Name, Address, and Phone No. Lists various individuals and their contact information.

No. 3 Adjacent Central Police Station, Off FECH Road, Gwagwada, Abuja.

Table with 4 columns: No., Name, Address, and Phone No. Lists various individuals and their contact information.



Northwest states ICT develop

The emphasis given to the information and communication technology (ICT) sector by some state governments in the country has orchestrated such remarkable performance in the sector by the governments that some of them are already receiving awards for excellence from some international agencies. Hamisu Muhammad of the Business Desk recently traversed the north west and particularly assessed ICT development in Sokoto, Kano and Jigawa states

The process of disseminating information effectively and coherently via information and communication technology (ICT) has become a unique concept which has to be sustained by any society that needs to develop and compete globally on the scale of emerging imperatives. Information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for managing societal problems and improving communications in the basic sectors of health, education, administration, agriculture, business and commercial activities has come a long way in transforming the world into a global village.

According to a recent survey on ICT indicators, by 2006 almost half of the workforce in developed countries will be employed by industries that are either producers or intensive users of ICT products and services. In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa, the average teledensity is still a mere two lines per 100 inhabitant. Regrettably, only 0.6 percent of Internet users worldwide reside in the African continent.

Despite the growth of mobile telephones, which has outstripped that of fixed lines, Africa still lags behind in the transition to an Information Economy.

In Nigeria several initiatives have taken place aimed at meeting the global challenges that cut across every aspect of life. Apart from the federal government efforts at ensuring the

teaching of computer education in schools and universities, some state governments have ventured interestingly far into the ICT business to reap its immense benefits.

Unfortunately, the acronym, ICT, is still unpopular among students of institutions of higher learning in the North West states. For instance, numerous students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, undergoing various professional courses have been observed to be deeply ignorant of ICT and its benefits.

Some of them say they only see computers at cyber cafes, while those who claim little understanding of them say they only check their e-mails on weekly basis, or even once monthly due to the shortage of the facilities in the university and high cost of using the internet. "It is difficult to involve intensely in online research and e-Education" said Bello Musa Bodinga, a level 400 student in the faculty of agriculture of the University, adding that if such facilities were available in the university the learning environment would be improved.

Another student, Muhammed Faisal Mustapha, a level 300 student, department of microbiology, decried the difficulties faced in conducting research, especially in the area of medicine, engineering and sciences. He explained that it is not proper in this information age to reach level 300-400

without a deep knowledge of ICT.

"It is an era of online re-

search, adding that plans to provide and introduce computer studies in all secondary schools in the state were underway.

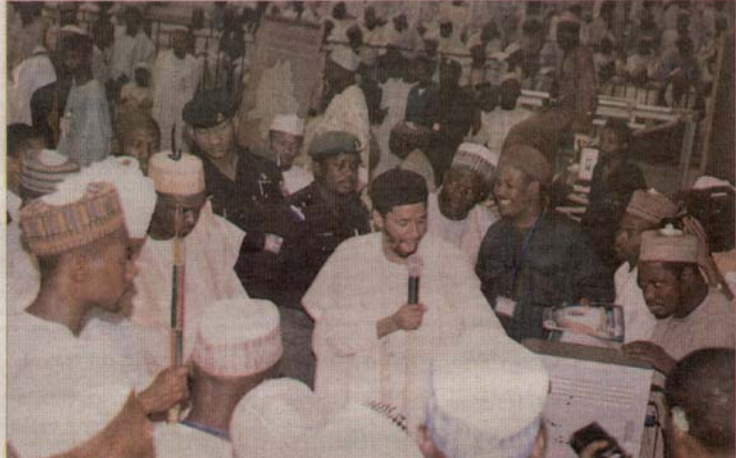
"Considering the importance of science and technology, the governor decided to upgrade the department of science and technical education

The programme, which held at the Murtala Muhammad Library complex, was witnessed by dignitaries from the academia and private IT companies.

According to the commissioner of information of the state, Alhaji Garba Yusuf, the programme aimed at sensitising

British Council, Microsoft, HP and Intel.

Speaking at the occasion, the special adviser to the governor on education and information technology, Dr. Bashir Galadanchi, said the theme of the programme, 'Kano can do IT' was carefully chosen in order to change the mindset of



Kano State Governor, Malam Ibrahim Shikarua (arrowed) and the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Dr. Ado Bayero inspecting materials displayed during the flagging off ceremony of empowerment programme of Quranic Teachers (Alurammas) with ICT facilities held at the Sani Abacha Indoor Hall, Kano recently.

search which is cost effective and widespread" said Mustapha. Sokoto State Commissioner of Science and Technical Education, Alhaji Saibhu Bakwai Sabon Birni, said ICT education under Governor Attahiru Bafarawa's administration has received a profound attention, saying that computers worth over N40 million were purchased and distributed to some selected secondary schools for the introduction of computer studies in

to a full fledged ministry in his second term" Sabon Birni announced.

On the networking of government ministries and agencies in ICT, the commissioner said efforts had been made to ensure good hardware access and facilities in the ministries for effective information dissemination in the state, adding that already some ministries had been linked with the government house main hub.

Kano state has generated the same tempo in ICT development. Shortly after the appointment of Dr. Bashir Galadanchi as a special adviser to the governor on education and information technology, a committee was set up to draft a report on the procedures of deploying ICT in the state. According to Galadanchi, the committee submitted its report late last year but the government has not yet decided on its implementation.

Between 6th - 11th December, 2004 Kano recorded another development in the sector, when the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), in collaboration with the NYSC volunteers in IT education, organised a Kano ICT Awareness Week, tagged: Kano can do IT.

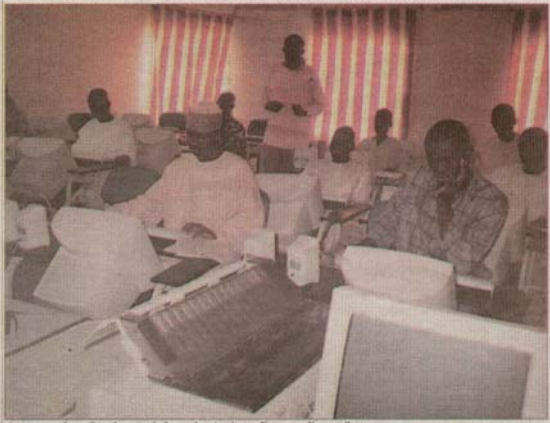
the community on the importance of ICT. He said the state government was determined to support such initiative in order to attract private sector participation in ICT for the development of the state.

He said during the week, there would be exhibitions by the local ICT companies and those based in the state, apart from several presentations by international organisations, global ICT companies such as

the people about IT.

He said an inter-secondary school IT quiz competitions and IT exhibition by secondary schools in the state was organised during the week.

The commissioner underscored the essence of ICT in modern societies. He stressed its importance in business development, job creation, income generation, farm produce processing and marketing, improved health, education and social welfare.



A cross-section of students at information institute, Kccware, Jigawa State



Dusse Hub, the largest broadband network in sub-Saharan Africa.

Development in focus

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He said his office would continue to initiate such a programme in order to sensitise the community better.

In Jigawa state, in the last four years ICT has remained the most improved sector. The governor, Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, was recently fondly called the ICT governor by the minister of science and technology, Professor Turner T. Ison during his visit to the state. Turaki has committed so much state resources to ensure full deployment of ICT facilities in both rural and urban communities in the state.

He has been criticised by his opponents for what they described as wasting the taxpayer's money in purchasing computers and internet facilities instead of paying more attention to some developmental projects. Turaki has remained unperturbed. He believes his critics have misunderstood the concept of ICT, even with the separation of ICT projects from those of socio-economic development.

On several occasions, Governor Turaki tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to defend his policy on ICT and emphasise its importance to human development.

In his speech at the e-Nigeria conference held early last year in Abuja, he said the importance of information and communication technology must be underscored in societal development, maintaining that its usefulness cut across all sectors of life.

Apart from improving socio-economic activities, the governor said ICT at the moment is the major source of revenue in many developing countries in the world, citing India,

Malaysia and Singapore as examples of the countries that have no natural resources such as crude oil but generate more revenue than Nigeria because of their high level of ICT development.

He said India, for instance, generated over \$12.5 billion in software export just within the first quarter of 2004 as Nigeria generate only \$10.5 billion annually in crude oil export.

Governor Turaki announced that as part of his plan for the state, at least over 100,000 youths will acquire ICT education before 2007 as rural communities are integrated into the global internet communities and provided with world class facilities for rural telephony. He said plans for the take off of the ICT university in the state is already at the concluding stage. The university, according to him, will provide all aspects of ICT education.

with the state capital, saying "also within the state we have 200-500 locations in our network." This, according to him, will ensure even development in the state.

"Primary and secondary schools, courts, clinics, and any structure falling within the radius of about 5-6 km from our local government headquarters have been connected with this hub," the managing director explained. He continued, "In addition, the telephony aspect of the project is also very vital, as we are currently running out 20,000 exchange lines in Dutse using PHS technology which is a very good option for rural telephony, a solution for rural telephony."

According to Kazaure, "however, it was realised that there is a lot of commercial potentials for the services we are rendering because the infrastructure are of high grade world class satellite and



Catching them young: Nursery pupils in computer class at Bafarawa Nursery/Primary school.

axxy ITT and embarked on the privatisation exercise of the company.

The managing director believed that the decision would boost the generation of revenue to finance the expansion of the network, adding, "right

cial services."

Extolling the long term benefits of the Jigawa ICT project, Kazaure said the present development in the state is nurturing the youth on a sound ICT education foundation for consequent expertise.

He also described the ICT capacity building in the state as "something to be proud of," claiming that 90 percent of the installation exercise of both the central and local network as well as 100 percent monitoring and maintenance at the moment are all done by the state indigene.

To keep proper and realistic ICT policies that will move together with the global changes the state governments need to embark on intensive research and development of IT and how it works. There must be an understanding of how it should be aligned to support the socio-economic

goals and objectives of the society on the basis of the fact that the aim of ICT is to reduce poverty and stimulate growth multilaterally.

Government also needs to understand that ICT is not just an instrument of solving immediate problems of administration and information dissemination. It is also a vital and strategic resource for planning, policy formulation, wealth creation and employment generation.

It is important to borrow a leaf from Asian countries which, within a very short period, started reaping the benefit of ICT by generating huge amounts of revenue from the sector although they started much later than the developed countries. It is time to realise that a lot needs to be done in providing conducive environment for the economy to shift from the resource-based to knowledge-based economy via ICT.

Government also needs to understand that ICT is not just an instrument of solving immediate problems of administration and information dissemination. It is also a vital and strategic resource for planning, policy formulation, wealth creation and employment generation.

internet connectivity."

He said to make the service more available and competitive within the country, the state government set up Gal-

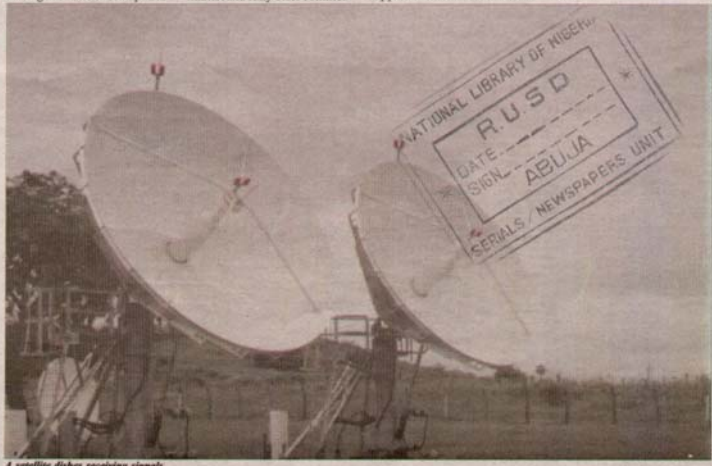
now we have deployed our services in Abuja and within the first quarters of this year we will enter the Nigeria IT market and fully offer commer-



At the Dutse Hub, the managing director of Galaxy Information Technology and Telecommunication company, Yusuf Kazaure, described the facilities installed at the Internet Hub as the best in sub-Saharan Africa, saying that it has the capacity to give the entire West African sub-region wireless internet access via satellite.

Kazaure said the Jigawa state broadband internet access project was conceived by the state government to assist its ICT projects in the various locations within the state, adding, "government administration has been decentralised. As a result of the communication problems and Nitel's deplorable telecommunications infrastructure in most parts of the state, the deployment of such broadband access has made government administration well-organised."

He said all the local government headquarters and government ministries located at various sites are in network



A satellite dishes receiving signals.

Table listing various companies and their details, including names like OGCN, LAGOS, and various engineering firms.

Sokoto River Basin & Rural Development Authority, Doma Kaito House, Km 14, Gusa Road, P.M.A. 222, Sokoto. Contact: Akaji Usman Adams, Managing Director/CEO, Tel: 846 21174; 846 211742

Main table listing various companies and their details, organized by state (ZAMFARA, KATSINA, SOKOTO, etc.) and listing company names and addresses.



THE HOME FRONT

FRAGMENTS

By Safiya I. Dantiye, Woman Editor
safiyadantiye@yahoo.com

Still on MTN's 'Na boy' advert

As long as babies are born, the issue of preferring boys to girls will continue to be a bone of contention to women. Therefore it is not an issue that will pass with time. This one is like the blood that flows in our veins, in other words it is like a heart beat. One can even say it is a 'drama' of reproduction.

Anyway, MTN seemed to have stirred the hornet's nest by wittingly or unwittingly saying 'Na boy' when a man whose wife had given birth called his mother in the village and informed her. As custom demanded, the mother told other people and there were celebrations.

Women groups saw the advert as an affront and discriminatory against girls which is rooted in African tradition, and which will be hard to uproot, I dare say.

But if MTN had portrayed where a man learnt of having a baby girl and accepted the news solemnly, then that would indeed have been discriminatory. And if it were so, wouldn't they have depicted what happens in most of our society? By the way, isn't it natural to tell the sex of a new born baby, or ask if you are told?

Even though women nowadays can do as well as men, and even better, as the feminists' jargon insists, men still prefer to have boys. In some families the girls do better and take care of their parents while the boys either go astray or are not as well to do as the girls to take the responsibility.

To be frank, even religion puts a man above a woman, though God says we are equal before him, and the superior among us is he who fears and worships Him most, but Islamically a man always comes first. This has made me to recall when I went on Hajj in 1991 when we were about to board a bus in Jeddah to Makka, one woman said "ladies first," and another woman said "this is an Islamic country, men are always first."

In any case, women are always put in their place with the tale of creation where Nana Hauwa'u (Eve) was created from a rib of Prophet Adam, insinuating that a woman can never be equal to a man.

In Islam, a female gets half of a male's share of inheritance which is quite favourable, judging that in some cultures and religions women are not recognized enough to

I always wonder if women give birth to boys only, who is going to give birth to more boys later, since there will only be men in the world? Yet men will like to marry and where are the women going to come from, since nobody wants to give birth to them?

be given inheritance, in fact they are part of the inheritance.

Moreover, men are looked upon as leaders and no matter how young a boy is in a house full of women they look up to him as their leader and he "naturally" assumes the leadership. Thereafter because of the above and the common argument that a boy carries the family name, while a girl marries and goes into another family and many other reasons some women too prefer to have baby boys to baby girls. They want to please their husbands and where there are co-wives it is a fierce competition to have more boys, in the event of the husband's death where the wife with more boys will carry the lion's share of the inheritance, in a manner of speaking.

Some men are ready to say that they don't have preference between a boy and a girl, but the common thing is that boys are preferred to girls.

Though we are not in the *Jahiliyya* period where baby girls were buried, some will still have them buried in this twenty first century, judging by their reaction to having them, including women.

I always wonder if women give birth to boys only, who is going to give birth to more boys later, since there will only be men in the world? Yet men will like to marry and where are the women going to come from, since nobody wants to give birth to them? This is what is happening now in some Asian countries, especially in China where a couple should have only one child, and if it is confirmed to be a girl through scanning, the pregnancy is aborted. So one day there will be less women in proportion to the marriageable men.

MTN has provoked an old age debate of preferring boys to girls, and definitely they are not the only culprits as many fathers, brothers and husbands are as guilty.

But perhaps the women groups felt slighted because the MTN 'promotes' the reality.

As I said earlier if MTN had an advert where the news of a baby girl is received sadly, and that of a baby boy is received happily, then that is really discriminatory, even though that too may only be natural with some people.

Women have so many woes to contend with without the one of knowing that we are not wanted as children, but ironically as wives and mothers.

The director, World Bank country office, Abuja, Dr. Hafez Ghanem has said that Gender issue would negatively affect the economic development if not mainstreamed into national development in the country.

Dr. Hafez Ghanem made the statement at the national stakeholders' workshop on the review of the Nigeria strategic country gender assessment report, at National centre for women development, Abuja within the week.

He said "Gender is now seen as a major cross-cutting issue in development"

"Therefore, engendering development through gender equality in opportunities, resources, rights and voice should be the key focus of every nation if it is to achieve reasonable economic development and reduce poverty," he added.

According to him, empirical evidence has shown that gender discrimination remains pervasive in many dimension of life world wide, and there is no region of the developing

Mrs. Saraki calls for World Bank Assistance

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

Life of the Kwara state Governor, Barrister Toyin Saraki yesterday urged the World Bank to assist motherless babies' homes by providing infrastructures for such institutions.

Speaking during a visit to the Motherless Babies' Home, Ilorin, Barrister Toyin Saraki who was accompanied on the visit by wife of the World Bank country director in Nigeria, Mrs. Ghanem, said the World Bank could complement the efforts of government and private initiatives by providing infrastructures to improve the quality of life of the motherless babies.

She expressed satisfaction with the reduction in the rate of child abandonment due to the advocacy campaign by her pet project, wellbeing foundation.

During her last visit to the motherless babies home Ilorin, twenty three abandoned babies were recorded, but has now dropped to eight following the advocacy campaign of wellbeing foundation.

Permanent secretary of the ministry of social welfare, Alhaji Dabarako Mohammed thanked the governor's wife explaining that her assistance to the Home had gone a long way to improve the wellbeing of the abandoned babies.

They also visited Al-Muwahideen centre for Arabic and Islamic studies where she promised to assist in providing sports field for the over 70 pupils and later paid similar visits to the school for the handicapped and the children specialist hospital, as well as the pottery industry all in Ilorin.

Gender issue, key to economic development - Director World Bank

By Abubakar Haruna, Reporter (Women Affairs)

world where women are equal to men in legal, social, economic rights.

He further maintained that the world Bank was indeed proved to be part of any laudable initiative of engendering development in the country.

He recommended the establishment of a national inter agency committee to coordinate and evacuate the gender issues of government and other national agencies

and the donor community to ensure efficient use of both human and material resources.

Earlier, the minister of women affairs, Obong Rita Akpan said that the World Bank and Ugited National Agencies had been highly supportive of the local gender initiative in the country.

Rita added that the sum of N200 million capital outlay had been set up for Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFEE) scheme in collaboration with Nigerian

Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NAC-RDB).

"The fund is self-managing by the women with appropriate levels of intervention by specialists and stakeholders and we aim to build the fund up to N1 billion and more" she opined.

According to her, the scheme must not be stereotyped "business as usual" whereby loan will be taken with minimum accountability resulting in rapid depletion of funds.



Dr. Lucy Idoko, Assistant Representative UNFPA, Nigeria, during Media briefing/dinner on Fistula held in Abuja on Tuesday. Pic: Kennedy Egonjode

Two million women suffer from fistula - UNFPA

Obstetric fistula, a debilitating pregnancy-related condition caused by prolonged obstructed labour, leaves women constantly leaking urine and/or faeces.

According to the first report ever, to map obstetric fistula in sub-Saharan Africa by (United Nations population fund) in Nigeria alone, there could be as many as one million women living with fistula.

The report added that "every minute, a woman dies from pregnancy-related complications. For every woman who dies, 15 to 30 live but suffer from chronic disabilities, the worst of which is obstetric fistula."

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA executive director said she hoped this report would sound a global alarm about fistula, concluding, "Most women living with fistula today suffer in silence, unaware that a simple cure is available. These women deserve our immediate attention. That is why UNFPA has launched a global campaign

to prevent and treat fistula."

Therefore in line with the global campaign, UNFPA raised funds globally to embark on surgery to repair patients. For this purpose in Nigeria four hospitals located in Kano, Katsina, Kebbi and Sokoto states have been selected. This was disclosed in a media briefing/dinner by Dr. Lucky Idoko, assistant representative, UNFPA, Nigeria in Abuja within the week.

Doctors in Nigeria would volunteer to do the surgery repair in February, stated Dr. Idoko, adding that four doctors from outside the country would come to learn and in turn help other people in sub-Saharan African.

Fistula was preventable by making sure every woman has access to emergency obstetric care, emphasized Dr. Idoko.

Also speaking at the occasion, Mr. Shehu Abu, the editor-in-chief of News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), commended the briefing as

educative, because, according to him people held the belief the fistula was some kind of untreatable venereal disease. But he was happy to learn that it was preventable and treatable.

Speaking earlier, the representative UNFPA Nigeria Mr. Niangoron Essen observed that the more women were educated, the more they improve the quality of the family.

Mr. Essen also noted that UNFPA had moved from the concept of population control to population as quality of life. And that they had programmes of education and economic development to improve the quality of life to the people concerned.

Gender equality and equity was also a priority to UNFPA, maintained Mr. Essen, adding that the more you put girls in school the more they participate in development. "men are less geared up to provide the back up educational needs to their children," he said.

The family is the center of the community, according to Dr. Niangoron Essen hence, UNFPA focused on the family and tried to bring men on board.

ABUJA TRUST

Bassan Jiwa market expanded for business—Aguma II

The market at Bassan Jiwa airport village Abuja has been expanded to accommodate recent trends in the buying and selling of agricultural produce.

The chief of Bassan Jiwa, Mallam Haladu Aguma II disclosed this to Abuja Trust, pointing out that the market was opened two years ago and at the moment more shops and sheds are being constructed.

He urged Bassan Jiwa dwellers to utilize this opportunity to develop the market for business growth, adding that the market day is Wednesday of every week.

The people of Bassa Jiwa were however, encouraged to engage in trading activities in order to achieve economic development, he said.

He stressed that nobody from anywhere will come and develop the market this is the task of the dwellers, and they should consider this as a golden opportunity.

He said that more plots of land have been increased so that the market will be expanded to attain greater heights.

He called on the neighbouring satellite towns such as Kutara, Taka Lafiya, Mangoro, Sauka and Gosa to join in developing the Bassan Jiwa market.

The doors are opened for

Court remands driver for causing death

A tanker driver of Pama village, Kaduna state, One Olusheyi Olubi has been remanded by a chief magistrate sitting in Jabi for causing death of one Engineer Ocheba Gabriel Ogada of Lugbe Housing Estate Abuja while driving dangerously along Jabi - Lugbe Airport road, Abuja.

The prosecution told the court that the accused person is charged with causing death by dangerous driving punishable under section 27 part 7 cap 348 law of the federation in 1990.

The prosecution revealed that the accused who is the driver in charge of vehicle, Island Tanker with registration number XA 816 TRK drove the said vehicle in a dangerous manner to other road users on January 15, 2005 at about 8:00pm and caused death of the said deceased at a public highway.

The accused person, having listened to the offences said to have been committed, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Counsel for the defence, Lawrous Adewosho, having cited law and authority, prayed the court to grant the accused bail.

The prosecution, who op-

By Hassan Idris, Senior Reporter (Agriculture)

multi-purpose trading among farmers, traders, as well as the working class at Bassan Jiwa whom he called upon to patronize the market.

He however, requested the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) to help in developing the Bassan Jiwa market, adding that would increase the revenue to the council.

He pointed out that Bassan Jiwa has potentials for tourism development, adding that travelers, tourists can find the village very attractive for visiting.

Because of its proximity to the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (NAIA), he assured AMAC of more business and tourism opportunities that will be explored, he said.



FCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, with the director public building in the MFCT, Engr. Kabir Maina, inspecting the Games Village...recently.

NURTW president calls for better security in parks

The president of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Alhaji Gidado Hamman, has advocated for the setting up of police post

By Benjamin Auta, Crime Reporter

in all motor parks in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

He made this call in an exclusive interview with Abuja Trust yesterday in his office in Abuja.

Alhaji Hamman said that the setting of police post in parks will help in curbing crimes which will enhance their status in the country.

He said the police have improved in its relationship recently with the union while calling on the acting Inspector General (IGP) to extend the same support to the union as his predecessor had done.

He decried the few numbers of parks in Abuja "when you talk of motor parks in Abuja we only have one fitting park in Abuja, only Zuba park, if you go to Jabi it is not even habitable."

He expressed happiness on the visit of the minister of the FCT, Malam Nasir el-Rufai to Jabi Park who promised to do something about the condition of the park by providing facilities.

On multiple taxation of

drivers in Abuja the president said that the federal government and other security agencies have been helping the union in that regard, he said that fine for those collecting illegal fine from motorists is N50,000 if prosecuted.

He praised state(s) government that gave soft loan(s) to numbers of the union saying it will go along way in providing employment.

Three docked for illegal NEPA connection

Three youths, Oia Oloyede (25 years), Lukman Pada (23 years) and Segun Oyekan (17 years) are in the police net for making illegal NEPA re-connection at Gwarinpa village, Abuja.

By Godwin Iyomongo, Reporter (Abuja Trust)

They were out for their routine night patrol ran into the trio while they were using a bamboo ladder to re-connect light.

On making the arrest, the police saw the Gwarinpa service centre manager, took the young men to the life camp police station where preliminary investigation was done.

But the culprits have alleged that one woman in Badagry section, road 22, C close was the one who contracted them for the deal and she promised to pay them N1,000, if they reconnected her.

A top official in the public affairs unit of NEPA district, told Abuja Trust yesterday that the case was at the moment being transferred to the FCT police command.

Umar Lawal expressed dismay over the incessant illegal connection which according to him, is militating against "our cash collection."

He said, the practice causes a lot of problem to their (NEPA) network.

"Somebody owing NEPA

N50,000 or N10,000, will engage the illegal electricians to reconnect them and refuse paying NEPA bills," Umar said.

He appealed to customers to always come forward and lodge their complains or fault officially for attention.

Umar opined that with Abuja growing in population because of the search for greener pasture, people have resorted to all manner of ways to keep life going.

He however, commended the police for apprehending the bad eggs and urged them to extend their tentacles to other areas in the city.

Tricksters docked over fake dollars

One Femi Ayodele and Wale Opeyemi, all of Lento Village, Abuja, have been arraigned before a chief magistrate sitting in Jabi, for cheating one Miss Fatima Adams the sum of N12,000 under the pretext to print America dollars.

The prosecution told the court that the two accused persons are charged with criminal conspiracy, being in possession of dollars suspected to be fake and cheating contrary to sections 97, 439 and 325 of the penal code law.

The prosecution said the accused induced the complainant and collected the

sum of N12,000 from her under the pretext to print America dollars for her.

According to the prosecution, one Echolae box that contains about 47 fake bundles of dollars totaling the sum of N50million was found in the accused's possession and they could not give satisfactory account of it.

The prosecution who told the court that the two accused persons were remanded in the prison on March 16, 2004 by the same court because the denied the allegations charged against them by the police said the case was transferred to chief magistrate's court to mention afresh.

The defence counsel,

Saltman Dayibu who prayed the court to grant the accused bail in line with section 36 subsection 5 of 1999 constitution and section 341 of the criminal procedure code act said the prosecution is wasting the time of the court as he could not try the accused persons since last year.

He urged the court to consider the period of time the two accused spent in the prison without trial by the police, praying that the court should grant them bail in a liberal terms.

The presiding chief magistrate, Othman Musa admitted the accused persons to bail at the sum of N100,000 each with one surety each. The case was adjourned to April 5, 2005 for hearing.



Mal. Nasir el-Rufai



CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION

(Established under the Companies and allied matters Act 1, 1990)

PRESENTS

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON COMPANY ADMINISTRATION AND PRACTICE IN NIGERIA

Date: 10th - 11th February, 2005
Venue: Sheraton Hotel and Towers Ikeja, Lagos
Time: 10am daily

Theme:

Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990 - Requirements of Compliance:
 Issues and Challenges

OBJECTIVE:

"To provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss Issues and Challenges of Compliance under the Companies and Allied Matters Act towards achieving a credible Corporate Environment for Economic Growth"

PARTICIPANTS:

Chief Executives of Corporate bodies, Directors of Companies, Trustees and Entrepreneurs, Bankers and Finance Executives, Legal Practitioners, Company Secretaries/Heads of Legal Services, Chartered Accountants, Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, the Organized Private Sector and Non-Governmental Organizations, Legal Advisers of Federal and State Ministries and Parastatals, Academia, Representatives of Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations

SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR:

His Excellency
Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu
 Executive Governor, Lagos State

GUEST OF HONOUR:

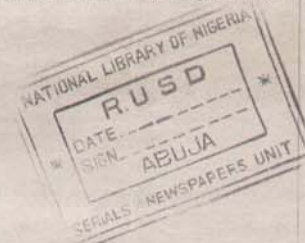
Chief Akinlolu Olujimi, (SAN)
 Honourable Attorney-General of the
 Federation and Minister of Justice to deliver Key Note Address

CHIEF HOST:

Ambassador A. D. Idris Waziri
 Honourable Minister of Commerce

HOST:

Mr. Ahmed Almustapha
 Registrar-General, CAC



DAY TWO

Friday 11th February, 2004

DAY ONE

Topic- Compliance under the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA): Challenges to Directors, Company Secretaries, Trustees and Shareholders

Speaker- **Professor Enioflok Essien**
 Dean, Faculty of Law
 University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

Lead Discussant- **Professor Yemi Osibajo**
 Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice,
 Lagos State

-2nd Session

Topic- Unregistered Business(es): Implications and Consequences on the Economy

Speaker- **Mr. Ade Ipaye**
 Special Assistant to the Attorney-General's Office
 Lagos State Ministry of Justice and Senior Lecturer,
 Faculty of Law, University of Lagos

Lead Discussant- **Mr. Femi Boyede**
 Chief Executive Officer Koinonia Ventures Ltd

Topic- On-line Registration and Ancillary Services: Legal Implications and Applications

Speakers- **Professor Epiphany Azinge**
 Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal
 Studies Abuja

Dr. Idoni Matthews
 Chief Executive Officer
 Decision Technology International Inc.

Lead Discussants -

Dr. F. C. Nwoke
 Faculty of Law
 University of Jos, Plateau State

Dr. Muhtar Albassan
 Deputy Director
 Information Management Services, CAC

2nd Session

Topic- Conflict in Names, Prohibited and Restricted Names: Problems and Solutions

Speaker ≤ **Professor Taiwo Osipitan, SAN**
 University of Lagos

Lead Discussant ≤ **Mr. Earnest Ojukwu, Esq.**
 Deputy Director-General and Head of
 Campus Nigerian Law School
 Enugu Campus

CONFERENCE FEE: N10, 000 per participant.

RSVP

Bello Mahmud,
 Director, Compliance
 Chairman Organising Committee
 Tel: 09-5241020

Churchill Williams
 Head, Public Relations
 Tel: 08033223410
 DL: 09-5241029

KANO TRUST

Water Scarcity in Kano Can Shekarau solve the problem?

Kano state, with over 15 dams spread across its vast land mass, has no reason to complain of inadequate water for consumption, domestic and agricultural use. But ironically, Kano state, especially its sprawling metropolis, is the worst hit city in the country when it comes to provision of potable drinking water. Presently less than 20 wards of the 66 wards in the six metropolitan local governments of Kumbotso, Tarauni, Fagge Gwale, Nasarawa, and Municipal has access to potable drinking water and the situation is deteriorating by the day.

Several administrations in the past have made various

By Musa Umar Kazaure,
Bureau Chief (Kano)

for bringing them water as soon as he assumed office. But the jubilation was short-lived as within six months of his administration, the taps began to go dry and even those that were having water before the improvement also joined the no-water queue.

Mallam Idris Kalamu, a resident of Sheka Gidan Gabas said, "We really celebrated the improvement of water supply immediately Malam Shekarau took over because for over five years water has not been getting into our houses except the

Kano metropolis"

Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau went on to announce that 624 million Naira has been budgeted for water supply in the state with 400 million Naira set aside for procurement of water treatment chemicals while 110 million was earmarked for the expansion and improvement of water treatment plants at Chaltawa, Tamburawa and Kusalla.

Supporters of Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso led by his former Commissioner of Finance, D. Hafiz Abubakar insist that the initial improvement in water supply to Kano metropolis was the handiwork of the Kwankwaso administration because, according to him, "We have already finished the additional 30 boreholes at Tamburawa for the improvement of water supply by the time we left office. How did Malam Shekarau improve water supply in just one month of his assumption of office. Is it magic he used because improving water supply is not a one-day, one month or one year job as he (Shekarau) attested to in his budget speech this year? If we had remained in power, the water problem in Kano would have been solved by now," the former Finance Commissioner insisted.

The public outcry over deterioration of water supply in the metropolis despite the claim of success narrated by the Governor before the House led to the reported Governor's tongue-lashing of the Ministry responsible for water supply during the Commissioner's retreat in Gusau, Zamfara State. According to Government House Sources, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau was not happy that despite the million earmarked by his administration for water supply in the state, the initial success could not be sustained, calling on the commissioners to tighten their belt to face the challenges ahead.

All efforts to get Mallam Shekarau's comment on what actually happened to the initial successes in improving water supply to residents of Kano metropolis failed as his Aides continue to shield him away from the journalists in Kano.

But in his 2005 budget presentation recently, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau announced what might seem to be a determine onslaught against the water problem in Kano metropolis. He said that the state government is spending 4.3 billion Naira to establish a brand new water treatment plant in Tamburawa and the rehabilitation of the various water supply facilities in the state.

The Governor added, "From this amount, the sum of 2 billion Naira is earmarked for the take off of the pro-

posed (100-150 million litres per day) new water treatment plant at Tamburawa, while another sum of N950 million is

a Press Briefing said it was inadequate for the amount of water needed to satisfy the entire Kano metropolitan re-

the high demand for water by surviving industries especially tanning, textiles and allied industries have combined



The huge pipes imported by Former Kano Governor, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso wasting away by the road side in Kano.



Water sedimentation at Chaltawa Water Works; to be improved by Shekarau govt.



Drilling for water at Tamburawa.

efforts to meet the yearning of Kano residents regarding potable drinking water with little success. The last administration of Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, a water Engineer by profession, met with little but short-lived success as his major pet project of installing the 1000km water supplying pipes failed to materialize, leaving the over two billion Naira imported pipes wasting along the major streets of Kano.

However, Kwankwaso's effort with the sinking of 30 additional boreholes at Tamburawa succeeded in improving water supply to Kano metropolis in the dying minutes of his administration and in order to put that effort on record he invited some selected journalists on the eve of his leaving office to see what he has put on ground for improvement of water supply to Kano metropolis. That effort paid off as many areas that hitherto lack pipe-borne water began enjoying it.

But alas! It was Governor Ibrahim Shekarau that took the credit as residents of Kano began singing praises of the new Shariah Governor

public tap on the road side. But things changed when Malam Shekarau came in, water flowed into our houses, and even the Water Board people were coming to ask for water bill. But today, even the taps on the roadside gets water occasionally. It is unfortunate the success could not be sustained by Malam Shekarau."

In his 2004 budget presentation at the State House of Assembly, however, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau claimed credit for the initial improvements in water supply when he assumed office on 29th May 2003. He stated that his government had embarked on rehabilitation of major water treatment plants and funded the completion of all ongoing water expansion projects embarked upon by previous administration at a cost of 107 million Naira. He added, "Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, you will agree with me that our efforts in this critical sector has already started to yield dividends as attested to by the restoration/improvement of water supply to over 40 wards and communities in

proposed to be spent on the reinforcement of trunk and reticulation and new distribution facilities. Similarly, in an effort to sustain and improve full capacity operation at existing water treatment plants, the sum of N200 million Naira is being proposed for third Chaltawa Water Works, while another sum of N284 million Naira is earmarked for procurement of water treatment chemicals.

Although the Governor was candid enough to tell the House that such a gigantic project cannot be completed within a short period which also means the budget did not include water treatment chemicals for the new water treatment plant, careful analysis by Kano Trust shows a reduction of allocation to a critical area in production and provision of water supply at the water treatment plants.

In 2004 budget, N400 million was allocated for chemicals for water treatment alone which the State Commissioner for Water Resources at

quirements. But in 2005 Budget submitted recently, instead of seeing an increase on that amount the Governor announced that N284 million is earmarked for procurement of Chemicals for Water Treatment. If Chemicals worth N400 million was not enough to provide the required water for Kano residents in 2004, how then will N284 million (a shortfall of N116 million) be able to meet the increasing demand for water in Kano metropolis? This is also the question we had wanted the Governor to shed more light on but all efforts through his Director Press Affairs failed. The Commissioner of Information Alhaji Garba Yusuf who is now delegated to speak on behalf of all the ministries to the press was also said to be away to Mecca.

Although the problems of providing potable drinking water to Kano metropolitan residents has been a teething one since the Rimi administration, the continuing expansion of Kano metropolis and

to make the problem worse.

But the latest efforts by Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau's administration to tackle the perennial water shortages in Kano, is seen by many water resources expert as a giant stride at achieving a substantial improvements in the delivery of potable drinking water to Kano residents.

But as Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau rightly said during his 2005 budget presentation before the House, "As we prepare to launch our propose new water treatment plant and other rehabilitation initiatives, I must use this opportunity to warned that constructing a new water treatment plant takes time and would not be completed within the year. I therefore wish to solicit for your understanding, support, and prayers throughout the period of this major undertaking." Prayers indeed are what the residents of Kano must embark upon to get tap water running into their homes hopefully by 2007.

EKO TRUST

January/March, disaster months for Lagosians

January to March of every year in the last three years has been a disaster for the residents of Lagos State, especially to the state government. It started in the year 2002 January 27, when over 800 people perished in a canal at Oke-Afa following the bomb explosion that ravaged the Ikeja cantonment, military barracks. While the state was remembering those who lost their lives during the bomb explosion in 2003, there was another fire disaster in Ikorodu area of the state where over 50 persons lost their lives.

Between January and March 2004 there was another baptism of fire in the state at federal secretariat Ikoyi barely five days after the incident, another fire gutted the Oko-Baba community in Ebutte-Metta area of the state rendering over 60,000 people homeless.

The eve of Eid-el-Kabir celebration last week turned out to be a black Wednesday in the state. More than 40 persons died in a multiple motor accident under the popular Maryland Bridge. Few months ago at the same point, a replica of this type of accident occurred claiming several lives. Barely a month before the last incident there was another accident on the same spot just that there was no live lost except for a man that was trapped for several hours under the wreckage of his own car. His survival was described as a miracle.

Such miracle however occurred last Wednesday when a baby girl of less than two years was carried out of the burning wreckage of colliding vehicles unscratched. The courageous mother, though burnt, was among six other survivors who miraculously escape from the ghastly accident.

The accident to many thought was an explosion, occurred under the fly-over. It involved five vehicles, including a tanker, a fully loaded 911 popularly called Molue bus, a Danfo commercial bus in yellow Lagos colour, a Peugeot J5 bus heading towards Kwara state and a car.

Apart from the tanker, which was said to have loaded diesel from Apapa, and heading towards the north was not badly affected, but the rest vehicles were burnt beyond recognition.

According to eyewitness, the molue bus was coming from Idumota heading towards Mile 12 area of the metropolis fully loaded with passengers coming back from shopping in preparation for the Sallah festivities, had a break failure and an on-going overspending Danfo 14-seater bus rammed into it,

causing an explosion while the J5 bus coming behind rammed into the danfo and molue, causing further explosion.

As the fire was raging, a tanker that was approaching was the inferno and swerved to avoid it and so hit the culvert, the fifth car, which also tried to avoid it, ran under the tanker and exploded. All the passengers in the Peugeot J5 bus, Danfo and the car were burnt beyond recognition. Likewise 20 other persons in the molue bus.

The rest of the passengers were seriously injured and were rushed to nearby public hospital. Besides the roasted bodies, wads of naira notes, rice, onion, tin tomatoes, turkey and chickens believed to have been the property of some of the victims traveling for Sallah were equally destroyed in the fire. Many people who spoke with our correspondent at the scene of the fire disaster said when they heard the bang, they thought it was another bomb blast, "it was so intense that we thought it was a bomb explosion, before we later found out that it was an accident. We then rushed to the place to see what was happening."

"People inside the molue were shouting for help, but help could not come, most of them died struggling to come out but they were trapped. Skulls were exploding as it was in the day of the Ikeja cantonment bomb blast, they could not be rescued because nobody was ready to go inside the fire to rescue them," they lamented.

According to our sources, it was when the fire was raging that sympathizers called in men of the Lagos State fire service, State Traffic Management Authority, LASTMA, Federal Road Safety Corps and officers of the Lagos State Ambulance Service and the police for rescue operations. On their arrival except members of the state fire service who arrived late at the scene and sympathizers were not pleased with their

action.

Nothing could be done even with the arrival of all other agencies until men of the fire service came. As the fire fighters made efforts to put off the fire, the ambulance services were moving those

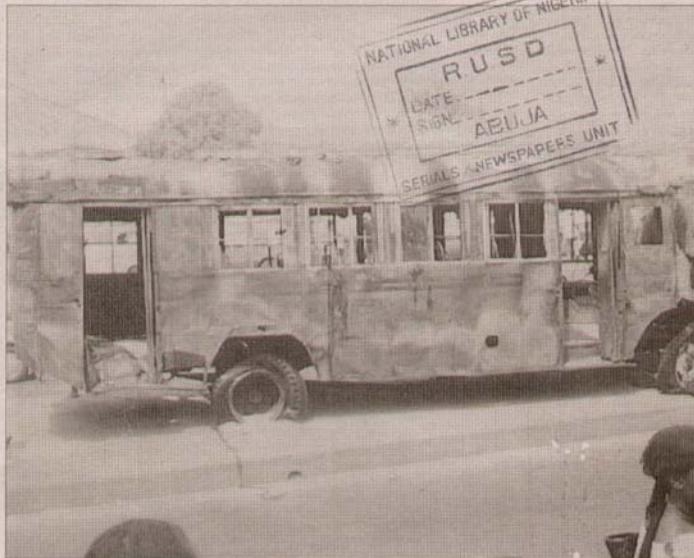
nature of the fly-over and advised the government to install highway lamps to help improve visibility at the tunnel.

They recalled that about five months ago a similar incident occurred on that

impatience to the cause of most road accident as most drivers are usually in a hurry and the struggle for the right of way by drivers usually leads to chaos.

Meanwhile in a bid to forestall incessant loss of lives

indiscriminate parking of trucks especially on the bridges because of the threat the dead weight constitute to the life span of the bridges, the traffic snarl resulting from the reduction of the carriage ability of the roads and the



The carcass of one of the vehicles involved in a multiple accident that sent over 30 people into an early grave at Maryland... recently.

Pic: Chidagwa/Oluwase

seriously burnt to the mortuary, while the injured were taken to hospital for treatment. Members of the LASTMA, FRSC and the police were on ground to control the heavy traffic build up and ease vehicular movement. It was a horrible and pathetic sight.

Speaking with our correspondent at the scene, the unit commander FRSC, Mr. Jack Vincent, attributed the incident to excessive speeding and carelessness on the part of road users. He advised that motorists should obey traffic codes, as it will help avert unnecessary deaths on our roads.

Meanwhile some people at the scene blamed the dark

same spot resulting in several deaths.

They infact said the place should be clean of a danger zone for now and bill board advertising driver to slow down under the tunnel should be erected to forestall further occurrence.

In an interview with the zonal commander of the FRSC, Mr. Paul Onche, said such accidents are due to indiscipline among drivers. According to him, most drivers do not deem it fit to plan ahead before putting their vehicles on the road, adding that the condition of most vehicles are not checked especially tankers on a long distance.

He also attributed

on Lagos roads, the Lagos State Government has given a two week ultimatum to National Association of Road Transport Owners that all tankers plying Lagos road must be made roadworthy or the tankers will be impounded. Similarly, the state government has threatened to impound tankers being parked indiscriminately in Lagos especially on the bridges roads and lay by arguing that the acts has resulted in reduction of the carriage ability of the roads.

Speaking with news men yesterday at the press centre, Alausa, Secretariat, the state commissioner for transportation, Mr. Muiz Banire, also warned Luxury bus owners to relocate to Ojota loading bay which has approximately 35,000 square metres enough to accommodate 500 buses at a time or risk government's action.

Banire who attributed recent fatal accidents on Lagos roads to indiscriminate parking of trucks and sundry offences, said government could no longer tolerate carnage on Lagos roads.

"You all are living witness to the fact that this administration had been in the fore front of the vanguard of the campaign against the

incessant loss of lives occasioned by vehicles running into the stationary truck, parked on the roads.

"Equally the rate at which unroad worthy trucks impede the free flow of traffic as a result of incessant breakdown and more importantly their frequent involvement in road carnage is not acceptable to the government," he warned.

The commissioner noted that in the last quarter alone, no less than 35 accidents in involving trucks and tankers were recorded with some of them claim g lives adding that: "no one would forget in a hurry the September 22, 2004 accident which occurred in from on Channels Television when a truck crushed six other vehicles."

Banire therefore urged owners of trucks, trailers and tankers operating in the state to refurbish them within the next two weeks or keep them off the roads as law enforcement agents have been directed to impound such vehicles.

The commissioner said Luxury bus owners should henceforth ensure that passengers do not board or disembark from vehicles on the road, warning that they can only use their current offices as booking offices "but boarding must take place in the new park."

Inside Politics

Jigawa lawmaker assists constituents

As part of his ongoing efforts to improve the living condition of his constituents, Alhaji Sule Inuwa Udi, the chairman committee on basic education of the Jigawa state house of assembly has donated houses, building materials, foodstuff and scholarships to various members of his constituency.

Pro IBB group joins PDP

Members of Vision 2007, a group supporting the presidential aspiration of former military leader, General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd), have said that despite the group's readiness to harmonise with other pro-IBB groups, they have unanimously decided to move embloc to the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Executive National chairman of IBB Vision 2007, Alhaji Hamed Adekunle Makama, who addressed a press conference in Abuja on Wednesday, said that while its the million members are to pitch their tent with the PDP, the autonomy of the IBB Vision 2007 remained sacrosanct.

The IBB Vision 2007 chairman disclosed that the National working committee and Board of Trustees of the group recently met and took the above decision, stressing that as far as Vision 2007 is concerned there is no alternative than General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida.

He said that IBB Vision 2007 would continue to maintain its identity and autonomy as a campaign and mobilization outfit expected to outlive the year 2007 whether IBB clinches the seat or not.

Alhaji Makama said Vision 2007 was a political group campaigning for support for IBB and has formidable presence established at every ward, local and state governments in all the six geo political zones of the country.

Also speaking, National campaign marshal of the Vision 2007, Alhaji Yusuf Alhassan Gumel said that members of the group had resolved to continue with their lawful activities under the constitution of Vision 2007.

Alhaji Gumel advised members of the group to endeavour to join the PDP en-mass reminding them that IBB is a card carrying member of the PDP.

From Hassan A. Karofi,
Correspondent (Dutse)

achievement at a press conference in Dutse, revealed that in the last one and a half years of his membership of the Assembly he had build a house for one Ubale Ringim who has been bedridden for over 30 years with cancer, provided one Inuwa Bola with N130,000 to renovate his house which collapsed after a heavy rainfall and repaired 50 hand pumps in Tsabare, Badage, Hidawa and Nassarawa villages and the Sankara water works and the Yan Dutse transformer.

On health, the legislator said he had assisted 20 people to undergo operations, repaired the Ringim general hospital overhead tank and undertook the

monthly payment of diesel for the use of the hospital.

Alhaji Udi also announced that about 1000 bags of cement was distributed to the communities of Karshi, Facawa, Digawar Hausa and several others during the flooding period in the area.

The lawmaker further revealed that he had sponsored students and purchased JAMB, NECO and WAEC forms for students of his constituency apart from the donation of mattress to the unity secondary school and other primary schools in Ringim.

Honourable Sule Udi assured that he would continue to do his best to assist his people through the provision of amenities so as to improve their living condition.

FCT area council election Appeal Tribunal has upheld the election of Alhaji Usman Wowo (ANPP), as the chairman Kuje area council.

The appellant and the PDP candidate in the March 27 local council polls, Mr Samuel Etsu Lanto, had appealed against the decision of the lower tribunal which declared Wowo duly elected.

Delivering the judgement, chairman of the Appeal Tribunal, Justice Salisu Garba, said there were no supporting evidence to prove the appellant's arguments.

Garb added that the tribunal had found that the appeal lacked substance.

Counsel to Lanto, Chief Karina Tunnyan, had earlier argued that there was wrong evaluation of evidence by the lower court, adding that it erred to arrive that the

Appeal Tribunal upholds chairman's election

irregularities recorded in the election were not substantial to nullify the election.

In his submission, Mr Sam Ologunorisa, Counsel to Wowo, supported the decision of the lower tribunal, arguing that it was not for the court to source for supporting evidence but to utilise the ones at its disposal.

Ologunorisa said Wowo was not a public officer and no appointment or any

contract letter was tendered in evidence.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that the lower tribunal had on Oct. 6, dismissed the case saying that the petitioners' witnesses had contradicted themselves on the issue of violence.

It also held that Wowo was not a public officer and there were no evidence to show how the irregularities had substantially affected the result.

South-East APGA reaffirms support for Okorie

The South-East caucus of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) has passed a vote of confidence on the national leadership of the party under Chief Chekwes Okorie commending the National chairman for steering the affairs of the party so well since it was registered as a political party by INEC.

In a six-point communiqué issued at the end of its meeting in Enugu this week, the South-East APGA noted that the embattled national chairman of APGA "has done so well to the extent that in less than eight months of its registration, the party went for an election and swept the pools in most parts of the country, especially in the South-East, and South-South geo-political zones of Nigeria."

Signed by the National vice chairman, South East and Acting Secretary south-east, Chief Benji I. Duru and Anebu Michael respectively, the caucus noted that the national leadership of the party had piloted the party well despite its meager resources and poor funding.

The caucus also lauded the Okotie leadership for doing "very well in its constructive opposition stand

and engagements which earned the National Chairman, Chief Chekwes Okorie an award "The most credible opposition leader" by the entire membership of Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ)."

The South-East zone also reaffirmed its support, loyalty and followership to the National Leadership and the National chairman, Chief Chekwes Okorie and prayed that God will strengthen him "to overcome the evil plans of our detractors, saboteurs and enemies."

Passing a vote of confidence in the leadership of Chief Chekwes Okorie and condemning the activities of the gang of political dissidents, the South-East thanked the NEC of the party for their courage in the disposal action taken against the dissidents led by Mr. Victor Umeh.

On the National political reform conference, the South-East caucus of APGA reaffirmed its support for the party's position and advised that participants should be drawn more from the political parties, labour, religious bodies and civil society as these bodies constitute major key players in the Nigerian project.



The FCT Minister, Mallam Nasir Ahmed el-Rufai (right) discussing with the minister of state internal affairs, Alhaji Samaila Sambawa and the senior special adviser to President Obasanjo on industrial matters and PAN chairman, Dr. Modibbo Umar during the FEC meeting held at the state House Abuja ... Wednesday.

Pix: Joe Oroye

Youths urge senate to reject NDDC nominee

A youths group in the oil communities of Abia state has threatened to stop oil exploration activities in the area should the senate confirm the appointment of Mr. Okey Nwubani as their representative in the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

Nwubani was among the 17 nominees sent to the senate by President Olusgun Obasanjo for appointment into the NDDC, and the upper chamber has already commenced screening the nominees.

But the Ukwa West Youths Association in a letter to the president of the senate, Adolphus Wabara, dated January 7, protested Nwubani's nomination on the grounds that he was not from the oil communities of the state and should therefore not represent them.

The letter, signed by chairman and secretary of the group, Simeon Nwagbara and Norah Martins, respec-

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter (Senate)

tively copied to Obasanjo and Governor Orji Kalu, said the nominee had in his past four years on the NDDC not served the interests of the people in the area.

Besides this, the group said, people in the area had selected Mr. Nwelele Godson Bright to represent them in the commission.

The youths said further that the nominee "did not perform at all to merit being re-nominated and the youths view his re-nomination as baseless and cannot be accepted by Ukwa West youths and the entire citizens of Ukwa West."

They therefore threatened that should the senate go ahead and clear the nominee, "the federal government and oil companies should forget further operation in all the oil wells and flow stations in Abia state."

Meanwhile, the Ukwa West traditional Rulers and

Elder Council of Abia state has also written to the senate protesting Nwubani's nomination, insisting that Bright was their favoured candidate.

The council gave similar reasons with the youths group and urged that the nominee be dropped in the interest of peace.

2007: NBC to map out strategy for campaign reporting

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has said it would work out strategies on the 2007 elections campaign format and political reporting.

Dr Silas Yisa, the Director-General of the Commission, told newsmen in Lokoja today at the venue of the NBC's expanded board meeting that current political developments and emerging trends had compelled the commission to think ahead of the next elections.

NBC, he said, would set both the tone and character

of political reporting and broadcast.

Yisa said a common framework for all campaign coverage would be worked out while the commission would move to install political seminars, involving all the stakeholders to ensure sanity in material broadcasts.

In the last two years, he said, the commission focused on issues of relevance concerning its establishment vis-avis its expected role in national broadcasting and public perception as well as recognition of its role.

TEN YEARS OF THE NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND (NSITF)

Globally, social security issues occupy the centre stage of discourse about how to improve people's welfare. Nigeria is no exception. It is a pleasant coincidence that this fervent of rethinking about social security is taking place at time the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) celebrates 10 years anniversary of its existence. It is, therefore, auspicious to look at the organisation's report card on this occasion

WHAT IS SOCIAL SECURITY?

The term Social Security was first used in the United States of America in relation to the social legislation implemented by the Roosevelt Administration, that is, the United States Social Security Act of 14th August, 1935. The concept appeared again in an Act passed in New Zealand in 1938. Social Security could be defined "as a policy measure aimed at protecting an individual in life situations or conditions in which his or her sources of livelihood may be at risk." Some of these conditions are easily identified: Old Age, Disability, Surviving a working spouse and/or providers sickness, Unemployment, Work Injury, Maternity and Death.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted the term as a simple and arresting expression for one of the deepest and most widespread aspirations of the people all over the world. The ILO defines social security as the "life protection which society provides for its members, through a series of public measures, against the economic and social distress that otherwise would be caused by the stoppage or substantial reduction in earnings, resulting from sickness, maternity, employment injuries, unemployment, invalidity, old age and death; the provision of medical care and subsidies for families and children."

This definition of social security by the ILO is very comprehensive and encompassing. The former Director General of ILO, Wilfred Jerks, in his address delivered in 1971 elucidated further that: "Nothing in the history of social policy (social security) has transformed the life of the common man more than insurance that in the event of loss of income through accident, poor health, unemployment, death, he will not be forced into destitution." By this definition, it has been amply shown that social security, all over the world is a pivot on which the welfare of individuals revolves in the event of eventualities.

IMPERATIVES OF SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS

In 1944, the International Labour Conference recognised "the solemn obligation of International Labour Organisation to further among the nations of the world, programmes which will achieve the extension of social security measures to provide a basic income to all in need of such protection and comprehensive medical care". It was even provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly, which states that "Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organisation and resources of each state, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and free development of his personality."

During 1950s and 1960s, social insurance-based defined benefit, Pay As You Go (PAYG) and old age security programmes spread throughout the developing countries of the world. Most were partially funded (as opposed to being pure PAYG scheme) so as to provide a source of funds that could be used to foster economic development. The schemes were typically financed by payroll taxes split between the employer and the employee, and in some cases supplemented by general government revenue. Many of these countries obtained their independence in the aftermath of the Second World War and viewed the establishment of national social insurance as an integral part of nation building.

Leaders of many countries were convinced by technical experts from international organisations such as International Labour Organisation Office to adopt social security systems modelled on social insurance principles. The scheme protects workers against the risk of reduced earning power in old age and included survivor and disability insurance as well. Such schemes call for pooling of risks that provide greater protection than typically associated with either provident funds or privatized social security schemes.

Social Security is very important for the well-being of workers, their families, and the entire community. It is a basic human right and a fundamental means for creating peace and social inclusion. It is an indispensable part of government social policy and an important tool to prevent and alleviate poverty. It can, through national solidarity and fair burden sharing, contribute to human dignity, equality and social justice. It is also important for political inclusion, empowerment and the development of democracy.

EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

Historically, traditional means of social protection existed in Nigeria, mostly through collective solidarity within the framework of extended family system. However, with modern industrialization, the traditional system of social protection virtually collapsed. This explains the rationale behind government's interest in setting up some minimum protection schemes like public service pension scheme, private/public sector occupational schemes, and the National Provident Fund (NPF).

NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND (NPF)

The National Provident Fund (NPF) Management Board was established by an Act of Parliament in 1961. The Board was set up to manage the National Provident Fund Scheme for all employees nationwide. In 1962, the scheme was amended by another Act of Parliament to cover only employees in the private sector who were not covered by the public service pension scheme.

The broad objectives of the Federal Government in establishing the NPF was to provide a poverty alleviation measure as required by convention 102 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), to which treaty Nigeria is a signatory. The Scheme was meant for the protection of private sector employees, whose employers were then mostly the multinationals, from financial difficulties in the event of either old age, cessation of employment, invalidity or death. Most employers then did not have such provisions in their employment policies. The Act establishing the Scheme provided for monthly contributions by members at the rate of 6% of basic salary subject to a maximum of N8.00 per month or a total of N96.00 per annum. The amount was paid

in equal proportion of N4.00 by the employer and the employee.

Within the life span of thirty-three (33) years of its operation (1961-1994), the NPF suffered severe operational inadequacies and constraints. As a result, its impact was hardly felt by stakeholders and regrettably, it developed a poor public image that was difficult to manage. The major shortcomings of the defunct NPF were as follows:

- (a) Stagnant contribution rate of N96.00 per annum for about thirty-three (33) years.
- (b) A hyper-inflationary economic environment, which adversely affected the resource base of the Scheme.
- (c) Evasion of the Scheme by many employers.
- (d) Poor record keeping of members' accounts, contributions and benefit.
- (e) Unviable and ineffective investment policies occasioned by the Trustees Investment Act, which limited the investment horizon of the Organisation.
- (f) Inefficient benefit administration coupled with meager benefit payments.
- (g) Management ineptitude and poor service delivery.

Transformation of the NPF into the NSITF Scheme

The unanimous verdict of the various persons and bodies including ILO experts that were appointed by the Federal Government to review the operations of the NPF was that the organization had not performed its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily and creditably.

In 1992, the Federal Government finally accepted the recommendations of the Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation (TCPC) now the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) and converted the provident fund scheme run by the NPF to a limited social insurance scheme. The Government approved the partial commercialization of the organization and changed its name to the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) to reflect its new role and objective. In 1993, the Federal Government promulgated the NSITF Decree, which repealed the NPF Act of 1992 (as amended) and vested all the assets and liabilities of the NPF Management Board in the new NSITF via Decree 73 of 1993.

The Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund Scheme became operational on 1st July, 1994 and it is a limited Social Security Scheme. It is limited in perspective because it caters only for the members. All registered members of the former NPF scheme became automatic members of the new scheme and their contributions were similarly transferred to their contribution records using the existing membership numbers under the new scheme, to ensure continuity. The NSITF operates on a tripartite arrangement of: employers (represented by NECA), workers (represented by NLC) and the government.

COVERAGE

The NSITF Scheme covers every person who:

- (a) is employed by a company incorporated (or deemed to be incorporated) under the Companies and Allied Matters Act 1990; or
- (b) is employed by a partnership irrespective of the number of persons employed by the company or partnership; or
- (c) in any other case, where the number of persons employed is not less than five.

RANGE OF BENEFITS

The range and variety of benefits provided by the NSITF are the old age, invalidity and survivors' benefits.

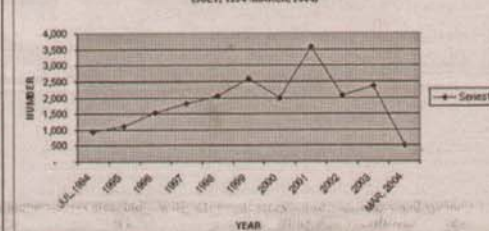
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCHEME

The NSITF is a defined benefit scheme which provides among others, a pension based on funds accumulated over the course of employment. In the NSITF Scheme, like most of the contributory schemes worldwide, employers contribute at a higher rate than employees.

Summary of Compliance Activities of NSITF from July 1994 - March 2004

SN	YEAR	CONTRIBUTION (N MILLION)	EMPLOYER REGISTRATION NO	EMPLOYEE REGISTRATION NO
1	JULY 1994	218.42	937	37,649
2	1995	683.13	1,116	78,343
3	1996	904.80	1,519	128,312
4	1997	1,115.74	1,813	106,586
5	1998	1,166.01	2,038	104,441
6	1999	1,255.52	2,275	103,684
7	2000	1,608.55	1,975	173,633
8	2001	5,602.13	3,578	419,473
9	2002	8,403.80	2,059	114,555
10	2003	10,183.72	2,352	119,934
11	January - March 2004	2,655.67	497	25,637
	TOTAL	33,887.49	20,449	1,412,217

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF EMPLOYER REGISTRATION (JULY, 1994 - MARCH, 2004)



...TEN YEARS OF NSITF

BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

One of the major criticisms of the defunct NPF was the meagre benefits paid to claimants. Unlike the NPF, which was merely a savings scheme that provided for lump sum payments of what was contributed plus a fixed interest as benefits, the NSITF scheme pays grants and monthly pensions as benefits.

There are seven types of benefits which members of the scheme are entitled to apply for subject to satisfying the qualifying conditions. The benefits are:

- Invalidity Pension
- Invalidity Grant
- Retirement Pension
- Retirement Grant
- Survivors Pension
- Survivors Grant
- Funeral Grant

Benefit claims are paid by the NSITF through its Branch Offices nationwide. It is important to emphasise that payment of benefits is considered top priority by the Management. In fact, all the Branch Offices are under strict instructions to ensure that claims are processed and paid within two (2) weeks of receipt, and in the event of a detected fault in a claim, to advise the claimant within the same, if not a shorter period.

INVESTMENT

Prior to the promulgation of the NSITF Act, the provisions of the Trustee Investments Act regulated the investment policy of the defunct NPF. The investment portfolio was then dominated by financial securities that have extremely low yield. Over 80% of the investments were in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) stocks, which generated abysmally low returns in the average of 6% per annum. Also, the returns from investments in fixed interest loan stocks were equally low and lacked the desired secondary market.

Under the NSITF, investment restriction was relaxed and the Fund's investment horizon widened. The NSITF is an institutional investor and a major player in the capital and money markets of the Nigeria economy. In order to properly regulate its investment operations, the Management has put in place guidelines and criteria for all investments with the objective of generating maximum returns at minimum risk exposure. This has propelled the Fund to play a crucial and very active role in the Nigerian money and capital markets and has contributed immensely in the development of the nation's financial system and the overall economy.

A sound investment policy is considered necessary for the Fund to be able to build a viable investment portfolio capable of generating enough income to offset operating expenditure and pay robust benefits. The basic principles that guide investment in the Fund include safety, liquidity, yield, diversity and socio-economic utility. Paramount amongst these parameters is safety, that is, the certainty of recovering the funds invested and the associated returns.

The Fund's investments in the Capital Market are spread widely in the following sectors:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (i) Conglomerate | (vii) Breweries |
| (ii) Banking | (viii) Chemicals and Paints |
| (iii) Food Beverage & Tobacco | (ix) Agriculture |
| (iv) Building Materials | (x) Textile |
| (v) Petroleum Marketing | (xi) Others |
| (vi) Automobile and Tyre | |

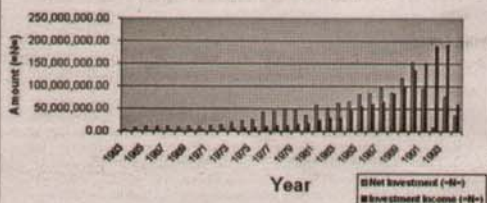
INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

The cost of the investment portfolio of the Fund as at 31st March, 2004 was N32.11 billion whilst the market value was N33.62 billion.

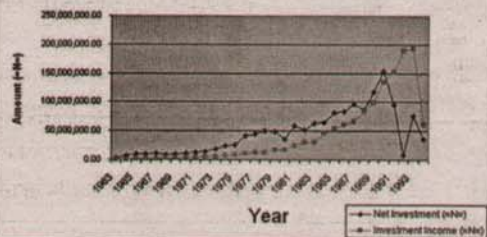
INVESTMENT INCOME

A total of N1,342 billion was realised as investment income between 1962 and June 1994, whilst a total of N8,056 billion was realised between July 1994 and March 2004. This represents a significant increase of N6,714 billion or 500.30% when compared with the pre NSITF era. The table below shows details of net investments and investment income for the periods 1962 to June 1994 and July 1994 to March 2004.

Analysis of Net Investment & Investment Income (1963 - June, 1994)



Graphical Representation of Net Investment & Investment Income (1963 - June, 1994)



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE PROFILE

One of the major criticisms of the defunct NPF was high administrative costs incurred by the Management. Since the transformation of the NPF to the NSITF, efforts have been made to correct the anomaly and accumulate enough funds for paying members' benefits. It is worth mentioning that this trend has been reversed, and from 2003 all the administrative expenditures of the Fund have been drawn from the investment income, thereby leaving the members' contributions intact.

Below is the analysis of income and expenditure of the Fund from 1994 to 2003.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (1994-2003)				
	INCOME N' 000	EXPENDITURE N' 000	VARIANCE N' 000	VARIANCE %
1994	146,461.00	255,076.00	(108,615.00)	(74.16)
1995	283,245.00	313,672.00	(30,427.00)	(10.74)
1996	1,383,195.00	622,757.00	760,438.00	54.98
1997	1,499,699.00	737,456.00	762,243.00	50.83
1998	1,432,431.00	887,029.00	545,402.00	38.08
1999	1,595,843.00	984,128.00	611,715.00	38.33
2000	2,154,817.00	1,218,866.00	935,951.00	43.44
2001	6,706,773.00	1,816,521.00	4,890,252.00	72.92
2002	10,291,239.00	1,659,464.00	8,631,775.00	83.87
2003	12,618,076.00	1,784,918.00	10,833,158.00	85.85

PROJECTS/ESTATES

The NSITF ventured into real estate business as part of the diversification efforts of the Management. The estates are located in different parts of the country. Some were purchased after construction whilst others were built by the Fund. The estimated market value of the properties is N7,402,765,321.05. The list of the major estates and their current status is as follows:

The tables below show the details of all properties/estates acquired by the Fund since 1962.

Estate/Housing Units acquired from January, 1962 - June, 1994		
S/NO	NAME OF PROPERTY	LOCATION
1.	SATELLITE TOWN STAFF HOUSING ESTATE (93 Units)	SATELLITE TOWN LAGOS
2.	FORMER GUEST HOUSE, JOS (8 Bedroom)	DADIN KOWA, JOS

Estate/Housing Units acquired from July, 1994 - March, 2004		
S/NO	NAME OF PROPERTY	LOCATION
1.	BUNU SHERIFF GARDEN	16 B. PROBYN ROAD IKOYI, LAGOS
2.	36 NOS. RESIDENTIAL FLATS	PLOT 15/GIMBIYA STREET AREA ELEVEN, GARKI, ABUJA
3.	18 NOS. RESIDENTIAL FLAT	PLOT 1080 LIKE STREET GARKI 2, ABUJA
4.	12 NOS. RESIDENTIAL FLATS	PLOT 1954 COTONOU CRESCENT, ABUJA
5.	20 NOS. RESIDENTIAL FLATS	PLOT 529 NDJEMINA ST WUSE II, ABUJA
6.	23 NOS. LUXURY DUPLEXE (GUDU)	PLOT 879/798 CADASTRAL ZONE A2 WUSE, ABUJA
7.	DANUBE HOUSING ESTATE	PLOT 2573 DANUBE CRESCENT CADASTRAL ZONE 6, MAITAMA, ABUJA
8.	KALABARI ESTATE	NO. 1 KALABARI CLOSE, OFF QUEEN'S DRIVE IKOYI, LAGOS
9.	KATAMPE ESTATE	PLOT 41IKATAMPE DISTRICT CADASTRAL ZONE B, WUSE, ABUJA

Office Buildings acquired from January, 1962 - June, 1994		
S/NO	NAME OF PROPERTY	LOCATION
1.	NSITF BUILDING	112, BROAD STREET, MARINA, LAGOS
2.	LAGOS ZONAL OFFICE	9, DORA CAUSEWAY, LAGOS
3.	ONDO BRANCH OFFICE	OFF IGBATORO ROAD, AKURE
4.	ILORIN BRANCH OFFICE	ASA DAM ROAD, ILORIN
5.	YOLA BRANCH OFFICE	YOLA ROAD, JIMETA
6.	SOKOTO BRANCH OFFICE	1, KADUNA ROAD, SOKOTO
7.	CALABAR BRANCH OFFICE	10, NEW IKANG ROAD, CALABAR
8.	ENUGU BRANCH OFFICE	3A INDEPENDENT LAY OUT, ENUGU
9.	ABEOKUTA BRANCH OFFICE	KEMASON ABEOKUTA
10.	MAKURDI BRANCH OFFICE	JONAH JANG ROAD, MAKURDI
11.	BAUCH BRANCH OFFICE	MAIDUGURI ROAD, BAUCHI
12.	IBADAN BRANCH OFFICE	OLD LAGOS ROAD, IBADAN
13.	FORMER KADUNA BRANCH OFFICE	UNGUWAR RIMI, KADUNA

Office Buildings acquired from July, 1994 - March, 2004		
S/NO	NAME OF PROPERTY	LOCATION
1.	HEAD OFFICE	PLOT 794, MOHAMMED BUHARI WAY, ABUJA
2.	PORT HARCOURT ZONAL OFFICE	302, ADA ROAD EXPRESS WAY
3.	FCT ZONAL OFFICE	117/119, YAKUBU GOWON WAY ASOKORO, ABUJA
4.	IBADAN ZONAL OFFICE	117, RING ROAD, IBADAN
5.	BENIN OFFICE COMPLEX	46, TEXTILE MILLS ROAD, BENIN
6.	HEAD OFFICE ANNEX	PLOT 115, IKEJA CLOSE AREA 2, GARKI ABUJA
7.	MAIDUGURI ZONAL OFFICE	20, SHEHU LAMINU WAY, MAIDUGURI
8.	KANO ZONAL OFFICE	TRUST FUND AVENUE, KANO
9.	KADUNA BRANCH OFFICE	PLOT 15716 MURTALA MOHAMMED SQUARE, KADUNA
10.	NSITF PLAZA (Shopping Complex)	PLOT 2413 CADASTRAL ZONE A, WUSE, ABUJA
11.	GOMBE BRANCH OFFICE	PANTAMI ROAD, GOMBE

On-Going Projects		
S/NO	NAME OF PROPERTY	LOCATION
1.	KARU HOUSING ESTATE	SANI ABACHA ROAD, MARARABA, KARU, ABUJA
2.	NPF TERRITORIAL HQ	ERA VILLAGE, BEHIND FGC, UANIKIN, LAGOS

The estimated Market Value of the Properties is N7,402,765,321.05

...TEN YEARS OF NSITF

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

The Management of the NSITF places high premium on developing its workforce. Members of staff of the Fund are given adequate training and exposure necessary for the discharge of their individual schedules. Workshops, seminars and in-house programmes are organised for staff periodically. Local and overseas trainings are also arranged to enable staff keep pace with changes in the dynamic world of social security. Apart from this, staff members are encouraged to embark on self-development programmes to better their lot.

Through this arrangement, many staff members have completed their Degree and Diploma programmes in various institutions of higher learning and they have been subsequently upgraded to officer cadre by the Management. In addition, some staff members are sponsored for selected academic programmes both locally and abroad. All these have helped to boost staff moral, improve productivity and reduce staff turnover to the barest minimum. The average staff strength of the Fund in the last ten years is 1,712.

SUMMARY OF NSITF ACHIEVEMENTS

The achievements recorded by the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) in its ten years of existence can be summarised as follows.

Between July 1994 and March 2004, the Fund registered 1,412,217 new members. It also inherited 2,839,153 members of the former NPF in 1994. Thus, as at March 2004, the Fund has a current cumulative membership of about 4,251,370 workers. In the same vein, it registered 20,449 employers between July 1994 and March 2004 whilst it inherited 20,410 employers of the former NPF in 1994. As at date, the Fund has cumulatively registered 40,859 employers.

The average number of employees registered monthly from 1962 to June, 1994 was 7,279 whilst it was 12,070 from July, 1994 to March, 2004. This showed an increase of 4,791 or 65.82%. Also, the average number of employers registered monthly from 1962 to June, 1994 was 52 whilst it was 175 from July, 1994 to March, 2004. This showed an increase of 123 or 236.54%.

The Fund has collected a cumulative contribution of N34.81 billion as at date. The sum of N923,329,329.53 was collected during the NPF era (a period of 32 years) whilst the sum of N33,887,468,144.62 was collected between July 1994 and March 2004 (a period of 10 years). The average monthly contributions collected from 1962 to June, 1994 was N2,367,511.10 whilst it was N289,636,479.87 from July 1994 to March, 2004. This indicated an appreciable increase of N287,268,968.77 or 12,133.80%.

In the area of benefit payment, laudable achievements were recorded both in the number of claimants settled and the quantum of amounts paid. The amount of claims paid from 1962 to June 1994 was N118,076,000.00 whilst it was N662,181,000.00 from July, 1994 to March, 2004. This showed a positive variance of N544,105,000 or 460.81%.

The number of claimants settled from 1962 to June, 1994 was 454,541 whilst it was 61,762 from July 1994 to March, 2004. Though the number of claimants may seem less in the NSITF era, the average amount of claims paid increased from N259.77 between 1962 and June, 1994 to N10,721.50 between July, 1994 and March, 2004. This translates to a monthly pension of N4,400.00.

It could be recalled that the Management of the NSITF commenced the payment of a minimum pension of 80% of the National minimum wage in 2002 i.e. N4,400.00 per month.

The Fund's achievements in the area of investments were equally commendable. The investment portfolio had increased from N1.47 billion in 1994 to N32.11 billion as at 31st March, 2004. This represented an increase of N30.64 billion or 2,084.35%.

The total investment income generated from 1962 to June 1994 was N1.34 billion whilst the sum of N8.06 billion was realised from July, 1994 to March 2004. This represented an increase of N6.72 billion or 501.49%.

The total amount invested in the money market from 1962 to June, 1994 was N144.75 million whilst it was N10.00 billion from July, 1994 to March 2004. This showed an increase of N9.86 billion or 6,847.22%.

In the capital market, the sum of N735.96 million was invested from 1962 to June 1994 whilst N14.70 billion was invested from July, 1994 to March, 2004. This showed an increase of N13.96 billion or 1,896.84%.

The value of real estate investments was N592.96 million in 1994 whilst it had increased to N7.40 billion as at March, 2004. This showed an increase of N6.807 billion or 1,147.89%.

The number of estates acquired from 1962 to June, 1994 was two whilst nine estates were acquired from July, 1994 to 2004, indicating an increase of seven estates or 350%.

The Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund has transitioned from the use of manual systems in the early days of the defunct NPF to the use of modern computer systems. With the procurement of IBM system 1004, a second generation computer in 1966, the Fund's journey to computerisation began. A comprehensive computerisation programme was carried out in 1991 to prepare the way for the transformation of the NPF to the NSITF. Commendable progress was recorded in the area of Software development by in-house professionals before the transformation.

Following the inadequacies of the available computer systems to cope with the increasing volume of records in the new NSITF scheme, greater efforts and funds were committed to a new computerisation project. This major computerisation of the Fund began in January, 2003 with the interview of shortlisted vendors to handle the project. The final selection of a vendor for the project would be completed soon. It is expected that the full computerisation of the Fund will be completed before December 2005.

NSITF AND THE PENSION REFORM BILL

Pension reform is now in the front burner in many countries around the world. Over the last two decades, many countries have examined their pension arrangements to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the system and have taken actions to address identified weaknesses. Governments have understandably wanted to reform their pension systems to make them compatible with their wider fiscal objectives. How efficiently pension matters are handled determines to a large extent the standard of living of individuals after retiring from active working life.

Nigeria's pension crisis is catastrophic to say the least. It is real and lamentable. The principal challenge has been the failure of government to define a proper and efficient framework for pension administration. It is noteworthy that since 1999, the Federal Government had set up independent committees to advise it on how to handle pensions.

For instance, President Olusegun Obasanjo set up the Adebayo Adede-led committee shortly after his assumption of office, to advise the government appropriately on pension reforms. The same government later set up a Evelyn Adedokun-led committee for the same purpose. It is the Adedokun-led committee that gave birth to the Proposed Pension Reform Bill that is pending before the National Assembly.

One of the nagging provisions of the Bill was to scrap the NSITF and other existing private pension schemes and establish a monolithic contributory pension arrangement for both the public and the private sectors. There was public outcry against this particular provision. The sensitive nature of the subject matter led to the organisation of many workshops and seminars to harness the views and opinions of experts on pension matters. The National Assembly conducted public hearing for the stakeholders and the general public. The views of all the stakeholders and experts on pension administration were articulated to assist the National Assembly in taking a position.

Some of the salient issues raised included:

- (i) Private Sector Pension should be clearly separated from public sector funds and the pension scheme for the Federal Government's employees should be separated from that of the States.
- (ii) The overwhelming opinion was to retain and strengthen the NSITF to provide basic social security for all Nigerians. It was also noted that the Fund had undergone series of re-engineering to meet the challenges in a dynamic world of social security. It was stressed too that the benefits under the NSITF are wider than the ones proposed in the Bill.

In conclusion, there was a groundswell of support and goodwill for the retention of the NSITF and a call for the Federal Government to consult with the Management of the Fund in order to tap from the accumulated expertise and experience, which would serve as a guide for the establishment of a contributory pension scheme for the public sector.

CHALLENGES

As being envisaged, the Pension Reform Bill may likely enlarge the functions of the NSITF. The Fund may be required to provide social security to all Nigerians. The challenges of providing social security for all citizens would be enormous, but the respite is that NSITF has garnered formidable experience and expertise, which would place it in a vantage position to excel. As a major player in the industry for some years, its time-tested strength would be displayed for the overall benefit of all Nigerians. The Fund shall obviously succeed if it is given this arduous assignment.

Furthermore, making the NSITF one of the Pension Fund Administrators would definitely open the door for competition with other operators in the business. The Fund is in a privileged position to assume a leadership role in this direction. The NSITF has acquired the managerial know-how to handle pension fund administration credibly. The Management is already abreast with the technicalities involved in the field of pension administration, unlike the new entrants who may face the problem of understanding the industry. It may take this group much longer time to settle down for business.

The NSITF already has the structures on ground to render this service. With its branch network virtually in all the states of the federation, the Fund shall be easily accessible to all Nigerians as the obvious choice. The Management would have to face the challenges of gaining and retaining the confidence of workers who may most likely opt for the services of the Fund as their pension fund administrator.

Moreover, the huge investment portfolio of the NSITF is a clear testimony of its strength. The likelihood of the Fund going under is very remote. This offers enough guarantee of the Fund's ability to discharge its obligations as and when due. The strength and chances of other pension fund administrators will depend largely on their ability to invest the pension funds profitably and generate reasonable returns that would be enough to offset administrative expenses. The possibility of other smaller administrators tinkering with the pension funds is high, particularly if they are not able to generate good returns on investment like the NSITF. If this happens, the probable result would be mismanagement and financial distress in the system as was the case in the banking sector in the 1990s.

Finally, the Management of the NSITF is aware that to be a champion is not a problem but to retain the championship. In the light of this, it has positioned the Fund to lead the way and would gladly open its doors to other administrators who may wish to understand its operations.

LOOKING AHEAD

The last Actuarial Valuation Report was completed in 1999. Another review shall be carried this year to confirm the long term financial health of the scheme and make vital recommendations.

Management recognizes the important role of human capital development. In line with this, it plans to review its conditions of service, train and empower members of staff to ensure that optimal productivity is achieved. The internal restructuring process was completed early this year and this has resulted in improvements in its internal operations. Encouragement would continue to be extended to members of staff through study leave, in-house workshops and exposure to basic social security training both locally and overseas.

The Fund would continue to participate actively in the capital, money and real estate markets of the Nigeria economy. It is expected that the recent admission of the NSITF on the council of the Nigeria Stock Exchange would translate into increase in its participation in the activities of that segment of the Nigeria Financial Market. Consequently, the capital market, which appears to offer more liquidity and safety, could provide avenues for better investment opportunities to maximize capital gains and boost investment income.

The NSITF has a lot of potential for growth in terms of extending its membership coverage and in the improvement of its benefit package. Additionally, the Fund has had its share of pitfalls but it still remains the premier social security organization in Nigeria with a national outreach. Because of its size, it is able to offer uniform conditions and terms of membership to all its members without discrimination. This makes NSITF the only scheme which is accessible to the majority of the workers across the country. Every effort will be made to retain the Fund's enviable position as a leader in the social security sub-sector not only in Nigeria but within the African continent.

The requirement for the NSITF to provide minimum pension for the contributors and social security for all Nigerian citizens enlarges the functions of and expectations from the Fund. However, the future configuration of the scheme to be run by the Fund shall depend largely on the outcome of the proposed Pension Reform Bill being sponsored by the Federal Government, and the passing of necessary legislations to effect the implementation.



Sports

PREMIER LEAGUE PLAY-OFF

Wikki, Kwara Utd seek top flight tickets

After failing to secure premier league slots during the regular season, four erstwhile premier league teams and two forms from the pro-league begin the battle for elitist soccer in a play-off, which begins today in two centres.

Interestingly, Wikki Tourists, Kwara United and Plateau and Mighty Jets that crumble to the superior five powers of their compatriots will engage Ebony Angels

and Adamawa United who missed promotion huddles by the whiskers have ample redemption at the Benin and Kaduna centres where the pre-season hostilities are to hold.

Already, Kwara United have signified its intentions to pick one of the slots by hiring CAF Champions League winning coach, Kadri Ikhan, while Wikki Tourists have

gone beyond changes of technical crew to administrative changes all in a bid to remain in the elite class.

Even then, financially embattled Mighty Jets have as usual gone to the streets to recruit young ambitious lads

who are already to demystify star-studded Wikki Tourists and financially endowed Adamawa United.

The Bernard Ogbe-tutored team tried in vain to take advantage of the Zamfara United, Ranch Bees hiccups

over fortified points to berth at the Premier League haven, and if the management has shifted position on not participating in the play-offs may have to bend over to snatch the only ticket available for the group.

Emmanuel Zira, the Team Manager of Adamawa United and Abdullahi Danbaba are certain their wards would gar-

ner the maximum points to scale the hurdle for premiership action.

Both Jets and Wikki have history beckoning on them first both had a bloody clash last season, secondly their pedigrees yearn for beef up and premiership offers both ample avenue to do so and thus guarantee their fans top flight action.

Surely, the lush green grass at the Benin City and Ahmadu Bello stadia will suffer as players sweat it out while their coaches plot strategies to outwit each other.

Popo leads Jets to Kaduna

Mighty Jets are leaving nothing to chance as the promotion/relegation playoff gathers momentum for the only slot at the Kaduna zone with the return of erstwhile coach, Shola Popo to tinker the team to victory.

Jets have recalled several players who had signed for various clubs to come to the team's rescue in order to remain in the Premiership. "We have recalled some of our players from their various clubs to come and participate in the playoff because we want to remain in the Premiership. Our chances are bright to qualify from Kaduna and neither Wikki nor Adamawa United can stop us," Jets chairman Suleiman Kwande said.

Returnee coach Shola Popo is confident that his coming back to the team is a morale booster to the players who are set to roar in the play-off.

"We are fully prepared and the morale of the players are high since I came back to the team. You know most of the players were with me when we gained promotion and we are set for a repeat performance. "Honestly I'm confident

that with fair officiating we will qualify from the zone. And for the best team to qualify, the officials must endeavour to give all the teams fair and quality officiating," the coach added.

Some of the players that are in Jets' training camp include Nura Nakargo, Jibrin Ibrahim, Vincent Orode, Stephen Morgan, Ebele Obi, and Nnaemeka Onovo while Sunday Mba is being expelled from the Eagles' camp.



Victor Babayaro, Wikki Tourists captain

Danbaba replaces Jumba as Wikki chairman

The Bauchi state government has made swift management changes in the Wikki Tourists FC, bringing on board as chairman, Alhaji Abdullahi Danbaba in place of Alhaji Sabo Adamu Jumba.

Danbaba, the state FA chairman was appointed following Jumba's decision to bow out after holding forte for some four years.

Jumba, a vocal member of the NFA board, was instrumental to the play-off which aims at giving some premier

league clubs that could not beat the relegation hurdle another chance to scale over it along with some professional league sides in the new 20-team format.

Though the state govern-

ment provided needed funds to run teams, Jumba it is assisted came to the rescue of Wikki Tourist severally whenever there was problems in the release of funds.

Meanwhile, Danbaba has

promised to bring his wealth experience to bear in the management of the teams noting that the first priority would be to secure one of the two premiership tickets offered by the play-off, which begins today in two centres.

Today's matches

Wikki Tourists vs Mighty Jets
Venue: ABS, Kaduna
Kwara United vs Plateau United
Venue: Ogbe stadium, Benin

Siasia, Moroccan coach disagree over officiating

Coach Samson Siasia and his Moroccan counterpart Jamel Fathi have disagreed sharply over the standard of officiating of their teams' semi-final match at the African Youth Soccer championship in Cotonou.

Siasia's Flying Eagles had bundled over the Moroccans from the final by 5-3 on penalties after both teams had tied 2-2 at full and extra times.

At a post-match conference which featured both coaches, Fathi said that the Togolese referee Djaoupe Kokou, was a disappointment as "his handling of the match fell below expectation."

"Nigeria did well, its a great team handled by a great coach like Siasia. I have no grudge against Siasia and his team but the centre referee was bad.

"In fact, the Nigerians needed such a referee to win the match," he said.

He congratulated his team for "playing against a big team like Nigeria", adding that "It is unfortunate that we

faced a bad referee."

But Siasia, in sharp reaction, said that the referee was against both Nigeria and Morocco, adding that the referee actually committed many mistakes in handling the match.

He said that the Eagles' forward needed to be sharpened following the unimpressive performance of the two strikers fielded in the crucial match.

"The strikers performed below expectation, but it is so sometimes. We will make sure it does not happen again in the final," he said.



Siasia

AFRICAN YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP Don't commit fouls, minister urges Eagles

Sports Minister Musa Mohammed has advised the Flying Eagles to avoid committing fouls in their final match against Egypt on Saturday at the ongoing African Youth Soccer Championship.

He said the advice was necessary to avoid incurring the wrath of "some referees who have shown some traits of incompetence" in the competition.

Mohammed gave the advice on Wednesday in Cotonou after watching the Eagles defeat Morocco by 5-3 in a semi-final match at the Friendship Stadium.

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the boys should avoid committing mistakes because "many of the referees are messing up the competition."

"I can see that many of the referees are not well trained, so our boys should watch out and not commit fouls," he said.

He said in spite of the problem, the Eagles played well against Morocco, adding that Nigerians and President Olusegun Obasanjo were united in their support for the squad.

Mohammed, along with some CAF officials including its president, Isa Hayattou

watched the explosive match which was nearly marred by perceived poor officiating by a Togolese referee Djaoupe Kokou.

The match stretched beyond the regulated extra time and ended in a penalty shoot-out that favoured Nigeria.

Ojo explains 3SC switch

Angers long-standing midfielder Ebenezer Ojo, has explained why he left the Flying Antelopes for 3SC.

"I felt I had stayed long enough with the Enugu club side. I have already spent three years with them, and I felt it was time for me to move on."

He added that he did not leave the Enugu side because of any difference with

the team.

Ojo did not hide his feelings on this: "There is no qualms about my movement, no hard feelings, honestly. I just felt I had stayed long enough."

The talented midfielder said his main aim is to help his new club regain their lost glory.

"I am in Ibadan to help this team regain their lost glory, and to at least get a continental ticket in the new season."



Shooting Stars defender Mutiu Adegoke, in action, for his club during last season's Premier League Championship

Sports

Dolphins find scoring touch at last

Dolphin FC, Nigeria's other representative in this year's CAF Champions League, who have managed just one goal in three pre-season matches, suddenly discovered some previously hidden firepower to rout Bayelsa United 4-1 in Port Harcourt on Sunday.

But it was really a match of two halves, as Bayelsa had an edge in the first period, and deservedly went ahead in the 26th minute through Gift Atuliwa's penalty after Joseph Ejimofe brought down Taiwo Alonge.

Atuliwa ought to have scored six minutes earlier, but hit the crossbar from the edge of the box with Dolphin keeper Austin Brown at his mercy.

However, the Bayelsa dominance that had looked so promising came to an abrupt end at the start of the second half, when Dolphin's forwards cruelly exposed their weaknesses in a nine-minute spell.

Victor Ezeji punished the ball-watching defence with a flying header off Endurance Idahor's free-kick to level scores in the 50th minute. Then Kelechi Osumwa put the double champions ahead two minutes later, nodding home Ochoke Ojubo's pin-point center.

Ojubo was a constant threat, and in the 56th minute, Ezeji flicked his cross to Osumwa who forced in his second. Three minutes later, Osumwa completed his hat-trick, firing home a grounder

after dispossessing fumbling Anderson Ebimor of the ball.

Dolphin coach Musa Abdullahi told KICK OFF he was impressed with the steady progress his team has made since the Super Cup loss to Enugu Rangers.

"The boys have picked up, and it is not an easy task to blend strange players into a team within a short time," he said.

"But experiments like this must be carried out in the pre-season, especially when there is the added responsibility of the Champions League."

"You could see the determination in the players, who came from a goal down to win 4-1, but we are disappointed to have even conceded a goal, since we would want to avoid doing that against Renacimiento."

Abdullahi however was sure they would see off the Equatorial Guinea Champions.

"We are playing at home, so a win is non-negotiable," he said.



Ade Alakija, right, of Ibadan VMobile vies for the for the ball with Lukman Adeboyo of Ibadan Wanderers during the Ibadan Polo Tournament

Okocha injured again

Austin 'Jay Jay' has suffered yet another injury and now looks set to miss Bolton's fourth round English FA Cup game versus Oldham.

According to the official website of Bolton, Wanderers excellent victory over Blackburn Rovers on Monday evening has come at price with news that three key players could be ruled out for Sunday's FA Cup clash at Oldham Athletic.

Okocha heads the casualty list after picking up a knee injury during the 1-0 win at Wood Park. He was badly tackled by Rovers new boy Robbie Savage in the early part of the encounter.

While Kevin Nolan (calf) and Nicky Hunt (Achilles) are receiving treatment which may see them missing out on cup action.

This is third injury the 31-year-old Okocha has suffered this season. He has previously been sidelined by calf and groin complaints.

Eagles face Egypt in final

The final of the 14th African Youth Championship will be between the Flying Eagles and defending champions Egypt, who Egypt won 3-1 on penalties after both teams were tied at 1-1 after extra time.

Benin looked set to upset Egypt courtesy of a third minute goal scored by the outstanding Maiga Abou but the champions then drew level seven minutes from the end courtesy of an equally rasping shot by Faraq Ahmed.

The game went into extra-time and in the ensuing penalty shootout the Egyptians triumphed 3-1.

In the first semifinal, Nigeria defeated Morocco 5-3 on penalties after both teams were tied at 2-2 after extra-time.

The third place match between Morocco and Benin will be played today but all semi-finalists will represent Africa at the World Youth Championship in Holland in June.

Ogunjobi: Minister gives fresh evidences

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sports Reporter

Sports Minister, Musa Mohammed has formally tendered documented evidences against the Taiwo Ogunjobi led NFA management, which is being investigated for alleged financial impropriety and administrative ineptitude.

The retired colonel tendered various incriminating documents

million, several thousand of dollars being grants from CAF in addition to other corporate sponsorship funds and alleged that the chief accounting officer of the football secretariat was unable to adequately account for them.

The minister, it was learnt equally tendered various petitions said to have been written against the management. Such petitions bordered on alleged impropriety and irregularities in the recruitment of the management staff.

Trustports scooped that the petitions presented by the minister only added to those already received by panel against Ogunjobi and Olabode Oke, the erstwhile feed of finance and administration.

The petitions against Oke was assigned to the independent Corruption Practices Commission (ICPC) and copied the three-man panel and the sports ministry.

Apart from documents on the various FIFA, CAF and other corporate grants and

sponsorship funds presented, Musa Mohammed was said to have provided both the Col. Jomo Dago Yabisa audit report which allegedly indicted the management and Ogunjobi.

Already, the probe panel, which calls it self-administrative panel has placed Ogunjobi and his management team on compulsory leave to allow the members to hindered space to embark on their findings.

Last December, the NFA management was ousted out of office as part of the reform programme intended to revamp the moribund NFA secretariat and to ginger up Nigeria football administration in both the domestic and international scene.

But an appeal to FIFA ensures a monetary reprieve FIFA had interview on the grounds that due process was not followed in sacking the management. By that they meant the NFA board and not the sports ministry should have taken the action. The panel itself was instituted by the Board in line with FIFA's due process.

Abdullahi defends new players

Head Coach of Dolphin FC, Musa Abdullahi is confident the team's new players would have fully integrated in time for Sunday's CAF Champions League preliminary round, first leg match against Renacimiento of Equatorial Guinea in Port Harcourt.

He told KICKOFF: "It is always proper to experiment with new players when there is a very busy schedule ahead, and then in case it does not work out, resort is made to the main team."

"We are not over-doing it. At the start (of the pre-season friendlies) we played more of the new players, but right now we are playing a lesser number of them for the team to have more understanding."

The former national under-23 coach also told KICK OFF he was forced to fortify all departments of the team due to a string of injuries to his key players.

"We gave priority to the

midfield, where a vital player like Bola Bello had been down with typhoid for a while and is still not fully fit. Also (Uwazuoke) Wobo and Emma (Godwin) had to undergo appendicitis operations, so we were constrained to get back-ups in the attack and defence.

"We deemed it fit to also create more competition in attack to make the likes of Ochoke (Ojubo), Efosa (Egukan) and even Victor Ezeji sit up."

Abdullahi then defended the quality of his new players, who have been criticized for not measuring up.

"We should be given more time, since this is a problem that has arisen from our football culture. Most of our teams play different styles, mainly due to tutorials as most of our coaches have different orientations from countries as wide apart as Germany and Brazil."

"Everybody knows the capabilities of Endurance

Idahor or Jacob Aikhonbare or even (Ayo) Adedeji, who is struggling to find his feet, but technically we believe they will pick up with time as they are still adapting to our own style."

"Remember, most of them have not trained long enough on our (Liberation Stadium) pitch, and we still have about four more training sessions before Sunday's game," he said. "I am sure by then we would have blended well to play well and beat them (Renacimiento) by a reasonable score."

Enakarhire predicts tough times ahead

Super Eagles' defender, Joseph Enakarhire has declared that the second round matches of the World Cup qualifying games which commence in March will be, contrary to expectations, tough for the national team.

The Sporting Lisbon player therefore cautioned

the NFA against complacency in the preparation of the national team for the task ahead. He cautioned the soccer-ruling body "not just to take our qualifying matches as something that should be taken for granted because of the assumption that Nigeria will always make it to any World

Cup finals.

"Our game against Gabon at home will not be as easy as many people think. I have noted with regret that we have not done any thing to prepare the national team for the matches coming our way."

Enakarhire appealed to the NFA to, "organise at least a

Grade A game for the national team before our next home match against Gabon."

He is nevertheless confident that the Eagles will make it to Germany 2006 at the end of the day. He said:

"We should all get down to business and make sure we get the maximum 15 points from the remaining games. We cannot afford to drop any point to any team again."

**This
space is
for sale**

K at Bahausha hahki da ru'ya, zai sha karya nan duniya.
A Arewa zamantakuta, sai nishadi sai sharkoyiya.
Girman kai da yawan kwafa, sai kace dan annabi Fariya.
Damin fa Arewa da hargaji, da yawan hama ba karya.
As a people, the Hausa are irreligious and without self-pride;
Their lot in life is but despair, regret and shame in the North there
is no fellow-feeling or neighbour's keep in sight. Life is nothing but
selfish pleasure-seeking, rivalry and abandon.
Arrogance and gnashing of teeth as befitts Narcissus.
Danger looms large on the horizon, and unable to manage their
poor, And the deluge of corruption has swept all.
This is a not-so-correct paraphrase in prose of the some stanzas of
Sa'ad Zangari's poem, *Arewa: Jamhuriya ko Malakiya?* Yet how
accurate and how informative! And nothing gives a better commentary
on this poem and demonstrates the proof of the Hausa-Fulani puddling
and the logical result of Mallam Sa'adi's trenchant observations than
their unchallengeable production of beggars. It is as if that their main
contribution to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product.

Clearly, begging is the most ubiquitous activity in the North; at
least there are more people engaged in it, in all towns in Hausaland or
in Hausa in all other non-Hausa towns across the country, than in any
useful activity. So pervasive is the Hausa factor in begging that Hausa
language has become the official language of beggars and beggary in
Nigeria. It is today the symbolic language of defeat—the sign of a
people unwilling to take responsibility for their own poverty, and
poverty. It signals defeat for the man, and failure for the government;
and, instead of facing reality, Hausa-Fulani people always rush to hide
behind religion. They pretend that charity and begging is one and the
same thing.

But in Islam, charity is whatever you give—of your property, time
or consideration—that is good. It may be money to someone in need
(and the nearer he is to you, the better, for that is the divinely ordained
way), or the concern and support you extend in those in trouble, or a
helping hand to those who are down-and-out.

You can do all these things without society having to put up with
the heart-rending sight of poor handlers and the humiliation of the out-
stretched hand. Perhaps the giving of charity is most effective when it
is formalised. In Islam there already exists the formal *Zakka* which is
a recognised right of the poor in the wealth of the rich. However, even
the voluntary acts of charity can benefit if its collection is formalised
as is done in Western countries. But even if it is not formalised here,
is the right of beggars necessarily inalienable? In other words, do beggars
have a choice?

Yes, they do. But, first, who are the beggars, as recognised by
Islam?

Qubish bin Mukharig al-Hilali said, "I was in debt and I came to
the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and begged help from him regarding it."
He said, "Wait till we receive *sadaqah*, so that we order that to be
given to you." He again said, "Qubishah, begging is not permissible
except for one of three [classes] of people: one who has incurred debt,
for him begging is permissible until he pays that off, after which he
must stop; a man whose property has been destroyed by a calamity
which has struck him; for him begging is permissible until he receives
enough sustenance or reasonable subsistence; and a person who has
been smitten by poverty, the genuineness of which is confirmed by
three intelligent and [trustworthy] members of his community, for him
begging is permissible until he has received what which will support him,
or provide him with subsistence." Qubishah, besides these three, every other
reason for begging is forbidden, and one who engages in such, consumes
that which is forbidden. [Mutin/Unless they fall within these three
categories they have no legal right to beg, and they can lawfully be
prevented from doing so, but if they do, for them, Allah has already
made canonical provisions. Zayd al-Harith al-Sadi said, "I came to
the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and pledged allegiance to him. Then
a man came and said to the Messenger, "Give me some of the collected
sadaqah." The Messenger replied, "Allah had not left the matter of
the division of *sadaqah* to be decided by a Prophet or to other [non-
Prophet]. He himself classified it into eight categories. If you fit into
any of those categories, I will give you your due." In general, a Muslim
is expected to spend for others out of what he has—as a religious duty,
this being the *muat* that binds Muslim society.

"They ask you what they should spend [in charity]. Say: "Whatever
you spend that is good is for parents and kindred and orphans and those
in want and for wayfarers. And whatever you do that is good, God is well
aware of it."
[Holy Qur'an 2:215]

But is this a sanction to beg or a direction to give? Perhaps because
of the emphasis on the superiority of kindly generosity, and the
encouragement given to voluntary alms-giving, and with the institution
of compulsory *Zakka* in Islam, Muslims and, especially people from
Hausa-Fulani cultural environment, have tended to equate alms-giving
with begging. They seem to think that you can't give alms or do acts
of charity unless there are beggars roaming around to receive what you
give out. So begging is indirectly encouraged, or at least not seriously
discouraged. There is no doubt about it that begging, bad and demeaning
as it is, has become something very difficult to discourage, though, of
course, for self-respecting people it remains impossible to justify by
any standard. Indeed, the Holy Prophet had indicated the ignominy
that awaited professional beggars. The Holy Prophet (SAW) said,
"Beggaring is not allowed for a rich man or for one who has strength and
is sound in limb, but only to one who is in grinding poverty or is
seriously in debt. If anyone begs to increase thereby his property, it
will appear as a leprosy on his face on the Day of Resurrection and
as heated stones from Hell-fire which he will have to eat. So let him
who wishes ask little, and let him who wishes ask much." If this is the
fate of beggars, what will be the fate of those whose mis-governance
produced them or accentuated their plight?

But we must also ask where we lost our spirit of giving and our
quality of fellow-feeling. Is this because of the fear of poverty that the
placards in our midst lead to no break of conscience, and so turn negatively
at the sight of our unfortunate beggars?

Trinidadian related from Abu Kalibah al-Annabi that the Holy
Prophet (SAW) said, "There are three things which I swear to be true
and I shall tell you something else, so keep it in mind. The three things
which I swear to be true are: that a man's property does not become less



FRIDAY COLUMN

Friday, January 28, 2005

Memo to the Land of Beggars

By Adamu Adamu

on account of *sadaqah*; that when a man is wronged and he bears it
patiently, Allah will give him greater honour on account of that, and
that when a man opens the door towards begging, Allah opens for him
a door towards poverty.

"The thing which I am going to tell you which you must keep in
mind is that the world has four types of people: one, a man whom
Allah has provided with property and knowledge, in [spending] which
he fears his Lord and [uses it to] join ties of relationship, acting in it
towards Allah as is due to Him, this man being in the best station. Two,
a man whom Allah has provided with knowledge but not with property;
who says with a sincere intention that if he has property, he will act as
so and so does, their reward being equal. Three, a man whom Allah has
provided with property but not with knowledge, in which he acts in a
careless manner ignorantly, not fearing his Lord with respect to it, nor
using it to join ties of relationship, or dealing with it in a right way, this
man being in the worst station. Four, a man whom Allah has provided
with neither property nor knowledge, who says that if he has property
he will deal with it as so and so does and has this intention, the least that
he has to bear being equal."

So important is this right of the poor in the wealth of the rich that
Allah instituted the collection and distribution of the *Zakka* as a pillar
of the religion of Islam. In this religion, the poor have a recognised
right to the wealth that the rich hold in trust to the Lord. The rich
cannot choose not to give. It is clearly spelt out in the Holy Qur'an;
and Allah did the distribution Himself.

"*Zakka* is only for the poor and the needy, for those employed to
collect it, for those whose inclinations incline to be reconciled, for the
freedom of those who are captives in great indebtedness, for [those
struggling in] the Cause of Allah and for the wayfarer [who is cut-off];
[this is] a duty imposed by Allah, [the Lord] omniscient, full of wisdom."
[Holy Qur'an 8:60]. Yet even those who might fall into any of the
eight categories were expected to make effort to get out of them. And
the Prophet was [and is] always there to help. A man of the Ansar came
to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and begged from him, and the Holy Prophet
[SAW] asked, "Have you nothing in your house?"

"Yes, a piece of cloth, a part of which we wear and a part of which
we spread [on the ground], and a wooden bowl-out of which we drink."
He said, "Bring them to me."

The Ansari man brought the articles to the Holy Prophet (SAW),
who took them in his hands and said, "Who will buy these?"

A man said, "I shall buy them for one dirham."
The Holy Prophet (SAW) said twice or thrice, "Who will offer
more than one dirham?"

A man said, "I shall buy them for two dirhams."
He [SAW] gave those to him and took the two dirhams, and giving
them to the Ansari man, he said, "Buy food with one of them and hand
it to your family, and buy an axe and bring it to me."

He then [bought] and brought the axe to him. The Holy Prophet
[SAW] took a handle on it with his own hands and said, "Go and gather
firewood and sell it, and do not let me see you for a fortnight."

The man went away and gathered firewood and sold it. When he
had earned ten dirhams, he came to him and bought a garment with
some of them and food with the others.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) then said, "This is better for you than
that beggar should become a spot of dishonour on your face on the
Day of Judgement. Begging is right only for three people; one who is
in grinding poverty, one who is seriously in debt or one who is responsible
for [paying] compensation and finds it difficult to pay."
[Abu Dawud]

By this action, the Holy Prophet (SAW) is demonstrating that the
functions of the leadership, besides disapproving of begging, include
helping the people, especially the poor, to unlock their potential,
putting back confidence into them, and helping them harness their
own human and material capital. Looking at it, it is as if the various
leadership classes in the North have abandoned the poor to their own
devices. And the truth is that they have really no device to be abandoned to.

But the restraint expected from those who go without is as great as
the generosity expected of those to whom much has been given. The
poor, unfortunate as their situation is, have no right to constitute a
nuisance to society. However, in a situation in which begging is the
difference between life and death, preaching decorum to one smitten
by hunger is perhaps time wasted. But the line has already been drawn,
as is clear from the following hadith:

Umayyah bin Hinn and Aqiba bin Habis begged the Holy Prophet
[SAW]. He commanded that they be given what they begged for.
Thereafter the Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "He who begs [from people]
when he has sufficient is simply asking for a large amount [of the
embury] of Hell-fire." The Companions asked, "O Apostle, what
constitutes sufficiency?" He replied, "It is that which will provide a
morning and evening meal." [Abu Dawud]

Yahya related to me from Malik from Abu Ziyad from al-A'raj
from Abu Hurayrah that the Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "The very poor
people [who deserve alms] are not the people who constantly
walk from person to person and are given one or two miteles, and one
or two dates." They [the Companions] asked, "Who then are the poor,
O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "They are the people who do not find
enough for themselves and other people are not aware of them [for
their desperate situation] to give *sadaqah* to them, and they do not
start begging from others." [Muslim]

Ahmad related that Anas said, "A man from the tribe of Tameem
came to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I
have plenty of property, a large family, a great deal of money, and I am
a gracious host to my guests. Tell me how to conduct my life and how
to spend.' The Messenger of Allah (SAW) replied, 'Pay *Zakka*, out of
your property, for truly it is a purifier which purifies you, and be kind
to your relatives, and acknowledge the rights of the poor, neighbours
and beggars.'" Ali ibn Abi Talib said, "Allah the Exalted has placed a due
upon the properties of the rich to meet the needs of the poor. Thus, if
the poor are hungry or asked or struggle because of the neglect of the
rich, then Allah will hold them [to the crime] accountable on the Day of

Judgement and will punish them." For the truly poor, Allah has spread
out a banquet: "And know that out of all the increase that you may
acquire [during] [a fifth share] is assigned to Allah and to the Apostle and
to near relatives, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer if we do believe
in Allah and in the revelation We sent down to Our servant on the day
of testing the day of the meeting of the two forces. For Allah hath
power over all things."
[Qur'an 8:41]

There was a time in Islamic history when this verse was not
restricted to war booty or tax on mineral wealth but to all income; and
both *Zakka* and *Kharaj* were paid, not as voluntary charity, but as
religious obligations that might not be avoided. Despite this, the Holy
Prophet himself never took *Zakka* forcibly from the rich even if they
possessed funds beyond *Zakka*'s limits, though Islamic jurists
were later to determine that this could be done. Of course, no jurist
had the right or competence to act aside a decision by the Holy Prophet,
but the fact that they could do so underscores the widespread belief that
Zakka is the property of the poor, and not a charity to them by the
rich. Even in the general non-technical *sadaqah*—the voluntary giving
from non-*Zakka*able and post-*Zakka* funds—which is what can more
properly be called charity, the Holy Qur'an recognises the right of
those who ask and those who are prevented from asking by self-respect
and positive pride.

But while begging may indeed be a shameful profession, where is
the blame for it to lie? Do we blame the beggars who may die if they
don't beg, or do we blame the system that produced them? While it
may be trendy and the in-thing to clear beggars off our streets and
demolish their shanty towns, government must accept that it is simply
whitewashing over the problem, not solving it; burying its failure, not
facing it.

In any case, the helpless, hapless, fingered mendicants on street
corners are not the only beggars in our midst. We all are. The failure of
government to transform our environment into a truly productive and
caring one has turned the country into a nation of beggars—unproductive
beggars.

Today, it is either you have no Western education—and are lame,
deaf, blind or plain lazy and without pride—and you go out to the
streets; or you are Western-educated and you are lazy, lucky or
frightened of work—and you go off to the offices and beg for contracts.
Sometimes it really sounds so funny when even those who sympathise
with beggars lament the fact that beggars no longer beg for just what
they need. Some of these beggars, like sympathisers complain, are very
rich, yet they never get tired. They come out to beg everyday.

But why should they get tired? They have no right to do so within
the logic and context of Nigeria's professional ethics. Lawyers plead in
court everyday, journalists report news and stories everyday; teachers
teach students everyday; and so why shouldn't beggars beg people
everyday? Isn't it a profession like any other? And is a professional,
don't you go for professional excellence? Contractors are never tired—they
do their thing everyday, and so we never clear them from offices.
The truth is that perhaps our beggars don't know how to beg just
like our society doesn't know how to give out charity. We willingly
give to those who beg on the streets, but to the others we give indirectly,
unconsciously and therefore unwillingly—and in even greater measure.
Here is how.

Suppose a government department wishes to buy ten refrigerators.
It is there in the market selling for 50,000 Naira a piece. What remains
is for the procurement officer to take a purchase advance and rush off
to the market and buy it. That doesn't usually happen, though it can—
and should. What happens is that a contractor comes along and is given
the contract to supply those at 100,000 Naira a piece. Perhaps it is not
impossible that contractors add value to the Nigerian system, but
shouldn't the public sector have resorted to them only in situations
where there is comparative advantage for the public? Otherwise, we are
saying that we have sanctioned public officials to donate in their friends
in the name of contract, which, indeed, is nothing but alms to educated
beggars.

Despite the great difference between street begging and contract
solicitation in offices, begging is begging; but whatever its variety, its
cause remains the same—visionless leadership. They are produced by a
system that is not working. It has been said that the aim of correct
education is not knowledge; it is action. These people have not been
taught how to act—those educated have no clear idea what to do, those
poor have not been properly empowered.

It is in this area that the Northern elite woefully failed the Northern
poor. There is no one in the North to fix a handle to the axe of the
poor to enable them gather firewood and sell. No one to empower
them. Perhaps it is not entirely accurate to say this, because, at least in
Kaduna, I am aware that Alhaji Adamu Yusuf, the BHC Hausa
correspondent, has set up an enterprise to train those condemned by
society to become beggars so that they become future entrepreneurs
and craftsmen. But, indeed, isn't it such a shame for the Muslims of the
North (and I have never seen a Christian Northerner begging) that if
all the rich and able people among Muslims in the North, an initiative
of this sort will only be launched by a young, struggling, poor journalist?

And while Muslims must end begging, they must resist any attempt
to dismantle the *madrassa* system, which has often wrongly been seen
as the culprit. Indeed, they must protect it against all the vagaries of
the times, from the destructive aspects of modernism, including the
disdain for religion by the Western-educated elite. *Madrassa* must
continue but it must be reformed. What the society needs to do very
urgently is to evolve a support system for the *ummalah* system,
based on *Zakka*, *sadaqah*, organised charity and endowments.

But begging will only end when elite from the Hausa-Fulani cultural
enclave change their mindset; and from experience, Nigerians will
never change their mindset unless they are forced by the environment.
And the only environment that can force them to do so is one in which
a future government rewrites and re-establishes a system that works;
a system that respects and enforces procedures for doing things and
explores our resources for the benefit of our people. We need a system
that can be initiated or beaten by its operators, a system that gives
the poor their due. Only then should we try to stop beggars—the
educated and the uneducated—from doing their thing.