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**ATBU reopens, securitymen take over campus**  
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**W**orried by incessant loss of lives as a result of snake bites in his emirate, the Mai of Kaltungo in Gombe state, Engineer Sale Muhammad has offered a prize of N200 to anybody who brings a dead snake to his palace as a means of eradicating the reptiles in the area.

## Traditional ruler offers N200 to rid Kaltungo of snakes

The traditional ruler has also directed his district and village heads to produce at least 150 dead snakes monthly to his palace. This community self-help project initiated by the emirate, said Engineer Sale,

From Mohammed Abubakar, Stringer, Gombe

will help check the problem of fatal snake bites which he explained causes the death of an average of 12 people every month.

He said this measure is

yielding positive results weeks after its inception because about 5000 snakes have so far been killed in the emirate.

The emir commended the state government for its constant supply of anti-

snake venom to Kaltungo general hospital which he said was being patronised by other areas in the northeast sub-region.

He also acknowledged the efforts of the Kaltungo local government council

which he said supplied anti-snake venom worth N1.5 million to the hospital for free administration to victims.

Kaltungo, located on a rocky area about 60 kilometres from the state capital, Gombe, has been facing problems of deaths from snakes bite for decades.

# 2007: We're investigating IBB — Ribadu

The chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Malam Nuhu Ribadu, has revealed that the commission is investigating former military president, retired General Ibrahim Babangida, in the run up to the 2007 presidential elections.

By AbdulAzeem Abdullahi, Group News Editor

vowed that the former ruler will never rule the country again, according to the current edition of the *Financial Standard* a weekly newspaper published in Lagos.

The EFCC boss made the revelation in Johannesburg,

South Africa, while addressing members of the Patriots Club of Nigeria, a group of Nigerian professionals living in that country.

According to Ribadu, the EFCC has "checked" on General Babangida's affairs internationally through its relationships with the international community, but

admitted that so far, the commission has not succeeded in pinning the former leader with money laundering or any other financial crime.

Ribadu said: "But he is so crafty. Nowhere will you see his name as the owner of a property or the holder of a bank account abroad. But

that does not mean he will escape. Never, never again in Nigeria will someone like him come to rule the country. It is too late for people like that. The world has changed."

General Ibrahim Babangida who ruled the country from 1984 to 1993 as military president recently declared his return to partisan politics disclosing that he is at present a card-carrying member of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Different pressure groups have sprung up and have coalesced into what they call the Nigeria Project to put pressure on the retired general to contest the next presidential elections in 2007.

But Ribadu disclosed that

corrupt and lawless people will never have the chance again to rule the country as they were already on the wrong side of history. He added that the nation has lost respect in the international community because of the misrule of past military rulers like the late General Sani Abacha.

The EFCC boss said that the commission will do all that is possible to create a conducive climate for investment in the country, pointing out that companies who take advantage of the generosity of the federal government to flout international business principles are in for a tough time.

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President Olusegun Obasanjo welcomes the former Sudanese Chief Justice El-Haji Yousuf Dafa Alla to the State House, Abuja, during his official visit to Nigeria yesterday. In the centre is the first Vice President of Sudan El-Haji Osman Mohammed Taha.  
 Pix: Joe Oroye.

## NITEL, Pentascope deal shoddy — Ex-NITEL ED

**We followed due process — el-Rufai**

A former Executive Director (ED), of the Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), Mr Y. S. Adamu, has accused the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), under the stewardship of incumbent minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Malam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai, of "fraudu-

By Ahmed I. Nhekarau, Group Business Editor & Nasir Imam, Property Editor

lently" awarding NITEL's management contract to Pentascope.

But in a swift reaction to the former ED's accusation and several other allegations levelled against him over the NITEL contract, el-Rufai, in

a 95-page document denied any shoddy arrangements in the deal, maintaining that the BPE under his supervision followed "due process" in engaging Pentascope to run NITEL.

Mr Adamu, in a six-page memorandum submitted to the House of Representatives committee on communications currently investigating the circumstances

surrounding the award of the NITEL management contract said: "The whole process was fraudulent from the company itself — The Pentascope — to the target given them. There was no way Pentascope could perform because they had not the slightest idea what they were signing for when they signed. At any rate, you do not expect

Contd. on Pg 2

## Suicide bomber kills 110 in Iraq

A suicide car bomber attacked a crowd of police and Iraqi National Guard recruits south of Baghdad yesterday, killing at least 110 and wounding 133, police said. It was one of the deadliest insurgent attacks since President Bush declared the end of major fighting in May 2003.

Associated Press Television News footage showed large pools of blood outside the medical clinic, located on a dusty street in Hilla, 60 miles south of Baghdad. Scorch marks covered the clinic walls and dozens of people gathered to help put body parts into blankets. Socks of shoes and tattered clothes were piled up in a corner.

"A suicide car bomb hit a gathering of people who were applying for work in the security services. The incident led to the death of 106 people and injury of 133 citizens," Babil province police said in a statement

By Jibrin Abubakar, Reporter (Foreign Desk)

released to reporters

It added that "several people" were arrested after the blast. It did not elaborate.

Dozens of bodies could be seen laying on the ground after the blast, and half a dozen ambulances ferried casualties to a nearby hospital, witnesses said. The huge blast damaged nearby shops and parked cars, and sent panicked people fleeing.

"People were queuing up to be checked medically in order to become policemen. A car came ... and exploded, killing more than 50 people, more than what you expect," Ammar Moya, a witness told APTN.

A second car bomb exploded Monday at a police checkpoint in Musayyib, about 20 miles north of Hilla, killing at least one policeman and wounding

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# NEWS

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"Companies coming to Nigeria must do what is right. We have told them that they must apply the same standards in Nigeria as they do outside," he said.

Ribadu also disclosed that economic crimes especially those relating to money

and property constitute about 70 percent of all crimes in the country, pointing out that the recent action taken against former police boss, Tafa Balogun, was an indication that the government was ready to reverse the trend.

Suicide *Contd. from Pg 1*

several others, police said on condition of anonymity.

Iraqi security forces have been regularly targeted by insurgents who see them as collaborating with U.S. forces and want to undermine Iraq's American-backed government.

The twin attacks came a day after Iraqi officials announced that Syria had captured and handed over Saddam Hussein's half brother, in the latest in a series of arrests of important insurgent figures that the Iraqi government hopes will deal a crushing blow to violent opposition forces.

The arrest of Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan also ended months of Syrian denials that it was harboring fugitives from the ousted Saddam regime. Iraq authorities said Damascus acted in a gesture of goodwill.

Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan, who shared a mother with Saddam, was nabbed along with 29 other fugitive members of the Baath Party in Hasakah in northeastern Syria, 30 miles from the Iraqi border, the officials said Sunday on condition of anonymity. The US military in Iraq had no comment.

Syria is under intense pressure from the United States, the United Nations, France and Israel to drop its support for radical groups in the Middle East, to stop harboring Iraqi fugitives and to remove its troops from Lebanon.

A week ago authorities grabbed a key associate and the driver of Jordanian-born terror leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaida in Iraq and believed to be the inspiration of the ongoing bombings, beheadings and attacks on Iraqi and American forces. Iraqi officials said they expect to take al-Zarqawi soon.

"I hope all the terrorists will be arrested soon and we

can live in peace," said Safiya Nasser Sood, a 54-year-old Baghdad housewife. "Those criminals deserve death for the crimes they committed against the Iraqi people."

The Iraqi officials did not specify when al-Hassan was captured, only saying he was detained after the Feb. 14 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in Beirut, Lebanon, in a blast that killed 16 others. Syria fell under suspicion in the killing because of its military and political domination of the country, where it maintains 15,000 troops. Hariri had quit the premiership over Syria's continued presence in Lebanon.

Capt. Ahmed Ismael, an Iraqi intelligence officer, said al-Hassan was handed to the Iraqis Sunday. Another Iraqi official said Syrian security forces expelled al-Hassan after he and his supporters had been turned back in an earlier attempt to cross the Syrian border into Lebanon and Jordan.

Al-Hassan was No. 36 the six of diamonds on the list of 55 most-wanted Iraqis compiled by US authorities after Saddam was toppled in April 2003. Eleven from the deck of cards issued to help troops identify the suspects remain at large. The United States had offered \$1 million for his capture.

Iraq's postelection Shiite Muslim power broker, United Iraqi Alliance leader Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, told AP al-Hassan's arrest signaled troubled times for the insurgency.

"Those criminals are on the run and we will chase the rest of them. We will work on arresting all the criminals, either those inside Iraq, or those in other neighboring countries, so that they can stand fair trial and be punished for the crimes they have committed against the Iraqi people," he said.

Vice President Atiku Abubakar yesterday mourned the death over the weekend of former works minister, General Abdulkarim Adisa and former deputy Senate President, Alhaji Haruna Abubakar.

In separate letters to late General Adisa's wife and Hajia Mariam Abubakar, wife of the late deputy senate president, the vice president said he received the news of the deaths with shock and disbelief.

He said General Adisa's death "is a loss to Nigeria. The late General was not only full of life but he was someone who was still eager to put his experience in the service of his fatherland," adding: "As a military governor and minister, General Adisa made a lot of contributions to the nation's

## Atiku, Wabara, Masari mourn Senator Haruna Abubakar

By Reuben Yunana, Isa Sanusi & Zainab Alimi

public service."

In his letter to late Senator Haruna Abubakar's family, Atiku said with the death "Nigeria has lost a caring, hardworking and versatile lawyer and politician", and urged the family to take solace in the fact that "his brief life had been eventful and packed with many achievements".

"Senator Haruna made tremendous contributions to the nation in his capacity as solicitor general and permanent secretary in the old Plateau State, as MD of PPMC and as senate Deputy President.

"All of us who have had the privilege of knowing and

working with him admired his intelligence, courage and his zest for life.

"His tenure as deputy senate president would go down in history as the beginning of a new order. He and his colleagues brought a lot of colour, dynamism and substance to the leadership of the upper House," Atiku said in his letter yesterday.

In his turn, President of the Senate, Adolphus Wabara, described the death of the former Deputy Senate President, Haruna Abubakar, as a colossal loss to the nation,

adding that the late Senator was a gifted Nigerian who accomplished so much very early in life and was a champion among his contemporaries.

A statement signed by Wabara's special adviser on media and publicity, Mr Harry Ugbolue, also described the deceased as an eloquent parliamentarian and a charismatic politician who was well respected, adding that the death of Haruna Abubakar came at a time his services were most needed by the nation.

Wabara particularly condoled the government and the people of Nasarawa state over the irreparable loss and prayed Allah to grant his family the fortitude to bear the loss.

In the same vein, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, and special adviser to the president on National Assembly matters, Senator Florence Ita-Giwa, has condoled the family of late Senator Haruna Abubakar who died at the weekend in London after a protracted illness.

Alhaji Masari noted that the passing on of the late senator was a great loss to the nation, especially at the time when his experience was greatly needed by the country.

He described late Senator Abubakar as a man who committed himself to the progress and unity of Nigeria and who during his term, became one of the most outstanding senators of the fourth republic.

He urged the family of the deceased and the people of Nasarawa state to take solace in the fact that the late senator put his life to beneficial use in their service and the progress of Nigeria, just as he prayed for the repose of the soul of the deceased.

Senator Florence Ita-Giwa also prayed for God to grant the family of late Senator Haruna Abubakar the courage and fortitude to bear his loss.

She said in a press statement she signed and made available to *Daily Trust* that she received the news of his death with great shock and remembered him to be a deep thinker who managed the turbulent and rambunctious Senate of his time through personal tact and deployment of legislative finesse.

"Nigeria has lost a great man, an excellent politician and indeed a great humanitarian, an avowed canvasser of the doctrine of the separation of powers and as the Deputy Senate President of the last Assembly, an excellent manager of people," she extolled.

She said that senators who had the rare privilege of working with late Senator Abubakar will miss his tremendous energy and broad intellectual base of legislative ideas and prayed that Almighty God grant his soul eternal rest.

## Obasanjo receives report on Darfur

By Reuben Yunana, Senior Reporter, State House Sudan.

Sudanese first vice president, Ali Usman Taha, yesterday briefed President Olusegun Obasanjo on the details of the report of the national commission of inquiry on the crisis in Darfur.

Also yesterday, the authorities in Cote d'Ivoire have called for the intervention of President Olusegun Obasanjo in the crisis in the West African nation with a view to finding an amicable solution.

The Sudanese vice president led a high level government delegation which met with President Obasanjo at the State House yesterday.

Issues discussed centred on adjudication, criminal justice and reconciliation in the war torn Darfur region of

(Obasanjo) of the African Union on ways to make progress in the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire," she stated.

Briefing State House correspondents, presidential spokesperson Mrs Oluremi Oyo, said the meeting was a follow-up to an earlier meeting between Obasanjo and his Sudanese counterpart, Omar Al-Bashir 10 days ago.

She said Mr Taha commended the Nigerian leader's role in the resolution of the crisis in Togo and Sudan.

A message was also brought from the Ivorian president, Mr Laurent Gbagbo, Mrs Oyo said.

"Essentially what the message contained was that following the successes made in Togo, President Laurent Gbagbo is seeking the advice of the chairman

President Olusegun Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo



President Olusegun Obasanjo

Pentastop *Contd. from Pg 1*

somebody to give what he does not have."

Going down memory lane, the former NITEL executive director narrated how the el-Rufai led management at the BPE allegedly "bungled" a good attempt to transform the first national telecommunication carrier in the country into a "world class" telecommunications company.

According to Adamu, a presidential advisory council (PAC), constituted by the Obasanjo administration in its first term, produced a working document that metamorphosed into the Telecoms Act, but was brazenly igno-

red by el-Rufai while he held sway as director general of the privatisation implementation agency.

The consequence of this action, he said, led to the subsequent attempt to sell NITEL to Investors International (London) Limited (IILL), a special purpose vehicle created only to run NITEL without the requisite expertise to do so.

He alleged that, because the BPE under el-Rufai ignored professional advice which showed that the global telecom market was in serious trouble, it went ahead with its bid to sell NITEL to IILL, thereby making industry watchers and analysts to "suspect a hidden agenda," stressing that the privatisation deal was therefore bound to fail from the onset.

The former NITEL ED alleged further that the Pentastop contract has done so much "damage" to the nation's first telecommunication carrier that it would take a "restructuring" of NITEL for it to be attractive to potential investors under a privatisation regime.

But the FCT minister said that he is absolutely convinced that nothing wrong was done in the award of the Pentastop contract even as he reiterated that due process was followed in the award of the contract.

el-Rufai said that Pentastop has a services agreement with KPN, a Royal

Dutch Telecoms Company and the largest telecommunications carrier in the Netherlands.

Under the management contract between NITEL, Pentastop and BPE, remuneration to the contractor shall be comprised of a fixed fee, a fixed amount for expenses, a possible annual performance bonus and possible end of contract performance.

He said though a fixed fee of \$10 million was provided for in the contract agreement with Pentastop, only a mobilisation fee of \$2 million was however paid for an all-inclusive out-of-pocket expenses like rent for residential accommodation, insurance etc.

The minister attributed the problem to lack of the then NITEL board under the chairmanship of Dr Anieze Chinuba and his successor, Engineer Vincent Maduka, to constitute an executive committee to serve as a verification expert.

The verification expert, el-Rufai said, according to the contract is to review and evaluate all information reported by the contractor based on monthly reports.

The minister however maintained that he left the BPE as director general some few months after the 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2003, contract agreement signing with Pentastop International and NITEL to assume duties as the FCT minister.



The chairman of the National Political Reform Conference, Justice Niki Tobi (middle) flanked by his vice chairman, Alhaji Sule Katagun (left) and the secretary of the confab, Rev. Father Matthew Hassan Kukah (right), during the sitting of the confab in Abuja ...yesterday. Pix: Kennedy Eghonodje.

# News

## PLSG vs EFCC Court fixes March 23 for ruling

The Federal high court in Jos has fixed Wednesday, March 23, for ruling in the case brought before it by the Plateau state governor against the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), investigating its accounts.

At the resumed hearing of the case yesterday, counsel to EFCC, Mr. Joshua Saidu and that of the Attorney-General of the federation, Tafa Ahmed, told the court that they had no further argument on the case.

But the plaintiff's counsel, Mr. Robert Clarke, who made further arguments, maintained that the action of the attorney-general of the federation in

From Rakiya A. Muhammad,  
Correspondent (Jos)

instructing the EFCC to investigate the accounts of the state government was unconstitutional, illegal, null and void as it contravenes section 128 (i) (bii) and 128 (2) (b) of the constitution.

Mr. Clarke added that if the attorney-general of the federation claims that he was acting on the Mutual Assistant Act on Criminal Matters CAP 235 of the law of the federal republic of Nigeria, "then his action is unconstitutional, illegal and void ab initio, the AGF in a federation of 36 states that are sovereign by their status, cannot give instructions to third parties where such instructions are inconsistent with the constitution and for which no power has been vested in that constitution for him to do so."

He maintained that the EFCC does not have the power to investigate a state's accounts, stressing that the only authorities that have the constitutional right to investigate the account of a state government are the auditor-general of the state and the House of Assembly.

The plaintiff's counsel also noted that there was conflict arising from the instruction given by the attorney-general of the federation to the EFCC to determine whether the case of corrupt enrichment can be sustained against Governor



Alhaji Adamu Ciroma (R) and Alhaji Adamu Fika (L), both elder statesmen discussing at the National Political Reform Conference in Abuja .... recently. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

## ATBU reopens, securitymen take over campus

The Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University [ATBU], Bauchi, has finally resumed academic activities amidst tight security.

The university was shut down abruptly following a riot resulting in the death of a Christian student's leader, Mr Sunday N. Achi, on October 9, last year.

However, its sister institution, the Federal Polytechnic, has remained closed as the management of

From Tashikalmah Hallah,  
Correspondent, (Bauchi)

the institution said they are still consulting and that they would announce the date of resumption very soon.

Our correspondent who was at the Yelwa campus of the university reports that security personnel comprising men of the state security service, anti riot policemen and conventional police were deployed to the institution's gate since Sunday while all entrance into the campus is subjected to security checks.

Although the campus was peaceful and students, lecturers and non academic staff were attending lectures and official schedule respectively, however, the security set up was scary, as revealed by the students who spoke to *Daily Trust*.

"I have never seen this kind of thing", said a three hundred level students of Civil Engineering, Umar Yusuf. "Maybe it was because of the situation that led to the closure of the institution. But, I think both the Christians and the Muslim students have learnt their lessons.

We don't need this kind of confusion [incident] to happen again. We are here to



Professor Fabian Usuji,

read and associate with one another".

"But look at it, they have deployed police, stationed an armoured tank. The whole place has been taken over by the security. That academic freedom is no longer there. I pray that this thing will never happen again" he added.

"I don't understand the decision to use metal detectors to search the students. Its too cumbersome. I dont know for how long this would continue", said Halima Usman, a student in the department of industrial chemistry, adding that "well its our fault. The policemen could not have been here if not because of our impatience. We are impatient in this country that is why we always have this kind of religious and communal crisis".

However, justifying the presence of the security personnel on the campus, Mr. Andee Ihome, Deputy Registrar [public relations], explained that "it's a kind of response to the stimulus. You would realise the circumstances under which we closed are not particularly palatable.

## Adisa was a patriot - AbdulZaraq (SAN)

Late Major-General Abdulkarim Adisa has been described as a great patriot who stuck to the truth all his life.

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) Alhaji AbdulRazaq, made the observation in a telephone interview with *Daily Trust* at the weekend.

The legal luminary explained that though some Nigerians might have disagreed with late Adisa's style of presentation, "there

## 'Palliative is the proper solution to fuel hike'

From Abdullahi M. Gulloma,  
Labour Reporter

The palliative committee set up to explore measures to cushion the effects of incessant hike in the prices of petroleum products has declared that unless the country refines its own petroleum products, the nation's economy will not get out of the woods soon.

Chairman of the committee, Senator Ibrahim Nasir Mantu, who emphasised this in Abuja yesterday, said scarcity of the products will continue unless the four refineries in the country were made to refine petroleum products for local consumption and export.

Senator Mantu, who is also the deputy senate president, said that scarcity of petroleum products were artificially created and called on the federal government to enforce the policy of refining 50 percent of crude oil in the country.

He said that there was need for the federal government to encourage competition in the oil industry in order to address the problem of hike in the prices of petroleum products.

According to him, operating private refineries in the country would help tackle the vicious circle of fuel price hike.

"18 companies have been given licenses by the federal government to establish refineries. Some of whom are ready and will soon start construction of their refineries. Private refineries will increase supply of petroleum products in the country," he said.

Senator Mantu also said that transportation, which is the major area of cushioning the effects of fuel price hike, has not been felt in most states of the federation.

He said that 30 states have so far received the palliative funds from the federal government and that Nigerians would soon feel the impact of the palliative measures.

According to him, the ministry of finance will enforce compliance and ensure that the state governments use the palliative funds for the purpose for which the funds were released.

## I did not call Obasanjo a killer

- Gov Kalu

By Reuben Yunana,  
Senior Reporter, State House

Abia State governor, Chief Orji Uzor Kalu, has denied the contents of a magazine interview in which he is said to have described President Olusegun Obasanjo as a killer, as well as a very corrupt and vindictive leader.

In a letter dated February 23, 2005 addressed to President Obasanjo whom he referred to as "the African President," the Abia state governor said the interview "which was widely circulated on the internet was full of "wild and malicious issues," attributed to him.

"I wish through this letter to vehemently repudiate the said interview in its entirety and absolve myself of any culpability, particularly where it claimed that I referred to you as a killer," Orji stated in his letter, adding, "I was purported to have referred to you as a killer, corrupt and vindictive. In fact, the interview raised many wild and malicious issues which I never at any time said or imagined."

Orji pointed out that "we can at times have our differences but I have never taken it to such a level of extremity as painted by the said interview."

The interview he said is the work of "some persons somewhere," who are out to "cause disaffection between you (Obasanjo) and me."

He recalled that he had shown President Obasanjo what he called "genuine friendship over the years and can never do anything to impugn or castigate your good self or the exalted office of Mr. President."

He described those behind the interview as "a marooned person whose stock in trade is character assassination and

## Obasanjo to launch multi-billion Naira corporation

President Olusegun Obasanjo is soon to launch a multi-billion Naira corporation set up by a group of Nigerian businessmen.

The corporation, known as Trans-national Corporation of Nigeria, with an initial capital base of N14 billion has already been incorporated in Nigeria.

The company, a purely private sector initiative, enjoys the backing of the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Already, a group of Nigerian businessmen have put down N100 million each to facilitate the take-of of the corporation.

Investors that have committed substantial sums into the corporation include; the chief executive of Nigerian Breweries, Chief Festus Odimegwu, the chief executive of Zenith Bank, Mr. Jim Ovia, Managing Director of First Bank, Jacob Ajekigbe, Alhaji Ali Dangote and Mr. Nicholas Ukachukwu of Prince and Pricess Properties, as well as Director-General of the Nigerian Stock Exchange, Mrs. Ndi-Okereke Onyuike.

Briefing President Obasanjo on the journey so far,

By Reuben Yunana,  
Senior Reporter, State House

committee that recommended the take-off of the corporation, Mrs. Ndi Okereke Onyuike, said the committee had targeted a capital base of not less than \$500 million.

Presenting a document tagged: "Strategy intent document", Mrs. Onyuike said all the 420 members co-opted or nominated into the committee would form the nucleus of the core investor group for the corporation, adding that five of the committee members have actually made a commitment of N900 million each."

Stressing that "there are many of them (committee members) that can contribute N1 billion each; because this company will start with N14 billion and it will increase to N28 billion until we have \$500 million."

She added: "With N14 billion, the corporation is standing, the 42 people invited and co-opted will form the core group of the corporation. They will contribute the minimum of 30% of the N14 billion. Then we will now open the name to the Nigerian public and

# News

## NATIONAL CONFAB... NATIONAL CONFAB... NATIONAL CONFAB

### Confab now sits Fridays

Contrary to an earlier position last week that plenary would be held between Mondays and Thursdays only, the national political reform conference has extended its sittings to include Fridays

At the resumed sitting yesterday, chairman of the confab, Justice Niki Tobi, announced that morning sessions would be held on Fridays from 9.00am to 1.00pm.

The initial position was that Fridays should be used

By Habeeb I. Pindiga & Emmanuel Bello, Political reporters

for consultations with constituencies at the end of each four-day plenary week.

Some delegates also pointed out that Muslims needed adequate time for prayers on such days.

But Tobi who made the announcement without subjecting the decision to vote, said the conference could still conduct morning sessions and allow delegates to go for prayers after 1.00pm.

He was, however, greeted

with protest chants of "No!" by delegates from all parts of the chamber.

One of the delegates from Akwa Ibom state who refused to be named, told *Daily Trust* that the decision was "wrong", adding that "on Fridays, we should respect the sensibilities of our Muslim colleagues, especially as we are trying to forge unity, cooperation and understanding."

He said if Christian participants would not agree to work on Sundays, it was unfair for Muslims to be subjected to Friday sessions.

A lady delegate also said there was need to designate Fridays as free days so that members would have time for other chores.

### Don indicts govs over contradictory statements

By Abubakar Haruna, Reporter (Abuja)

Dr. Bashir Kurfi has said that the manner in which state governors try to out-do one another in making contradictory statements over the issue of presidentialism and parliamentarism indicated hidden agenda in the political reform conference.

Dr. Bashir Kurfi who is a senior lecturer at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, made the statement in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Hausa service, monitored in Abuja yesterday. He said that the contradictory statements made by the governors raises fears about the authenticity of the conference.

He said "this is a clear indication that there is a hidden agenda in the conference or else, why should the governors, after nominating delegates, hold meetings and announce their positions over what should be discussed at the conference."

He added that "they should have reserved their opinion and allowed the delegates to deliberate on issues of national interest."

According to him, the state governors and president Obasanjo want to feign making contrary statements in order to disintegrate the north and achieve their hidden agenda during the conference.

The governors from the southern states of the federation had urged the national political reform conference to ensure that true federalism is entrenched in the constitution while the Northern state governors urged the conference to ensure that true presidential system is maintained in the country.

President Olusegun Obasanjo insisted that the presidential system of government was the best for Nigeria and said "no two presidential systems in the world are the same."

He also said that the on going political reform conference and subsequent constitutional reforms are geared to give the country a unique presidential system.

One of the delegates representing the Islamic community in the national political reform conference, Dr. Ibrahim Tahir, has called for the consideration of the report of Justice Niki Tobi's Commission of Inquiry into the Plateau state ethno-religious clashes and other reports on various communal clashes around the country.

Tahir, who was speaking at the resumed session of the confab in Abuja yesterday, said the conference should not limit itself to the documents provided by the government.

His suggestion came as conference secretary, Rev. Mathew Kukah, asked any

### Delegates discuss Obasanjo's speech today

The national political reform conference will today commence debate on President Olusegun Obasanjo's inaugural address delivered last Monday, which listed the dos and don'ts of the confab.

Chairman of the conference, Justice Niki Tobi, who made this known yesterday's session, said also that the conference will decide on the draft rules of debates distributed yesterday.

Obasanjo had warned the confab against issues pertaining to the unity of the country, federal character, presidential system of gover-

### Tahir wants Plateau crisis, others discussed

delegate who had an idea of any helpful document to point it out so that copies would be provided for participants.

Tahir said the forum would do the country well by considering the various reports on different communal crisis in the country, as doing this, he suggested, may end up finding solutions to the recurring problems.

Besides the Tobi report

on the Plateau crisis, others he listed include those of Ife/Modakeke and Zaki Biam skirmishes.

He also called for the provision of the 1979 constitution, the draft constitutions of 1989 and 1995 and the reports of the committees that formulated them.

At the inauguration of the conference last Monday, President Olusegun Obasanjo had said that a number of documents would be made available to the delegates.

These include the 1999 constitution, draft electoral bill, the Makarfi committee report, report of the presidential constitution review panel, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document and the Oputa Panel report, among others.

Five of these documents were provided last week, but the Oputa panel report was not made available yesterday.

Kukah told the delegates that the panel report was in seven volumes of 10,000 to 15,000 pages and that this and the Vision 2010 report are yet to be handed over to the conference secretariat.

He also dismissed speculations that some of these reports were hidden.

### Confab Tit Bits

#### Press cameras worry Gemade

As delegates made spirited efforts to be recognised to mention one problem or the other yesterday, former national chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and member of President Olusegun Obasanjo's team of elder statesmen to the national conference, Chief Barnabas Gemade, could be seen also trying his luck.

When he was eventually asked to speak, he had one problem, and this was the domineering presence of television and still cameras of journalists in the confab chamber.

"We see more than half a dozen cameras and this is one of the things we need to put in order", he said and suggested that the accreditation for photo journalists should be categorized so that only those who need to cover the plenary were allowed to do that.

#### Which kind of deputy chairman is this?

Alhaji Sule Katagum sits next to Justice Niki Tobi in the confab chambers. His role is to deputise for Tobi.

But it looks like this deputy chairman is living up to the expectations of the man who brought him there and is not even willing to disappoint his critics. During confab sessions, Katagum sits in his flowing traditional attire watching as Mathew Kukah, who is supposed to be a scribe to the confab, takes over his duties. Whenever there is need to help Tobi in explaining things to delegates (and such need crops up every now and then), Kukah does that. We were told that the deputy is the second (not third) most powerful person in the gathering. Is Katagum truly timorous as Obasanjo described him in his *Not My Will!*

#### Boos and cheers in the house

A standing rule in the confab is that there will be no jeers or cheers when the honourable delegates are talking. But human emotions cannot be relied on. So, when Paul Unongo, delegate from Benue state stood up Monday and bore his colleagues with "high level *turanchi*", the visibly unimpressed delegates began to boo. There were hisses and shuffling of feet to indicate tiredness and pure boredom. Poor Unongo, he just retreated.

It wasn't only the Benue high chief. A prominent delegate (still from Benue) who represented the middle belt forum got the booing of a life time when he suggested that the sitting arrangement of delegate should be according to the geo political zones.

#### Women power displayed

This time, our women (nay mothers) are ready for war. Zainab Maina, leading the pack, at a point, charged at the chairman accusing him of gender-insensitivity. Mrs. Calome Jankada, on the federal government bill, also made the same accusations. But Niki (he insisted to be called by his first name), roundly denied the accusations.

#### Women want genderless language at confab

Women delegates at the on-going national political reform conference have taken their crusade for equality with their male colleagues to another level with a demand for a neutral language for the conference deliberations.

A woman delegate from the south at the end of the day's session yesterday accosted the conference secretary, Rev. Father Mathew Hassan Kukah, to protest the use of female unfriendly language and to demand that gender insensitive language be used instead.

The woman complained that during the days' business, the conference chairman, Justice Niki Tobi and his deputy, Alhaji Sule Katagum, used sexist language in all their remarks on the floor of the conference.

The woman expressed her reservation at the Justice Tobi's use of her word 'chairman' instead of 'chairperson' and at the deputy chairman's use of the word gentlemen in addressing the whole delegates.

The bewildered secretary however, advised the lady to make her observations on the floor of the conference when it reconvenes today, adding that it is not for or up to her to decide the type of language the conference will use.

## NIGERIA'S MOST RELIABLE SUPPLIERS OF POWER GENERATORS AND SERVICE COMPANIES

Power generation and distribution in Nigeria have been grossly inadequate to meet the electricity supply requirements, despite the huge investment and attention by the authorities to revive the sector.

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Recognising the contributions of the private sector in this troubled sector, **Media Trust Limited**, the publishers of *Daily and Weekly Trust Newspapers* will publish a special supplement on the major dealers/marketers and servicing companies of power generating sets and accessories in Nigeria. The focus is to sensitize the public on their contributions /achievements to the nation's economy, promote their image and identify challenges facing the sector. The publication date is **Tuesday, March 15, 2005**. For further enquiries and participation, interested companies are requested to call the **Special Projects Department** on any of the following nos: **08028494170, 08037038663, 08042145839, or 09-6720346.**

abstract

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# MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY  
tempthist@yahoo.com

## Opinion

### Confab: Alternative scenarios

That the much anticipated National Confab reconvened yesterday is no longer news, what is news is that its principal officers are beginning to talk from both sides of their mouths, justifying in the process, the widely held fears about the exact motives of the conference.

Far from the optimism generated by the president's inaugural speech, which held out some hope for the survival of the nation as a geographical if not a political entity, we are now been told in plain language, that the widely held view about 'no-go' areas was a bad joke after all! That leaves the door ajar for the ethnic champions from the South-West and their short-sighted counterparts from the South-East to sneak in their time-worn agenda on true federalism and regionalism which in truth, is the same as seeking for the balkanisation of the country along ethnic lines.

But even that is hardly surprising. In the coming days and months, as the battle lines are drawn and positions become hardened, look-out for the likes of Enahoro and Soyinka to make a sudden volte-face in support of the Confab especially if the delegates from their region are making significant headway in unravelling the country. In my earlier write-ups on the same subject, I hinted at a conspiracy and concluded that their grandstanding was a ruse.

My assertion was not without good reason. I simply recalled their antecedents before June 12, when they called the late M.K.O Abiola unprintable names from a northern lackey to a saboteur only to become his staunchest supporters when it appeared the unfortunate annulment of the election presented an unprecedented opportunity to unleash anarchy on their unsuspecting countrymen. Only a madman can bet with some degree of certainty, that this confab, which they now derogatorily refer to as the 'Abuja Dialogue' would not present a similar opportunity.

And so, now that we at least know what to expect from delegates at the confab, the time is ripe for us to also reassess our positions before the first blows are exchanged in the

expansive hall of the International Conference Center in Abuja. But if you think I am being over pessimistic please think again. The old Yugoslavia had fewer ethnic groups and still could not avoid the bloody civil war, which consumed it along with the lives of hundreds of thousands. Nigeria with its over 250 ethnic groups and huge concentration of Muslims, Christians and animists is a potential 'nuclear' bomb on a minefield.

Regardless of what may be said there really won't be much dialogue at the confab because it was planned to be so. Thanks to unprecedented propaganda over the past two decades, southern delegates hyped by their constituencies made to believe that the North had been feeding fat at their expense, would approach proceedings with a fixated mind-set, leaving little room open for negotiations. They would be equally astounded by the response of delegates from the north reeling from the negative effects of decades of selective propaganda and abuse. Should that be the case, their attitude would be a recipe for disaster.

Already, expectations from the confab had created mixed reactions from most informed people I spoke to. Apart from their individual safety, nearly all were most concerned about the huge shares they recently purchased in banks located in the southwest and what would become of their investments if the country finally disintegrates.

Others thought about the likely effects on communications such as the GSM had become an essential part of their lives while some wondered what to do with their businesses and landed assets located in other 'regions'. Still, to others like me the situation is even more confusing.

Geography suggests that I hail from the middle-belt of the nation, but I share little in common with Solomon Lar whose notion of the region those not stretch beyond the people of southern Borno, Kaduna, Plateau, Benue or even Niger state with the obvious religious connotation. Where would the Middle-Belt end or begin? With resource control high on the agenda, would the South-South be

left to enjoy their riches in peace? The scenario, like the possible outcome of the confab itself, can best be described as murky, but it does not end there. Throughout history, man has proven to be the most dangerous animal of all. With their possible insistence on regional police and armies, how would minorities, be protected from predators if they have their way?

**ADISA: The Vanity of it all....**

Last Friday, news broke that retired Major General Abdulkarim Adisa had died in a London hospital from injuries he sustained in a ghastly motor accident earlier in the week.

To his loved ones, the loss was no doubt a painful experience, while most Nigerians would surely miss his colour and sense of drama. But Adisa was equally a personification of all of us and perhaps if he never existed, we would have found a way to create someone in his image, literally speaking of course. Like the typical Nigerian, he represented crisis and aggression in an ocean of tranquillity; hope and kindness in the face of despair; humour in the absence of candour and; even poverty and greed in the midst of abundance.

He was brash to a fault but also honest enough, unlike Oladipo-Diya, to publicly admit culpability in their failed attempt to unseat Abacha. Yet the man was also crudely opportunistic.

Nigerians would recall that soon after IBB stepped aside, he emerged as one of Abacha's staunchest supporters, falling out with the dark-goggled General only over the little matter of changes in ministerial appointments. With Abacha's demise and OBJ an unattractive quarry, he became one of the leading apostles and promoters of the IBB 2007 project. Ever nostalgic of the good old days when he hugged the spotlight like a colossus, 2007 obviously presented an opportunity for his re-launch onto the big stage.

But alas, the year proved to be a bridge too far, with apologies of course to Cornelius Ryan. Still, those close to the man have kind tales of his generosity and sense of charity.

For that and the manner he enchanted us with his unpretentious mien, may he in death, finally find the peace that obviously eluded him in the latter stages of his life.

### Confab as Obasanjo's national soliloquy

By Charles Onunaiju

As fairly predicted, Nigeria's political elites have succumbed to the rapture of General Obasanjo's latest political forgery, the Conference to reform what is not even formed. Abuja, was chocked to the brim on February, 21<sup>st</sup> 2005, with fierce looking Policemen manning all the major entrance to the city, as if a certain invading army was on the offensive rather than the arrival of conference delegates.

As widely expected, Obasanjo handed out stern warning on the need for the conference delegates to remain only within the ambit provided by him. He warned them sternly not to stray beyond the confines of what he thinks Nigeria should be and therefore letting them appreciate that the show was entirely his, and that any innovative views that delegates might choose to canvass will be strictly within the perimeters of his received wisdom.

Because it appeared simplistic and ordinary, he took a stand on the indivisibility and sovereignty of Nigeria as the launch pad to gag the conferees. And the chairman of the conference, Justice Niki Tobi duly complimented General Obasanjo by even dramatizing his affirmation of Obasanjo's guidelines to the effect that he would resign should the Conference attempt to breach its guidelines.

True, there is virtually no group in Nigeria that takes seriously any attempt to balkanize the country, because this is not even popular among the ordinary people, for whom the size of Nigeria and its enormous resources has come to represent their scope of vision, ambitions and prospects.

Therefore, hiding under the guise of keeping Nigeria one is a tiresome alibi by Obasanjo and his clique to marginalize democratic discourse and scuttle popular participation.

Even avowed organizations with separatist agenda only plays up the card as a method of seeking inclusion and deepened involvement in the Nigerian project. Actually, if there is any group whose activities are threatening to Nigeria's Sovereignty, it is this regime and its key actors that want to preserve Nigeria without Nigerians. And whose key policy output is set to debase patriotism and render the concept of nationhood sterile, barren and totally dysfunctional. The banal rhetoric and empty soliloquy that makes patriotism part of the regime theatrics is going to be

replicated at the Obasanjo Conference with, of course, loud affirmations of a *great and united Nigeria* that is only valid if the tiny clique around this regime continue to live in the vain glory of being called powerful, when in actual fact they are midgets and dwarfs in matters of ideas and vision that is very critical to rebuilding a society.

The conference is doomed even before it got started, because it is tarnished by a credibility deficit. The thunderous applause of the delegates that greeted every word Obasanjo uttered at the inauguration of the conference showed that irrespective of the call of duty, these men and very few women among them, are already captives of Obasanjo's vision and ideas of Nigeria, which is wrapped in an empire dominated by him and those who see him as their messiah.

There is nothing General Obasanjo said at the inauguration ceremony of the conference that has not been repeated over and over by his predecessors.

And therefore, to take those incantations as the basis and scope of any meaningful dialogue will be a monumental excursion to vanity. The critical question of forming foundational pillars for a society ravaged by acute poverty of leadership is a free discourse in a market like open environment.

The tragic fate of our country and what appears to be our disproportionate share of leadership mediocrity is further constrained by the lifeless weight of legalism. What German Philosopher, Mr. Ferdinand Schliermacher described in his book *Soliloquies*, is the real situation in today's Nigeria. According to him, "how unavailing is the struggle of a superior mind, seeking moral cultivation and development, with this world that recognizes only legality, that offers death formulas in place of life, custom and routine in place of free activity."

As typical in our case, men in their mutual relations and State or government in its dealings with the citizens paid regard not to the whole man, but to superficial qualities; they respected not intelligence but cleverness, they appreciated not inner cultivation but outer riches. It is in this state of affairs that a country surrenders to mediocrity as a standard banner with which it buys her ticket on the downward slide of human prospects and development. The serious issues at the core of Nigeria's current condition is not even a matter of political will to overcome obstacles but in the total lack of critical ideas,

vision and even dreams which serve not only as a challenge to the existing reality but a strategic instrument to transform and transcend it.

Optimists of Obasanjo's Conference point to few men with personal credibility and intelligence whose input can be of meaningful contributions. However, the nature of the conference, patently undemocratic in composition and totally constrained by the narrowness of its architect's agenda, will found the most honest and patriotic delegates among the lots looking like a government's attack dogs. At best, the conference will scrape the bi-cameral legislature which Nigerians do not like in any case, and settle for a single chamber National Assembly and may even recommend a cabinet form of parliamentary government, but would never find the way on which to craft these externalities to the fabric of the society.

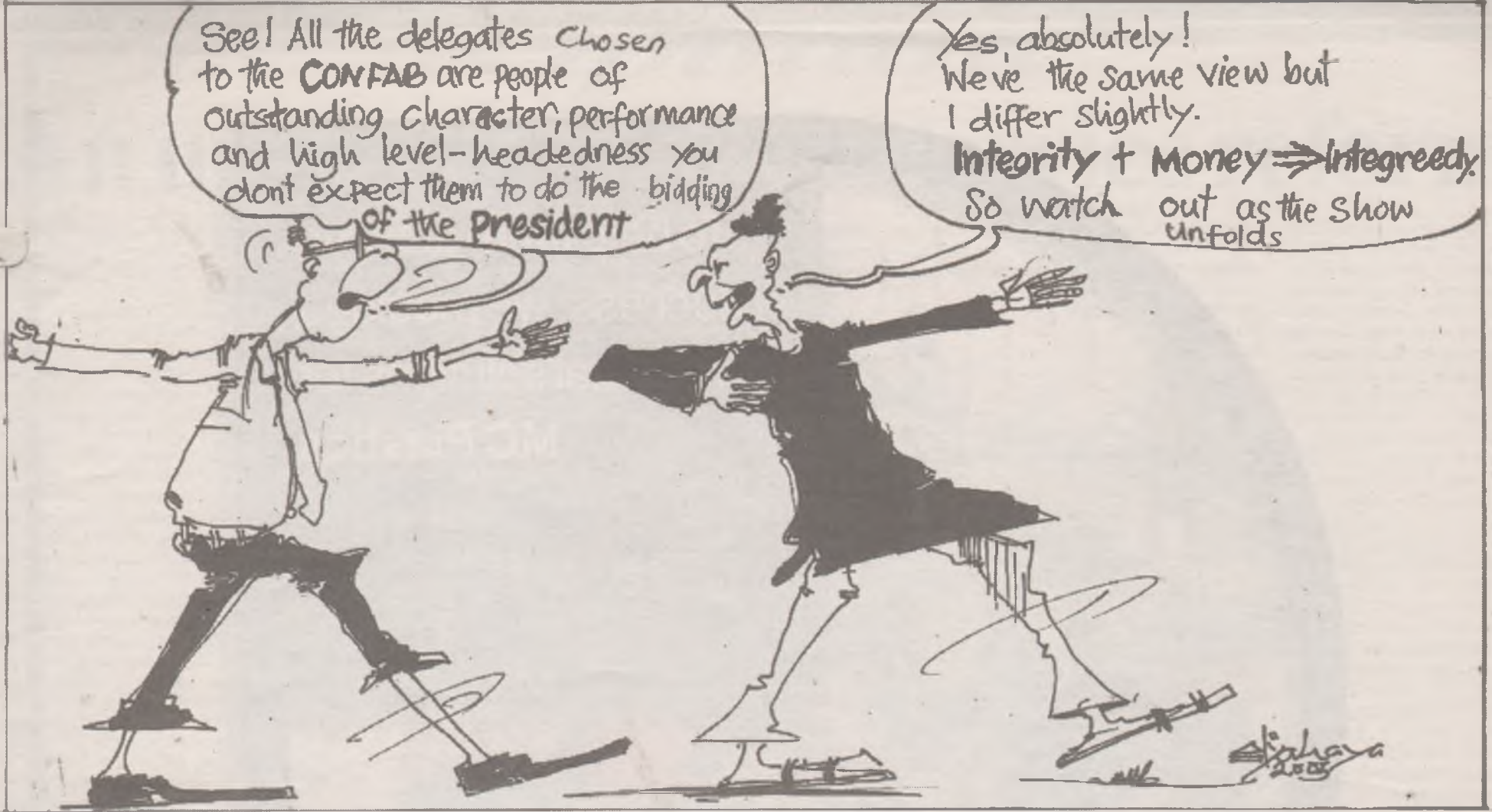
This is because two critical questions of ethnic nationality and religious faith have more or less been bared from the conference discussions, as if there is anything left in politics when the nationality question and religious faith is excluded from it.

In a characteristically hunky manner in which General Obasanjo takes his ideas as the immutable laws of nature, he claimed that "most Nigerians may have a permanent addresses in their villages" but according to him they "survive on the basis of work, business, leisure and other interaction and engagements". He further pontificated that "we should consolidate these positive webs and network of solidarity, compassion, tolerance, inclusion, organization, mobilization and collective dedication to the common good rather than reifying ethnicity in a nation and world that is changing rapidly".

If these words have been uttered by a fire-spitting university scholar, he would have deserved the applause Obasanjo got, at least for the beauty of the prose. But from a leader who should have been at home with the stark reality of contending political forces on the ground, this is terrible flight of fancy that can only issue from bankruptcy and total deficit of critical insight.

The Conference is not only a distraction, waste of time and resources, but a diversion on the massive electoral banditry that characterized the charade through which Obasanjo and the remaining clique imposed themselves on the country at the heavy cost of democracy and prosperity to Nigerians.

Mr. Onunaiju is a journalist based in Abuja and can be reached at onunaiju@yahoo.com



**YOUR LETTERS**

**Will Taraba ever enjoy the dividend of democracy?**

It is common knowledge that democracy is a system of government of the people, by the people and for the people. Unfortunately, this is not the situation in Taraba State where democratic principles are not observed by government in decisions that affect the people. Prominent citizens of the state who are members of the ruling political party (PDP) who should be carried along in the political processes in, turnout to be the individuals being persecuted by the leadership.

Instead of partnering with them, they are perceived as

threat and sidelined in decisions that affect the people with a view to rendering them irrelevant, forgetting that they have large followership across the state.

Transparency in the affairs of government is non-existent. Ethnic harmony, peace and security has eluded the state.

Since 1999 no effort has been made to bring development to the state. The leadership in Taraba remains unfocused, spending more time in Abuja and travelling to other states to commission projects executed by other governors

without being challenged to do likewise at home.

President Obasanjo has visited almost all the states in Nigeria to see their achievements and commission projects except Taraba State. Projects are initiated and abandoned at inception. All the infrastructures being enjoyed in Taraba today, were the achievements of Navy Captain Afolahan (rtd), the first Military Administrator. Our people still remember him for all these accomplishments. So far, he remains the only person who has ruled the state with a vision similar to those of its

"founding fathers".

Indeed, the use of ethnic considerations in running government by the leadership has not been good to our people. This has seriously caused division among our people and encouraged the abuse of public funds by the favoured groups. Funds meant for development of the state are converted into private resources and spent on buying luxury cars for friends and political associates in and outside the state as gifts.

Equally worrisome, are the indiscriminate trips overseas without success to look for foreign investors to

invest in the state and the unnecessary award of scholarships to indigenes of other states every year for political reasons. Furthermore, the cost of maintenance of the state owned aircraft has become an avenue for siphoning funds from the treasury. The millions being spent every year on local and foreign musicians during ceremonies and political rallies could be used in providing drugs.

Worse still, is the ongoing plan to get the state more indebted and committed to huge debt servicing obligations to frustrate

whoever takes over in 2007. The loans being negotiated are not likely to be used in executing any viable project but in the settlement of individuals. The names of the banks, syndicating these loans are already being compiled by pressure groups for onward submission to the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in a petition for probe of activities of the State Government from 1999 to 2005.

If the state had understood, a formidable team of prominent politicians, intellectuals and technocrats would have been formed out of the reservoir of retired Ministers, Ambassadors, federal permanent secretaries, senior military officers, Senior police and intelligence Chiefs, and serving academicians, professionals and businessmen. Some of these personalities have seen the past and the present. Given their wealth of experience they are better positioned to represent the state at the conference.

In conclusion, we cannot continue to wait and see the future of our people in the state being mortgaged and truncated by the deliberate act of some unpatriotic, politicians who believe in corrupt practices. We must call a spade, a spade when there is every reason to do so, with all sense of responsibility.

Mr. Solomon Yakoko, United Methodist Church, Abuja.

**Tsunami: A dinner to save humanity**

The gory picture of Tsunami that combined with the wailing cries of the survivors touched the hearts of world leaders compelling them to pool resources together in aid of the victims led by a donation of \$250 million from World Bank, as governments pledged the sum of \$500 million.

Although the response to the catastrophe was overwhelming, United Nations officials believe that it requires the biggest relief effort the world has ever seen. UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland had to confess, "I have never seen anything like it, the phenomenally terrible (death toll) figure ... It is not the last we'll see ..."

Moved by this humanitarian gesture, the Nigerian government also gave the sum of \$1 million to the UN Fund.

inaugurated on, 4th January, 2005 by President Olusegun Obasanjo to raise resources for the victims in the South-East Asia.

Apart from contributing to the UN Relief Fund, he also said during the inauguration that Nigeria will contribute additional funds for Tsunami Victims. He therefore charged the committee to raise resources both in cash and kind, describing the assignment as a national one.

Given this arduous task and considering the fact Nigeria has undoubtedly carved as niche for itself as a giving nation especially within the African continent, the challenge before the committee was to ensure that it surpasses the target. This they believe will further project the image of the country positively in the eyes of the world.

The committee co-

Muhammadu Maccido and President of the Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN), Archbishop Peter Akinola, has other eminent Nigerians such as Emir of Gwandu, Haruna Jokolo, Archbishop John Onayekan, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano, Governor Victor Attah of Akwa Ibom State, Mr. Jim Ovia and Miss Ayo Obe others include Hajiya Bulkisu Yusuf, Chief Ajibola Ogunshola Alhaji Umaru Mutallab and Engineer Abba Gana.

Since its inauguration, members of the committee have collectively and individually made relentless efforts towards ensuring that they accomplish the task that is before them. Realizing that most European Union countries have already contributed to the fund and Nigeria, which occupies an important place in Africa has always

show cause for reciprocity especially as it concerns the plight of third world nations.

It was in this regard that the committee considering the fact the \$1 million given by that the Federal Government to the UN Relief Fund was not enough, decided to look inward to raise more funds that will add credibility to the nation. As one of the items stated "we have done it before and so we should be seen to be setting the pace for the rest of Africa".

To achieve this fresh goal, the committee has set up a Dinner Sub-Committee under the leadership Gov. Victor Attah to organize a fund raising Dinner Night next month in Aso Rock Villa. President Obasanjo is expected to host other prominent Nigerians, state governors, ministers, members of the diplomatic corp, parliamentarians, and multinational corporations

Already, the leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) have pledged to play a prominent role during the event. And the organizers are also poised to add weight to the call for humanitarian service.

As a measure to further add colour to the event and to also use music as a vehicle of conveying the message across, the organizers have in their wisdom decided to involve the performing musicians Association of Nigeria (PMAN).

Some of its members have already put together an amazing theme song along with others. This dinner must save humanity.

Samuel Adekunle, Plot 1027, Lugbe Abuja.

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



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# Opinion

## An update on public service reform

It seems 2005 is the year for the transformation of the public service that will make it more efficient, productive and accountable in the conduct of government business. Between January and February of the New Year, the federal government has taken some steps to reposition the service for greater effectiveness. Within the period, President Olusegun Obasanjo inaugurated a Presidential Committee on the Review of Public Service's rule, procedure and reform. The Committee, which is chaired by Mr. Steve Orosanye, the Principal Secretary to the President with membership from relevant agencies, is to immediately work out transitional arrangements to facilitate on-going Public Service Reforms in the areas of appointment, deployment, discipline, performance management, motivation and voluntary exit incentives among others.

Within the period too, were circulars and directives that will promote justice and equity in the service. For instance the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Ufot Ekaette issued a circular for the decentralization of Due Process Office for proper coordination and cost-effectiveness in executing government's programmes and projects, where even the old untouchable oil and gas sector will toil the line of due process. In another development, the Head of Service of the Federation, Alhaji Mahmood Yayale announced the creation of Procurement Officer Cadre to make civil servants useful and effective in hitherto consultancy service offered at exorbitant rate by contractors. These efforts from all indication will cut waste and

By Yusha'u Shu'aib

strengthen the public service for efficiency.

The reason for the reform in the service is not far fetched, when the President himself recently confirmed that corrupt, inefficient, even indicted public servants were protected by their peers and some even got rewards for their non-performance. Most importantly the service has failed to catch up or keep in step with modern technology as offices are littered with hundreds of thousands of old and disorganised files. He went on to further point out that information is virtually impossible to keep accurately or retrieve easily, and simple administrative procedures are turned into painful excursions into the maze of bureaucratic redtapism.

In the past, the civil service is the darling of applicants who saw it as a place to make contributions towards good governance and economic growth of the nation. It is the pillar that sharpens the direction of national goals and aspiration. It was when the Civil Servants did not supplement their income by doing contract or running other discreet businesses to survive. Many joined the service because of job security, efficient career progression and self-contentment from realistic wage. But lately the system has been bastardized with the fear of victimization and sudden retrenchment which make the public service vulnerable to political interference and very weak to give genuine advice and sincere recommendation on policy issues.

The recent misconception and misgiving on some aspects of the reform programmes are not

unexpected. It is difficult to appreciate aggressive changes for better society without some resistances. The civil servants as members of the conservative institution of government hardly express themselves publicly due to fear of official sanctions and reprimand. It is probably due to the timid nature in the service that President Obasanjo initiated and participated in an interactive forum with their selected representatives, most especially with the top management staff, to express their views freely and to voice out on likely pitfall in executing the policy.

In reforming the service, the President has involved a mixture of respected technocrats with different ideologies to serve in the engine room for the reform. Alhaji Mahmood Yayale Ahmad, a fine core civil servant believes in the old conservative and unpolluted public service; Mallam Nasir Elrufai, is a dogged advocate of efficient service delivery that is profitable in all sense and Chief Efot Ekaette, a midpoint between the two extreme who had tasted the 3Ps at top level i.e. public, private and political life.

The public service is driven by the public officers who are either elected or appointed and is managed by the civil servants who are employed through rigorous exercise. While the former give final approval on policy, the later execute the directive. Therefore politicians and political appointees play prominent roles, which influence the outputs from the service. For the success of the reform, almost all aspects of the civil service need to be addressed: from recruitment to termination of appointment; from salary to promotion; from

contractor to political interference, and from training to other motivational packages.

Many wonder if the legitimate earning of civil servants is adequate for sustenance, so that they may not have any inclination towards corruption. Some may wonder whether the salary of a public servant, from the junior cadre to top management can sustain basic needs in term of feeding, accommodation, transportation, medication and schooling of the wards. The monetization policy introduced by the government for civil servants, like that of Public officers, should be based on economic reality so that the remuneration is commensurate with their works and position as to minimize, if not to totally eradicate, the level of corruption in the polity.

Unlike in the private sector where merit is the keyword for promotion, in the public service, it takes some hardworking staff many years to be considered. It seems without the death or termination of appointment of workers, vacancies for elevation may be elusive because the senior and aging civil servants consistently update their ages backwards to remain in the service by refreshing their birth documents and dyeing their hair. The attitudes of those true "Senior Servants" delay others' promotions and deny fresh recruitments. Even if vacancies for promotion are declared, it appears the essential requirement is long-years-in-service as against exceptional performance and outstanding achievements. It was therefore not surprising to see brainy applicants cutting corner by getting rapid promotions from an agency or other tiers of government and

afterward seek transfer to the federal service on higher level.

While it appears easier for one to move into the public service with ease from the private sector, the civil servants are not allowed to enjoy such progressions which may help them gain further experience outside the service. If only the civil servants can be allowed on secondment and transfer of service to the private sector, on return such officers would inject new positive skills acquired into their jobs.

Every senior civil servant is proud to reiterate the rules and ethics of the service and can easily quote the sections that dwell on every corrupt and unethical tendency, but experience has shown that the bylaw is tactfully manipulated for selfish interest and for vindictiveness. Since the rule forbids staff from private practices, it is baffling the allegations that some civil servants amassed huge wealth, own properties, send their children to foreign school and live highly ostentatious life. How possible could that be, if the rules and regulations are pragmatic and realistic. It seems only medical workers and academicians are allowed to undertake private practice and consultancy services respectively, while the core civil servants are disallowed. If the salary and allowances cannot be enough to sustain them, the government may allow those in the service to undertake other professional practices that could not undermine their official integrity after office hours. They may also be permitted to trade and even drive personal vehicles for commercial purposes to boost their legitimate earning.

It is unfortunate that while the government encourages

training and retraining for further empowerment and skills acquisition, some civil servants see the gesture as opportunity to make extra money. Apart from making management development and capacity building mandatory, the government should sponsor staff to acquire professional membership of relevant bodies for the purpose of updating themselves on the latest trends in their field.

Probably due to the fact that the civil servants know the true value of inflated quotations, with or without Due Process, they are compelled to demand for unwholesome gratification from contractors. Though there is no moral justification for bribery in whatever guise, it may be necessary for the service to recognize genuine manufacturers, producers and their representatives for award of contracts, than the use of middlemen in the name of contractors to undertake such assignments at outrageous cost. It will also curb the attempts by civil servants to award contracts secretly to themselves and their cronies.

It is extremely difficult to deny the existence of corruption in the service or to exonerate oneself from endemic syndrome; every Nigerian must support the reform in the public service to reclaim its lost glory and for sanity in our nation. There is nothing that encourages hard work, commitment and patriotism than enabling environment and realistic wage that make one gratefully indebted to the nation.

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Ordinarily no one should be wary by the Government's attempt to conduct a head count. Not so in Nigeria and, indeed, not under the tutelage of the present Obasanjo administration.

It should however be noted that no one is implying that Obasanjo administration cannot conduct a successful headcount. What is obvious from Obasanjo's antecedent is that his administration cannot conduct a credible and acceptable population census.

All the past exercises were marred by controversies and unacceptability. The 2005 exercise would unarguably end up in a like manner despite all the "promises" by the organizers, that they hope to break this trend by using "Satellite imaging not only to count people, but also dwellings in Nigeria".

Curiously, it is the planned deployment of this satellite technology that made most observers to be skeptical about the whole

## Census 2005: Genuine scepticism

By Hassan S. Indabawa

exercise. The Government has reportedly directed the National population commission (NPC) to use images from the NigeriaSat-1 satellite to reduce "human error" in 2005 National population census.

The Director-General of the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), Professor Ajayi Boroffice, on 4<sup>th</sup> May last year, said that this collaboration is important because only space maps would produce "reliable" results in delineation of several settlements scattered across large expanse of land in the country.

However, Prof. Boroffice's pronouncement only amplifies the persistent argument of the hard line Southern elites, which became more strident over the past one year. Indeed, even president Obasanjo has

lent his support to this line of thinking by implying that the data and image to be used in capturing "rooftops" of villages that cluster each location of the country, would be used to determine the actual population of these settlements.

It is on this premise that population of a particular group can, to a large extent, enhance its stake on the political power play of the nation. This realization ostensibly galvanized the South in to hammering in to the ears of all those who care to listen, that all the past census exercises were deliberately skewed to favour the North.

However, any keen and dispassionate observer can easily understand that there is more to the programme than what appears on the surface. The South characteristically rallied behind and applauded president Obasanjo for finally resolving to address

the "National Question". Infact, the census should have been conducted in 2001 but for Obasanjo's refusal which clearly contravened the Nigerian constitution.

Then if the rooftop images are going to be the determining factor in ascertaining the population density of a settlement, as asserted by president Obasanjo in May last year, and vociferously expounded by notable southern elite, then there is indeed a plan to rig the forth coming census exercise.

The president has created the impression that it would be impossible for any one to ascribe a population of 10,000 people to a village shown on the satellite monitor to possess not more than 30 rooftops.

Pre-empting the public consciousness that satellite images so far recorded had indicated that South is more densely populated than the

North, is also a pointer to a possible plan to tinker with the 2005 National population figure.

This is why the North should naturally suspect the motive behind Obasanjo's enthusiasm in flaunting the imaging system as a determinant in aggregate demographic representation of Nigerians.

A section of Nigerians even claim that the entire North-West comprises only 8632 towns and cities in a country of 47000 settlements, thus representing only 18.38% of the Nigerian land mass. Whereas the South-West has 14403 settlements representing 30.6% of Nigerian land mass with a population of 29.57 million as against the North-West's 16.47% million!

Recently, some notable Islamic organisations had to come out openly and caution the president on his

"creeping marginalization" of Nigerian Muslims. They cited as injustice, what they described as his lopsided appointments into the federal cabinet and other key federal positions. Indeed since the advent of Obasanjo's second tenure, there seem to be a design to subdue Islam, which has already manifested in his recent appointment of advisers and certain key positions.

Nevertheless, president Obasanjo's inexplicable shifting of the time-table for the exercise from 2001 to the present; in which most of the fundamental economic and political restructuring is being tailored, has cast aspersions on the census exercise, just like his other programmes which were widely perceived to be a well laid out plan, being unfolded to permanently re-draw the politico-economic landscape of Nigeria.

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# Trust International

## Africa

### Darfur atrocities go on-Report

A leading UK aid agency said the world is still not doing enough to protect more than two million displaced people in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

Oxfam, one of the biggest providers of clean water to the displaced people, said atrocities were still being committed on a massive scale.

It urged more support to be given to the small African Union mission there.

Areas where it operates have seen some improvement in security and a few displaced people have begun to return.

Yet in the context of Darfur's vast area, these success stories are a drop in the ocean.

Months after its deployment was announced, only half of the AU's 3,300-strong force have arrived.

In the last few weeks, fighting between government forces and the Darfur rebels has died down.

However, according to Adrian McIntyre, Oxfam's spokesman in Sudan, atrocities have continued.

"There is a certain low-level violence against individuals that is absolutely pervasive in Darfur," he said.

"The harassment, the beatings, the robbery, the rape, the murder continues on a daily basis and unfortunately it continues well below the radar screen of the international media and of the international diplomatic machine."

Oxfam urged the international community to step up efforts to protect civilians by providing resources and logistics to an expanded AU mission.

Sudan's government has a legal obligation to protect its own citizens but it has also been accused of arming and backing militia groups which are behind many of the attacks.



A Sudanese displaced girl carries firewood in El-Sereif camp near Nyala town in Sudan's southern Darfur region. African Union (AU) observers monitoring a ceasefire between ethnic minority rebels and government forces in Sudan's troubled Darfur region have failed the local population, a rebel leader charged.

### DR Congo to punish UN attackers

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) said it will spare no effort in tracking down those behind the killing on Friday of nine United Nations peacekeepers.

Defence Minister Adolphe Onusumba said the time had passed when such acts would go unpunished.

The minister visited the eastern Ituri province, where the Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed.

It was the deadliest attack against the UN mission in Congo since it started work six years ago.

Bangladesh has said it will continue to contribute troops to UN missions despite the incident.

The UN force in Ituri, Monuc, also includes peacekeeping troops from Pakistan, Morocco and Nepal.

Ituri has been the scene of bitter ethnic fighting for a number of years.

Violence between rival militias resumed in the mineral-rich province in December, and aid workers

say tens of thousands of people have been displaced by the fighting - many fleeing to neighbouring Uganda.

UN forces have come under attack in Ituri before, but this is the first time that soldiers have been killed there, said the BBC's correspondent in the region.

Mr Onusumba arrived in the provincial capital, Bunia, on a visit aimed at boosting the morale of the peacekeepers "because what happened was deplorable".

"What took place cannot leave anyone indifferent, since how can one kill the same people who have voluntarily chosen to come and help us," he told reporters.

"To those who committed these terrible acts, they should know henceforth that the time has passed for such acts to go unpunished," Mr. Onusumba said.

"We are not going to spare any effort to ensure intelligence services are able to tell us what exactly took place."

He said the army would work more closely with the UN mission to crush the gangs involved in the violence.

The government would deploy trained personnel in places where Monuc was exposed.

Bangladesh, which is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations across the world, has 1,300 troops in DR Congo.

The soldiers' deaths were the second largest loss of life for the Bangladeshi army while on UN peacekeeping duties.

In October 2003, 15 Bangladeshi officers died in a plane crash in Liberia.

The Secretary General of UN, Kofi Annan, has already condemned the attack, stressing that the attack will not deter the UN mission on DRC. He called on the government of DRC to track down the perpetrators of the ambush.

### British Council begins leadership programme

By Elkanah Chawai, Reporter (Foreign Desk)

In a renewed effort to support African development, 24 Nigerians will participate in the British Council and Lead International Leadership programme in Abuja which will begin today bringing together young African leaders in a peer network.

In a press conference Friday in Abuja, the deputy director of British Council in Nigeria, Peter Brown, said that the programme is about empowering young African leaders with leadership values and creating a vibrant network which the participants will stay in touch and exchange experiences on a regular basis.

"What the programme is aiming to do is to look at Africa not just from the deficit point of view, because when we talk about issues in Africa we often read in the papers about HIV/AIDS, and corruption. What this programme will do is encourage people to look at the positive attributes, not glossing over the negative or trying to pretend that the negative doesn't exist, but rather to emphasize what is positive in the continent," he said.

He added that British Council's role in the programme is only supportive in bringing people together in a network but pointed out that the conceptualization and the design of the programme was fashioned out by Africans who are on the team.

The Pan African facilitator for Nigeria, Umar Kawu said that the programme is an "African programme designed by Africans for Africa," where Africans will look at what is working in Africa, using experiences from it and resources to effect change.

He said that this can only be done through people from Africa rather than going outside to import experiences that may not be appropriate to the African experience.

He added that participants in the leadership programme already have sphere of influence or community which their exercise leadership qualities, saying that each of this participants, will take their new knowledge back and impact on their community.

## Burundians vote in constitutional referendum

Citizens of Burundi have begun voting in a referendum aimed at ensuring power-sharing between the central African country's rival ethnic groups and ending a war that has claimed some 300,000 lives.

The new constitution, which envisages a balanced power arrangement between the minority Tutsi tribe and the majority Hutus, is widely expected to be approved. The Tutsis have ruled since Burundi achieved independence from Belgium in 1962.

Some 3.1 million people were registered to cast ballots in Monday's referendum, the first national vote in Burundi

since it was plunged into chaos in 1993.

Polling stations opened at 6:45 am (0445 GMT) and were due to close at 4:00 p.m. (1400 GMT), with preliminary results expected by Tuesday and final returns to be announced on March 4, according to election officials.

In the capital, the atmosphere was calm as the polls opened about 45 minutes behind schedule with dozens of voters waiting in line under tight security.

"I came to vote because it is important for the transition to peace and democracy," a 55-year-old teacher told AFP outside the Sirphanie polling station in the capital Bujumbura.

"It's been a very long time since we've had this right," another 40-year-old voter chimed in.

Under the constitution, Burundi's president will have two deputies from the different ethnic groups while 60 percent of the cabinet will be Hutu and 40 percent Tutsi.

Representation in the parliament, made up of a National Assembly and Senate, will be apportioned on a 50-50 basis with Hutu and Tutsi parties required to field candidates from both ethnicities to reach the mix.

The proposed constitution also calls for the army and the police force to be equally split along ethnic lines.

This is seen as a critical

component because the country's civil war erupted after the assassination in 1993 of Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu who was the country's first democratically elected president, in an attempted military coup.

### Somali militia leaders reject troops

Influential militia leaders in Somalia have rejected the possible deployment of troops from Ethiopia and Djibouti.

The proposed deployment offer on Sunday was part of a regional mission to help the country's transitional government set foothold after relocating from exile in Kenya.

"We endorse the deployment of troops from the international community without the involvement of contingents from Somalia's immediate neighbours," Ethiopia and Djibouti, they said in a statement released on Sunday in Nairobi after overnight talks.

The press release was signed by militia leaders Husain Muhammad Aidid, also deputy prime minister, Muhammad Qanyara Afrah, minister of national security, Musa Sudi Yalahu, minister of trade, Butan Isa, minister for demobilisation and Umar Mahmud, minister for religious affairs.

The militia leaders from the dominant Hawiya clan who control the capital Mogadishu, said they planned to visit the bullet-scarred city to flush out armed men roaming there who have vowed to oppose

the deployment of foreign troops.

The militia leaders said they agreed to surrender parts they controlled in Mogadishu to the transitional government, which is still holed up in Kenya owing to insecurity in Somalia.

Early this month, African Union authorised the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which groups Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti, to deploy an interim peace mission in Somalia before a proper AU force.

Some Somalis have accepted the deployment of regional troops but not inclusion of soldiers from Ethiopia, which they accuse of backing various factions and Djibouti of supporting the predecessor to President Abd Allah Yusuf Ahmad's government.

Kenya, which is home to thousands of Somali refugees, is accused of having dubious political interests in Somalia, but Nairobi has said it would only send military observers. Ethiopia and Uganda have offered to send troops, with other IGAD nations yet to decide.

### Togo: France commends ECOWAS

France has commended the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) over its role in Togo, saying it fully support the sub-regional grouping.

A statement made available to Daily Trust by the press and communication officer of the French embassy, Harlem Friganoy said that "France continues to fully support the efforts of ECOWAS which is continuing consultation."

The statement expressed hope that the consultation succeed as quickly as possible and lead to a free, democratic and transparent presidential and legislative elections so as to end the transition and return to the

By Jibrin Abubakar, Reporter (Foreign Desk)

path of democracy in Togo.

Soon after the enthronement of Faure Eyadema, ECOWAS had slammed a multiple sanctions against the country.

However, on Friday, when Faure announced his resignation, the sub-regional body was quick to lift the sanctions, saying it was a "victory for democracy."

Faure Eyadema has been selected as the new presidential candidate for the ruling part in the forth coming election.

Faure Gnassingbe said he wanted to ensure transparency in the election scheduled for April.

# Trust International

Middle East & Asia

## Sharon issues fresh threat in Mid East

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon threatened Sunday to freeze peace efforts the Palestinian leadership does not crack down on liberation fighters after a weekend suicide bombing in Tel Aviv killed five Israelis.

At a Cabinet meeting, Israel decided to suspend a plan to turn control of five West Bank towns over to the Palestinians and free 400 more prisoners. Those gestures were agreed upon at a Feb. 8 summit in Egypt, where Sharon and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas declared a truce.

The attack and the Israeli measures underlined the fragility of the truce and its vulnerability to violence by activists who oppose any accommodation.

A familiar pattern appeared in danger of re-emerging: a truce, a Palestinian attack, Israeli retaliation, another Palestinian attack — and ultimately the end of the truce and rekindled violence.

Four of those who died Friday were reportedly at a surprise birthday party. A fifth Israeli — a woman who was not otherwise identified — died in the hospital yesterday of wounds suffered in the bombing, according to Israeli media. The deaths brought to

### ...as Israelis accused of stealing land

Israeli police have arrested eight people on suspicion of stealing hundreds of plots of Palestinian-owned land by falsifying documents.

Police believe the suspects forged ownership documents for plots of Palestinian land in the southern West Bank and around Jerusalem, then sold the land to a company called Himanuta, a subsidiary of the Jewish National Fund, which manages state land.

The suspects are believed to have pocketed between \$4.5 and \$6.8 million for the land sales, Israel's private Channel 2 reported on Sunday, without saying exactly how much land had been sold.

Following an undercover investigation, police arrested eight people, including a senior official in the Israeli civil administration, which operates in the West Bank, several Israeli businessmen and a lawyer, the report said.

Police suspect the land sale was rubber-stamped by the civil administration official in exchange for a bribe.

Another 19 lawyers are also expected to be questioned over their alleged involvement in the land sales, the channel said.

"There are many suspects involved in this investigation, among them a senior officer of the civil administration, a lawyer, two Israelis and others involved with the company Himanuta," West Bank police chief Aliazir Alhar said at a televised press conference.

500 the number of Israelis killed in 119 Palestinian suicide bombings in four years of fighting.

Sharon charged that Syria was behind the suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv night spot Friday — the first such attack since Abbas took office in January. Syria denied the allegation.

Islamic Jihad, a group fighting for liberation against Israeli occupation was said to have claimed responsibility.

At the beginning of the weekly Cabinet meeting, Sharon said Islamic Jihad carried out the bombing on orders from its leaders in Syria, although he held the Palestinian Authority responsible as well.

"There will be no progress politically, and I repeat, no political progress, until the Palestinians carry out a determined campaign to destroy the terrorist groups and their infrastructure," Sharon said.

He warned that if this is not done, "Israel will have to increase its military activities that are meant to protect the citizens of Israel."

A senior military official said on condition of anonymity that Israel would not hit back for the bombing. Shin Bet security service head, Avi Dichter said Israel's policy now is to pressure Abbas to crack down on the violent groups.

Sharon told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that if Abbas continues to try to control the militants by persuasion, "terrorism will continue ... and Israel cannot accept that," a statement from Sharon's office said.

They had the conversation when Rice called to offer condolences over the bombing, it said. Sharon said talks on the US-backed "road map" peace plan could not begin unless there were "active steps against terrorism."

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia dismissed Sharon's warnings.

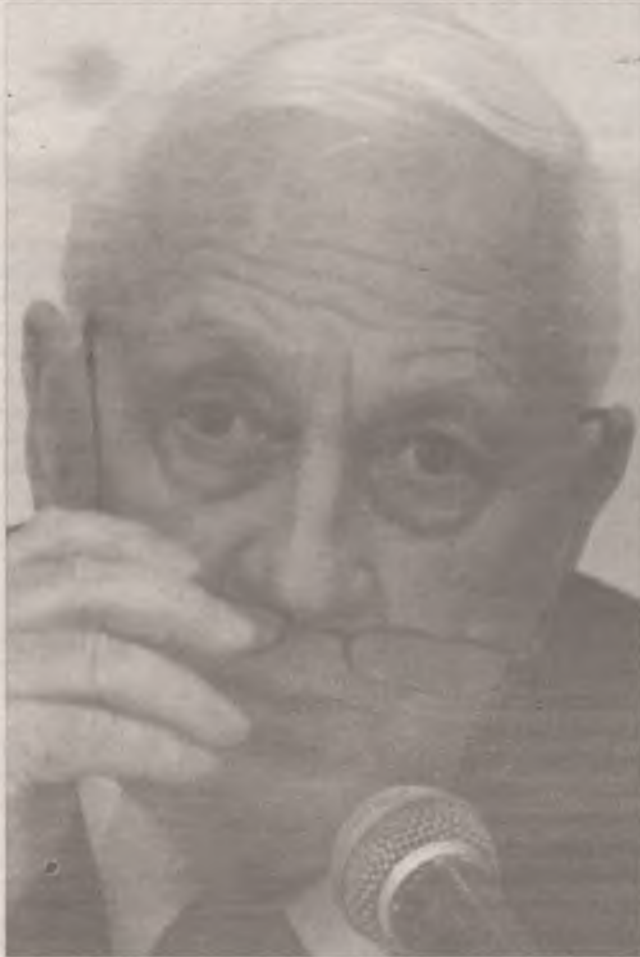
"If Israel wants to cut off contacts with the Palestinians, it will be its own decision and we will not cry," Qureia told reporters. "But we say that there is an opportunity begun in Sharm el-Sheik and we want to develop this effort," referring to the summit where the truce was declared.

Relations between Israel

and the Palestinians have warmed considerably since Abbas' election last month.

Abbas has deployed Palestinian security forces throughout the Gaza Strip) to prevent activists from firing rockets on Israel and brokered a temporary agreement with the militant groups to halt attacks. In response, Israel released 500 Palestinian prisoners, promised to end killings of militant leaders and agreed to hand over security control of five West Bank towns to the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister, Tony Blair is hosting a meeting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today. The meeting is meant to mobilise international support behind a plan to ensure that the Palestinians have the political, economic and security infrastructure they need to create a viable state. A statement from the British High Commission in Abuja said.



Ariel Sharon, Israeli Prime Minister

## UN debates Iran's nuclear row

The board of governors of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, met in Vienna yesterday to discuss Iran's controversial nuclear programme.

After two years, the IAEA has failed to prove or disprove US claims Iran is secretly trying to make nuclear arms.

Yet suspicions, particularly from Washington, remain high. Tehran insists its nuclear programme is peaceful.

As well as Iran, the IAEA's board is to discuss who will be the next director general of the agency.

Late last year, Tehran agreed with the European Union to freeze its uranium enrichment programme - a process which can be used for nuclear power plants or nuclear weapons.

France, the UK and Germany are now trying to persuade Iran to make the freeze permanent in exchange for trade and technology benefits.

But concern over possible violations remains high.

The current head of the agency, Mohammed ElBaradei, is standing for a third term as director general.

## Malaysia migrant deadline looms

Thousands of illegal workers are queuing at a Malaysian port ahead of a midnight deadline to leave the country.

Thousands more are hiding, saying that the government's crackdown leaves them with no jobs to go home to, or complaining that they are owed wages.

The authorities have put armed volunteer reservists on standby for the launch of a huge operation to deport those who choose to stay behind.

Punishments could include heavy fines, jail sentences and whipping.

The deadline for illegal workers to leave Malaysia has been extended three times since the policy was first announced in October, but despite this, the Malaysian immigration authorities estimate that at least 200,000 illegal workers remain.

The Malaysian government said it has recruited more than 300,000 volunteers to round up those who stay.

They will be paid cash rewards for each illegal worker they apprehend.

Many work in construction, plantations and domestic service.

They risk jail, fines and whipping if found.

Members of the public are being invited to ring a special hotline to report suspect foreigners to the authorities.

Throughout the day, crowds of people have queued at a ferry port near the capital, Kuala Lumpur, to board ships and naval vessels bound for Indonesia.

Hundreds more waited outside the United Nations refugee agency in Kuala Lumpur, hoping to be given papers that, in theory, could exempt them from deportation.

"I feel sad leaving, but I don't want to be whipped or jailed," said Mohamad Sifud, 30, who has worked illegally in construction for 10 years.

Foreign labourers without papers are being offered the chance to come back if they acquire the proper documentation.

"I will definitely come back legally," Mohamad Sifud told the Associated Press. "There is not much work back home."

But not everyone will be confident that they will be able to get a job legally.

Alia Shukri, from Bali, said she would stay put.

"People ask me many times am I not afraid of being caught and jailed," she said. "Yes, I am scared, but what choice do I have?" she said.

Most of the illegal workers are Indonesian, and the 26 December Indian Ocean tsunami and interventions by the government in Jakarta have prompted the Malaysian government to delay the crackdown three times before.

Indonesia's Labour Minister, Fahmi Idris, told a Malaysian news website that 100,000 Indonesians are refusing to leave because they are owed wages, and that his

government would take legal action unless they were paid.

Malaysian Interior Minister Azmi Khalid stressed that he wanted the deportations to be carried out humanely.

But human rights groups said the involvement of poorly-trained volunteers carrying firearms invites accidents.

Those illegal workers who have not left by midnight local time will be banned from returning, and could also face two years in jail, fines of \$13,000, and, for anyone under 50, up to six strokes of the cane.

## Syrians threaten Arabic TV station

**A**l-Arabiya TV staff has received death threats from Syrian security agencies over an interview with UN chief Kofi Annan in which he urged Damascus to withdraw from Lebanon by April, the station said.

The Dubai-based Arabic station said on Sunday that the threats accompanied criticism of the channel in the Syrian state-run daily Tishrin.

"Al-Arabiya expresses its extreme concern over Tishrin newspaper's method in accusing the television of treachery. This was accompanied with threats directed against a number of our colleagues in Beirut," the television said in a statement faxed to the media.

A source at the station, referring to Syrian security, said: "There were death threats against al-Arabiya's staff in Beirut by the Syrians."

Syrian officials were not immediately available to comment. Al-Arabiya said it had aired the interview with Annan in full and without interpretation or exaggeration.

In it, UN Secretary-General Annan urged Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon by April, when he is due to present a report on the situation to the Security Council.

In a front-page article on

Saturday, Tishrin accused Al-Arabiya of ignoring later remarks by a UN spokesman who said Annan had not been setting a deadline.

"This incident, along with many other incidents, raises dozens of questions about the mission of this station and the bodies that run and finance it," Tishrin said about the majority Saudi-owned station, which is seen by some Arabs as pro-Western.

Al-Arabiya said the newspaper's criticism was unjustified.

"Al-Arabiya has aired interviews with Syrian officials and analysts to answer the secretary-general ... as it was keen to give a balanced report," the statement added.

Syria said last week that it would pull back more troops to eastern Lebanon in line with a 16-year-old agreement that ended Lebanon's civil war and that it was ready to work with the United Nations to implement a resolution calling for the removal of Syrian troops.

International pressure for Syria to quit Lebanon has grown since a bomb killed former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri last week.

Many Lebanese hold Syria responsible for his death.

## Shiites minority to increase roll in Saudi polls

Saudi Arabia's Shiite minority has jumped at the chance offered by local polls to have their say in the oil-rich kingdom.

As members of the Shiite community, who are concentrated in the Eastern Province, prepare to vote in the second round of landmark elections, one of the leading Shiite Shaikhs in the kingdom, Shaikh Ali al-Nasr said: "The role of these councils is limited, but [elections] are a chance to assert the presence of the Shiite as equal citizens."

"There is no particular Shiites interest in the municipal councils .... There is national interest, and Shiites are part of this

country," the Dammam-based Shiite scholar said.

The second round of the historic ballot, this time to elect half the members of municipal councils in the Eastern Province and south western regions of the kingdom, will take place on 3 March.

The first round in the capital Riyadh on 10 February saw 73.6% of only 140,000 registered voters - about 30% of total eligible voters - taking part.

A third and final round will take place in the western regions of Makka and Madina, as well as the northern regions, on 21 April.

The ballot is open to men aged over 21 except military per-

sonnel.

The high turnout in some areas has been attributed to calls by Shia clerics for their followers to make their voices heard via the polls.

"I have called (on followers) to register .... This is a new step towards democracy," Nasr said.

"No doubt, the encouragement by scholars to participate played a role in raising the level of Shiite registration," Shiite academic Adnan al-Shakhs commented.

The Shiite candidate in Tarut Island, Jafar al-Shaib, said: "This is an opportunity for the Shiite to express their belonging to this country."

# Trust International

World Report

## New Zealand demands Israeli apology over espionage

New Zealand's Prime Minister Helen Clark said she is still

### Clinton urges Taiwan, China to forge closer ties

Former President Clinton, visiting Taiwan despite China's warning his trip could violate Washington's "one-China" policy, urged the rivals Sunday to set aside their differences and work closer together economically.

China and Taiwan split in 1949 during civil war, but Beijing considers the democratic, self-ruled island to be Chinese territory. China leaders balk at any actions that they believe lend support to Taiwan's government, and Beijing repeatedly has threatened war if Taiwan moves toward formal independence.

China warned that Clinton's one-day visit could violate a policy under which the United States agrees to have no diplomatic ties with Taiwan and recognises Beijing as China's sole government.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said last week that Clinton, as former president, should be familiar with "China's solemn position on the Taiwan question."

Though this was Clinton's first trip to Taiwan since being elected president in 1992, he visited the island four times as Arkansas governor and many Taiwanese are fond of him. Listeners packed an auditorium in Taipei on Sunday to hear him.

The former U.S. president said Taiwanese investors in China were giving hope to Chinese workers and could help reduce the possibility of a conflict between the two sides.

"While our differences are important, our common humanity matters more," Clinton said. "The more people have positive things to do, the less likely they are to fall into destructive patterns."

Clinton was to have dinner with President Chen Shui-bian later Sunday, officials said.

Clinton arrived in Taiwan from Japan. He earlier visited China after touring areas in southern Asia ravaged by the Dec. 26 tsunami.

waiting to receive a formal apology from Israel over a scandal involving Israeli spies.

Clark said yesterday that she was encouraged by the words of regret from Israel's president but that New Zealand still wanted a formal apology.

Relations between the two nations have been frosty since two suspected Israeli agents were convicted and imprisoned in New Zealand for trying to fraudulently obtain a passport in 2004.

Wellington has demanded a public explanation and apology for what Clark described as "utterly unacceptable" behaviour by the two. Uriel Zoshe Kelman and Eli Cara.

They were deported last year after serving half of their six-month prison sentences. Police are still searching for several other people they believe were involved.

Clark has slapped diplomatic sanctions on Israel, including delaying approval of the appointment of a new Israeli ambassador.

She also postponed foreign ministry consultations and declined to issue an invitation for Israel's President Moshe Katsav to visit New Zealand.

Katsav said on Australian television that he regretted the deterioration of his country's relationship with New Zealand.

"I am very sorry about the last development in our relations with New Zealand," Katsav said on Channel Nine Television's Sunday programme.

"For us New Zealand is a good friend of Israel and I really regret about what happened.

"But again, I really hope that this problem is closed and I want really to close this chapter in our relation with New Zealand. I can express my [sorrow] and my regret," he said.

Clark told TV One's "Breakfast" programme on Katsav's comment that Israel wants to put the affair behind it means "I think we will make good progress in the negotiations".

But she said the comments were not seen by New Zealand as a substitute for the apology being negotiated with Israel.

"Obviously, the president's comments are encouraging and we're looking to progress the matter at a diplomatic level," Clark said.

## Odd World

### Man, 63, sleeps with cows

A 63-year-old man is charged with sexual gratification with an animal for allegedly having sex with calves. Harold G. Hart, of Neillsville, allegedly told police that he routinely stopped at a Greenwood farm, usually after bar closing or on trips to strip clubs near Marshfield or Neillsville.

A criminal complaint filed in Clark County Circuit Court said the farm's owners installed a motion detector on Jan. 22 after regularly seeing footprints and vehicle tracks on their land. Around 4 a.m. the next morning, a sensor sounded and Hart was caught leaving the barn, but Hart allegedly said he just used a bathroom in the barn and had never been there before.

Hart told police he had sex with heifers before he went into the service in 1963 and resumed about a year ago at the farm. He admitted to using a rope to tie calves around the neck and estimated he had been to the farm "at least 50 times," according to the complaint.

He told police he never had sex with animals while maintaining a relationship with his girlfriend or his wife, the complaint said.

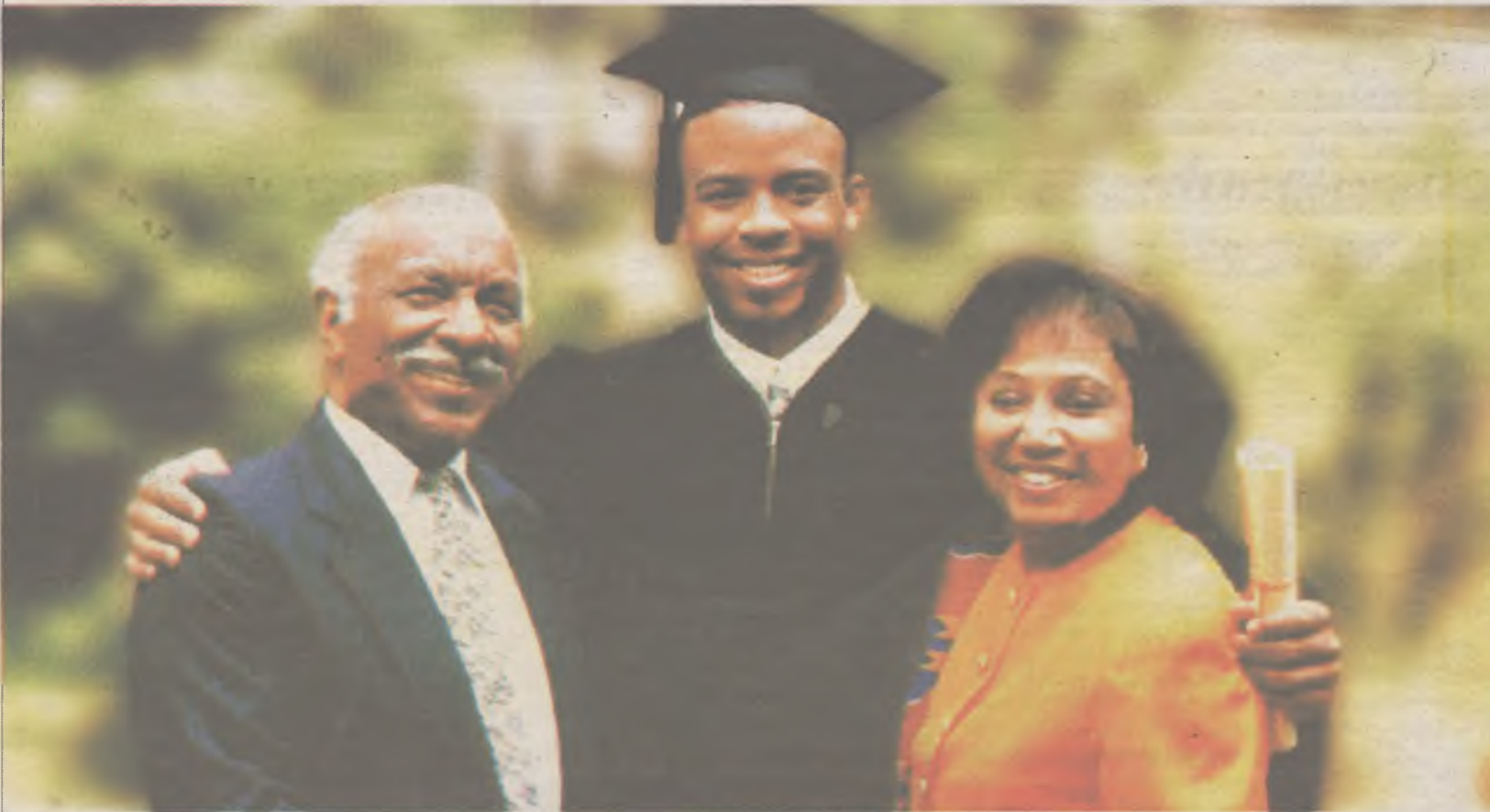
Hart also is charged with disorderly conduct and two counts of obstructing an officer. Each charge carries up to nine months in jail.

Hart is scheduled to appear in court March 10.

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- \* Allows lodgements and withdrawals from any FSB branch
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- \* Ability to use this product as security for loan
- \* Statement of account to be issued quarterly

For further details please call: (01) 7741714, 7741994, 2691235, 2695285.

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# Business Trust

## Today's flight schedule

<b>Albarka Air</b>	
Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
<b>Maiduguri - Abuja 06:50</b>	
Abuja - Maid.	17:00
Lagos - Yola	1:00 p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15.30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.
<b>Chanchangi Airlines</b>	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.
<b>IRS Airlines</b>	
CBQ - Abuja	8.00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - Cal	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.
<b>EAS Airlines</b>	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos	2:30pm.
<b>Dasab Airlines</b>	
Auja-Lagos	8:30am.
Lagos-PHC	10:30am.
PHC-Lagos	12:30am.
Lagos-Kano	2:30pm.
Kano-Lagos	4:30pm.
Lagos-Abuja	6:30pm.
<b>ADC Airline</b>	
Lagos-Abuja	7:15am.
	12:45pm.
Abuja-Lagos	8:55am.
Lagos-Calabar	11:15am.
Calabar-Lagos	7:20am.
P/H-Lagos	9:45 a.m.
<i>Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.</i>	

## Finance

### NAL Bank's 4bn share offer opens

The NAL Bank Plc's four billion ordinary share offer for subscription of 50 kobo each at N2.50 kicked off Monday, February



Bashir Borodo, NAL Chairman

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor Lagos

20, 2005, with the chairman of the bank, Alhaji Bashir Borodo expressing his optimism that the offer will be over subscribed.

Speaking at the completion board meeting of the bank last week, the chairman said the price of the offer was a give away, and that investors stand to

gain bountifully as the bank has put every thing in place to meet Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) N25 billion capital base.

He said that NAL has survived in the Nigerian financial sub sector in the last 40 years and has never declared a loss, urging Nigerian and other investors to tap into the opportunities inherent in NAL.

According to the bank, it expects to raise about N10 billion from the offer, which apart from meeting the required capital base will enable it to improve its IT structure, expand its branch network and access capital for administrative purposes.

It assured the potential investors that the proceeds of the offer would be effectively and efficiently applied in the overall interest of all stakeholders.

The lead issuing house and stock broking firms for the offer are Union Merchant Bank Ltd and Clear View Securities Ltd. The offer will close on March 30, 2005.

### First Atlantic targets N12bn from offer

The managing director/CEO of First Atlantic Bank Plc, Mr. Okey Nwosu has disclosed that the target of the Bank is to raise N12 billion from its on-going offer.

According to him, the aim of the strategy is to finally combine its shareholders funds with that of other banks, namely Assurance Bank Ltd, Guardian Express Bank and Manny Bank Plc, in order to strenghten Astra Bank Plc.

Mr. Nwosu who disclosed this at the bank's "facts behind the offer" at the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) headquarters in Lagos, revealed that the aim of the banks involved in Astra Bank Plc is to take off with a capital base of over N30 billion.

The event was graced by deputy director-general of NSE, Mr. Musa Elekama, chairman of First Atlantic Bank, Olorogun Otega Emmerhor, etc.

He said that the bank's position as the leader in electronic and mobile banking in Nigeria would be a plus for Astra Bank when it takes off within the year, saying that First Atlantic capacity for initiatives is one

that has made her a great Nigerian bank.

He opined that the price of the offer was apt since it is currently at N3.4 on the floor of the exchange.

Elekama stated is his welcome address, that NSE supports the on-going recapitalization efforts among banks, and called on all stakeholders to support the efforts.

### 'How Evidence Act makes "419ers" above the law'

The special adviser to Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) governor, Mr. A. Owo has said that the nation's Evidence Act needs review in order to ensure the prosecution of advance fee fraudsters (419ers).

According to him, the current evidence act is archaic as fraudsters involved in e-banking frauds cannot be prosecuted as documents processed electronically are not admissible in Nigerian courts.

The special adviser who spoke on the first day of Money Market Association of Nigeria delegate conference held in Victoria Island, Lagos stated that the current situation has

seriously put fraudsters beyond the law as their prosecution is made difficult. He added that the prevalence of frauds is creating difficulties for banks and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Therefore, he called on the National Assembly and the Judiciary to examine the situation with a view to reviewing the existing act.

The president of MANN, Mr. F.S. Adenike thanked the governor of the CBN on his contribution, saying that the association is concerned about progress being made in the economy and that it is their hope that all will be well for the environment.



Lt. Gen. Muhammadu Wushishi (rtd) (right), Chairman, Chatered Bank Plc and Mr. Peterside Atedo at the completion board meeting of Chatered Bank Plc in Lagos ...recently

## International

### Oil prices hold above \$51

Crude prices edged up yesterday, extending their recent rise above \$51 a barrel amid concerns about continuing cold weather in the U.S. Northeast and the possibility that OPEC (news - web sites) will cut production in March.

Light, sweet crude for April delivery rose 31 cents to \$51.80 a barrel in electronic trading ahead of the opening on the New York Mercantile Exchange midday in Asia. Prices for heating oil also rose by about 2 cents to \$1.4758 a gallon.

Qatar's Oil Minister Abdullah bin Hamad said Sunday that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries might "cut supply to stop inventories from building" on March 16 when OPEC members gather in Iran (news - web sites).

Hamad's comments came after Saudi Oil Minister Ali Naimi said the kingdom would not let supply rise above current levels during the second quarter. Saudi Arabia is the world's largest exporter of crude and is an influential member of OPEC.

The president of OPEC, however, sought to quell concerns last Wednesday that the group would cut production. Sheik Ahmad Fahad al Ahmad al Sabah, Kuwait's oil minister, said OPEC won't allow prices to "surge to record levels."

In response to Tuesday's nearly \$3 price spike to a three-month high, Al Sabah said OPEC would react to help cap any prices, but gave no specific details.

Traders have also cited concerns over winter weather in the Northern Hemisphere and U.S. energy stockpiles, especially of heating oil.

### Qatar, Shell sign mega gas project deal

Qatar was due to sign an eight billion dollar deal with Royal Dutch/Shell to supply liquefied natural gas to the United States after laying the cornerstone for a mega project to supply LNG to Britain.

The deal with the Anglo-Dutch energy giant, under which Qatar will supply eight million tons of LNG annually to the United States, will be announced on the eve of a Doha Gas Conference opening Monday, industry sources said.

Another major deal, with France's Total, is expected to be unveiled on the first day of the four-day conference, which will be attended by executives from international energy majors.

Qatar's crown prince on Sunday laid the cornerstone for a gas project worth 12.8 billion dollars which provides for the supply of Qatari LNG to Britain by 2007 in a joint venture with ExxonMobil.

The ceremony at Ras Laffan Industrial City, 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of the capital Doha, was attended by Britain's Prince Andrew alongside Crown Prince Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

Under the Qatargas II project, Qatar will supply 15.6 million tons of LNG to Britain annually over 25 years starting in winter 2007, a statement said.

State-run Qatar Petroleum has a 70 percent stake in Qatargas II while ExxonMobil holds the remaining 30 percent.

Qatar had announced in December the deal with ExxonMobil, the world's biggest oil company, to supply LNG to Britain by the winter of 2007-2008.

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## Motoring



Kia Sportage fuel cell electric vehicles



All-new Kia Rio five door

## Kia launches fuel cell fleet, five doors Rio

**K**ia Automotive Group in partnership with UTC Fuel Cells and Chevron Texaco has unveiled its Hydrogen energy station at the Kia America Technical Center in Chino, Calif. The project is part of a Department of Energy-sponsored Hydrogen Fleet and Infrastructure Demonstration Validation Program.

The new Hydrogen energy station will fuel a fleet of five Kia Sportage fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) based out of the Kia America Technical Center. Other fleets will be tested out of AC Transit in Oakland, Calif. and Southern California Edison over the duration of the program.

The Chino hydrogen energy station is part of a five-year U.S. Department of Energy cost-sharing program that is designed to demonstrate safe, practical hydrogen technologies in real-world settings. Chev-

Stories by Hamisu Muhammad  
Reporter (Business)

ronTexaco Technology Ventures is leading the project in collaboration with the Kia Automotive Group and UTC Fuel Cells.

"We believe there is a strong future in Hydrogen fuel cell technology and today, with the opening of this energy station, we are bringing the future to the present."

The goal of fleet testing is to refine fuel cell technology in real-world driving conditions. Over the next five years, Kia hopes to improve durability, efficiency and reliability in its fuel cell vehicles in preparation for future commercialization. Additional testing is also planned under cold-climate conditions.

Meanwhile, Kia Motors Corporation has revealed early details of its latest production model, the all-new Kia Rio five-door hatchback,

which will make its World Premiere in Europe at the 75th Salon de 'Automobile in Geneva, Switzerland, on March 1, 2005.

"Our new Rio is completely redesigned from the ground up, created especially with our European customers in mind. The new Rio offers customers more space, more power, higher performance, better handling, a smoother ride and enhanced fuel economy," said Senior Executive Vice President and COO of Kia Motors Mr. Yong Hwan Kim.

Styled to attract image-conscious modern consumers, the sub-4 meter new Rio hatchback is a car that perfectly matches Kia's 'exciting and enabling' brand aspirations, while the longer 4.2-meter sedan (launched at the Detroit Motor Show earlier this year) has an elegant and distinctive notchback profile. Taller, wider and shorter

than the model it replaces, the new Rio has a much longer wheelbase and much improved packaging to offer significantly more cabin space than its predecessor. The new Rio line-up will feature a total of 20 models, and customers can choose from two body styles, manual or automatic transmission, two equipment levels and an extensive range of option packages.

We designed the new Rio to meet the rising expectations of our European customers who expect more from Kia, with improved quality and a fresher appearance," enthuses Jean-Charles.

The five-door hatchback and four-door sedan Kia Rio models will go on sale across Europe this summer and are destined to be immensely significant introductions for Kia into the B-segment, the most popular segment of the European market.

## Uruguayan president to drive Mahindra vehicle

**I**ndia is going places and this time its own wheel. On March 1, the newly-elected Uruguayan president Tabar Vazquez will drive to his inauguration on an Indian vehicle-Cimarron, the Latino version of Mahindra and Mahindra's Bolero.

In the process the Uruguayan president-elect rejected traveling to the swearing-in ceremony in a Mercedes Benz, the preferred vehicle of many world leaders. The reason being that Bolero, imported by the Uruguayan auto company Nordex, uses some local components and talent to revamp

the Indian version to suit to the local conditions in the South American nation.

M&M officials said that Bolero has been revamped with localized components and special features to suit the Uruguayan market. The vehicles now boast of a 2.5 litre engine to help it handled the need for a rugged commercial and private transportation vehicle. Nordex, which imports the vehicle in a knocked-down form, also plans to export Cimarron to other Latin American countries including Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Peru.

## PAN denies 25% price slash on 306

**P**eugeot Automobile Nigeria Limited (PAN) has described as unfortunate a report by a media citing its managing director Mr. Franciose Serre announcing 25 per cent price cut of its Peugeot 306 from N1.7million to N1.2million.

The report which was published last week by one media organisation (not *Daily Trust*) that the PAN MD while briefing newsmen at the Kaduna International Trade Fair announced the price cut.

PAN's public relations manager, Baba Yahaya Mohammed while charting with *Motoring* over the weekend described the report as misrepresentation and incompetence, stressing that PAN's vehicles are the cheapest among its competitors in the market.

According to him, Mr. Serre said at the event that "there

cannot be any reduction on the company's products because it has not aimed at an economy of scale.

He added that "it is only when you attain massive production such a reduction can be considered.

On their participation at this year's Kaduna Trade Fair, Mohammed said "we are very much impressed with the number of request and visitors we recorded at our stands."

He said there is strong impression that Nigerians still have confidence in Peugeot vehicles adding that PAN has purchased Peugeot 307 Valentines drive with convenient method of payment and free comprehensive insurance, registration and personal gift.

He said the Valentine offer will continue even after the trade fair till 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2005.

## Iran gets Mercedes assembling plant

**I**ranian public sector auto giant Iran Khodro Diesel (IKD) signed a deal with DaimlerChrysler for a limited number of luxury Mercedes-Benz cars to be assembled in the Islamic republic.

The official news agency IRNA reported that under the deal, IKD will set up a company called Top Khodro to assemble the cars under

the supervision of Mercedes-Benz, a division of the German-US auto giant.

Mercedes Benz 200, 250 and 350-E models will begin rolling off the production line later in 2005, with initial annual production limited to 2,500 units but eventually expanding to 5,000. "The head of IKD, Majid Sheikhani, said the cars

would "fill the gap of luxury cars in Iran".

The official was quoted as saying that only imported components would be used, with the price of each car ranging from 650 million to 1.3 billion rials (73,000 to 146,000 dollars).

IKD is Iran's top truck producer, and has a long history of producing Benz trucks and buses under

licence.

But the signing of the contract, initially scheduled for May 2004, had been delayed — something the Iranian press had attributed to the impact of US sanctions against the Islamic republic.

Iran's auto market is tightly protected, and foreign companies are confined to striking minority-stake joint-venture deals with local firms or allowing their cars to be assembled here from imported or locally made components.

Iran's domestic car, the Paykan, is to be taken out of production before next March, bringing to an end more than three decades of service. The Paykan is a descendent of the long-defunct British Hillman Hunter, the production line of which was sold to Iran in the late 1960s.

That car is already being eclipsed by more modern models made by France's Peugeot, South Korea Kia and Japan's Nissan. France's Renault has also set up shop here to build the low budget



Mercedes Benz E-class Elegance



Peugeot 307, a Valentine drive on displayed at Kaduna Interna-

# Business Trust

## Telecoms



Chief Operating Officer of Glo Mobile, Mr. Mohammed Jameel handing over a N16 million cheque to Mrs. Aisha Mohammed-Oyebode, Executive Secretary, Murtala Mohammed Foundation (MMF) in Lagos ... recently

### Katsina NITEL staff to enjoy state benefits

**C**ooperative development benefits and training hitherto enjoyed by staff in various ministries and government parastatals in Katsina state will henceforth be shared with the territorial staff of the Nigeria Telecommunications Ltd. (NITEL), Katsina state.

The director of cooperatives in the state ministry of agriculture, Arch. Aminu Marafa, who disclosed this at a lecture during the inauguration ceremony of NITEL staff multipurpose thrift and credit cooperative society in Katsina, said, as partners in progress, their organization is still placed to enjoy the state's outlined cooperative development education and training for the 2005 fiscal year.

The director who was represented by his assistant, Arch. Lawal Aminu said, one of the objectives of such a society is to develop a system through which socio-economic promotion can be achieved with mutual respect which emphasizes on the involvement of the masses/customers into an articulated economic action plan to provide positive results in

From Lawal Ibrahim  
Correspondent (Katsina)

uplifting their standards of living.

Urging them to establish a good working relationship with sister organizations for good exchange of ideas, the director enjoined them to be a transparent and cooperative society that can explore all the agencies and institutions responsible for loans assistance, resolving to assist them in that regard.

In a welcome address, the president of the state's cooperative society, Mr. O.M. Ebonam assured them of a solid foundation laid by the organization to chart a course for moving the society forward and prepare themselves for the challenges ahead of the new NITEL management, adding that development stages of foundation, sound investment, consolidation and sustainability have already been itemised for the emergence of enviable cooperative society.

Among those inaugurated included O.M. Ebonam as president, while G.H Ajayi and A.M. Babangida were inaugurated as vice president and treasurer respectively.

## V-Mobile to expand nationwide

V-Mobile, one of the GSM service providers has said its services will be expanded to all the 36 state capitals before the end of next month.

Briefing newsmen at the 26<sup>th</sup> Kaduna International Trade Fair on Wednesday, the company's South-west regional manager, Mr. Tunde Lawson said V-mobile maintains the lowest tariff in the market.

He said the company has provided jobs of millions of

From Sani Babadako,  
Bureau Chief (Kaduna)

Nigerians who operate calling points and sell recharge cards adding that with its expansion programme, the company is the leading GSM provider.

He said comparatively, the charges in Nigeria were low adding that inadequate infrastructure such as water, electricity and roads which the service providers have to provide at their installations

are responsible for the kind of charges.

Mr. Lawson said V-mobile has contributed immensely to the economic development of the country by reinvesting its profit in Nigeria pointing out that the company is completely indigenised.

He commended the deregulation of the telecommunication sector by the federal government adding that it was a revolution for the country.

Mr. Lawson said it was in order

to make telephony masses oriented that V-mobile reduced the price of its starter package from N10,000 three years ago to the present N1,000 adding that the company will continue to look for ways of further reduction.

## Glo Mobile offers 805 free text messages

Glo Mobile has launched a new promotion tagged "805 SMS" in which existing and new subscribers will enjoy 805 free Glo-to-Glo text messages over the next 23 months.

In the promotion which began on February 16, existing subscribers and new subscribers who activate their lines before yesterday 28, 2005, will be offered 35 free SMS every 30 days for the next 23 months, ending in December, 2006, bringing to 805 the total number of such free text messages for each subscriber.

According to a release by the company in Lagos, the first set of 35 free Glo-to-Glo SMS would be available when the customer sends his first SMS. These SMS would need to be used up within 30 days from then, after which the 35 SMS would lapse. A fresh set of 35 free SMS would then be available for the customer for the next cycle of 30 days. These 35 free SMS would continue to be available for another 30 days. This will go on for every 30 day cycle until December, 2006.

Globacom's group direc-

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy  
Business Editor (Lagos)

Subhra Das, who announced the promo said that the offer is available to both prepaid and postpaid subscribers including those of Prepaid Classic, Glo Premium and the postpaid packages.

## Reltel Introduces Bonus-card

Reliance Telecommunications Limited (RELTEL) has introduced another package Bonus-Card to meet the aspirations of its teeming subscribers.

According to a press release from the company, while unveiling the package at a ceremony in Lagos, the chairman of RELTEL, Chief Annie Okonkwo, said that Bonus Card was a direct response to the need of the average Nigerian telephone user.

"We have always been sensitive to the needs of our subscribers and we have achieved that goal again with the introduction of Bonus Card," chief Okonkwo said.

Recalling the company's introduction of the

According to the statement, unlike the current free SMS, the 805 SMS offer is not tied to credit recharge by subscribers as they are offered the free SMS irrespective of the number or value of recharges done per month. The offer said to be regarded by industry watchers as the biggest of its kind in the history of GSM operation in Nigeria.

From Zankariyya Adaramola,  
(Lagos)

where RELTEL crashed calls to GSM lines from N30 to N20, and also made RELTEL to RELTEL calls free at all times, he said the Bonus Card Package is a single-owner solution that guarantees value for money for its users.

"Bonus Card is a special direct plan that will address the peculiar needs of the business centers and other high-user subscribers of RELTEL", the chairman added.

Chief Okonkwo said that RELTEL has now made it possible for calls to be made to GSM lines at N15 per minute at call centers, nationwide.

"All that a subscriber needs is to buy the Bonus Card at N4,500, load it and you are automatically placed on the tariff plan," he said, adding that Bonus

## VACANT POSITIONS

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- SALES OFFICERS (2) NOS**  
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- DRIVERS (3) NOS**  
Applicants for this position should have a minimum of Secondary School Certificates and working experience of five (5) years. Interested candidates should not be more than Thirty Five (35) years of age. The possession of Current Driving Licence is mandatory.
- AUTO MECHANIC (1) NO**  
The candidate applying for this position should be holders of at least Secondary School Certificate and a minimum of Five (5) Years experience in Japanese Automobiles.
- AUTO ELECTRICIAN (1) NO**  
Applicants for this position must hold at least a Secondary School Certificate and minimum work experience of Five (5) Years.

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# Business Trust

## 1ST-TIER SECURITIES

## THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
JULI PLC	1	0.52	1,000	520.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1,000</b>	<b>520.00</b>
<b>AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED</b>				
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	2	0.78	2,000	1,560.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC.	19	18.60	247,262	4,339,378.62
PRESKO PLC.	12	10.95	47,452	521,649.40
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>33</b>		<b>296,714</b>	<b>4,862,588.02</b>
<b>AIRLINES</b>				
AVIATION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PLC.	2	1.00	1,500	1,500.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,500.00</b>
<b>AUTOMOBILE &amp; TYRE</b>				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	10	1.99	129,161	258,012.39
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	1	6.52	4,918	32,065.36
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>134,079</b>	<b>290,077.75</b>
<b>BANKING</b>				
ACCESS BANK PLC	15	3.42	276,175	944,518.50
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	46	6.63	283,332	1,878,491.16
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	1	3.41	5,000	17,050.00
CHARTERED BANK PLC	1	3.90	10,000	39,000.00
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC.	2	1.92	18,000	34,560.00
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.	4	0.70	34,750	24,325.00
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	499	23.35	1,527,441	35,669,453.75
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	48	1.25	460,946	597,174.56
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	239	10.00	1,544,673	15,723,227.98
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	6	0.56	290,000	165,500.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	23	0.57	1,722,259	979,069.67
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	10	1.43	670,000	934,050.00
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.-	4	7.81	392,503	3,065,448.43
LIBERTY MERCHANT BANK	2	0.80	14,000	11,200.00
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	6	0.64	135,200	86,424.00
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	9	1.08	196,000	214,420.00
NAL BANK PLC.	2	2.80	7,596	21,268.80
OCEANIC BANK PLC.	66	4.94	4,826,600	23,323,495.00
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	21	1.60	8,261,792	13,443,823.36
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	10	7.41	65,474	485,162.34
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	5	1.54	166,270	256,055.80
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	12	10.00	35,705	357,050.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	385	19.00	1,503,476	28,997,679.57
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	8	0.72	216,440	158,953.80
WEMA BANK PLC.	1	3.93	15,027	59,056.11
ZENITH BANK PLC	144	13.80	1,983,108	27,288,996.01
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>1,569</b>		<b>24,661,767</b>	<b>154,777,453.84</b>
<b>BREWERIES</b>				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	120	91.00	515,108	47,596,053.79
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	428	35.01	1,062,372	37,261,219.57
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>548</b>		<b>1,577,480</b>	<b>84,857,273.36</b>
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS</b>				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	48	23.00	354,199	8,144,714.96
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	19	4.56	1,619,394	7,104,191.64
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	7	7.13	44,915	320,243.95
NIGERIAN ROPES PLC.	1	1.57	25,000	39,250.00
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	31	10.00	135,521	1,354,944.79
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>106</b>		<b>2,179,029</b>	<b>16,963,345.34</b>
<b>CHEMICAL &amp; PAINTS</b>				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	6	4.69	15,577	73,056.13
CAP PLC.	7	7.35	31,899	234,457.65
D. N. MEYER PLC.	2	4.85	708	3,433.80
IPWA PLC.	1	0.50	13,471	6,735.50
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	5	4.04	61,700	258,268.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>21</b>		<b>123,355</b>	<b>575,951.08</b>
<b>CONGLOMERATES</b>				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	1	1.00	14,510	14,510.00
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	13	5.06	81,323	419,081.08
JOHN HOLT PLC.	5	0.80	2,350	1,810.08
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	130	15.99	488,988	7,802,446.87
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	59	12.90	108,794	1,386,160.22
S C O A NIGERIA PLC.	2	1.09	1,330	1,449.70
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	58	14.17	199,518	2,827,170.06
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	14	1.11	52,158	57,012.48
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>282</b>		<b>948,971</b>	<b>12,509,640.49</b>
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>				
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	3	14.80	5,125	75,850.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>5,125</b>	<b>75,850.00</b>
<b>FOOD/BEVERAGES &amp; TOBACCO</b>				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	24	23.00	16,849	394,418.00
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	170	51.80	507,776	26,540,707.94
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	24	16.61	52,981	880,014.41
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	66	52.90	103,186	5,431,460.95
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	63	145.01	58,365	8,506,738.39
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>347</b>		<b>739,157</b>	<b>41,753,339.69</b>
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>				
EKOCORP PLC.	8	0.58	122,056	67,970.24
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	10	3.15	106,921	332,279.05
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	7	5.30	58,596	308,679.00
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	16	3.30	162,092	539,897.48
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	31	8.60	345,471	3,019,804.67
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>72</b>		<b>795,136</b>	<b>4,268,630.44</b>
<b>INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS</b>				
ALUMACO PLC.	1	1.64	369	605.16
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	4	1.00	242,000	242,040.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	2	2.90	7,000	20,300.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	42	3.10	216,470	660,111.48
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>465,839</b>	<b>923,056.64</b>
<b>INSURANCE</b>				
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	7	1.40	113,027	158,237.80
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	1	1.06	274,255	290,710.30
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	7	1.43	90,000	128,700.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	5	2.89	60,000	174,215.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	1	1.97	6,000	11,820.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	5	3.17	162,170	530,559.18
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	1	0.80	15,240	12,192.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	15	0.95	219,975	208,976.25
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	9	2.57	66,633	174,056.81
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>51</b>		<b>1,007,300</b>	<b>1,689,467.34</b>
<b>MANAGED FUNDS</b>				
C & I LEASING PLC.	4	1.44	10,000	13,920.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>10,000</b>	<b>13,920.00</b>
<b>PACKAGING</b>				
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC.	2	3.87	4,166	16,122.42
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>4,166</b>	<b>16,122.42</b>
<b>PETROLEUM (MARKETING)</b>				
AFROIL PLC.	4	0.80	9,000	7,200.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	109	62.00	153,559	9,546,804.13
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	13	2.04	123,404	251,744.16
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	39	178.99	88,531	16,113,846.46
CONOIL PLC.	79	112.00	106,820	12,501,408.07
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	28	149.84	24,907	3,728,198.44
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	34	179.99	51,381	9,218,687.58
OANDO PLC.	188	89.90	186,850	16,784,655.73
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>494</b>		<b>744,452</b>	<b>68,152,544.57</b>
<b>PRINTING &amp; PUBLISHING</b>				
ACADEMY PRESS PLC.	1	1.90	1,000	1,900.00
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC.	1	1.64	1,000	1,640.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>2,000</b>	<b>3,540.00</b>
<b>REAL ESTATE</b>				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	20	8.80	104,011	921,761.63
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>104,011</b>	<b>921,761.63</b>
<b>TEXTILES</b>				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	4	2.10	17,608	36,976.80
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>17,608</b>	<b>36,976.80</b>

## TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
INLANDBANK	670,000.00	934,050.00	70
NB	1,062,372.00	37,261,219.57	428
UBN	1,503,476.00	28,997,679.57	385
FIRSTBANK	1,527,441.00	35,669,453.75	499
GUARANTY	1,544,673.00	15,723,227.98	239
BCC	1,619,394.00	7,104,191.64	19
IMB	1,722,259.00	979,069.67	23
ZENITHBANK	1,983,108.00	27,288,996.01	144
OCEANIC	4,826,600.00	23,323,495.00	66
OWENABANK	8,261,792.00	13,443,823.36	21

## TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
OKOMUOIL	17.80	18.60	+0.80
NBC	52.21	52.90	+0.69
AP	61.41	62.00	+0.59
OCEANIC	4.71	4.94	+0.23
BERGER	4.47	4.69	+0.22
BCC	4.35	4.56	+0.21
SKBEECHAM	8.50	8.60	+0.10
JBERGER	14.70	14.80	+0.10
C&ILEASING	1.38	1.44	+0.06
INLANDBANK	1.38	1.43	+0.05

## TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
GUINNESS	94.99	91.00	-3.99
NOLCHEM	114.50	112.00	-2.50
TOTAL	182.49	179.99	-2.50
NESTLE	146.51	145.01	-1.50
TEXACO	151.00	149.84	-1.16
PRESKO	11.46	10.95	-0.51
ZUP	23.50	23.00	-0.50
CADBURY	52.30	51.80	-0.50
MOBIL	179.33	178.99	-0.34
CFAO	5.32	5.06	-0.26

## Fund managers favour stocks over bonds

US fund managers, apparently worried about a decline in bond prices as rates rise, shifted money to stocks from bonds during February, according to a new Reuters asset allocation poll.

The allocation changes in the latest monthly survey put the mix of stocks and bonds back to near where it was in November, when US stocks rallied after the election.

The poll showed a 67.1 percent weighting in equities in February, up from 54.5 percent in January. Bonds fell to 27.6 percent in February from 40.5 percent the month before.

The survey of 12 managers was conducted from February 16 to February 24.

"A lot of asset allocation people are overweight equities and underweight fixed income," said Derek Sasveld, senior asset allocation strategist at UBS Global Asset Management.

Sasveld expects equity markets globally to provide a "reasonable return" this year in the range of 7 percent to percent, with perhaps a little more outside the United States.

Reflecting concerns about rising long-term interest rates, UBS allocators have short bond positions for the US, UK and Japan markets in their absolute return portfolios, he said.

The poll showed the North American equities allocation rising to 56.3 percent from 53.7 percent.

In contrast, the equities allocation for Europe both inside and outside the euro zone fell, as did Japan.

In a sign that investors remain enthusiastic about emerging markets, the equities weightings for Asia ex-Japan and Latin America increased.

In bond portfolios, the weighting for the euro zone fell to 21.3 percent from 25.0 percent, while North America saw a more modest decline. The bond weighting for Europe outside of the euro zone rose to 11.5 percent from 9.5 percent and the Japan bond weighting increased to 14.6 percent from 11.8 percent.

"I think the general direction of long-term rates is upward. However, I don't believe we're going to gallop upward," said Anthony Chan, managing director and senior economist at J.P. Morgan Asset Management.

Chan has only modest expectations for US equities, where he thinks the return could be only about 5 percent this year. He said the market is very nervous about warnings of shortfalls in corporate earnings.

He also believes the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries would like to see oil stay around \$50 a barrel.

Asked what allocation shifts are anticipated over the next three months, the managers anticipate a smaller underweight in bonds and a smaller overweighting in stocks.

In bond portfolios, US Treasuries are seen moving from underweight to a small overweight. Japanese bonds are seen shifting to a smaller underweight, while euro zone bonds are seen moving from the present slight overweight to a somewhat larger overweight.

In stock portfolios, the euro zone is seen moving to a somewhat larger overweight while Japan is expected to move from moderate underweight to moderate overweight. Asia outside of Japan is seen moving to overweight from neutral.

The energy sector is expected to shift to a larger overweight, while financials are seen moving from underweight to a small overweight.

Materials are seen moving to a smaller overweight and industrials are seen shifting to overweight from underweight.

Donald Gimbel, senior managing director at Carret & Co. LLC in New York, says investors are favouring value-type stocks over the growth style, and gravitating toward mid-sized companies.

"People are saying, 'Before I lose a lot of money in the bond market, I think I'll put that money to work in the equity markets

# LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

## News

### ASUU identifies disabilities in national confab

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma, Labour Reporter

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has kicked against the federal government's national political reform conference, saying that the conference is afflicted with "incurable disabilities."

A communiqué signed by the president of the union, Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano, said that it was naive to attempt to resolve fundamental problems facing the country through a conference or dialogue.

The union said that organisations such as labour and professionals that were allowed to participate in the conference would only serve to legitimise the programmes of the ruling class.

According to the union, the federal government and non-governmental coalitions have not shown evidence of serious capacity to defend the welfare of Nigerian masses or the struggle to free the country and its people from forces of global domination.

"There is already a huge controversy concerning the 'legality' of the FGN-sponsored national dialogue. Some members of the National Assembly have taken the presidency to court challenging the legality of the confab.

"Nigerians including those who have been selected as delegates, do not know the definite agenda for the conference and even if they knew, it was set by the sponsors, not the people of Nigeria," the union said.

According to the union, what Nigeria needs is a transformation that would provide for everyone, a decent life, education, health-care, housing, cultural expression and freedom of expression.

"ASUU's suggestion is that the chief task of those who are genuinely interested in resolving the fundamental problems of poverty; freedom and development skewed against the majority of the population is to organise to control the politics of the country in favour of the majority," the union said.

### TUCN condemns sack in Guinness

From Samson Ojo, Correspondent (Lagos)

The Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN), has condemned the recent retrenchment of 500 workers by the management of Guinness Nigeria Plc.

The TUCN in a statement stated that the retrenchment was done in bad faith, adding that the exercise did not reflect the rising profit profile of the organisation.

In terminating the appointment of about 500 workers, Guinness Nigeria Plc claimed that the exercise was as a result of the discontinued use of old production line in its operation.

The two page statement signed by the TUCN secretary-general, Chief John Kolawole, explained that the exercise was unnecessary and not in line with the federal government's current reform programmes geared towards providing employment for the people.

While calling for a review of the retrenchment exercise, the TUCN insisted that the exercise was not in line with due process of disengaging employees.

Said he: "The TUCN is of the view that the retrenchment list did not go through the due process, as reports have it that some of the affected staff were only victimised and have no godfathers in the organisation."

### Ladipo urges ANLCA to maintain peace

The pioneer president of the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Dr. Rafiu Ladipo has appealed to the two factions of its board of trustees to give peace a chance.

The ANLCA has had two different board of trustees running side-by-side in the last six years, dividing the association into two warring factions.

Each of the board of Trustees is claiming to have been duly certificated and hence, is in charge of the association.

Ladipo made the appeal at a peace meeting with some of the factional leaders in Lagos on Wednesday, adding that "the issue of who is real and who is impersonating would be addressed in due course".

He said that a Technical Committee would soon be inaugurated to reconcile the various aggrieved groups to achieve the unity of purpose required in the freight forwarding business.

Ladipo, who is also the President of Nigerian Football Supporters Club, pleaded that the ANLCA should be able to speak with one voice to bring back the lost credibility of the association.

"There is dignity and respect in unity," he said, adding that the economic importance of the association was crucial as its members handle a lot of imports and exports.



Protesters square-up to policemen during a protest at the NLC headquarters in Abuja.

Pix: Felix Omigbinde.

## Telecom workers task confab on job creation

The National Union of Posts and Telecommunication Employees (NUPTE) has called on labour representatives at the national political reform conference to make a case for job creation.

Speaking in an interview with *Labour Trust* in his office, the NUPTE general secretary, Comrade Adejo Jeje lamented that despite the availability of huge resources in the country, many Nigerians are still roaming the streets in search of jobs.

According to him, the federal government has failed in its responsibility to create jobs for the citizens, but still engages itself in downsizing or right sizing of workers.

Said he: "A government that cannot cater for the needs of its citizens is not worthy to be called a

From Samson Ojo, Correspondent (Lagos)

government. A situation where the government still shifts the task of job creation to the private sector is a criminal act."

The NUPTE scribe urged the labour representatives (NLC and TUC) to lobby government to take the issue of job creation very seriously in order to create wealth for the citizens.

Comrade Adejo condemned the federal

government's policy of downsizing or rightsizing in the civil service. According to him the government should rather look for ways of increasing the work force in order to absorb some university graduates.

"Today there are so many universities that are yearly producing fresh graduates, what then is the essence of going to university when there will be no job at the end of the day," he said.

Commenting on the efforts, to unionise workers

in Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) companies, the NUPTE general secretary, told *Labour Trust* that all arrangements have been concluded, but regretted that most of the workers were afraid of joining the union.

Nevertheless, the NUPTE scribe stated that the union has embarked on sensitisation of workers in the GSM companies to educate them on the benefits of joining the unions.

## 'Cordial mgt/staff relations secret of Chida's success'

Existing cordial relations between the staff and management of Chida International Hotels has been described as the secret behind the hotel's success.

According to the chairman and chief executive, Sir. Gabriel Agada who

dropped this hint in a chat with newsmen in Abuja recently, the management in Chida does not believe in "master-servant relationship," hence the existence of mutual love and understanding between the management and the workers.

"Our work is to serve the interest of the public, and while carrying out that responsibility, you must also love those who are serving, it is a give and take situation," he said.

Sir. Agada pointed out that following Chida's desire to render the best services possible, the staff are cultured with the cardinal principles of humility and honesty which is expected to be sustained in the long run.

"As long as that employee is there, he would

strive to maintain that culture of humility in service, irrespective of his size or age, and that is the lifespan of the business," he said.

Sir. Agada said he owes his eternal gratitude to the about 250 well trained and experienced work force, who have prepared Chida International Hotel to make a difference in the hospitality business in Abuja with an uncompromised standard of services.

Some members of staff who spoke to *Labour Trust* said the existing cordial relationship between management and staff as well as an attractive welfare package have endeared them to the hotel which is seven minutes drive to the city centre.

It has 250 rooms with a variety of services including an internet business centre, 24-hour room service, a medical centre, guarded car park, 24-hour police surveillance and free airport/township shuttle among others.

The staff revealed to *Labour Trust* that management exposes them to constant training and re-training on the best practices in hotel business. This training they said, is arranged both locally and internationally on a periodic basis.



Sir. Gabriel Agada

## Transporters protest extortion

The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), has called on the federal government to put an end to alleged extortion of transport workers by members of the Nigeria Police Force.

President of the Union, Alhaji Gidado Hamman told *Labour Trust* in Abuja that the transport workers would withdraw their services if the government failed to call the police to order.

According to him, transport workers, especially members of NURTW, have suffered untold hardships in the hands of policemen operating on highways across the country.

"Since the exit of the former Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun, the union is receiving complaints of extortion by policemen on daily basis. This is an uncivilised way of policing the society.

"The union is therefore calling on the federal government to caution members of the police force on putting unnecessary pressures on our members and extorting money from them. If the government fails to do that, the union will be left with no other choice than to withdraw its services to the nation," he warned.

Alhaji Hamman also called on the federal government to, as a matter of necessity, reform the Nigeria Police Force in order to make it effective in modern day policing.

He said that the welfare of the rank and file of the police should be adequately taken care of in order to boost the morale of the policemen.

"If the police force is sanitised, the whole country is sanitised. It is high time the federal government mapped out strategies to clean up all the bad eggs in the police force," he said.

# LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

## How the new pension scheme will work

**A** forum was last week in Abuja organized for employees of the public services, union leaders and representatives of cooperatives and thrift societies wherein the impact of the new pension scheme on the public service was examined. These notes taken from the forum by Austine Odo of our Labour Desk gives some highlight on the new scheme and how workers can gain from it.

In June 2004 a new Pension Act was signed into law. The Act repeals all previous legislations regulating the administration of pension benefits and establishes a uniform contributory pension scheme for employees in the federal public service, Federal Capital Territory and private sector. The objectives of the new scheme are to ensure that workers in the public service of the federation, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and private sector receive their retirement benefits as and when due; assist impoverished individuals by ensuring that they save in order to provide for their old age; and, establish a uniform set of rules, regulations and standards for the administration and payments of retirement benefits for the public service of the Federation, the FCT and the private sector.

The pension reform programme is modeled after the pension system in Chile and stipulates that pension funds and assets are to be privately managed and invested by professional fund managers (administrators) and custodians registered with the National Pension Commission.

In May 1981, Chile replaced its government-run, pay-as-you-go retirement system with an investment-based private system where individuals fund their own retirements through compulsory savings. The aim of the reform was to create a social security system open to all citizens, based on freedom and solidarity, promoting fairness as well as efficiency. By privatising pensions, Chile resolved her soaring pension deficit and stimulated domestic growth. For example, pension funds are being used in the development of infrastructure which in turn pro-

duces handsome return to contributors. Aside from receiving a comfortable retirement, workers now see themselves as important stakeholders in the economy.

The enormous pension deficit in the Nigerian pension scheme also led to the need for the current reforms. The defined benefit Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) pension scheme as at 2002 had outstanding liabilities estimated at 2 trillion, or approximately 25% of the GDP and government spending on pension, which was estimated at 4.8% of the national budget and 1.15% of GDP was not enough to meet these liabilities.

The new scheme is a contributory, privately managed pension scheme. This means that the employee and employer contribute a pre determined percentage of employee's basic salary into a pension account for the employee. The contributions would be managed by professional fund managers and custodians. At retirement, the benefit to the employee would be the total contributions plus any income (and capital gain) earned on the contributions made with the objective of ensuring that every person who has worked in either the public or private sector receives his retirement benefits as and when due; assisting employees by ensuring that they save to cater for their livelihood during old age; and, establishing a uniform set of rules and regulations for the administration and payment of retirement benefits in both the public and private sectors.

An employee contributes a percentage of his monthly emolument (that is, sum of basic salary, transportation and housing allowances) and the employer also contributes a percentage of the employee's monthly emolument

towards the retirement benefits of the employee.

A minimum of seven and a half percent of monthly emolument (that is, sum of basic salary, housing and transport allowances) except for the military personnel who contributes two and half percent or an employer is required to contribute a minimum of seven and a half percent of your monthly emolument except for the military which is twelve and a half percent. However, an employer may elect to bear the

administers the retirement funds, of contributions made on the workers behalf by employer. The company will be licensed by the National Pension Commission (NPC).

Every contributor will open a Retirement Savings Account (RSA) with a Pension Fund Administrator of choice. The PFA will issue a periodic statement of account showing how much has been contributed and returns on the contributions.

Employees have the free-

(FCT) and the private sector (where there are five or more employees) are affected by the new scheme.

A worker will have access to his or her money either at retirement or at the age of 50, whichever comes later, and he/she can withdraw any portion of it

Upon retirement or on reaching the age of 50, which ever comes later, and then only to the extent that what is left is sufficient to guarantee that at least 50% of your last salary will be paid to you monthly through an annuity or a programmed withdrawal.

If an employee retires before the age of 50 years in accordance with the terms and conditions of his employment, he may withdraw a lump sum of money not more than 25% of the amount in his RSA account, provided that such withdrawals shall only be made after six months of retirement and the retired employee does not secure another employment.

The balance of 75% will be used to purchase an annuity from a life insurance company or to fund programmed withdrawals from the RSA.

What happens to retirement benefits under the pension scheme existing before the commencement of the Pension Act 2004?

In the case of the Federal Public Service and the FCT where the previous scheme was unfunded, the government will calculate the amount due to each employee and issue a Federal Government Retirement Bond to the employee. The employee shall hold this bond as evidence of government liability. Upon retirement the bond shall be redeemed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The proceeds shall be transferred to the credit of the Retirement Savings Account of the employee.

For employees in self funded agencies, the employer shall credit their RSA with any funds to which the employee is entitled from prior schemes. If the funds are not sufficient to meet the accrued liabilities to the employee, the employer shall issue to the employee a written obligation on the liabilities, and the obligation shall have the same priority as salary. The terms of repayment of such obligations shall be agreed with the employee.

The Federal Government shall pay into Redemption

Funds Account with the Central Bank, an amount equal to 5%, of the total monthly wage bill payable to employees in the public service of the Federation and FCT. The amount paid into the CBN shall be used to redeem any retirement bonds issued.

The new scheme offers the potential for higher benefits than the previous arrangements. Each individual's actual outcome would however be dependent on a number of factors including economic growth, the minimum pension guarantee as specified by the NPC as well as the investment expertise of the PFA.

The new Act mandates employers and employees to provide retirement funds for the latter. The contributions to be made by employees to their Retirement Savings Account (RSA) could cause a reduction in their disposable income. However, the contributions would be a major factor in assisting employees towards a comfortable retirement.

In addition to the contributions to a Retirement Savings Account, employers shall maintain a life insurance policy in favour of employees for a minimum of three times the annual total emolument of the employee.

Under the new scheme, employees will be required to choose their own Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs). The PFA will manage independent accounts for each employee and the benefits that accrue to the account holder will be a function of contributions to the account, performance of the PFA the employee chooses as well as market/economic growth. The new scheme provides that the PFA shall not hold any pension fund and asset nor keep these funds with a custodian in which it has business interest. This will ensure that the employees' contributions are safe should the PFA go bankrupt.

Drawing from the Chilean model, if the new pension scheme is well accepted by employees and managed efficiently by all parties, workers should have more pension benefits at the end of their work life when compared to the previous pay-as-you-go scheme. Also, it could mean that the days of long queues for pension and the stress associated with it are over.



Alhaji Yayale Ahmed, Head of Civil Service of the federation.

full burden of the scheme provided that the total contribution is not less than 15 percent of your monthly emolument.

The total contribution (employee's and employer's) will be paid out by the employer directly to a Pension Fund Custodian (PFC) and the funds will be managed and invested by a Pension Fund Administrator (PFA) of the employee's choice.

A Pension Fund Administrator (PFA) is charged with the responsibility of managing and investing pension funds and assets. The company will be licensed by the National Pension Commission (NPC) while a pension Fund Custodian (PFC) is a company that will hold contributions, and investment instruments on behalf of the Pension Fund Administrator. The PFC is required to notify the PFA, who manages and

dom to move from one PFA to another once a year.

A change of job will not affect an account as this is for the employee and will remain with him for life. When he changes, he will be required to notify the new employer of the PFA that manages his account and his RSA number. The employer will then contact the PFA to get the details of the PFA's Custodian in order to remit his contributions.

The scheme will not affect existing pensioners and those who have 3 years or less to retire as well as categories of persons under S.291 of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, that is, Judicial Officers of the Supreme Court and Appeal Court and any other Court as specified in the Constitution. However, all other employees in the federal public service, the Federal Capital Territory

### Monetisation: Disengaged drivers drag minister to court

**A** Federal High Court in Abuja has ordered Foreign Affairs Minister Olu Adeniji to appear before it over the implementation of the monetisation policy in his ministry.

Twenty four disengaged drivers of the ministry dragged the minister to court alleging foul play and discrimination in the implementation of the policy in the establishment.

The plaintiffs, led by Mr

Oloyede Zacheus, claimed that the minister did not comply with the relevant rules and regulations in the implementation of monetisation policy.

They claimed that their appointments were abruptly terminated in line with the monetisation policy, but that the ministry denied them their full entitlements and benefits under the same policy.

They said the policy recommended equitable and

transparent sale of 50 per cent of excess vehicles in the ministry to disengaged drivers, but that none of the vehicles was sold to them.

They also said that the vehicles were sold to serving management and senior staff of the ministry.

The plaintiffs also alleged that the ministry was attempting to dispose their monetised accommodation thereby violating their rights to personal property.

### ... as workers stage protest in Abuja

**M**ore than 350 civilian staff drawn from various schools yesterday in Abuja staged a peaceful protest at the Ministry of Defence headquarters over the non payment of their monetization arrears.

A placard displayed by the workers read "Okonjo-Iweala says she has released all MOD's allocations. Pay our arrears".

The workers said that they were determined to see

the minister over their monetization arrears.

The staffs, who were drawn from Nigerian Army schools and navy schools in Port Harcourt, Lagos, Jos, Abokuta among others, said that they had not been paid since 2003.

Correspondents learnt that staff working in the states had not been paid their new salary since October 2003.

The workers also said that the 19 per cent Christmas bonus had not been paid

since the inception of President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration, while headquarters staff were paid N10,000 flat rate.

The workers further said that there was always a disparity in what was paid to them and what was in the voucher, adding that that was part of the reason for the protest.

Meanwhile, leaders of the protesting workers were invited to discuss the matter with the minister.

# LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

## The viability of NSITF as a social security agency

**S**ocial security issues occupy a noticeable position in national discourse. In this piece, *Austine Odo, our senior labour reporter and Abdullahi Gulloma, our labour reporter researched into manifest documents along with investigations on the operations of NSITF and its viability in the operating environment.*

The Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) came into existence in 1993 with the responsibility of managing the social insurance pension scheme for workers in the private sector of the Nigerian economy. It is funded solely from the contributions of employees' gross emoluments. It is from the cumulative contributions that the cost of administering the scheme is funded and the surplus is invested to generate income for the payment of workers' benefits. Retired members are entitled, subject to certain qualifications, to receive pensions and grants as benefits in the event of attaining retirement age. In managing the social insurance scheme of workers, the Fund is primarily acting as an enforcer of contributions, benefits administration and investment manager.

In its enforcing role, the Fund according to labour and employment minister, Dr. Hassan Lawal, was able to increase its contribution through the collection of N10.2 billion in 2003. This is against the sum of N8.5 billion collected in year 2002. This increase of N1.7 billion (or 20%) he said, is significant given the growing expenditure profile of most Nigerian workers. However, the increase is not unrelated to a growth in membership through the registration of new employees into the scheme. 2003 recorded an increase of 5% above the 2002 figures. Such an increase amounted to an additional 2,352 new employees joining the scheme.

As part of the work of the Fund, *Labour Trust* gathered it has to put the contributions made, into investment creation. A gross investment of N49 billion was recorded in 2003 against N32 billion recorded in 2002. This showed an appreciable increase of N16.8 billion or 52% above the performance in 2002. Also, the gross investment made by the Fund for the period January to June 2004 was N29 billion against N22 billion which was recorded during the corresponding period in 2003. This shows an increase of N7.6 billion or 35%. The gross investment for January 2003 June 2004 (11/2 years) is N78 billion.

Statistics received from the ministry shows that the Fund realized the sum of N2.5 billion in 2003 as income from its various investments compared to N1.8 billion which was realized in 2002. There was an appreciable increase of N0.7 billion or 38%. The investment income from January to June 2004 was N2.5 billion compared to N0.1 billion generated during the corresponding period in 2003. There was an increase of N1.6 billion or 186% over the 2003 performance. The total investment income for January 2003 to 30th June 2004 was N5 billion.

The Fund works through a Projects Section, which oversees the real estate investments of the Fund. The activities of the Fund in real estate investments include the following:

- \* Executive Housing Estate, Gudu Abuja with 23 four bedroom bungalows.
- \* Karu Housing Project with 146 two and three bedroom flats
- \* Acquired properties consisting of two residential buildings and one office complex and another in the Central Business District, Abuja.
- \* Katampe Housing Estate consisting of 24 two-bedroom flats, 25 three bedroom flats and 16 duplexes and 10 lock up shops.
- \* Others include properties in Lagos, Maiduguri, Kano and Abuja

The significant progress made by the NSITF seems to have attracted new challenges. The Pension Reform Act of 2004 has placed on the NSITF new challenges with emphasis for the provision of social security services other than pension to all contributing citizens. To facilitate this transformation the minister said, steps are being taken to reposition, refocus and re-engineer the organization to meet this dual role and responsibility both as a Pension Fund Administrator and a social security service provider.

Our findings showed that following the introduction of the NSITF Scheme in July 1994, the rates of contribution to the scheme was changed to 7.5% of the basic

salary of a worker, with the employer contributing 5% and the worker contributing 2.5%. A ceiling of N48,000.00 per annum was placed on the contribution. By this arrangement, the highest contributor to the scheme from inception to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2000 paid the sum of N300.00 per month and 3,600.00 per annum. This translated to a maximum pension of N14,400 per annum or N1,200 per month for a contribution of 120 months to the scheme. The ugly situation we learnt, was unacceptable to a scheme originally designed to bail out workers at the time of need. Barely three years after the introduction of the NSITF scheme, it became apparent that the rates of contribution to the scheme had been rendered unrealistic by running inflation and incessant salary

i. The increase had boosted the monthly pension payment to members. The pension had increased from the maximum pension of N1,200.00 per month (N14,400.00 per annum) to a minimum pension of N4,400.00 per month (N52,800.00 per annum).

ii. A minimum gratuity of N105,600.00 to members has also been introduced.

The NSITF Management had focused on the transformation of the Fund into an effective and efficient customer-service organisation. To achieve this, it places greater emphasis on enhancing the speed of its product delivery, providing greater value and excellent services to its stakeholders and claimants. This according to official sources in NSITF, was achieved by expanding the

from July 1994 to March 2004 whilst a total of 1,412,217 employees were registered in the same period. Contributions collected increased to N33,887,468,144.62, notwithstanding the harsh socio-economic environment that was prevalent in the country during the period under review. Analysis showed that registered employers grew by 100.19% from July 1994 - March 2004, whilst registered employees grew by 49.74%. Contributions collected witnessed a growth rate of 3,670.05% as well.

### Enhanced benefits

The average benefits showed in the previous sections is made up of the much higher benefits paid to pensioners and the relatively smaller lump sum grants paid to claimants who did not qualify for Invalidity Pensions. It is necessary to analyze the payments made to pensioners, to appreciate the size of the more significant payments.

The pension payments include Transitional Basic Pension (TBP) and a lump sum Gratuity paid to newly qualified Invalidity Pension claimants and Survivor's Pension. These pension payments are analyzed for the 3 years; 2001 - 2003 (see the table below). The average annual TBP for the years 2001, 2002 and 2003 was N8,029.00, N14,702.90 and N39,349.62 respectively. The average TBP for the first three months of 2004 was N10,006.72. The average gratuity paid to newly qualified TBP claimants for the three years 2001, 2002 and 2003 was N20,906.49, N25,196.87 and N94,478.31, respectively. In the period January - March, 2004, the average gratuity paid to newly qualified TBP claimants averaged N88,471.00.

The average annual Invalidity Pension for the years 2001, 2002 and 2003 was N24,428.57, N18,090.91 and N50,360 respectively. In the period January - March, 2004, the average claim under this contingency was N9,824.00. The average gratuity paid to newly qualified Invalidity Pensioners for 2001, 2002 and 2003 were N17,900.00, N24,625.00 and N79,378.39 respectively. In the period Jan. - Feb. 2004, the average claim under this contingency was N86,000.00.

The total amount of benefits paid to claimants during the period 1962 to 1993 was W118.08 million whilst

the sum of W662.18 million was paid from 1994 to March 2004. This showed a substantial appreciation of N544.10 million or 460.79% over the figures of the NPF era. The total number of claimants paid was 454,541 during the period 1962 to 1993 whilst 61,762 claimants were paid from 1994 to March 2004. Though the numbers of claimants paid from 1994 to March 2004 appears fewer, the average claim paid rose significantly from N259.77 in the NPF era to N10,721.50 in the NSITF. As part of the improved service delivery, the processing of application and payment of benefit claims through banks are completed within two weeks.

NSITF is an institutional investor and a major player in the capital and money market of the Nigeria economy. In order to properly regulate its investment operations, the management had put in place guidelines and criteria for all investments with the objective of generating maximum return 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, i.e. the certainty of recovering the funds invested and the associated returns.

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 Fund recorded a net investment of N1.463 billion between 1962 and June 1994 whilst the gross investment between July 1994 and March 2004 and was N30.997 billion. This represents an increase of N29.534 billion or 2,018.73%.



Dr. Hassan Mohammed Lawal, labour and productivity minister

increases. The rates of contribution to the NSITF as fixed by legislation, was stagnant and, therefore, left behind by the economic realities as mentioned.

In consonance with Section 40(1) of the NSITF Act No. 73 of 1993 which provides for a periodic review of rates of contribution to beef up insurance income to guarantee desirable benefits, the Board of the NSITF recommended a review of the rates of contributions to the government. Thus, the government accepted and approved the recommendations of the board and increased the rate of contributions to 10% of gross salary effective 1st January 2001. The rate is shared 'between the employer and the worker in the percentage ratio of 6.5% and 3.5% respectively.

The new rate of contribution according to our findings, has improved the Fund's fortune and members' benefits in so many ways:

frontiers of compliance coverage to the unorganised private sector, and striving for higher return on its performing investment portfolio.

Compliance remains the centre of the Fund's operation of not just aggressively mobilizing new members from private sector to join the scheme, but ensuring that existing members and their employers effectively met their financial obligations that are essential for the operations of the Fund.

During the period, 1962 - June 1994 (NPF era) a total of 20,419 employers were registered into the scheme whilst a total of 2,839,153 employees were also registered. Total contributions collected in the same period was N923,329,329.53.

It is note worthy that the operations of the Fund had improved significantly since its transformation in July 1994. A total of 20,449 employers were registered

## LGs owe retirees N50m in Kogi

**O**ver 50 million naira is being owed retirees of local government councils and local government education authorities in Kogi State.

The executive secretary of the Kogi State pension board, Chief Paul Biodun Oludoyi who disclosed this in a chat with *Labour Trust* at the weekend in Lokoja said the amount is part of the

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Correspondent (Lokoja)

arrears owed the retirees by some contributory bodies.

The state pension board he noted receives a monthly allocation of N40 million from the local government councils out of which, N35 million is expended on pensions of about 3,000 pensioners while N5 million is expended on the payment of pension arrears, gratuities, death benefits

and the general office administration of the board.

While commending the state government for leaving up to its obligations, Chief Oludoyi appealed to the federal government and the state primary education board which he said has not contributed any kobo to the fund even while having the largest number of pensioners, to pay up.

**T**he police in Kaduna State have dismissed four of its men over the killing of one Sama'ila Iliyasu at Unguwar Muazu in Kaduna.

The Kaduna State Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Muhammed Yesufu, announced the dismissal at a news conference in Kaduna.

He said the dismissed policemen were members of a police foot patrol team led by Cpl. Shehu Muhammed

## Four policemen lose jobs in Kaduna

and that they were made to face "orderly trial, found guilty and dismissed from the force."

The police commissioner said they would soon be arraigned for conspiracy and murder.

Yesufu warned that the police would no longer fold its arms and watch few irresponsible ones drag its name in mud

He also said that trigger-happy policemen should be prepared for hard times in the state.

Yesufu sympathised with the family of the deceased and reassured members of the public that the police would continue to respect the dignity of life and the rule of law.

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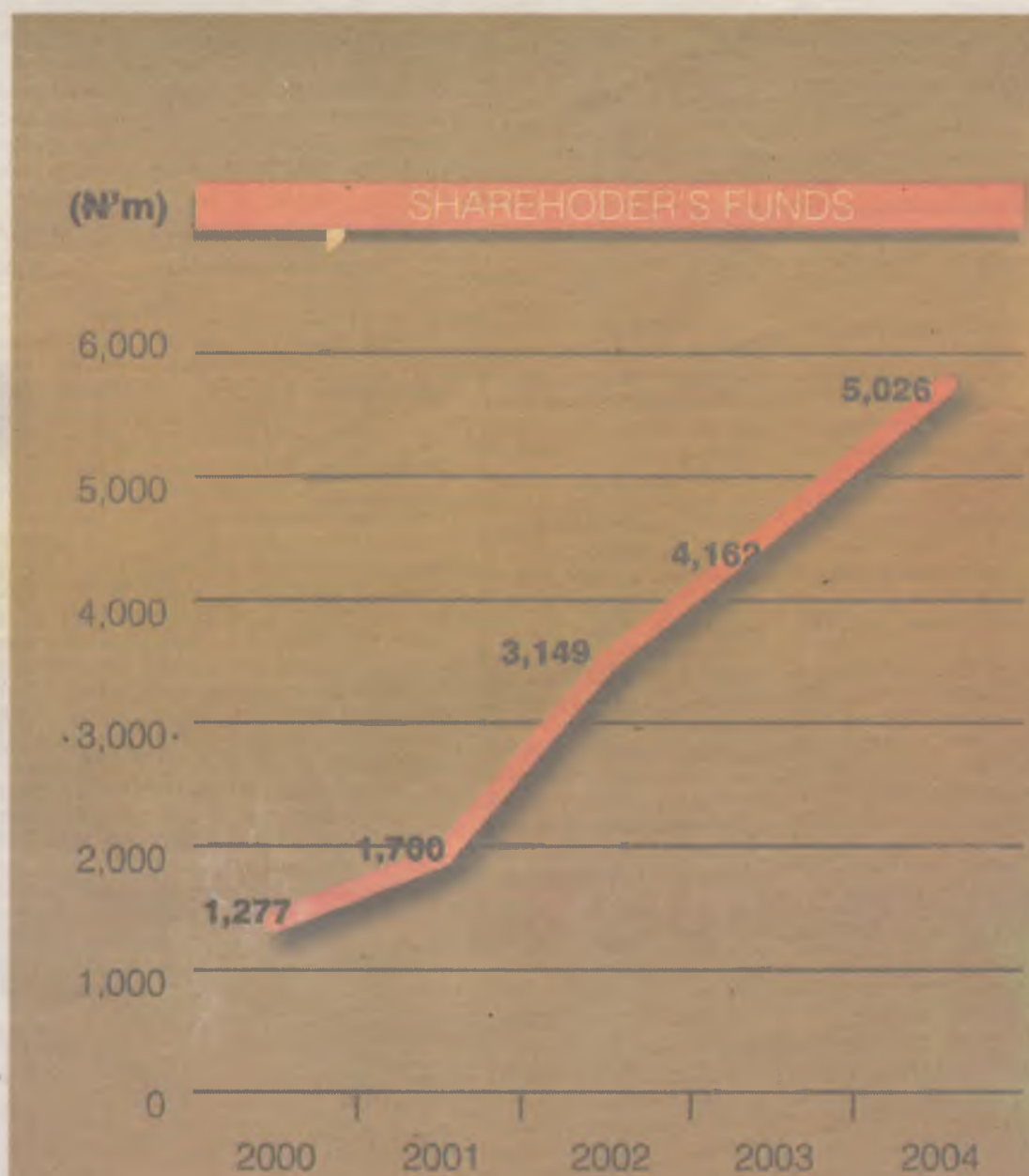
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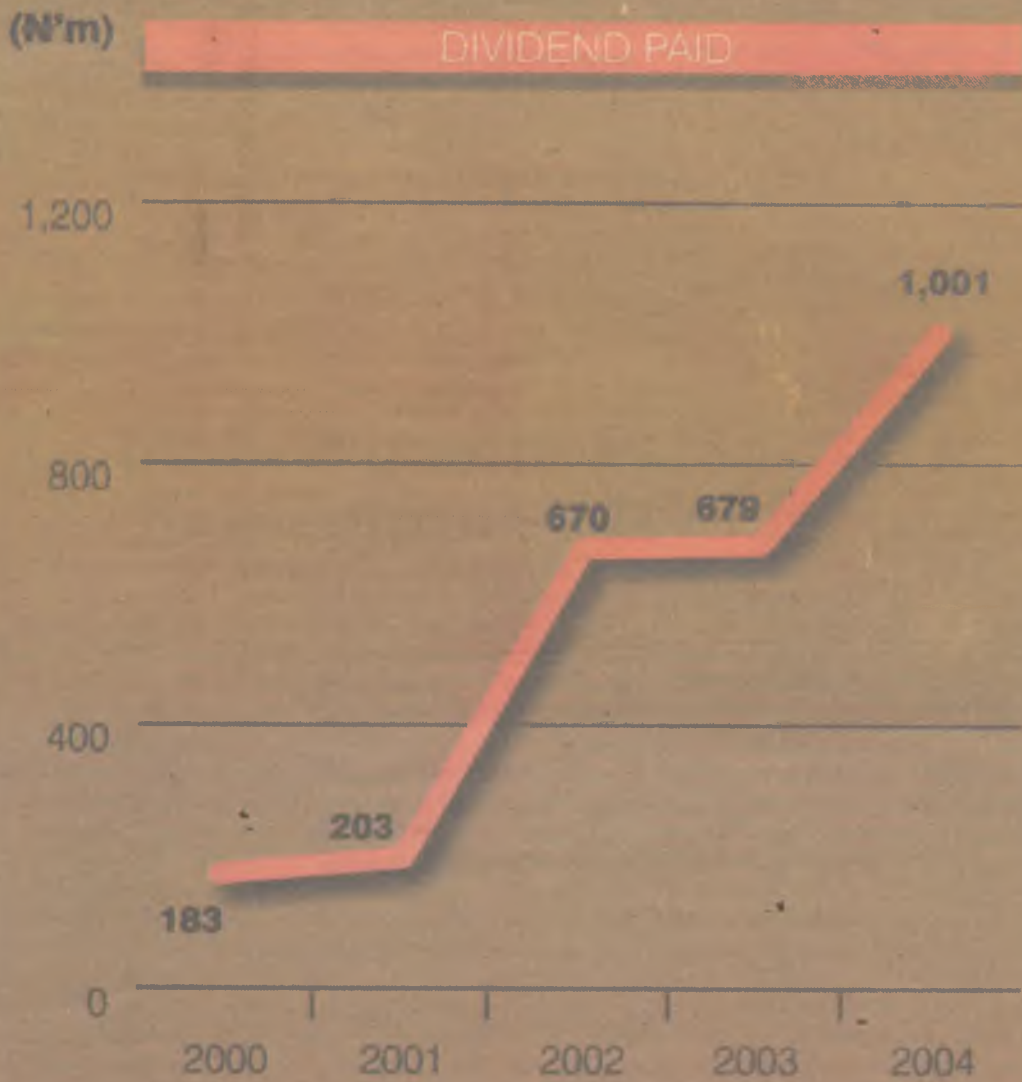
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# YOUR HEALTH

## Islamic scholar urges more battle against VVF

An Islamic scholar and medical doctor, Dr. Ishaq Lawal has called on the federal government and religious organisations in the country to declare war on the Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF), an abnormal health condition leading to uncontrollable leakage of urine common with young girls during childbirth.

Dr. Lawal made the call at a lecture he delivered on VVF, causes and prevention at the weekend at the annual Nasirullahil Fathi (NASFAT) women's week held at the national Mosque Conference Hall, Abuja.

Describing the scourge as a social ill which needed urgent attention, Dr. Lawal noted that one million cases of VVF exist in the country with more prevalence in Northern Nigeria due to high rate of early marriages.

"Of these, only 2,000 cases have opportunity for repairs, with less than 50% having likelihood of success" he added.

He pointed out that early marriage, small pelvic in women, big baby in pregnancy, prolonged obstructed labour, poor maternity

By Zainab Alimi

healthcare services, poverty, poor nutrition and hygiene as some causes of VVF.

"But the provision of adequate maternity care to pregnant women is the surest way to prevent VVF, even in the event of early marriages," he said.

He therefore called on the federal government, religious and non-governmental organisations to educate the general public on the importance of antenatal care and hospital delivery, and provide free maternal healthcare services to pregnant women.

He pointed out that the most common effect for VVF is rejection of the victims by relations and society at large, adding that Muslims have a responsibility in assisting them by providing emergency operative relief packages to patients.

"Women do not necessarily have to suffer from VVF. This societal ill can be prevented and checked through free medical care, moral support, public enlightenment and building the capacities of local communities to improve

healthcare services."

He said that surgical repairs is the best cure of VVF, but that most patients cannot afford it, hence there is the need to provide soft loans, food and nutritional supplements, essential drugs including contraceptives, to them as well as teaching them vocational trade.

The NASFAT women's week which kicked off on Saturday, February 26, 2005 will run through till March 6, 2005. Other programmes lined up for the event are lectures on Muslim women and the development of the society, visit to the female prison, Suleja free deworming and blood-pressure medical services, general fasting and prayers for the nation, among others.



An officer of the ministry of health immunising children against polio at Ogo-Ofun Street, Ado-Ekiti, recently. Pic: Olanipepo Odunwa

## Polio: Zamfara gov's wife canvasses for support

The wife of the Zamfara State governor, Hajia (Dr.) Karima Ahmed Sani has enjoined religious bodies and traditional rulers to assist in sensitising their followers, with a view to achieving success in the on-going immunisation against polio virus in the state.

The governor's wife stated this weekend in Bungudu Local government area of Zamfara state at the flagging off ceremony of this year's first round of National Immunisation Days (NIDs) of the national programme on Immunisation (NPI), with a call on parents to make available their

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin  
Health Reporter

children below the age of five years for the exercise which was flagged off Friday in the state.

Hajia Sani who is a medical doctor pointed out that immunisation against polio virus is the right of children and as such, should not be denied them for whatever reason.

Daily Trust gathered that people's response on the first day of the house-to-house polio immunisation was impressive except in few households in Gussau, the state capital where they refused to make their children available for the

exercise until after another round of sensitisation to them by the officials of the National Programme on Immunisation (NPI).

Religious bodies in the state, the Jam'atul Nairil Islam (JNI) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), it was gathered contributed immensely to the overall success of the exercise in the state as the bodies were said to have sensitized their members on the efficacy and the need for the immunisation in the state.

With the response of parents in Zamfara state to the last lap effort to interrupt the transmission of wild polio virus and eradicate poliomyelitis, it could be said that the controversies that surrounded the efficacy of Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) have become a thing of the past in the county, especially in the northern parts of the country.

Daily Trust gathered at the

state NPI office that 604,520 doses of polio vaccine were supplied to the state for the exercise in the fourteen local government areas in the state with about 214,000 doses remaining from the last year's exercise.

The state commissioner for health, Dr. Bello Mohammed Buzu told Daily Trust that the exercise started good in the state, noting that the people and government of Zamfara state take polio immunisation as a serious business. He added that the presence of top government functionaries, Emirs and other traditional and religious leaders at the flag off ceremony is an indication of the importance that is attached to the exercise in the state.

The Zamfara state government, he said is serious and committed to the immunisation programmes targeted at protecting children against polio virus.

## Medical Council retires registrar, deputy

The Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria has announced the compulsory retirement of its registrar and deputy registrar, Dr Ezeani Okwudili and Dr. Mohammed Tajudeen Isholu Lawal respectively.

Speaking to newsmen weekend at the plenary session of the council, the chairman of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, Dr Shima K. Gyoh said the officers were allegedly accused of disobedience, insubordination and obstruction of the functions of the council.

Shedding more light on the action of the council, the chairman told newsmen that an investigative panel set up in November 26 last year to unravel the course of the power nature of the secretariat and the report indicted and recommended that they should leave.

According to him, the officers, instead of complying with the rules resorted to intrusion and reprecation of the council.

The chairman also hinted that the council is re-organising itself to achieve the purpose for which it was established (to regulate professional conduct of medical practitioners in Nigeria) while also saying that the council is projecting the completion its capital project in Abuja as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Dr Gyoh advised the federal government to set up a registration/accreditation and inspection board in order to ensure that every medical institution is duly registered by the council.

By Mohammed Shesanya  
Correspondent (Lagos)

He said consideration for registration would be based on the premises, equipment, skills and experience of staff of such medical institution adding that it is high time proliferation of shoddy medical colleges and institutions are checked.

## NGO solicits financial support

Total Life International, an NGO with specialisation in rendering qualitative medical services for the poor and the less privilege in the rural areas of the country has appealed to the wealthy individuals in Sokoto, Zamfara and Kebbi states to assist it with funds for its operations.

Speaking with newsmen in Sokoto recently the executive director of the organisation, Dr. Chris Lawal Oshiafi during a concert organised by the organisation to recruit volunteers that will participate in her activities at the ECWA Goodnews church, Sokoto, said the organisation's medical assistance mainly focuses on Fulanis dwelling in the interior parts of the state.

Dr. Oshiafi explained further that these Fulanis are those who by omission or commission could not get health care services and are beyond the reach of other health facilities, adding that the organisation will not only render free medical services to these group but also at their door steps with the help of volunteer doctors, nurses and

From Abdulfatai  
Abdulsalami Correspondent  
(Sokoto)

other health personnel.

The executive director of the organisation noted that last year alone, it treated as many as 1,820 people of common ailment like malaria, upper respiratory infection, urinary track infection, typhoid, and many more in the interior parts of Zamfara state.

He said, the body expended close to N6.4 million in the treatment of people which he noted cut across age and sex barriers last year and that for the year 2005 the organisation is having a budget of N31 million to spend on drugs alone excluding logistic and staff welfare which he observed will cost them another N30 million.

Speaking on their mission in Sokoto state, he remarked that they are in the state to woo people who are interested in joining their team for this exercise noting that they may not necessarily be medical doctors, nurses and other health workers.

The executive director told

newsmen that Total International was established on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2003 and that they had their first rural outing in Zamfara, noting that they carry out free medical treatment to impoverished rural dwellers in Zamfara state

## HIV/AIDS infected children get food supplement

HIV/AIDS infected children in Akwa Ibom state are now receiving food supplement to boost their health while the illness lasted.

The wife of the Akwa Ibom state governor, Nneji Alison Attah who announced this weekend said her pet project, the Child Development Trust (CDT) has come to stay to assist in the nutritional intervention programme for the needy HIV/AIDS or apprehended children in the state.

Neneji Attah who is the chairman of the CDT during her visit to Nsit Attai, Udu Uko and Ukanafum local government areas of the state to round off the child nutrition intervention programme un-

From Edet Ekanem  
Correspondent (Uyo)

dertaken by the CDT in those areas maintained that nutrition intervention is a strategy of prevention of the AIDS virus spread.

She further stated that with the nutrition supplements immunity HIV/AIDS in affected person would be restored thereby giving good health, muscular coordination and mental aptitude in malnourished children.

The governor's wife said the child nutrition intervention programme of CDT has treated more than one thousand children of severe malnutrition in the local government areas so far covered and has brought positive change to

several homes in Akwa Ibom state.

She gave financial support to mothers of the treated children advising them to use the fund to improve their economic activities that would better their lot and for better feeding routine for their children.

It would be noted that the CDT usually identifies the malnourished children in a particular government area, carry out laboratory tests on them before undertaking a four to six months supervised feeding for the children, which also include "Alimeal" Alipowder, the two protein food supplements brought about by the CDT for rehabilitation purposes.

# YOUR HEALTH

## Regulatory bodies tasked on staff training

The deputy governor of Niger State, Dr. Shem Zagbayi Nuhu has stressed the need for training and retraining of staff of regulatory bodies and professional associations for improved performances. He also commended the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN) for carrying out routine training of its staff on the modern day techniques for the achievement of the much-needed excellence.

Dr. Nuhu in a key note address he delivered at the opening ceremony of management course for middle level officers of the council and Dr. Fred Adenika memorial lecture organised by the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria in Abuja, pointed out that no organisation can achieve its set objectives without a dynamic and well-trained workforce, noting that it makes sense to infuse modern day techniques in regulatory bodies and professional associations for qualitative and efficient service delivery.

The deputy governor who is a pharmacist by profession maintained that infusion of excellence within the activity of PCN, which is a regulatory body is, "akin to infusion of life" to the level of practice the society receives.

He described the gesture of the council as a right step towards re-invigorating the management staff towards achieving excellence in the output of policies outlined by the council or as specific activities as described in the instrument that set it up.

While commending PCN for establishing zonal offices in three additional locations to take care of its services, Dr Nuhu also noted that a head office of any organisation needs to decentralise in order to achieve a corporate excellence.

He however said that inspection of premises, mounting of

Stories by Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter

mandatory continuing professional development are aspects of the duties of a regulatory body that could be better handled with proper coordination between the head office and the local offices, noting that decentralising while maintaining a strong centre will lead to greater efficiency.

Earlier in his welcome address, the chairman of the governing council of the council and the chairman of the occasion, Prof. Festus Odio Ogunbona said the idea for organising the training exercise for middle level officers of the council was borne out of the governing council's desire to expose registry staff of the PCN to various aspects of management training and devel-

opment with a view to achieving improved efficiency in the council.

Prof. Ogunbona maintained that the training exercise for staff of the council will be a continuous one as it is designed to inculcate into staff modern management concepts, principles and practices which would propel them (staff) towards peak performance.

He disclosed that his predecessor, late Dr. Fred B. Adenika who died two years ago was a rare gem in pharmacy and management, describing him as an articulate and organised publisher of many pharmacy books adding that while he was the chairman of the governing council of PCN, he laid a good number of policies that the present council finds useful in

steering the council to greater heights.

Also speaking at the occasion, the registrar and secretary of the council, Pharm. Ahmed Tijjani Mora while commending the council's chairman, Prof. Ogunbona for his continuous support in the activities of the registry, also noted that, the implementation of the directives of the governing council as well as the PCN's statutory functions cannot be properly achieved without adequate training of staff.

Management training and development, he said has become the hallmark towards achieving corporate excellence, pointing out that, "it is this same excellence in corporate management that the late chairman, Dr. Fred B. Adenika lived and died for."



(L to R) The Deputy Governor of Niger State, Dr. Zagbayi Shem Nuhu, Chairman PCN, Prof. F. A. Ogunbona and the Registrar, Pharm. A. T. Mora at the workshop for middle level staff/2nd Dr. Fred Adenika memorial lecture held at PCN office, Abuja...recently.

## Drug resistance compounds malaria treatment - expert

Drug resistance which has compounded the treatment of malaria has been identified as one of the factor responsible for the deteriorating situation of malaria in the country.

The national professional officer, South-south and south-east for roll back malaria, Prof. Emmanuel Ezedinachi who stated this recently in Abuja at the journalists round-table discussion organised by Internews Network Nigeria Local Voices project, further stressed that malaria is a disease that can be prevented and treatable.

According to him, malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition accounts for 82 percent of under five children mortality in the country adding that since 1979 till date, a lot is being done to reduce, if not stop the number of deaths attributable to the disease in the country.

Prof. Ezedinachi said the current goal of malaria case man-

agement is to ensure, "adequate clinical and parasitological cure, since persistent parasitaemia is associated with increase gametocyte carriage," adding that the essence of the efforts is to among other things reduce malaria morbidity and mortality, reduce malaria related anaemia, ensure rapid and lasting clinical cure and to also minimise the rate of resistance to meet the Abuja targets.

The WHO professional officer for Roll Back Malaria in Nigeria disclosed that only 43.2 percent of Nigerians take first action against fever within 24 hours adding also that 69.4 percent of the action are inappropriate and lamented the poor medical record keeping at all levels of health facilities in the country.

He cited examples of health resistance in high places to include low priority in budgeting, poor funding and lack of fund release to the health sector and

called for adequate attention to the health sector by all stakeholders.

In his paper entitled, "anti-malaria drug resistance, the national plan," the assistant director, national malaria control programme of the federal ministry of health, Dr. Earnest Nwokolo said malaria is responsible for 60% of out patients visits, 30% of childhood mortality, 25% of infant mortality, 11% of maternal deaths, pointing out that about N132 billion is lost to malaria annually in form of treatment costs, prevention, loss of man hours and hosts of others.

He pointed out that the roll back malaria mobilisation plan is a partnership involving governments, private sector, research organisations, civil society, media and development partners with a view to reducing malaria by the middle of 2010.

While supporting government's review of malaria treatment policy, in view of malaria

resistance to Chloroquine, Dr. Nwokolo said the multi-centre therapeutic efficacy tests have demonstrated high efficacy of the artesunate-amodiaquine and artemether lumefantrine across various zones of the country.

According to him, adequate clinical and parasitological responses for both drugs were in excess of 95% in all but, in one zone adding that by WHO recommendation for the selection of Artemisinin based Combination Therapies (ACTs) as first line drugs for the treatment of malaria, both drugs are recommended but a comparative matrix was used to select the drug of choice.

Dr. Nwokolo said the primary goal of malaria treatment is to cure patients of the infection and thereby reducing morbidity and mortality rate. Another purpose, he said, is to encourage rational drug use to prevent the development of anti-malarial resistance.



## DANDRUFF

Very common scalp condition, probably an indication of shedding of the scalp, visibly seen as white flakes or crumbs. However, other causes include hormonal imbalances, poor diet, and deficiencies of Vitamin B complex.

### Treatment

1. Calendula/cajaput/tea tree: These plants are applied as shampoo to the hair and when formulated as hair conditioners, are equally effective.
2. Elder flower/stinging nettle: Infusion of each of these plants applied to the scalp is effective.
3. Desert date (*Aduwa* [Hausa]): The fruit is burnt and ground to form an oily paste and applied to the hair as an effective remedy.
4. Horse tail/yarrow/thyme/rosemary/nettle/sage/witch hazel: The infusion of any of these plants is made by taking a big handful of the herbs in 600ml of water and left to simmer for 20 minutes. The hair is massaged thoroughly, soaked with the infusion and dried after 10 minutes. The preparation also promotes hair growth.
5. Carrot/onion/potato/cloves/ginger: These are food sources of sulphur. They promote healthy hair and prevent dandruff. The use of their solution or juice applied directly to the hair root is effective in treating dandruff.

It is advisable that before washing hair, add about 8 tablespoonful of pure organic peanut oil to half lemon juice and rub the resultant mixture into the scalp. Leave on for 5-10 minutes, then shampoo and rinse hair with vinegar and water after shampooing (1/4 cup of vinegar to a quart of water).

## PURITIS (RASHES)

Skin, one of the most vascular organs of the body is susceptible to many reactions, rashes being one of the indications of an ongoing reaction within the body system. The severity of this could result in cracking, dryness, flaking, itching, and scaling. Also, reaction could be caused by food, drug allergies, environmental or bacterial toxins, etc.

### Treatment

1. Chamomile/marigold: Infusions of any of these is effective for various condition such as eczema, nappy rash, and other fungal rash
2. Tea tree: '1'~ oil from tea tree applied on the skin is very effective.
3. Crawcraw plants: Infusion of the plant leaves in kerosine is applied to the rashes for quick relief for quick relief from itching and inflammation, soak cotton wool or clean cloth in cool water, bring out and apply on affected area for 10 minutes.

## PURITIS (ITCHING)

This could be general or localised resulting from an allergy, or symptom of other disease conditions, eg liver diseases. In most cases, relief can be obtained with herbal treatment and control is achieved if the causative effect is allergic in origin.

### Treatment

1. Chickweed (*Awede* [Yoruba]): This plant stands out as an itch reliever. Apply juice ointment directly to the affected area or wash with the herb infusion daily.
2. *Karkashi* [Hausa]/stinging nettle: Apply juice directly on the affected areas.
3. *Moshi* medicine - *Guiera senegalensis* (Sahara [Hausa]): An infusion of the leaves is taken 3 times daily.
4. Coconut water is an immediate and effective relief for itching. Drink the water from a whole coconut to relieve the itching.
5. Buckthorn bark ointment/majoram/peppermint are good for preventing itching.

Hajiya Zainab Sheriff writes from Zee's Herbal Pharmacy, Suite 12, Angels Plaza, Garki II, Abuja.  
E-mail:-zeeherbal@zwallot.com

# YOUR HEALTH

## When lawyers debate issues on HIV/AIDS

When Mr. Jacques Hoffman applied for a job as a cabin attendant with South African Airways (SAA), little did he know that he was in for a traumatizing experience.

He was asked by the airways to go for an HIV test. The test result showed that he was positive and SAA refused to give Mr. Hoffman the job because, they said, part of his job involved travelling to different countries and he would need to have a yellow fever vaccination. It is not advisable for some one with HIV to have these vaccinations. The South African Airways said that it was an inherent requirement for the job in the air line and therefore they couldn't employ him.

The case was referred to the constitutional court. The court was asked to decide if SAA had gone against Hoffman's right to equality, dignity and fair labour practices.

The court ruled that South Africa Airways violated the constitutional rights of Jacques Hoffman by refusing to employ him as a cabin attendant on the ground of his HIV status (Hoffman Vs South African Airways (2001) I C HR 328.)

The medical examination found him to be medically fit and thus suitable for employment. However the blood test showed that he was HIV positive as a result, the medical report was altered to read that the applicant was HIV positive and therefore unsuitable.

In ruling in favour of Hoffman the court stated thus "legitimate commercial requirements are of course an important aspect of employing an individual, however we must guard against allowing stereotyping and prejudice to creep in under the guise of commercial interests.

"The greater interests of society require the recognition of the inherent dignity of every human being and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Our constitution protects the weak, the marginalized, the socially outcast and the victims of prejudice and stereotyping. It is only when these groups are protected that we can be secured that our own right are protected" ( per Ngcobo J page 354 para B-D)

The Judge further stated that "the appellant is living with HIV. People who are living with HIV constitute a minority. Society has responded to their plight with intense prejudice. They have been subjected to systemic disadvantage and discrimination; they have been stigmatized and marginalised. As the present case demonstrates, they have been denied employment because of their HIV positive status without regard to their ability to perform the duties of the position from which they have been

By Ikenna, Emeka Okpani  
(Bureau Chief, Port Harcourt)

excluded.

"Society's respond to them has forced many of them not to reveal their HIV status for fear of Prejudice. This in turn has deprived them of help they would otherwise have received. People who are living with HIV/AIDS are one of the most Vulnerable groups in our society.

"Notwithstanding the availability of compelling medical evidence as to how this disease is transmitted, the prejudices and stereotypes against HIV positive people persist. In view of the prevailing prejudice against HIV positive people, any discrimination against them can to my mind, be interpreted as a fresh instance of stigmatization and I consider this to be an assault on their dignity.

The impact of discrimination against HIV positive people is devastating. It is even more so when it occurs in the context of employment. It denies them the right to earn a living. For this reason they enjoy special protection in our law".

The elaborate narration of a case of this nature in South Africa is because in Nigeria, there are no known case of discrimination determined in court involving people living with HIV.

Everyday, applicants are denied jobs by multinational companies after series of interviews because they failed medical test which in most cases is as a result of testing positive to HIV. Some ministries and government parastatals including the army and police have been known not to employ people who test positive to HIV or to sack workers who later test positive while on the job.

In most cases because of the stigma attached to the disease, the affected person quietly goes home and refuses to look for any job again and quickly degenerates and dies. If it is known that the infected person lost his job because of HIV/AIDS, then the whole society and sometimes the close family abandons the person to die.

It was these issues and



Cross section of military and paramilitary personnel during the International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC), held in Abuja...recently

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

others that came to fore at a sensitization workshop for lawyers in Owerri with focus on HIV/AIDS, Human Rights and the law. It was packaged by a non Governmental Organization (NGO), Centre for Right to Health (CRH).

HIV/AIDS continues to spread throughout the world at an alarming rate. It is estimated that more than 40 million people are infected, 28million of which are in Africa. In Nigeria with prevalence rate of 5.0 per cent close to 6 million people could be living with HIV.

The epidemic is taking various dimensions and has become more of a development problem than a health one.

In a paper "legal and Ethical issues raised by HIV/AIDS in Nigeria," a legal practitioner, Barrister S. Amadi-Obi said the pandemic manifests itself in the world of work in many ways. These, he said include, disruption of production thus substantially lowering the gross development product; discrimination in employment; increasing incidence of child labour, de-

pleted human capital and treatment, occupational safety and health.

He said HIV/AIDS has raised a lot of ethical and legal issues in Nigeria which needs to be addressed. Barrister Amadi Obi asked if stigmatization of persons living with HIV was against the provisions of section 34(1) (a) of 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria.

People living with HIV/AIDS have been subjected to degrading treatment based solely on their health status and some have been barred from the use of public facilities such as educational and recreational institution.

In some cases, people who have tested positive have been known to be denied treatment by doctors. In 2004 report on the global AIDS epidemic prepared by UNAIDS, the following was Observed about Nigeria, "similar research in four Nigerian States found discriminatory and unethical AIDS related behaviour among Doctors Nurses and Midwives. Abuses included denial of care, breaches of con-

fidentiality and HIV testing without consent.

Furthermore, 65% are reportedly seeing other health care workers who denied them care. Some 20% felt that many people living with HIV had behaved immorally and deserved to be infected".

In spite of international labour organizations definition of a disabled person and the universal declaration of Human Rights, in most countries including Nigeria, a HIV positive status has become a ground for discrimination and it has therefore become imperative that our legal system has to rise up to the occasion and come up with legal and constitutional provisions that will substantially ameliorate these, Barrister Amadi submitted. Our laws, he said should be reviewed to ensure that they adequately address the public health issues raised by HIV/AIDS such that provisions applicable to sexually transmitted diseases are not inappropriately applied to HIV/AIDS. Such laws, he said should provide for funding of public health authorities to enable them provide a comprehensive range of services for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

"I believe that the constitutional provision against discrimination is adequate however the procedure for fundamental rights in our courts could take more than one year to conclude and should be reviewed so that it will be mandatory that such applications should be concluded by a court within a reasonable time," Barrister Amadi-Oke said.

In her paper, HIV/AIDS and the law in the work place", Mrs. Racheal Nsofor Ndulue, the president interna-

tional federation of women lawyers said although most countries already have national AIDS committee, persistent lack of co-ordination in government policy and lack of special attention to human-rights issues relating to HIV/AIDS epidemic suggest a need to consider possible additional structures or to strengthen and reorient those that exist to include legal and ethical issues.

She said the 2nd international consultation on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, held in Geneva from 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25th September 1996 developed a guideline to assist states in creating a positive, rights based response.

These include that states should review and reform criminal laws and correctional systems to ensure that they are consistent with international human rights obligations and are not misused in the context of HIV/AIDS or targeted against vulnerable groups; states should enact or strengthen anti-discrimination and other protective laws that protect vulnerable groups, people living with HIV/AIDS and people with disabilities from discrimination in both the public and private sectors, ensure privacy and confidentiality and ethics in research involving human subjects and provide for speedy and effective administrative and civil justice.

The centre for Right to health, according to its project manager Mr. Bede Eziefule has a mission to advocate for the full realization of the right to health in Nigeria and promote respect for ethics and practices especially for vulnerable groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS.

***In spite of international labour organizations definition of a disabled person and the universal declaration of Human Rights, in most countries including Nigeria, a HIV positive status has become a ground for discrimination and it has therefore become imperative that our legal system has to rise up to the occasion and come up with legal and constitutional provisions that will substantially ameliorate these.***

# News Focus

## GSM masts, handsets: How harmful?

By Hammeed M Bello,  
Hamisu Muhammad,  
Elkanah Chawai &  
Benjamin Ejike,

Nigerians are increasingly becoming apprehensive by the day over the potential danger posed to their lives and environment by the harmful materials believed to be emitted by the Global System of Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) handsets, and the masts which are indiscriminately located across the country.

Fears are rife that the GSM handsets and masts do allegedly emit lethal radiations that can cause harm to the human skin, impair hearing abilities, brain damage and can provoke several kinds of cancers, although researches have so far not made any conclusive statement on the allegation.

The situation is made complex by the fact that conflicting claims are made at regular intervals, some of which insist that mobile phone use involves increased health hazards while others conclude that it is impossible to prove that there is any link between mobile phone radiations and health.

Despite these conflicting positions, members of the Nigerian public are becoming more concerned over the health implications in the use of GSM, even as the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), the body set up to regulate activities of GSM operators in the country, and some other medical experts, denied that the radiations emitted by GSM handsets and masts are injurious to the human body and environment.

Nigeria is populated with over 140 million people, and given the immense number of GSM phone users, even small adverse effect on health could have major public health implications for the country, and this requires the authorities to seriously examine the allegations with a view to taking proactive measures that will allay the fears of Nigerians.

Researches have given two different views on the subject. Some say radio waves emitted by mobile phones can heat up body tissues, with damaging effects while others believe that radio waves are not powerful enough to cause damage to the body. Some said magnetic fields created by mobile phones can affect the way human body cells work, and that people who make long phone calls sometime complain of fatigue, headache and loss of concentration while the other view held that magnetic fields are small and are unlikely to affect body cells.

tigue among others have never been reported in laboratory conditions and may be due to other factors in modern life.

One of the views is that mobile phone users are 2.5 times more likely to develop brain cancer and the International Agency For Research on Cancer found a link between childhood cancer and mobile phone, and likened mobile phones radiations to those emitted by power lines, while the opposing view held that researches have not been clear on the allegation, and that radiation produced by power lines have greater energy and are different from the one radiated by the mobile phone.

Some researchers said radio frequency waves similar to those in mobile phones altered the genetic expression in nematode worms while others insisted worms are not humans, and there is no guarantee that human brain cells will behave the same way.

In the face of these fears, Internet materials have cautioned GSM users against dangerous habits and to take precautionary measures. They include using the phone only when necessary, keeping the calls short, avoiding phones with internal aerial because the aerial need to be far away from your head as possible, and avoiding using the phone when the reception is poor because the phone needs more power to communicate with the base station and the radio wave emissions are higher. Phone users were also advised not to buy a phone with high SAR value because they emit more radiation. SAR (Specific Absorption Rate) was introduced by World Health Organisation (WHO) as a means of measuring the rate of radiation from mobile phones.

Also, the indiscriminate siting of masts by the operators in human communities without regard for environmental health and the likelihood of the mast collapsing and destroying lives and property is worrisome. The operators who are apparently engaging in some sort of cut throat competition to win over as many customers as possible seem to have little or no regards for environmental orderliness and safety.

Meanwhile, reports have alleged that one of the GSM operators, V-Mobile, has pulled down its mast at the Escravos in Delta State for



Chief Cornelius Adebayo, Communications Minister

the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) over violations of safety rules.

The mast was located 310 metres away from the runway of the Escravos Airstrip which records more than 200 flights daily thereby posing danger to lives, and the NCAA had threatened to report V-Mobile to NCC for alleged failure to obtain aviation height clearance before mounting the mast. Mr Sam Adurogboye, media assistant to the NCAA director-general who allegedly confirmed this action was said to have hinted of NCAA's resolve to impose a fine of N500,000 on V-Mobile for infraction on safety and endangering human lives and another fine of N25,000 and N500,000 for illegal erection of mast and towers respectively.

When contacted for comments on the issues, the executive vice chairman of NCC, Engr Ernest Ndukwe, said that GSM masts emit radio active substances are mere specu-

lation. "If there is radio active waves in the mast it would have killed all the people in the developed world," adding that the operators are guided by rules against harmful waves.

"The antennae is so far away and that is where the radio active waves are coming from and by the time it gets to where we are on the ground the power is already gone", Ndukwe said, and advised the public not to panic as his commission has adopted measures against any likely harmful effect of GSM use.

Also, a radiotherapist, Dr Abdulrazak Oyeseun who is head of Radiotherapy and Oncology department of the National Hospital, Abuja, dismissed claims that GSM masts emit radioactive materials. Rather, he told our man that what the masts emit are electromagnetic materials. Hon (Dr) Aminu Safana, a medical doctor and chairman, House of Representatives



Mr. Ernest Ndukwe, NCC boss

Committee on Health, corroborated this position, even as he (Safana) said the possibility of radioactive materials cannot be ruled out and is a new area to be looked into.

Dr Oyeseun, on his part, said if the masts emit radioactive substances which are very dangerous to human health, the government couldn't have allowed them, and according to him, the effect of electromagnetic waves, which are also radiated by household appliances like radio and television, on human health is yet to be ascertained, and that even if they have any effect, it will not be serious. He however concluded that radioactive materials are very dangerous to human health and can kill.

But the director of Urban and Regional Planning of the Federal Capital Development Authority, Mr Augustine Ike, had a different view. "If not for anything the skyline of the city would be messed up. The proliferation could be con-

trolled by one big central mast which will serve the need of all the customers because it is not only hazardous but is destroying the skyline of the city".

The House of Representatives Communications Committee deputy chairman, Hon Leo Ogor, said his committee has not gotten any confirmation as to the health hazard of the GSM handsets and masts, but decried the indiscriminate location of masts, which he said constitute environmental eyesore. He said the law setting up the communication industry required that facilities, like the masts, be shared among telecom operators to avoid littering the environment unnecessarily, adding that his committee will look into it to ensure compliance with the rule.

The House committee on Environment has also waded into the matter. According to its chairman, Hon Emeka Atuma, "The microwave radiations that are being used by the GSM operators have radioactive equipment incorporated in it and the committee on Environment has also identified the adverse effect of such equipment within the habitation of Nigerians and we have also observed that they are mounting those radioactive equipment without recourse to areas of human habitation in the country."

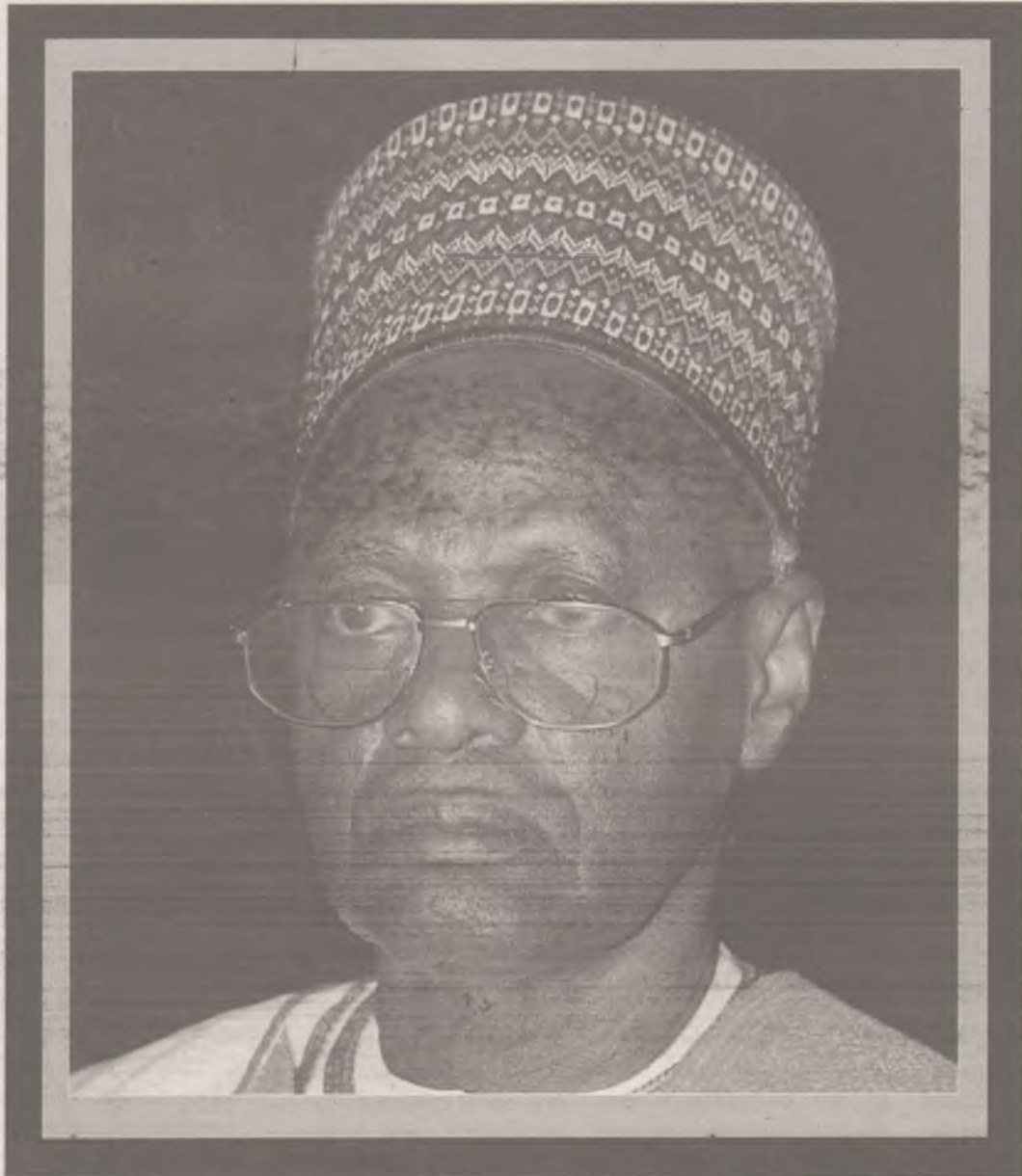
Atuma said the operators have also violated the environmental impact assessment standard, which is not well conducted by the operators before such installation, adding that a post impact assessment is not also conducted by the operators. And that the committees' planned summit

***"Nigeria is populated with over 140 million people, and given the immense number of GSM phone users, even small adverse effect on health could have major public health implications for the country, and this requires the authorities to seriously examine the allegations with a view to taking proactive measures that will allay the fears of Nigerians."***



# GOVERNMENT OF AKWA IBOM STATE OF NIGERIA

## *A Statesman @ 80*



His Excellency,  
Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Usman Shagari 'Turakin Sokoto', GCFR,  
Second Republic President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria



Arc. (Obong) Victor Attah

I, Arc. (Obong) Victor B. Attah, Executive Governor of Akwa Ibom State, on behalf of my family, the Government and people of Akwa Ibom State along with other well-wishers within and outside the country, rejoice with His Excellency, Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Usman Shagari 'Turakin Sokoto', GCFR, Second Republic President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on his 80th birthday Anniversary.

Your Excellency, we have noted with satisfaction your statesmanly conduct in National Affairs, particularly your contributions as a consistent political stabilizing force in our nascent democracy. May the Almighty God guide and guard you in the years ahead.

Congratulations!

Signed

Arc. (Obong) Victor Attah



**FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, ABUJA**  
**INVITATION FOR BIDS**

**COUNTRY:** Nigeria  
**PROJECT:** National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Environmental Management (NCSA)  
**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF GOODS:** Computer Systems, Other Office Equipments & Internet Services.  
**CREDIT NO.:** TF53427-UNL

The Federal Government of Nigeria has received a grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (The World Bank) for the National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Environmental Management (NCSA) and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this grant to payment under the contract for Procurement of Computer Systems, other Office Equipment and Internet Services.

The Federal Ministry of Environment now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of the undesignated items:

LOT	ITEMS	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
A	1	Computer s	10
	2	Printers	2
	3	Scanner	1
	4	Stabilizers	10
	5	UPS	10
	6	Extension Cables	10
B	1	Internet Services	12-15 outlets with 4 Remote linkage to Laptops

Bidders may bid for any one or more lots and discounts offered for the award of combined lots will be considered in bid evaluation.

Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding Procedure specified in the World Bank's Procurement Guidelines and it is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines. In addition, bid(s) must be accompanied by the following:

- (i) Company Profile;
- (ii) verifiable evidence of experience in similar project;
- (iii) certificate of registration with the Federal Ministry of Environment;
- (iv) evidence of company registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission;
- (v) Tax clearance for the last three(3) years; and
- (vi) Evidence of financial capability in form of:
  - a Bid security of at least 3% of bid price or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency; and
  - b Turnover of at least =N= 2.0m in the last three(3) years.

Bid documents and further information are obtainable from the Office of the Director, Planning, Research and Statistics, Environment House (Former FEPA BUILDING), Airport Road, Central Area District, Abuja between the hours of 9.00am - 4.00pm (Mondays-Fridays).

A complete set of bidding document in English Language may be purchased by interested bidders on submission of a written application to the address given above upon payment of a non-refundable fee of =N= 10,000.00 payable to "GEF-NCSA PROJECT" in Bank draft.

**SUBMISSION OF BIDS:**

Copies of completed bids must be put together in separate binders in sealed envelopes, marked at the right hand corner "BID for GEF-NCSA GOODS" and delivered at the address stated below on or before Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 2005 at 12 Noon (local time):

The Director,  
Planning, Research and Statistics Department  
Federal Ministry of Environment  
Environment House (Former FEPA BUILDING),  
Airport Road, Central Area District,  
Abuja.  
Attention: Project Manager GEF-NCSA.

Late submission will be rejected and bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who may choose to attend at the address, date and time stated below:

Venue: DPRS OFFICE,  
Planning, Research and Statistics Department  
Federal Ministry of Environment  
Environment House (Former FEPA BUILDING),  
Airport Road, Central Area District,  
Abuja.

Date: Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 2005

Time: 12.15 pm (Local Time)

(Signed)  
S. O. Adenle  
Permanent Secretary  
for: Honourable Minister



**UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA**

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING & CONTINUING  
EDUCATION (CDL & CE)

**SECOND SEMESTER ACADEMIC  
CALENDAR 2003/2004**

**REGISTRATION:** 100 Level - 1st March - 8th April, 2005  
200-500 Level - 8th March-15th April, 2005

**FIRST CONTACT**

100 LEVEL - 4- 5 MARCH, 2005  
200 LEVEL - 11-12 MARCH, 2005  
300 LEVEL - 18-19 MARCH, 2005  
400 & 500 LEVELS - 1- 2 APRIL, 2005

**SECOND CONTACT**

100 LEVEL - 8- 9 APRIL, 2005  
200 LEVEL - 15- 16 APRIL, 2005  
300 LEVEL - 22- 23 APRIL, 2005  
400 & 500 LEVELS - 29- 30 APRIL, 2005

**THIRD CONTACT**

100 LEVEL - 6- 7 MAY, 2005  
200 LEVEL - 13- 14 MAY, 2005  
300 LEVEL - 20- 21 MAY, 2005  
400 & 500 LEVELS - 27-28 MAY, 2005

**EXAMINATIONS** - 6TH JUNE-9TH JULY, 2005

SIGNED  
PROF. A.A. UJO  
DIRECTOR



**The Capital Science Academy**  
**Abuja.**

**ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS**  
**JS 1 AND SS1**  
**September, 2005 Session**

**ENTRANCE EXAMINATION CENTRES**

These will take place as follows:

JS 1 - SATURDAY, 2ND APRIL, 2005

**Abuja:** The Capital Science Academy, Kuje at 10.00am and 2.00pm

**Kaduna:** Nazareth Primary School, Egypt Road, Barnawa, Kaduna at 10.00 am

**Kano:** Benny International School, Hadejia Road, Kano at 10.00am

**P/Harcourt:** Montessori International School, 57 Kings Perekule Street, Old GRA, Port-Harcourt 10.00am

**Maiduguri:** Abande Primary School, Dipchari Road, Maiduguri at 10.00am

**Lagos:** Radiance Nursery and Primary School, 1st Avenue Festac Town, Lagos at 10.00am

**SS1 AND OTHER JS1 - 28TH MAY, 2005**

**Abuja:** The Capital Science Academy, Kuje at 10.00am

Forms are available on line, at the centres or at MBC International Bank, Garki Area 3 and FSB Bank, Central Area, Abuja.

For further details  
E-mail: csaabuja@yahoo.co.uk  
www.csaabuja.org  
09- 2901098, 08035961720, 08036457147

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BOUNTI 8000	N12/min for 30 days

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# ABUJA TRUST

## FCT budgets N53bn for 2005

The Minister of FCT, Malam Nasir el-Rufai last week presented a budget of N53, 277,185,238 for 2005 fiscal year before the House of Representatives committee on FCT.

Defending the budget, el-Rufai said that the initial N48, 925 billion submitted to the House was later discovered to be inadequate because of some other additional expenditure.

He said that with the addition of N4, 352,185,238 he presented today, the budget deficit has now risen to N4, 837,185,238.

The minister explained that the bulk of the budget will go to FCDA, which will take N20 billion; Mandate secretariat, N5 billion; satellite town development, N4.6 billion; area council and pensions, N8.75 billion and personnel and overhead cost, N2 billion.

Other expenditure include other agencies, N2.2 billion; directorates, N201 million and minister's office N1.3 billion.

el-Rufai noted that the additional budget of N4.352 billion was for additional 12 projects which included water supply, purchase of taxi cabs, school rehabilitation, purchase of high rise fire vehicle and survey and mapping.

Others are development of community markets, running of orphanages, provi-

sion of infrastructure at Abuja courts, street lighting and accreditation of college of education.

el-Rufai said the budget was expected to be financed from N28 billion statutory allocation; N2.4 billion, from VAT; N2 billion FCT share from excess crude oil sales and N4.5 billion, as internally-generated revenue.

He told the committee that the ministry hoped to finance the deficit through its share of excess crude which, might increase from the projected N2 billion to between N4 billion and N6 billion.

The chairman of the committee, Rep Phillip Aduda, assured the Minister that the committee would study his submission.

## NYSC coordinator commends CDS members

Members of the editorial board of 'Batch B' Community Development Services (CDS) of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) have been commended for their high sense of maturity and diligence in the discharge of their duties. The coordinator of the CD group who is also the deputy editor-in-chief of the National Youth Services Corps (NYSC) Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Headquarters, Ms. Carol Embu, gave the commendation yesterday during the weekly meeting of the group.

She noted that if the current level of seriousness by members of the group could be sustainable and improved upon, they would arguably

be the best in the history of CDS editorial groups.

Mrs. Embu also remarked that comments from members of staff at the FCT Headquarters (venue of the CD weekly meeting) is encouraging, adding that had it been that the group is acting otherwise, there would have been bad reports about the group.

While urging members to cooperate with the selected production crew, she warned that any member found wanting in his/her assigned responsibilities without genuine reason would have his/herself to blame for the consequences.

## Allocation fees: Jisalo tells traders to stop complaining

The chairman of Abuja Municipal area council, Hon. Zephania Jisalo, has called on traders to stop complaining about the money they are paying in order to obtain allocation forms for shops at the Utako Market. He said this yesterday in his office while fielding questions from journalists.

According to honourable Jisalo, the N10, 000 will be used to provide quality structures at the market apart from other facilities like constant water, electricity, good sanitation and security. He stated

that this has to be because it is going to be a modern market that would be well planned and organised, unlike what used to be at the old Wuse Market. "Even fire service would be available at anytime in case of any fire outbreak," Jisalo added.

It would be recalled that recently the FCT authorities evacuated attachments traders at old Wuse Market to decongest it and relocate some of the traders to Utako

Market situated within Utako district.



Hon. Jisalo, AMAC boss

## Rain douses Abuja heat waves

The unexpected rainfall in some parts of Abuja metropolis last week has brought a bit of temporary relief from the heat waves occasioned by the dry season and hot weather condition being experienced in Abuja and its environs.

The rainfall, which lasted for a few minutes in places like

Wuse, Maitama, Karu, Garki, Area 1, Jikwoyi and Gwagwalada among other places last Friday, however, resulted in the reduction of the intensity of heat waves that the city has experienced for the past two months.

The temperature in the city, which fluctuates be-

tween 34°C to 36°C before the rainfall has now slightly come down to 31 to 32°C.

This is also an indication that the dry and hot weather may soon be over earlier than expected to pave the way for the rainy season, which usually occurs around March and April each year.

Minister of FCT, Malam Nasir el-Rufai said he has recommended the dissolution of the ministry and in its place be given a status of a state.

el-Rufai dropped this hint last week while defending the ministry's budget before the House of Representatives committee on FCT. He explained that Abuja did not need a ministry but a struc-

## el-Rufai recommends dissolution of MFCT

ture similar to a state.

"For instance, I'm from Kaduna, why can't we have ministry of Kaduna? I think it should be dissolved and FCT given a status of a state," he stressed.

He explained that when FCT was created in 1976, it was

not meant to be under a ministry but to have a status of a state "which we highlighted in our recommendations."

On the delay on allocating lands to the 85,000 applicants, the minister said "I don't have 85,000 plots of land to allocate to them."



Former President Shehu Shagari, addressing newsmen after collecting his re-certified certificate of occupancy (C of O) from the Abuja Geographic Information System (AGIS) office in Abuja...last week.

## Monetisation: Court orders minister to appear before it

A Federal High Court in Abuja has ordered Foreign Affairs minister, Olu Adeniji, to appear before it over the implementation of the monetisation policy in the ministry.

Twenty-four disengaged drivers of the ministry dragged the minister to court alleging foul play and discrimination in the implementation of the policy in the establishment.

The plaintiffs, led by Mr. Oloyede Zacheus, claimed that the minister did not comply with the relevant rules and regulations in the implementation of monetisation policy.

They claimed that their appointments were abruptly terminated in line with the monetisation policy, but that the ministry denied them their full entitlements and benefits under the same policy.

They said the policy recommended equitable and transparent sale of 50 percent of excess vehicles in the ministry to disengaged drivers, but that none of the vehicles was sold to them.

They also said that the vehicles were sold to serving management and senior staff of the ministry.

The plaintiffs also alleged that the ministry was attempting to dispose their monetised accommodation thereby violating their rights to personal property.

In the suit, filed by their counsel, Mr. Ayo Odifiri, the plaintiff demanded from the defendants, a public apology to be published in two national newspapers and N50 million as damage.

They also sought an order of perpetual injunction restraining the defendants from further harassing them by

threats of re-allocating their monetised houses.

The Head of Civil Service of the Federation, the Executive Secretary of FCDA and the Federal Civil Service Commission were joined as co-defendants to the suit.

Trial Judge, Justice Chinyere Chikere, granted the plaintiffs leave to apply for order of mandamus, to enforce their fundamental rights and to serve the defendants by personal service. The matter was adjourned to Monday, February 28, for mention.

## Judge frowns at refusal to honour court summons

An Abuja High Court judge has described as "a negative approach to democracy" the refusal of some political office holders to honour court summons.

Justice A. S. Umar of the FCT High Court, Lugbe, made the declaration while delivering judgment in a suit filed by Dr I.C.A. Okpalobi, chairman of PDP-USA chapter against the party, its former chairman, Chief Audu Ogbah, and national secretary, Prince Vincent Ogbularor.

The plaintiff was challenging the legality of the purported dissolution of PDP-USA executive and its replacement by a caretaker commit-

tee, by the PDP National Working Committee.

Referring to the non-appearance of the defendants throughout the suit and their refusal to file any reply to the plaintiff's affidavit, Umar said, "this court has taken steps judiciously to see that service were effected on them."

"But the defendants did not find it useful to appear even once despite the proof of service on them," he said.

"It is very sad indeed. I must express my displeasure on the attitude of such officers to the court. It is a disservice which is injurious to the tenets of democracy," the judge said.

# KANO TRUST



Farmers make brisk business from sale of vegetables at Sabon Gari Market. Pix: Aliyu Machika.

## Gwale debunks criticisms over projects implementation

By Ahmed Abubakar  
Correspondent (Kano)

The Gwale local government council in Kano state has condemned those criticising it for the slow implementation of projects. This was made known by the chairman of the council, Alhaji S. Jibrin Kofar Naisa, in a recent chat with *Kano Trust*. According to him, 'when we came in, we decided to undertake an intensive study of all the problems facing the residents of the area to ascertain their priorities. We then categorised their needs according to their scale of preference.' He explained that there was no justification for carrying out projects that will not have direct impact on the people. 'Since this is a

democratic era,' he added, 'we decided to consult some of the people first before carrying out any project.'

Naisa urged the people of the area to continue to exercise patience. He disclosed that the council inherited debt of about N50m on assumption of office, but said that efforts were being made to settle the debt. He said that the council intended to complete the outstanding projects before embarking on new ones in order to ensure prudent management of the scarce resources. He counted the office complex in the Gwale secretariat and the Gwale healthcare centre among the projects nearing completion, and noted that the road project and classroom block at Jaen were already completed.

## KNSG reduces civil service corruption by 75%

By Ahmed Abubakar  
(Kano)

A former representative of Dambatta constituency at the Kano state House of Assembly, Alhaji Umar Sa'ad Dambatta, has observed that corruption in the state's civil service has been reduced by 75% since the Shekarau administration assumed office.

He said that the ad-

ministration was able to achieve this by the prompt payment of salaries and timely promotion of the workers. He commended the government for offering civil servants other welfare packages, saying that such gestures would boost their morale and incline them to shun corrupt practices.

## UNDP, KNSG move to fight VVF

By Aliyu S. Machika  
(Kano)

The United Nations Population Fund (UNDP) has expressed its readiness to assist the Kano state government in fighting vaginal vesicovaginitis (VVF). The Deputy Director,

Population Management, of UNDP, Mrs. Imelda Henkin, disclosed this during her courtesy call on the Kano state governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau. She said

the UNDP had decided to launch its campaign against VVF eradication in Nigeria, commencing with the northern states, and explained that the importance of the campaign was not only to find solutions for the young girls suffering from the VVF but also to strengthen the sustainability of the campaign against that scourge.

help eradicate VVF was a welcome gesture. He said that his government had introduced free medical care and education for women and children, and revealed that doctors, nurses and other medical staff were recently recruited into the state's health sector. He pledged his administration's support for the eradication of VVF.

Disclosing that the campaign had already begun in Katsina, Mrs. Henkin urged the Kano state government to continue to offer assistance to victims of VVF. She commended the government's health programmes, especially as they affect women's health.

Responding, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau noted that UNDP's concern coincided with his administration's policy on healthcare, adding that their determination to

## Special allowances for teachers underway

The Kano state government plans to introduce special allowances for teachers in a bid to improve their welfare. Disclosing this, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau said that his administration would give special attention to the provision of learning materials and office furniture, as well as the recruitment of suitably qualified teachers to enhance the quality of education in the state.

By Aliyu S. Machika (Kano)  
The state ministry had purchased furniture worth N12 million, which would be distributed evenly to the 86 secondary schools in the state. She disclosed that the government had engaged the services of 904 security guards as well as 357 matrons and cooks to improve the management of existing school facilities and create a better environment for studies.

Speaking in a similar vein, the state's commissioner for education, Hajjiya Balarabe Bello Sule, announced that her

## Finance Ministry ordered to publicise monthly state accounts

Governor Ibrahim Shekarau has made it mandatory for the Kano state ministry of finance to publicly disclose the state's monthly accounts on the 30<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup> of every month so that the people

would know the incomes and expenditures of the government.

Commenting on such transparency, a former commissioner in Jigawa State, Alhaji Adamu Kiyawa commended the action of Governor Ibrahim Shekarau as worthy of emulation by other states and the country at large. He noted that Shekarau had proved beyond doubt that he was not in government to steal but to serve. He also suggested that the National Assembly should compel all state governors to disclose their monthly accounts in the interest of good governance.

Alhaji Adamu Kiyawa, who is also the proprietor of Gateway International School, Kano, advised the state government to ensure the completion of its laudable initiatives and called for strict punishment for any body undermining its efforts. 'I

think we should extend this transparency crusade to ministries and local governments where there are lots of complaints about shoddy practices on contracts,' he said.

An Islamic scholar and preacher in Kano, Sheik Ibrahim Khalil, said that the transparency initiative was good for a Sharia compliant government and called for its sustenance.

## 9,000 Kano students to receive scholarship

The Kano state scholarship board is to award scholarships to 9,000 students across the state to help develop their educational potentials. This was disclosed by the secretary general of the board, Alhaji Lawal Saje Rano, during an interactive session with students of the College of Education, Kumbotso.

Alhaji Rano, who praised the efforts of

hard working students, urged the rest to rise to the challenge in order to benefit from the state government's diverse educational programmes. He said that the government would always pay attention to the well-being of the students to ensure that they were adequately assisted whenever necessary.

Speaking earlier, the acting director of higher

education in the state, Alhaji Bello Yakasai, stated that the essence of the interactive session was to obtain first-hand information from the students. He urged all students in Kano state to take their studies seriously, and said that the educational authorities would do everything possible to ensure that they were not misguided by the bad eggs in their respective institutions.



Gov Ibrahim Shekarau



Mrs. Nemodi Usman,  
Finance Minister

# EKO TRUST

## Southern govts urge FG to release LG funds to Lagos

Nine Southern governors rose from their one-day meeting last Friday and urged the federal government to obey the orders of the Supreme Court by releasing funds due to the local governments in Lagos State.

Their decision followed deliberations on the petitions presented to the summit by the chairmen of local governments in Lagos State and the state House of Assembly.

It will be recalled that the federal government is yet to obey the orders of the Supreme Court directing the Presidency to release funds due to local governments of Lagos State seized illegally by the President.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the ninth Southern Governors' Forum which, was chaired by the Lagos State governor, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, at the Meridian Hotel, Victoria Garden City, Lagos, the governors express displeasure with the inadequate arrangements for the on-going census exercise, the governors suggested the application of satellite imagery and other modern technological tools to ensure an adequate headcount.

The governors also advocated for the creation of the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, which will handle the financial issues relating to states and local governments while the current Accountant General takes charge of the finances of the federal government.

Noting that it would welcome a postponement to enable the National Population Commission to review its arrangements for the conference, the summit of southern governors said a reliable and accurate date is very crucial to the socio-political and economic development of the country.

The forum, which was attended by nine governors and five deputy governors, also objected to the new

revenue allocation formula, arguing that it is not adequate to carry the burdens of additional responsibilities such as the funding of primary school education.

It therefore advocated a new allocation formula in which the Federal Government will take 48.47%; states, 36.77% and local governments will share 14.75%.

Commending the federal government for embarking on the determination of the debt profile of each state of the federation, the governors said it will help states to plan with a good measure of certainty and urged all relevant functionaries to ensure a speedy completion of the exercise.



A cross section of White Cap Chiefs at a ceremony in Lagos...recently.

Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu.

## Lagos to sanction firms using noisy, smoky power plants

The Lagos State government has concluded plans to impose heavy sanctions on corporate firms, which are using noisy and smoky generators to supply power in residential highbrow areas.

The general manager of the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency, Mr. Debisi Adeshina, who disclosed this in an interview with our correspondent, said a private firm had already been commissioned for that purpose.

Adeshina said the appointed company would ensure that all firms operating on Victoria Island, Ikoyi, Apapa, Ikeja and other highbrow residential areas in the state carry out their operations using noiseless and smokeless engines.

He said the development would check the abuse of generating sets by firms operating in residential areas whose activities were causing noise and air pollution in their areas of operation.

Adeshina said LASEPA was taking up the challenge because it had observed that most residential areas in Victoria Island and Ikoyi had been taken over by firms who now carry out their activities using generators everyday since the public power supply had become epileptic.

He said the company engaged by LASEPA would be going from one company to another to check the level of noise and fumes being generated by the generators, and force them to make use of gadget that could control the effect of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide on the people.

He said the company

would also compel them to buy gadgets that could reduce the level of noise being produced by the generators and penalise those who refuse to abide by its regulations.

He said, "If we want this environment to be good, the application of the World environmental technical document must be used. If they are well used, you will find out that companies in residential areas would not pollute their areas of operations, they won't even be there in the first instance."

"Awolowo road in Ikoyi and most streets on Victoria Island were purely residential areas before they were suddenly commercialised. We

have however put together a procedure to check their abuse of the environment.

"We have commissioned the company, it is a consulting firm that has been mobilised to go from one firm to another to check the noise and fume level of the generators being used by the various companies in residential areas," he said.

Adeshina said companies in advanced countries were being made to use gadgets that could control air and noise pollution in their generators adding that governments in Nigeria should also take a clue from that.

He said the use of solar powered energy would have

been a better alternative to back up the public electricity supply but that the country was not developed to that stage.

It would be recalled that *The Punch* newspaper had exclusively reported on Wednesday that irregular power supply from the National Electric Power Authority had forced firms on Victoria Island to be committing huge sums to generate alternative power supply using generators and solar energy to power their activities.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that firms on Oyin Jolayemi, Adeola Odeku, Sanusi Fafunwa and Karimu Kotun

streets have been running their services on diesel powered engines and solar system since the last one month.

Our correspondent also observed that fumes and noise emanating from the generators have been creating serious concerns for residents living very close to the firms.

Reacting to the development, the executive director, Investment Banking Group of All States Trust Bank Plc, Mr. Emmanuel Osa Agwoje had explained to our correspondent that his company spends between N5 million and N5 million every month to supply alternative power supply.

## ...vows to prosecute child traffickers

By Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent, Lagos

Worried by the shocking discovery of an orphanage engaging in child trafficking and trading of human parts, the Lagos State government has said that it would ensure that the 11 persons arrested in connection with activities in the home are prosecuted.

It called on the general public to be more vigilant and prompt in reporting any strange or suspected criminal activities in their neighbourhood.

To this end, the state government through its ministry of Social Development, Youths and Sports has concluded plans to reinforce its monitoring teams to start an intensive combing of private social welfare institutions in the state.

Addressing a news conference on Sunday, the

thorough interrogation and investigation.

"The case of Pastor John-Gift and her husband is a case we intend to see to a logical conclusion to serve as a deterrent to many others who engage in such illicit practices in the state".

The commissioner said the ministry was working closely with the state ministry of Justice on the matter to ensure that the case is effectively prosecuted and not swept under the carpet or treated with levity by security agents in the state.

He said, "We have invited the ministry of Justice to appear as the amicus curiae, a friend of the court in criminal matters to ensure prosecution in the matter".

Bamidele said that the ministry had so far moved 13 babies and toddlers that were found at the center to the Lagos State Motherless

Babies Home; four children are in Lagos State Children Transit Home, Idi-Araba while six pregnant teenagers are in Girls' Approved School, Idi-Araba.

Similarly, a girl was taken to Girl's Remand Home, Idi-Araba while a boy was moved to Boys' Remand Home, Oregun. One of the babies is said to be on admission at Massey Children Hospital, Lagos Island.

All the babies, toddlers and pregnant girls were taken to the state general hospital for medical examination before they were admitted in the social welfare institutions.

He further explained that the ministry is presently working with the liaison offices of the state of origin of the girls' to ascertain that their parents are notified of their whereabouts and that they are united with their parents.



Gov Bola Tinubu

# News

## FRCN Sokoto FM station demolished

Officials of the Sokoto Urban and Regional Planning Board at the weekend demolished the FM station of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) being established in Sokoto.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the station was demolished at about 6:30p.m on Friday.

Alhaji Kabir Binji, the special adviser to Governor Attahiru Bafarawa on Urban and Regional Planning, said that the structures were demolished because they

were illegal.

"Any where we see illegal structures, we will demolish same," Binji said, pledging however, to give the full details on Monday.

The project manager of the contractors, Chief Owolabi Ishaq, told NAN that the project

had reached 85 per cent completion. He said that all the major civil and electrical work, including the generator

house, had been completed.

And added that the total cost of the project was N26.8 million and that the cost of the completed structures was about N19 million.

NAN reports that the federal government had embarked on the establishment of FM stations in the 36 states of the federation in 2002 and that some of them have since gone into operation.

Only eight out of 36 states and the FCT participated in the just-concluded Kaduna International Trade Fair where 650 companies exhibited their products.

Aside the local and the international participants, only Borno, Kano, Katsina, Nasarawa, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kaduna and Delta states participated.

The deputy president, Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, Hajiya Saratu Aliyu, expressed dismay at the poor participation by states. She challenged

## 'Eight states participated in Kaduna Trade Fair'

states to show-case for their absence, even when the fair was properly conducted.

Aliyu told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kaduna yesterday that participation

by states at fairs had been poor since the re-introduction of democracy.

"Gone were the days of the military, which ensured

the participation by states," she said.

She said participation by states could ensure rapid industrial development and promotion of agro-allied ventures.

"In spite of invitation letters and reminders dispatched to various governors to participate in the fair, the response was very poor," Aliyu lamented.

## Governor orders probe into finances of Yobe SEPA

Governor Bukar Ibrahim has ordered a full-scale probe into the financial activities of the

Yobe State Environmental Protection Agency (YSEPA).

Governor Ibrahim last weekend inspected streets and public places in Damaturu and its environs, expressing disgust at the agency's activities. He told newsmen after the inspection that in spite of the huge amount given to the agency, the aesthetic look of Damaturu and major towns remained unsatisfactory.

### SEPA

"I can vividly recall approving a huge amount



Governor Bukar Ibrahim

of money to the agency but from what I have inspected within

Damaturu metropolis, the funds have not been prudently utilised and I am disappointed with the poor sanitary condition of the state capital," he said

He directed the Ministry of Environment and the YSEPA to give an account of all financial transactions on sanitary projects. From now, he said regular monitoring of the sanitary condition of major towns, markets, commercial motor vehicle parks and major public places would be carried out.



Governor Boni Haruna of Adamawa State (left) and the D.G. Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution Dr. Sunday Ocheche, putting heads together during a workshop organised by the Centre recently in Yola.

## Census: Mixed reactions trail exclusion of ethnicity and religion

The forthcoming national population census is already

brewing controversy as ethnicity and religion, which form the basis of the Nigerian society are pushed aside. This decision was borne out of the conference held in Kaduna state last year when the governor, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, called on the National Population Commission (NPC) to remove religion and ethnicity in the questionnaire to be administered by the commission during the census.

This move was supported by the council of states executive meeting with President Olusegun Obasanjo. However, diverse views have been aired by a cross-section of Nigerians on the matter. Daily Trust caught up with a cross-section of the society who bared their minds on the matter. Excerpts:

"Why not? It should be included," so says Kingsley Effiong of Wuse, Zone 6, Abuja. He goes ahead to say: "Ethnicity and religion must not be removed because it will never divide Nigeria as the government is thinking.

"If you remove these two factors, then you are counting the Muslims out as the government is presently run by a Christian that is why I

By Benjamin Auta, Reporter

believe that these two factors - religion and ethnicity would never divide or destroy our country."

"Government should not dictate to us, Eberechukwu Orji, student. In her words: "I think the government is trying to dictate to us and we must not allow it because we are the ones the policies affect.

"Even though it is usual with the government to dictate to us, we should be left to decide such issues ourselves. I don't have a problem with a Hausa man or Yoruba and I don't also have problems with people of other faiths as those factors (religion and ethnicity) are very important to our developmental process."

In the view of Dauda Williams, a security man, "I can't say yes or no now in this matter; but God should take control of such situation."

Mr Okafor, a civil servant, submitted that he had no much comment on the issue: "I am handicapped to comment on this matter. Nonetheless, I believe that government meant well when it decided to remove ethnicity and religion in the confab; even Mr President reaffirmed that stand last

night".

But for Ibrahim Mohammed, a trader, "the government solely dictates the pace. If it (government) says there should be no religion and ethnicity, then it should be so. At any rate, most of us want resolutions that will bring everlasting peace in our country. To that end, I plead with the government to strive to arrive at a consensus that will not lead to problems in the future".

According to Honourable Umar Faruk, a councillor: "I appreciate it being removed because it will discourage religious bigotry and division in the country.

"Nigerians should be made to feel at home anywhere they reside irrespective of religion and ethnic group".

And for Abdul-Rahman Oluwatosi, a marketing executive, "I am worried about it because it will cause more division.

"I know they want to divide this country, which is why they are running away from religion and ethnicity."

"Problems we are running from will still be there." Suleiman Yahaya, a driver. Adding that, "They will always want to make mistakes in most national assignments so that they can come back with excuses, any way, Nigeria

will always remain one irrespective of our tribes and religions.

"I can use myself as an example, I am married to a

such things themselves, after all, they only need the figure to plan developmental projects for the country.



Sama'ila Makama, Chairman, NPC

Yoruba woman while I am from Niger state."

In the opinion of Mr. Edward Bassey, an accountant. "It is the best policy this government have introduced since its inception.

"Let us say that politicians can manipulate

"My brother, I don't really care if they don't count us at all because I am tired of this counting and its leaders.

"If they decide not to count us at all, things will still remain the same and if they still count us, there will be controversy over one thing or the other, I am not bothered."

"They are not stupid to exclude religion and ethnicity." Chima Ejike, civil servant. In her words: "How will the government make mistakes about removing religion and ethnicity?"

"Let me tell you, this is what has been causing wahala (problems) in this country.

"We must therefore support Mr. President and Chief Makama to give us a better result in the forthcoming census."

As for Mr. Timothy, a student. "I don't know were to begin from, but things will always remain the same, mark my words."

In Naomi Iliyas' opinion, hair stylist, "I think it will make Nigeria a better country, because nobody will want anything bad for her country and we are in a democracy.

"I believe the country will be better if we don't have religion and ethnicity inserted in the census questionnaire."

# THE ARTS

## The 77<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards

### Best Actor: Jamie Foxx gets the nod

By Crispin Oduobuk,  
Group Literary Editor  
(with agency reports)

As widely expected, *Ray* star and emerging Hollywood leading man, Jamie Foxx, went home with the Best Actor Award at the 77<sup>th</sup> Oscars ceremony held in the early hours of Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005 Nigerian time.

Foxx beat Don Cheadle (in contention for his role in *Hotel Rwanda*), Johnny Depp (*Finding Neverland*), Leonardo DiCaprio (*The Aviator*) and Clint Eastwood, who got nominated for his role in his Best Picture winner *Million Dollar Baby*, to get the award.

In his acceptance speech, Foxx paid special tribute to his late grandmother, Estelle. "She told me stand up straight, shoulders back. Act like you've got some sense," he said. "And she still talks to me now, only now she talks to me in my dreams. And I can't wait to go to sleep tonight because we have a lot to talk about."

The acceptance speech given by Foxx for his Best Actor Oscar was adjudged by many as the ceremony's high point. Foxx was praised for "demonstrating a blend of poise and passion unmatched by previous winners."

This Best Actor Award is Jamie Foxx's first nomination for the honour regarded as the film world's most coveted prize. He won for what has been described as his "uncanny embodiment of Ray Charles" in the movie *Ray*.



A scene from the movie *Ray* featuring Jamie Foxx as Ray Charles. Foxx is the 2005 winner of the Best Actor Award for his performance in the movie

### ...His trek from comedy to the big screen

Jamie Foxx is enjoying success in a multifaceted career that already encompasses dramatic roles in films and television, as well as stand-up comedy and music. Though previously best known for his comedy work, his emergence as a leading dramatic actor is evidenced in his most recent and upcoming roles. He most recently starred opposite

Tom Cruise in Michael Mann's thriller *Collateral*; Foxx portrays Max, a taxi driver who becomes "collateral"—an expendable person—when he and his cab are hijacked for a night by a contract killer (Cruise) in town to carry out five hits before dawn. In addition to his title role in *Ray*, Foxx is set to star in the action thriller *Stealth* for director Rob Cohen,

which is slated for release in 2005.

Foxx recently received critical acclaim for his portrayal of gang member-turned-Nobel Peace Prize nominee Stan Tookie Williams in the cable movie *Redemption*. He also starred opposite Gabrielle Union in the urban romantic comedy film *Breakin' All the Rules*.

Foxx first came to fame as a popular stand-up comedian and comedy actor. During the early 1990s, he was a regular on the comedy series *In Living Color*, alongside Keenan Ivory Wayans, Damon Wayans and Jim Carrey. He also had a recurring role on the series *Roc*, and guest-starred on several other shows.

In 1996, he launched his own series, *The Jamie Foxx Show*, which became one of

the top-rated shows on the WB network. Foxx not only co-created and starred on the show, but also served as an executive producer and directed several episodes. During the show's five-year run, Foxx won an NAACP Image Award and earned three more nominations for Outstanding Actor in a Comedy Series.

On the big screen, Foxx received praise from both critics and audiences for his performance as a breakout star quarterback in Oliver Stone's 1999 football-themed drama *Any Given Sunday*, in which he joined an ensemble cast that also included Al Pacino, Cameron Diaz and LL Cool J. In addition to his on-screen role in the movie, Foxx wrote, produced and performed two songs featured on the film's

soundtrack, including the title track and the chant "My Name is Willie."

He went on to co-star with Will Smith in the 2001 biopic *Ali*, which marked Foxx's first collaboration with director Michael Mann. His portrayal of Muhammad Ali's orner man and constant inspiration, Drew Bundini Brown, brought Foxx another Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture. His additional film credits include *Bait*, *The Truth About Cats and Dogs* and *The Great White Hype*.

In 2002, Foxx brought down the house in his first HBO comedy special, *Jamie Foxx: I Might Need Some Security*.

He also has the distinction of hosting the top-rated *Saturday Night Live* of the 2001-02 season.

### The movie *Ray*

*Ray* is the never-before-told, musical biographical drama of American legend Ray Charles. Featuring a remarkable performance from Jamie Foxx in the central role, *Ray* follows the inspiring story of a one-of-a-kind genius.

Born in a poor town in Georgia, Ray Charles went blind at the age of seven shortly after witnessing his younger brother's accidental death. Inspired by a fiercely independent mother who insisted he make his own way in

the world, Charles found his calling and his gift behind a piano keyboard. Touring across the Southern musical circuit, the soulful singer gained a reputation and then exploded with worldwide fame when he pioneered incorporating gospel, country, jazz and orchestral influences into his inimitable style. As he revolutionized the way people appreciated music, he simultaneously fought segregation in the very clubs that launched him and championed artists' rights

within the corporate music business. *Ray* provides an unflinching portrait of Charles' musical genius as he overcomes drug addiction while transforming into one of this country's most beloved performers.

*Ray* is directed by acclaimed filmmaker Taylor Hackford (*An Officer and a Gentleman*); screenplay by James L. White, from a story by Hackford and White; and produced by Hackford, Stuart Benjamin, Howard Baldwin and Karen Baldwin.



Hollywood tough guy Clint Eastwood who won Oscars for Best Director and Best Film on Sunday for boxing drama *Million Dollar Baby* dealing a double blow to his main rival Martin Scorsese and *The Aviator*.

*Million Dollar Baby*, a gut-wrenching movie about the relationship between a grizzled boxing trainer, played by Eastwood, and his eager protege, portrayed by Hilary Swank won four awards in all. In addition to Eastwood's two, Swank won Best Actress and Morgan Freeman Best Supporting Actor.

# News

## NITT plans technology centre

The Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Zaria, is to set up a transport technology centre for research and skill acquisition. This was

**From Sani Babadoko, Bureau chief, Kaduna**  
disclosed by its Director-General and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ibrahim Vandu-Chikolo, at the 26<sup>th</sup> Kaduna International Trade Fair. He stated that already consultants had completed the design of the centre which will be the first of its kind in

Africa, adding that contractors had been invited to bid for its construction. "I would like to appeal to all stakeholders in the industry to collaborate with the NITT in the development of this unique centre which is going to be the first of its kind on the African continents," he said.

## Cmdr. urges speedy rehabilitation of barracks

The Commander, Army Headquarters Garrison, Major General Nathaniel N. Madza, has appealed to the Presidential Committee on Barracks Rehabilitation (PCBR) to speed up rehabilitation of barracks to resolve the problems of accommodation.

**By Ruby Rabi, Defence reporter**  
problem, but extra-efforts should be made to solve the problem as a contented soldier would be more dedicated to duties. He observed that water supply in the cantonment has been very epileptic. This, he explained, had constituted a threat to them as the sewage system in barracks was adversely affected. He urged the minister of the Federal Capital Territory to assist the command with boreholes to alleviate the persistent water scarcity prevailing in the barracks.

According to him, the NITT had computerised its operations, and added that its space-age library to link users to databases around the world through satellite was also nearing completion. He said the NITT, as the leader in professional development in transport and logistics, would host the meeting of the African Forum of the Commonwealth Institute of Transport and Logistics (CICT) International between April 2-7, 2005, which is expected to attract experts from Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia.

He said 224 participants drawn from public and private sectors attended the short-term programmes of the institute in 2004, while 13 participants enrolled for the four programmes in the Department of Professional Studies.

Dr. Ibrahim also said the institute had put up proposals for the conduct of research in trend in global transport and its effects on Nigerian Ports Traffic and Strategies for the formation of the auto-technicians into small/medium scale enterprises.

It would be recalled that military personnel called on the federal government to come to their aid by providing accommodation as most of its men were stranded in the Federal Capital Territory.

Speaking at the 2005 West African Social Activities (WASA), an annual event to mark a successful military year, Major General Madza said the troop's welfare was a major concern to the chief of Army Staff, and should be addressed to boost the morale of the soldiers concerned.

The commander said the federal government was presently addressing the

The embattled Chief Security Officer (CSO) to the late General Sani Abacha, Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, and four others currently facing trial before a Lagos High Court over an attempted murder of the *Guardian* Publisher, Mr. Alex Ibru, Friday escaped contempt charges following the walkout action they staged on the court last Monday. The action of the accused persons was precipitated on the court's refusal of their applications praying the trial judge, Justice Kayode Oyewole, to disqualify himself from trying them on the reason that he was bias.

The trial judge, in his response, had ruled that the accused be barred from the court, and subsequently ruled on Thursday that Al-Mustapha and others be brought to court to explain the rationale behind their action.

The former chief security officer, who amongst all the accused, did not show face on Thursday appeared the following day, adducing the failing nature of his health as the reason behind his action on Monday as well as his failure to attend the court's proceedings on Thursday. He however prayed the court to temper justice with mercy.

But while ruling on the matter on Friday, the trial judge, Justice Kayode Oyewole, said the action of all the accused was unbecoming, and contravened section 133 of the Criminal Code, which entitles defaulters to three

## Al-Mustapha, others, escape contempt charges

**From Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondent Lagos**  
months' imprisonment. He said the accused persons were men of proven integrity in police and military respectively whose benchmark has been discipline.

According to him, ever since he commenced presiding on the case on October 2003, twenty-nine interlocutory motions had been taken and majority of them bordered on stay of proceedings. He stated that this development showed the defence had left lacuna in the judicial process of the country.

Justice Oyewole posited that he bore no animosity

against any of the accused persons, as he had always strived to maintain due process in matters, disclosing that he would caution himself with the use of contempt charges so that the trial of the protracted case would sail through.

"I shall take caution on the usages of contempt here and allow the trial to go on."

Responding, the state's counsel, Mrs. O. Ogbunsesan; Barrister Olalekan Ojo and Chinedum Ikegbule, counsel to Al-Mustapha, and General Bamaiyi, praised the judge for demonstrating maturity and forbearance in his ruling, while also stressing their resolve to accelerate the trial.

## Nagarta Radio Commissioned

**From Sani Babasa, Bureau Chief (Kaduna)**  
Nagarta Radio, a private radio station, was at the weekend commissioned with a call on northerners to invest in the media. Making the call at the commissioning ceremony of the station at Maraba Gwom in Jos, the former chief of defence staff, General Muhammadu Wushishi, who was the chairman at the occasion, said:

"We have waited for so long, since the advent of liberalisation of the broadcasting industry in Nigeria to see such initiatives to enhance our enterprises.

"We had hoped that our investors would step in with

great enthusiasm to create net work of private radio stations that will be tailored, not only to the satisfaction of our people in the 19 northern states, but also designed to pursue the crucial and strategic needs of the people for social, cultural, economic, political growth and development."

He said northerners were avoiding radio taxes, but failed to realise that it was through the radio that they get informed about products and services as well as information about their political development in their country.

# HUSSAINI ADAMU POLYTECHNIC

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION, KAZAURE

## Congratulations

"By the authority vested in me as Chancellor, I confer on you the Degree of Doctor of Science 'Honoris Causa', with the rights and privileges attached thereto". These are the words of Chancellor of the University of Jos, HRM Oba (Dr.) Adeyemo Adejugbe Aladesanmi III, JP, Ewi of Ado-Ekiti.

The academic board and academic community of Hussaini Adamu Polytechnic are proud to be associated with the above academic citation. Your Excellency, this is a recognition of your brilliant and excellent technological programmes aimed at improving the life and living of our people.



His Excellency,  
(Dr.) Ibrahim Saminu Turaki  
Executive Governor of Jigawa State



Prof. A.T. Sulaiman  
Hon. Commissioner for Higher Education



Dr. M.A. KAZAURE

Signed:  
Mallam Sulajman Dauda  
(REGISTRAR)

# Inside Politics

## A troubled national conference

From all indications the on going National Political Reforms Conference will continue to be trailed by controversies up to the very end. Its convocation was contentious, and it has kicked off controversially. From the hurried convocation, the confab ran into a hurried adjournment barely two hours in session. It resumed this week amidst uncertainties on the direction of debate, funding, welfare, etc.

### The maiden session

The first sitting held shortly after the inauguration ceremony was rowdy and shaky. For a start, there were no rules of proceedings, no agenda, no order paper, no proper sitting positions, no good lighting. When the chairman, Justice Niki Tobi suggested that the conference sits from Mondays to Fridays, the session went heated. A suggestion by a Moslem member that his Christian brothers there won't accept Sunday sessions just as their Moslem counterparts were against Friday sittings was misinterpreted by a Reverend to mean whipping up religious sentiments. When Tobi asked a simple question that any body or group having a position paper should say so, delegates parried the inquiry and began to talk about their welfare.

When it became apparent that a fruitful debate was impossible, some delegates suggested an adjournment for some days while things are put in order. By the time Tobi decided for a 7-day break, tempers had started to mount. So many people wanted to speak and could not wait to be recognised before putting on their microphones and shouting at the top of their voices. At a time, the chairman's microphone went down, so the aging jurist also had to deploy much strength to his speech system to talk loud enough to the hundreds of delegates' hearing.

### Seven days lost

A day after the not so decorous session expected of the gentocratic gathering, Tobi and his secretary, Mathew Kukah were reported to have lodged a protest to the

By **Habeeb I. Pindiga,**  
Political Reporter

secretary to the government of the federation against the shoddy preparations. Delegates also had to cheek out of their hotels, with

This coterie of troubles is perhaps an expected fate for a project that generated heated acrimony, suspicions and schisms. It divided the hitherto united Senate of the Federal Republic and created an avenue for Southerners and their not so

parties, the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) got enmeshed in crisis. While most of the member-parties were against sending a delegate to the confab, one of them, the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) insisted on

balkanisation of the country. Issues like parliamentary system, confederation and resource control were expected to dominate debate and probably lead to break up of Nigeria. There were apprehensions for instance that a parliamentary

destroying the unity he had helped to build. This, according to a source, led to last minute changes in Obasanjo's speech to insert the no-go areas.

### Is this the end for controversies?

But it's unlikely if Obasanjo's detour becomes the end of the story. The Southern Governors Forum has insisted on true federalism, whatever that stands for, while their Northern counterparts have threatened to withdraw their delegates should any 'no-go' area be contemplated.

There are also reports of huge spending in the programme, beyond the projected N923 million. The opening ceremony alone is said to have gulped not less than N300 million, which is about one-third of the total budget. Also, the minister of state for finance, Mrs. Esther Usman is said to have been queried by the presidency for saying that government was drawing from its Consolidated Revenue Fund to finance the conference. The ministry has also issued a statement refuting the story. The basic question of source of funding therefore remains in the fore front.

More trouble may be on the way as the confab goes on. Losers in certain decisions will surely protest.

### Any hope?

It may not be difficult to predict the likely outcome of such a flawed process. Though delegates with sectional agenda may try to bring them in through the back door, Northern delegates have indicated their resolve to resist such attempts. They are said to have decided to be making references to Obasanjo's speech to stave off moves to bring up topics that would threaten the nation's unity.

As the confab reconvenes this week, it's unlikely if business will go on unhindered. The issue of setting up a business committee is most likely to come up. A rule of debate must also be formulated if the confab is to make any head way. These rules must provide for manner of indicating desire to contribute, time for each speaker, use of decorous language, among others.



Justice Niki Tobi

many of them leaving Abuja for private engagements, instead of staying back to prepare ahead. Ahead of the reconvening, Tobi and Kukah are said to have gotten the secretariat on a proper footing. They are now in charge. May be this will be a good beginning, but there are lot more preparations to be made. And in any case the conference has lost a precious one week.

### Destiny of a faulty exercise

friendly Northerners to hurl invectives at each other using any available forum. The confab also exhumed the not fully buried executive-legislature antipathy, especially on the issue of extra-budgetary spending. For the first time since the inception of the present National Assembly, lawmakers dragged the president to court, challenging his powers to convene the conference.

Another dimension was also added recently to the nominations, when the opposition group of political



Rev. Father Mathew H. Kukah

participating. Thus a CNPP official, an APGA member, was said to have written to the government forwarding three nominees. But chairman of the group, Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa wrote a counter later, disowning any nominations.

### How Obasanjo backed down

Before the confab took off last week, there were reports that President Olusegun Obasanjo would give delegates an open-ended agenda. This formed part of the fears that the forum would lead to the

system of government would be introduced to stop a Northerner from becoming an executive president in 2007. But surprisingly in his inaugural address, Obasanjo allayed these fears by introducing no-go areas. He de-listed many of the contentious issues that were expected to heat the confab.

Daily Trust learnt that the president soft-pedalled after a meeting with a high-powered Northern delegation. The delegation, it was gathered, cautioned the president from

***“There are also reports of huge spending in the programme, beyond the projected N923 million. The opening ceremony alone is said to have gulped not less than N300 million, which is about one-third of the total budget. Also, the minister of state for finance, Mrs. Esther Usman is said to have been queried by the presidency for saying that government was drawing from its Consolidated Revenue Fund to finance the conference. The ministry has also issued a statement refuting the story. The basic question of source of funding therefore remains in the fore front.”***

# SPORTS

## Mourinho may face inquiry by English FA

The Football Association may launch a disciplinary inquiry after Jose Mourinho was sent off during Chelsea's Carling Cup final win over Liverpool.

The Chelsea boss was sent from the touchline by the fourth official for appearing to taunt Liverpool fans after Chelsea equalised - before winning 3-2.

Referee Steve Bennett has confirmed he will include the incident involving Mourinho in his official match report.

Mourinho said his gesture was aimed at the English media, not Liverpool fans.

Mourinho was charged with improper conduct in January following comments he made af-

ter Chelsea's Carling Cup semi-final, first leg encounter against Manchester United.

But the Football Association decided not to take any disciplinary action.

However, he confirmed the circumstances of his dismissal in Sunday's final at the Millennium Stadium.

And he expressed his regret at any possible misjudgement over his gesture of putting his fingers to his lips in front of thousands of frustrated Liverpool fans.

"The police told the fourth official 'Mr Mourinho must go' - and if I made a mistake I apologise," he said.

"I have a lot of respect for fans of every team in the country, in

the world and try to show that."

He added: "This is a special situation for me but if I made a mistake and did something that I cannot do in English football, then I have to adapt and understand where I am.

"I have a lot of respect for Liverpool fans. What I did, the sign of silence - 'shut your mouth' - was not for them. It was for the English press."

The Football League confirmed that, contrary to Mourinho's own post-match assertion, there had been no direct police involvement in his removal from the touchline.

A spokesman declared: "The decision to ask Jose Mourinho to leave the technical area came

from the match officials and was initiated by the fourth official, Phil Crossley.

"The match referee, Steve Bennett, was aware of what was happening on the touch-line and was content that it was being dealt with correctly."

Mourinho could not disguise his anger at the criticism he and his team had received after losing to Newcastle United in the FA Cup and Barcelona in the Champions League.

He was also criticised for refusing to speak to the media after the defeat in the Nou Camp but was in outspoken mood after claiming his first trophy in English football.

Mourinho said: "It is not

about me, it is about us. And you cannot put pressure on my group - no chance.

"There is another thing you

forgot. We have not lost our rearranged game against West Brom. If we beat them, the gap would be nine points again in the Premiership."



Mourinho...he will face inquiry by English FA after he was sent off during the Carling Cup final on Sunday

## ...blasts press after win

Chelsea's Jose Mourinho criticised the media after seeing his side win the Carling Cup 3-2 against Liverpool, his first trophy in English football.

Mourinho was sent off for pressing his finger to his lips after Chelsea's equaliser, but he said the gesture was not aimed at Liverpool fans.

"The signal of close your mouth was not for them but for the press," he said.

"They speak too much and in my opinion they try to do everything to disturb Chelsea. Wait, don't speak too soon."

Mourinho was dismissed for the gesture he made when Chelsea equalised with 11 minutes remaining of normal time from a Steven Gerrard own goal.

It appeared to be directed towards the Liverpool supporters but he claimed it was a gesture of defiance to the media, although the press section at the Millennium Stadium is on the other side of the pitch.

Mourinho spent the rest of the match watching the game from the bowels of the stadium on a monitor, but said he did not regret his actions.

"The only thing I have to un-

derstand is that I have to adapt, I work here and I have to respect that," he added.

"We lost two matches and in my opinion you (the media) try to take confidence from us and put pressure on us.

"We now have the first title and almost for sure we will have the second one and the second one (Premiership) will be the big one.

"I'm not feeling the pressure. You cannot put pressure on me, no chance.

"I have read I have to prove a lot in English football. Sir Alex Ferguson is the only European champion in this country, nobody else, so I have to prove what?"

Mourinho expressed his delight for Chelsea at winning, but said win the League Cup trophy was "nothing special" personally.

"It's just one more. I had a few before this," he said.

"I'm very happy to win. It's important for the fans, for the

club and especially for the players.

"It's very difficult to win for the first time and for these players it is the first time so it is important."

Eidur Gudjohnsen, who came on at half-time, said the "fantastic" victory was all down to their relentless work ethic over the course of the match.

"It was a very intense and even game and it was hard to break them down, but hard work pays off in the end," he said.

## Blooming Rose leads Raptors past Lakers

Jalen Rose scored 26 points, including eight straight in the latter stages of the fourth quarter, as the Toronto Raptors upset the Los Angeles Lakers 108-102 in National Basketball Association play on Sunday.

Rose scored 10 of the Raptors's last 12 points as Toronto finished the game on a 12-3 run after earlier blowing a 15-point lead.

The win was the third straight for the Raptors, who are unbeaten since the All-Star break.

Recently, there had been speculation that both Rose and

Donyell Marshall might be dealt by the Raptors, but the pair stayed in Toronto as Thursday's trade deadline passed.

Marshall added 19 points and nine rebounds for the Raptors, who had 13 three-pointers in the game.

Kobe Bryant scored 31 points, had eight rebounds and eight assists for the Lakers, who lost their second straight contest after a season-high three-game winning streak.

Los Angeles was coming off a 111-90 drubbing at the hands of the defending NBA champion

Detroit Pistons on Friday.

Matt Bonner and Rafer Alston both added 14 points for the Raptors.

Chucky Atkins had 22 points for the Lakers.

In other games, Vince Carter had 34 points and 11 rebounds as the New Jersey Nets stopped the Cleveland Cavaliers 104-98 in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Jason Kidd added 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Nets, while Nenad Krstic added 15 points.

LeBron James had 28 points to lead the Cavaliers. Jeff McInnis added 23 and Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 20 points and 18 rebounds.

In Milwaukee, Michael Redd scored 35 points as the Bucks pounded the Seattle SuperSonics 99-73.

Desmond Mason added 19 points and 11 rebounds for the Bucks, who held the Sonics to their lowest point total of the season.

Former Buck Ray Allen, in his first game in Milwaukee since being dealt to Seattle two seasons ago, had just 16 points.

In Houston, Matt Harpring scored 28 points as the Utah Jazz edged the Rockets 99-92.

Raja Bell added 23 points for the Jazz, who out-scored Houston 30-23 in the fourth quarter.

Tracy McGrady had 23 points to lead Houston.

In Washington, Cuttino Mobley made two free throws with 1.5 seconds remaining to lead the Sacramento Kings past the Wizards 110-108.

Mike Bibby had 38 points for Sacramento.

Gilbert Arenas scored 43 points for Washington, but his foul on Mobley led to the winning points.

In New Orleans, Carmelo An-

thony had 31 points and 10 rebounds as the Denver Nuggets rallied to beat the Hornets 94-93.

Anthony scored 17 of his points in the fourth quarter as the Nuggets overcame an 11-point deficit in the final 10 minutes.

Dan Dickau led New Orleans with 22 points.

In Orlando, Dwyane Wade scored 28 points as the Miami Heat beat the Magic for the second straight day, 112-103.

Eddie Jones added 24 points for Miami, which was once again without the injured Shaquille O'Neal. Grant Hill led Orlando with 34 points.

In Portland, Latrell Sprewell scored 27 points as the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the Trail Blazers 91-83.

Nick Van Exel had 26 points for the Blazers, who lost all four of their games to the T-Wolves this season.

In Phoenix, Antoine Walker had 33 points and 13 rebounds as the Boston Celtics downed the Suns 120-113 in overtime.

Boston became the first Eastern Conference team to win in Phoenix this season.

Amare Stoudemire scored 27 points for the Suns before fouling out while Steve Nash missed his third straight game.

## Match Play champion, Toms, returns to world's top ten

David Toms moved back into the world's top 10 after cruising to a record victory at the WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship in Carlsbad, California on Sunday.

The 38-year-old American, who produced superb golf all week before crushing compatriot Chris DiMarco 6 & 5 in the 36-hole final, climbed seven places to ninth in the official rankings.

Toms, the 2001 U.S. PGA champion, was delighted to be back in the top 10 but believes he still has a little way to go before establishing himself as a top-five player.

"My desire is to be a top 10 player every year, and I've been outside the top 10 in the world ranking since I missed a few events last year early in the season," he told reporters at a Costa

Toms was sidelined for the first month of the 2004 PGA Tour following wrist surgery in December 2003.

"I dropped, I guess, from seven or eight all the way down to 20 something at one time last year," he added. "But it's my goal to be a top 10 player.

"As far as a top-five player, I feel like I have limitations. Year-in and year-out, week after week, there are a handful of guys who are just better than I am."

With Toms climbing to nine, 2003 U.S. Masters champion Mike Weir of Canada slipped one place to 10.

The rest of the top 10 is unchanged, though, with world number one Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods, Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson occupying the top-four spots.

Elijah Singh, Woods and

left-hander Mickelson all made early exits last week at La Costa.

Singh, who ended Woods's five-year reign as the game's leading player last September, stays at the top for the 26th consecutive week.

Britain's Ian Poulter, who lost to Retief Goosen at the 20th hole in the consolation match for third place at La Costa, climbed three places to a career-high 32nd in the world.

World ranking points are accumulated over a two-year period, with points awarded in the most recent 13-week spell doubled.

Each player is ranked according to his average points per tournament, points being weighted according to the status of the event and strength of the field.

## Arthurs serves up maiden title win

Australian veteran Wayne Arthurs won his maiden ATP title with a victory over Croatia's Mario Ancic in the final of the Scottsdale Classic in Arizona on Sunday.

The unseeded Arthurs beat the third-seeded Ancic 7-5 6-3 to become the first man to claim his initial tournament win at 33 since Tom Gullikson won at Newport in 1985.

"It feels really good, really satisfying, especially now that I'm older and it's probably more satisfying to win a tournament this late in my career," said Arthurs, who was playing in the 128th tournament of his professional career. "I felt I couldn't miss my serve no matter how hard I hit it," Arthurs added.

"I knew I had to do that because he's a great returner and I didn't let him get into any of my service games at all except one when I made a couple of early volleys cross his shoulders.

"Apart from that, it's probably one of the best serving displays I've ever had."

Ancic agreed, "His serve is unbelievably difficult but he surprised me how well he returned today," the Croatian said.

Arthurs won the opening set in 40 minutes after breaking Ancic in the 12th game. In the second set, the Australian broke in the sixth game to go 4-2 ahead and held his next two service games without losing a point.

Arthurs, a hard-serving left-hander, did not face a break point for the second straight match and ended the tournament having held serve for 62 consecutive games.

He only lost eight points in 11 service games in the final and the only time he was broken this week came in the sixth game of his first round victory over fourth seed Taylor Dent. He also sent down a tournament-high 74 aces.

# Sports

## At last, work commences on abandoned ABS complex

By AbdulRaheem Aodu,  
Sports Reporter

Work has finally commenced on the Ahmadu Bello Stadium Sports Complex after 26 years of utter neglect.

The complex, which boasts of six lawn tennis courts, four squash racket courts and an Olympic sized swimming pool, was abandoned by successive governments since 1979 when contract was awarded for the project.

Over the last two and a half decades, the sports edifice was into a hide-out for criminals and harbour of dangerous reptiles as it facilities rot away in the face of neglect.

Trustsports observed on a visit to the complex at the weekend that work has commenced in earnest on the lawn tennis courts, the car park and the fence surround-

ing the complex.

Speaking to Trustsports on the renovation work on the complex, the Ahmadu Bello Stadium manager, Mr. Isa Okeyode said that the contract for the completion of the sports complex was awarded to seven contractors.

"Work has fully commenced on the sports complex. We hope that the lawn tennis courts and squash racket section will be completed next month, then we will face the swimming pool.

"This aspect (swimming

pool) is expected to gulp millions of naira because most of the equipments for filtration and the pumping machines would be imported that explains why we started from the court.

"The contract is spread around seven firms to ensure that work is finished on time. Three of them will handle two tennis courts, one of the firms has been awarded work on the fence and gates, while another will work on the footings and entrance burg-

lary proof. The car park and the renovation of the boreholes that supply water to the stadium was given to another contractor just as one of them will handle the swimming pool," he said.

According to him, three of the contractors have mobilised on the site and have so far completed 30 per cent of the work. One of the firms, Jamec West Africa Ltd., was seen working on the tennis courts.

Trustsports observed that

the car park has been upgraded, while the area behind the complex has been cleared.

Mr. Okeyode expressed happiness that the Sports Minister Col. Musa Mohammed has finally fulfilled the promises of many past sports ministers on the completion of the sports complex, saying that the place will no longer harbour armed robbers and men of nefarious activities.

## Clubs scramble for Enyeama

A mad scramble is currently on in the Nigerian domestic league for Super Eagles goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama in the wake of his return from an unsuccessful attempt to seal a deal with English Premier League side Bolton Wanderers.

Leading the chase to secure the goalkeeper's services are Iwuanyanwu Nationale who have had an initial approach for the player turned down by Enyimba.

"I just came from a meeting with the Enyimba chairman now," a subdued Nationale Team Manager Emeka Iwuagwu told KICK OFF on Monday. "But he says they won't release him."

Nationale chairman Ignatius Okeahialam stopped just short of accusing Enyimba of high-handedness, not only in Enyeama's case, but also with respect to strikers Chibuzor Ozurumba and Ekene Ezenwa. It is a charge flatly refuted by the Enyimba boss, who says players are free to go where they want to, as long as the terms are right.

"How can we be holding back players? What about the ones who we have cleared to other clubs here and the ones who have gone abroad," Enyimba boss Felix Anyansi-Agwu said.

Also in the running are Ibadan Warlords, 3SC who are missing the services of first choice keeper Kola Ige. Coach Godfrey Esu has made an initial request for the player which is being considered by the African champions.

"Esu has called me about Vincent, but we are considering all the offers. We are not holding any player back, but we have to be sure that we have proper consideration in any future move. We want to help Vincent keep in shape because of his status but the terms have to be right for us too," Anyansi told KICK OFF, implying that a loan deal would meet with approval.

Watching all these with keen interest are Makurdi side Lobi Stars, who have spoken with the player, but are yet to contact the club.

Garden City sides Dolphin and Sharks are also in the frame, but none have made any approaches because of simmering undercurrents of friction between Port Harcourt and Aba, although Enyimba sources claim that Dolphin have contacted the player through former team mate Victor Ezeji, a claim denied by the Dolphin striker.

Sharks in particular, are seething over their inability to secure the services of two Enyimba players in the close season. Striker Eric Fasindo and goalkeeper Abdul Isa were close to joining the Port Harcourt side, but claim that their efforts were thwarted.

Dolphin need another top quality keeper to replace Rotimi Sunday whose move to Israel is raising a storm within the double champions with an investigation as to the source of his clearance currently going on.

With all the intrigue going on, the player himself is keeping mum about his immediate future, although he insists that his priority is to keep in shape.

## Makinwa strikes again

Stephen Ayo Makinwa continued his brilliant scoring form for Serie A basement boys Atalanta in their 3-3 draw away to Cagliari on Sunday.

The Super Eagles forward has now struck three times for the relegation-threatened side after joining them from Genoa in mid-season.

The home team squandered their lead on three separate occasions, allowing Luigi Sala to cancel out Antonio Langella's early effort. Makinwa then responded after Mauro Esposito had restored the Sardinians' lead.

Nelson Abejion appeared to have won it for Cagliari, but Michele Marcolini kept his nerve to convert a last-minute penalty and earn the visitors a share of the spoils.

In Florence, midfield star Christian Obodo was fully involved in Fiorentina's disappointing home result against Udinese, who rescued a point at the Stadio Artemio Franchi to keep their UEFA Champions League hopes alive. The visitors came from two goals down to record a dramatic 2-2 finish.

The Viola will surely kick themselves for this costly slip, as they are still very much at risk of a return to Serie B. Fiorentina remain in 16th place and are only three spots atop the relegation zone.

In England, Austin Okocha started a brilliant first half build up that led to Bolton's goal equalizing goal at St James Park, but sadly, the Trotters' 10-game unbeaten record ended as Newcastle United continued their recovery with a Kieron Dyer winner in the second half. Celestine Babayaro posted a commanding performance for the Magpies from his usual left wing back position.

Newcastle's opening goal game after 35 minutes through Lee Bowyer but Sam Allardyce's men didn't have to wait too long to get themselves back in the game.

In a space of six minutes later, Okocha weaved his way past his marker to deliver the ball to Davies on the edge of the box. The big man then flicked it to Gary Speed, who headed the ball into the path of Stelios, whose volley gave Shay Given no chance.

Portsmouth were not so lucky at Old Trafford as Yakubu 'The Yak' Aiyegbeni failed to find the net against the Reds who ran out 2-1 winners through a brace from Wayne Rooney. In one testu-

moment Yakubu burst through the United defence, but his rather tame shot did little to rattle Tim Howard.

Rooney opened scoring for United after only eight minutes but Pompey grabbed the equalizer two minutes into the second half through the Yak's initiative. He took up the running on the edge of the area before pulling the ball back to Steve Stone, whose shot was only half cleared by Wes Brown. The ball dropped to Gary O'Neil, who cracked a half volley past Howard's outstretched arms.

Despite allowing Aston Villa a brief comeback, Joseph Yobo offered a solid defensive performance for Everton who cruised to a 3-1 trouncing of Aston Villa at Villa Park. The win took the Toffees' points haul to 48 and enhanced their UEFA Cup hopes.

In France, on-loan FC Metz striker Bartholomew Ogbeche fired blanks again as his team played to a 1-1 draw against visiting Lille at the Stade Saint Symphorien.



Inter Milan Nigerian striker Obafemi Martins, foreground, challenges A.C. Milan's Paolo Maldini during their Italian Serie A match at the San Siro stadium in Milan on Sunday

## Kaka earns Milan derby win to end Inter's run

Brazilian Kaka struck late to earn AC Milan a 1-0 win in the Milan derby on Sunday and inflict Inter's first defeat of the season.

Champions Milan stayed joint top of Serie A on 57 points with Juventus, who beat Siena 3-0, while Inter, previously unbeaten in 38 league and cup games, slipped 14 points behind the leaders and virtually out of the title race in fourth place.

There had been little between the teams until Gennaro Gattuso's low drive was turned home by Brazilian Kaka in the 74th minute to give Carlo Ancelotti's side victory.

The Brazilian admitted there was a stroke of good fortune behind the winner which was more of a diversion than a shot.

"Finally after so much bad luck with hitting the post and other situations I got an

opportunistic goal," Kaka told Italy's Sky Sport television.

"We are having some luck at the moment - at Manchester and here we won it in the final minutes. That is a good sign," said the Brazilian, referring to the 1-0 Champions League win over Manchester United on Wednesday.

Inter had gone close on the stroke of halftime when Milan's Brazilian keeper Dida

produced a fine save to keep out a fiercely struck drive from Argentine Juan Sebastian Veron.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti conceded his side had been fortunate to take the three points from what was, with the lack of entertainment, a disappointing derby.

"A draw on a night like this with few chances would have been a fairer result," Ancelotti said.

"But these are things that happen in the game, sometimes just a little thing can turn things your way. It is a very important win for us but I have to say that Inter didn't deserve to lose," the Milan coach added.

Club owner and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi agreed.

"I'm happy with the result but it was not an attractive game. It was lucky Milan but that's fine," he told reporters. Inter coach Roberto Mancini had no doubt his side had deserved at least a point.

"When you concede a goal like that in a game where Milan hardly got near goal then I think you can talk about being unlucky," the

## Ibrahim Babangida joins China train

Ex-junior international Ibrahim Babangida has concluded plans to join his elder brother Tijjani in the Chinese football league.

The diminutive winger, who won the 1993 U-17 World Cup in Japan with the Golden Eaglets took some time out to sort out some personal problems before rekindling his footballing career.

Widely known as Aruza by his close friends and pals, Babangida last played in the Dutch second division with FC Volendam before going on

A close confidant of player, who shares the same name with Nigeria's former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, told Trustsports that the ex-Stationery Stores dynamo is currently in the country and would soon join his older brother Tijjani in China.

"He is in the country and has visited me some days back. He told me that he would soon move to China to play in their top division.

"Ibrahim did not disclose the name of the club, but I suspect it is the same team where his brother Tijjani

plays. He's not nursing any injury he returned home to sort out some few problems before moving ahead," the Babangida associate said.

Trustsports recalls that Ibrahim joined Tijjani in the Dutch league following the Eaglets victory in Japan. His Dutch club, FC Volendam, was later relegated to the second division a couple of seasons ago.

The other Babangida, Haruna, who is the youngest of the trio, now plays in the Ukrainian league after a stint with Catalan giants Barcelona



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, ABUJA  
VACANCIES FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) has provided a grant to the Federal Government of Nigeria for the National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Environmental Management (NCSA): GEF Grant No. TF53427-UNI.

The purpose of the Grant is to assist Nigeria in identifying priority actions and essential capacity building in areas of biological diversity, climate change, desertification and persistent organic pollutants with the aim of catalyzing action in a coordinated manner.

**SCOPE:**

The activities will include the following:

- Preparation of a concept paper; organizing of a workshop for scoping and priority setting, and establishing of a National Capacity Needs Self Assessment (NCSA) Secretariat;
- Assessments in biological diversity, climate change, desertification and persistent organic pollutants, national workshop on prioritization of issues, and purchase of equipment and software;
- Analysis of cross-cutting issues and national workshop to agree on priorities; and
- Development of a strategy and action plan, through technical advisory services and workshop

The Federal Ministry of Environment now invites eligible individual consultants to provide a detailed proposed Methodology and Work Plan for this assessment, analysis of cross-cutting issues and priority setting in any one of the thematic areas (including biological diversity, climate change, desertification and persistent organic pollutants) of his/her area of specialisation with the sole aim of achieving the overall objective of the NCSA project.

In addition the consultant should provide the following:

- Comprehensive CV of Consultant showing cognate experience; and
- verifiable evidence of experience in similar project.

**Additional Proposal** on the execution of the mandate of a **Lead Consultant (Team Leader)** may also be submitted for a candidate applying to coordinate the work of other thematic consultants.

Only selected consultant(s) shall be contacted and detailed Terms of Reference shall be provided thereafter.

Further information are obtainable from the Office of the Director, Planning, Research and Statistics, Environment House (Former FEPA BUILDING), Airport Road, Central Area District, Abuja.

**SUBMISSION OF BID:**

Six copies of completed documents must be put together in separate binders in sealed envelopes and marked at the right hand corner "BID for GEF-NCSA Consultancy Services" and delivered at the address stated below **not later than four weeks** from the date of this advert:

The Director,  
Planning, Research and Statistics Department  
Federal Ministry of Environment  
Environment House (Former FEPA BUILDING),  
Airport Road, Central Area District,  
Abuja.  
Attention: Project Manager GEF-NCSA,

(Signed)  
S. O. Adegunle  
Permanent Secretary  
for: Honourable Minister

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE  
COMMISSION

Central Business District  
Tower 421, Constitution Avenue, Abuja

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**LOSS OF CERTIFICATES OF  
OCCUPANCY FCT/ABU/NG.227, FCT/ABU/  
AN 2039, FCT/ABU/NG160, FCT/ABU/IM.89  
& FCT/ABU/KW.192**

**T**his is to notify the general public of the loss of the original copies of the above Certificates of Occupancy (C of O) issued in respect of the properties of the Securities and Exchange Commission situate in Abuja and its environs. The C of Os were lost in the course of relocating the Commission's Headquarters to its present location in Abuja. The Securities and Exchange Commission, Abuja is in the process of applying for recertification of the title documents to the said properties at the Abuja Geographic Information System (AGIS) MFCT.

**Signed:**

**Management**

# Sports

## PREMIER LEAGUE

### Gombe edge Insurance

Gombe United continued their impressive run in the Premiership, pipping hard-fighting Insurance 1-0 to join the front runners on the league table.

Nura Mohammed's lone strike off a corner kick in the 11th minute was all the 'Scorers' needed to acquire the maximum points to the detriment of the visitors who displayed good skills, but were undone by poor finishing.

The match itself was full of drama as FIFA badge referee Iro Saulawa nearly ruined the day following a controversial goal by the homer's Murtala Abdullahi in the 64th minute.

The referee had allowed an offside goal, which the visitors protested vehemently insisting that the assistant referee, Peter Shinyi

had signalled for offside. It took a consultation between the referee and his assistant before the goal was cancelled.

Stunned by the first half goal, coach Uwua made changes in attempt to salvage the game, but Akpala Joseph frittered away begging chances to the chagrin of the spectators before he was substituted.

Twice, he came face to face with Gombe keeper, Ahmed Yusuf, but decided to shoot wide.

Coach Justin Tenge told KICK OFF after the game that

his boys are in high spirits and hoping for a continental ticket. "My boys are no doubt in high spirit and we are determined to go continental at the end of the season."

Though Insurance proved to be a good side, my players' determination saw us through. All we need is motivation from the government and we will continue to soar higher."

Godwin Uwua, was disappointed in the referee's handling of the game and caution that: "Our referees

need to improve if we want the game to improve from the level we are right now. Although, we lost the game because my players lost

some glaring chances, the referee's attitude also went a long way in determining the final outcome," the coach told KICK OFF.



Insurance's striker Nasiru Hussein failed to save his side against Gombe Utd.

### Ogunsanya dumps 3SC

Dependable central defender, Seyi Ogunsanya has again put up a disappearance act as authorities at his Oluyole 3SC club have declared him absent ahead of his side's all important week 3 clash against visiting Enyimba of Aba.

The highly experienced defender who is expected to play a key role in the revival of the Shooting Stars team alongside others like Ladi Gasper, Wilson Oboh, Kingsley Elvis and Oluwale Johnson to name a few, is reported to have jetted out to South Africa in search of greener pastures immediately after the week 2 Globacom league encounter away to Sharks.

The absence of the 2003 CAF champions league winner with Enyimba is expected to be highly felt by the Oluyole warriors as Dele Adeleye who should fire into that position is away with the Flying Eagles on a national assignment to Mali.

Itoke Akpan, a former sharks of Port Harcourt defender is however expected to fill the void. Goal keeper Kola Ige had initially been declared ineligible to play in Saturday's game due to accumulated yellow cards bagged so far in the 3 week old league.

### I'm under pressure

Sharks FC of Port Harcourt chief coach, Shuaibu Amodu, has admitted that he was under pressure by the management and fans of the club for a good outing this season.

The former national team handler told reporters in a post-match interview in Lagos on Saturday after the Rivers side were beaten 3-1 by NPA at the Onikan Stadium, Lagos, that it was too early to write off any team just after three games in the season. Sharks have just one point from their three games.

"I am under pressure from the club management and fans, considering my track record and pedigree in coaching. They expect so much from me. But my boys are young and have not yet come to grasp playing in the Premier League."

"Having just gained promotion after some years at the professional league, they are using the first few

matches as learning process. The team has the capacity to do well as the league progresses, they will improve in their game," Amodu said.

"It is still a long journey. Sharks will bounce back," Amodu added.

Maurice Coreman, NPA Coach admitted that it was a tough game, "but I thank God

### -Amodu

we won. Both teams have good and talented players.

"We will continue to improve on our matches now that the players are getting to understand themselves," Coreman said.

## Naval Academy clinch Ramat Cup

Calabar-based Soccer Academy clinched this year's Ramat Cup under-16 soccer championship concluded in Calabar a weekend.

The soccer academy, a tripartite collaboration of the Cross River government and the Youth Sports Federation of Nigeria (YSFON), beat their Lagos counterparts 2-1 in the final game played at the U.J. Esuene Stadium.

Edo were consoled when they declared champions at

the expense of Delta, who had earlier defeated them 3-1 victory of their female team, who were penalised for fielding an ineligible player.

The Delta player had earlier been disqualified for being over the stipulated age. Delta coach, Daniel Evumena admitted using the overaged player, adding that he did so because Edo also fielded an overaged player. Evumena

admitted that he did not lodge any protest against Edo.

Lagos went into the lead in the first half but lost the initiative in the second stanza when the Academy scored in the quick succession late in the game.

The champions secured their ticket to the final when they overcame Edo 4-3 in a penalty shootout after regu-

lation scores ended 1-1 in regulation time while Lagos shot out Niger 4-2 also through penalties after full time scores ended 1-1.

Edo placed third with a 3-0 win over Niger. Delta defeated Oyo 2-1 while Edo beat Kwara with a similar scoreline.

Medals were awarded only to the boys while the girls' medals were given to

officials of the girls teams as the Delta girls had vowed to disrupt the closing ceremony.

Eighteen states took part in the week-long tournament.

The Norwegian Ambassador to Nigeria, Jens Erik Grondahl, officials from the Ministry of Sports and Social Development and YSFON officials including its acting president, Alhaji Tunde Ojulari.

### ...Norwegian envoy urges YSFON to upgrade tourney

The Norwegian Ambassador to Nigeria, Jens Erik Grondahl, has urged officials of the Youth Sports Federation of Nigeria (YSFON) to upgrade the annual Ramat Cup International U-16 soccer championships to that of Norway Cup.

Speaking at the end of the just-concluded 28th edition of the championships in Cala-

bar, Grondahl urged YSFON officials to liaise with organisers of the Norway Cup on how the upgrading could be achieved.

The ambassadors, who commended the wisdom of the founding fathers of YSFON, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) shortly after the final of the competition that the Norway

Cup was organised by a private organisation.

He noted that as a voluntary organisation, YSFON could also be turned into a bigger competition with support from private sector.

Grondahl noted that the presence of a Norwegian club at the competition was a pointer that Ramat Cup had attained the status of an in-

ternational event and urged YSFON to seize the opportunity of the championship to attract more foreign teams.

NAN reports that "Norway Cup," arguably the single largest youth soccer tournament in the world featuring players from nine years to 19, attracts boys and girls from over 50 countries annually.

Tajudeen Akinyemi, leader of the Norwegian delegate to the championship, told NAN that the team would participate in next year's competition in spite of the poor funding of 2005 edition.

Akinyemi, a FIFA-licensed agent, disclosed that he discovered six players whose transfer to Norway he hoped to arrange.

Cross River government failed to release the promised fund for the organisation of the competition, leading to Norwegians being locked out of their hotel.

### YSFON launches anti-AIDS campaign

Kaduna State branch of the Youth Sports Federation of Nigeria (YSFON) has launched an enlightenment campaign tour to fight the HIV/AIDS scourge.

Malam Abdurasaq Usman, the YSFON project manager for the state, announced this to newsmen in Kaduna at the weekend.

The federation was working with the state's Action Committee on AIDS to hold workshops in all three sena-

torial zones of Kaduna State, he said.

According to Usman, the workshops would be held in Zaria, Kaduna and Kafanchan for football coaches, sports administrators, games masters and mistresses as well as students and players.

He explained that the aim was "to use sports to further intimate the public on the dangers inherent in HIV/AIDS, and to publicise measures needed to curb its

spread among sport men and women".

The YSFON would also hold seminars for leaders of youth clubs from the 23 local government areas of the state, he said, noting that "they in turn will be expected to spread the message to the larger society."

In addition, soccer jamborees would be held at four centres namely, Igabi, Ikara, Kachia and Kaduna as part of the war on HIV/AIDS, Usman said.



Sharks coach, Shuaibu Amodu has admitted that he was under pressure from club management.

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# DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, March 1, 2006

## EDITORIAL

### Cassava policy

**C**assava policy recently enunciated by the federal government seeks at once to reduce the perennial glut of the product as well as enhance the earnings of the farmers. It intends to achieve this, through generating market for the product by popularising the notion of cassava bread, whereby at least 10 per cent of bread produced in the country would now come from cassava flour. And to underscore the seriousness of this policy thrust a workshop was organised by government at Oyo to sensitise and train local farmers and other enthusiasts in the way of baking bread with cassava and wheat flour.

To be sure, this impetus at seeking new markets for cassava is welcome, aside from the benefit of empowering farmers whose earnings would be raised; if the policy is prosecuted vigorously it might lessen wheat imports which consume a sizeable amount of the nations foreign exchange. Yet the policy is fraught with a number of misgivings. Surely, this is not the first time government has attempted to find an alternative to wheat as an essential ingredients of bread. Many years ago a similar policy of substituting maize for wheat was orchestrating in a similar fashion, sadly nothing came out of it.

As it were, corn bread was stillborn. A few years hence, we shudder at what would be the fate of the cassava policy. It is hoped the problems that militated against the corn or maize bread would teach appropriate lesson to enable the cassava bread came to fruition.

However, there is a discernible feeling that government seems to be targeting only crops from a certain part of the country, namely the South West, for improvement. Almost simultaneously with the implementation of the cassava policy, government is also embarking on a plan to triple cocoa production over the next three years from the current 180,000 tonnes to some 600,000 tones by 2008. To achieve this some N154 million would be pumped into the programme.

Clearly the perception coming across is that there is a certain lopsidedness in the emphasis placed on boosting agriculture for over all development. Does the federal government have a policy for groundnuts for instance, bold enough to bring back the vanished groundnuts pyramids; such a policy should be able to boost the crops production as well as find new uses for it, as has been done for cassava. Indeed a comprehensive policy for certain strategic agricultural products capable of creating over all increased production for those crops which would serve as raw materials for agro based industries is of utmost urgency. The policy should be devised in such a way to benefit all part of the country. That is the way to go in order empower and improve the lot of farmers across the nation.

## Vision 2010 and the political conference

By Ujudud Shariff  
([ujudud@yahoo.com](mailto:ujudud@yahoo.com))

**N**igeria shall be "a united, industrious, caring and God-fearing democratic society, committed to making the basic needs of life affordable for everyone, and creating Africa's leading economy".

Even though a lot has been said, written and would continue to be said and written about the agenda (visible and invisible), merits or otherwise, imbalance in regional and religious representations, gender and age inequalities characterizing the Obasanjo political conference, we found the non-mention or reference to the famous vision 2010 rather awkward. The non-inclusion of the report of the Vision 2010 among the documents to be circulated amongst the conference delegates is rather odd considering the fact that this document has answers to the numerous issues and questions the conference is expected to address. In fact, if this report had been implemented as recommended by its 235 members, this conference would not have been by any standard a superfluity.

We want to assume that the organizers of the talk shop have forgotten to include the Vision 2010 report and not that it was deliberately omitted because someone does not like it because it was originated by the late Head of State, General Sani Abacha. I am particularly happy because some delegates to this conference include members of the Vision 2010 committee such as its chairman, Chief Ernest Shonekan, Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, Air Commodore Samson Omeruah, Vice Admiral Murtala Nyako, Hajija Zainab Maina, Major General IBM Haruna, Alhaji Sulaiman Baffa, the Tor Tiv, Alfred Turkula and several other prominent Nigerians and captains of industry. In deed, on the basis of quality of delegates, one could say the visioners were far better than the present conference delegates. The vision committee received inputs from Nigerians in Diaspora, multilateral institutions, government institutions, foreigners working in Nigeria and other friends and stakeholders. The Vision 2010 Committee was inaugurated on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1996 by General Sani Abacha (may his soul rest in peace) with a 14-point term of reference to re-invigorate, re-focus, re-engineer and rejuvenate Nigeria in all aspects of national development. The mandate of the committee was to develop a blueprint of measures and action plans which "when implemented can ensure the realization of Nigeria's widely acknowledged potential by the time the nation is 50-years old as an independent country in the year 2010". The committee sat for one year, 12 plenary meetings; 57 around-the-country meetings and workshops; 53 sub-committee meetings; field studies and thousands of memoranda from the public. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1997, the committee submitted its 3-volume report recommending immediate, short, medium and long terms measures to stimulate economic growth and "transform Nigerians into patriotic citizens".

Reading the 203-paged main report, it is amazing how it was allowed to rot even by its authors. This document is a must for all adult Nigerians because of its depth and scope. We may not agree with all their conclusions and recommendations; but certainly Nigeria has never produced such an all-encompassing document that if implemented, would have transformed the country for the better. The report, for the benefit of those that never saw it, consisted of seven chapters: Introduction; Our vision for the year 2010; Political and Socio-cultural and Economic Direction; Ecology and Environment; Sports; Nigeria's External Image and Implementation of Action Plan. In developing the vision, the committee adopted the strategy of applying a common standard of simply inquiring: Where we are (and why), Where we want to be and How to get there. At the end of it all, the committee evolved a vision statement for Nigeria that Nigeria shall be "a united, industrious, caring and God-fearing democratic society, committed to making the basic needs of life affordable for everyone, and creating Africa's leading economy".

The vision 2010 committee also developed its slogan (A great Nigeria... in ours to build); developed its symbols (green, white and black) and even developed its jingles to mobilize the society. The committee then went on to address virtually all the issues under the sun and made appropriate recommendations. There was also a chapter on Action Plan on how to implement those recommendations. Nigeria has already lost about eight years from the time the report was submitted in 1997. This report is as good as when it was presented and we can still go back to it and begin implementation in earnest. Suffice it to note that already, some of its recommendations were already implemented. On the vision's political, socio-cultural and economic direction, having examined where we were at the time (we have only

got worse now) they went ahead to prescribe where we want to be and how to get there. The committee recommended the adoption of some basic values without which the society can hardly get forward. These core values include honesty and accountability, openness and transparency, co-operation and cohesion, equity and social justice, industry, discipline, patriotism and nationalism, self-confidence and moral courage, entrepreneurial spirit, religion and morality and education.

From here we will proceed to randomly quote directly from the recommended Action Plan on different issues of national development. On core values for example, it was the view of the Vision that we should "set aside a 'Recognition Day' to recognize exemplary conduct based on very clear and well implemented criteria; encourage the development of and celebrate indigenous role models; enact and implement legislation to establish officially recognized National HALL OF FAME AND ACHIEVEMENT, where the names of identified adults and youth achievers are recorded". On governing system, it was recommended as follows: "Amend the draft constitution to transfer responsibilities for education, health-care, agriculture and similar areas to states and local governments so that the federal government will concentrate on its core functions such as defence, conduct of foreign relations, maintenance of national highway system, etc. Amend revenue allocation formula so that states and local governments will have the funds to perform the additional functions to be transferred to them." On the public service, the committee recommended that an improvement in the "remuneration for all levels of public servants and monetise public service benefits, make necessary adjustments to personal income tax (PITA) rate to cushion the tax effects of monetisation; make provisions to improve facilities for public servants at all levels; increase remuneration and improve conditions of service of teachers at all levels of education; and firmly establish a system of periodic conditions of service". On law enforcement and defence, the committee recommended the enactment and implementation of a "legislation to create an insurance fund for policemen, soldiers and other public officers engaged in risky work; enact and implement legislation to establish a Prison Service Commission to oversee the welfare of prison officials and review their conditions of service from time to time; commence the recruitment of additional 120,000 (police) recruits to achieve an overall strength of 250,000 by the year 2010; work out a house ownership scheme for the police".

On capital mobilization, the committee recommended for the establishment of a "Regulatory Agency to regulate the Pension Industry and administer the new Pension Law. The body will, among other roles, license, supervise and control professional pension Fund Managers, etc.". On Women, the recommendations were to "Review all discriminatory laws and regulations against women and effectively persuade traditional rulers to change all traditional practices (facial marks, genital mutilation, widow's rights, etc) inimical to women development; implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of which Nigeria is a signatory. On football administration, the recommendation was "ensure football is self-financing and self-accounting from now onwards; gradually reduce government funding in other sporting activities, beginning with at least 40% self-funding to the year 2000 and declining thereafter".

Finally, we look at the chapter on Nigeria's external image where the Vision 2010 gave the blueprint. In discussing the objectives and strategies for restoring and sustaining a positive image of Nigeria, it needs "to be re-emphasized that the external image of a country is always a reflection of her domestic state of affairs. Nigeria's efforts should, therefore, be concentrated on getting the fundamentals at home right, while managing her external relations more effectively".

All said and done therefore, the vision 2010 report is a report that all adult Nigerians should have a copy and which the delegates to the political reform conference should have and deliberate upon. As they cannot reinvent the wheel, it is our considered opinion that they will find it very useful in their deliberations. All the vision 2010-committee members in the political conference should mobilize and lobby for the adoption of the vision. Nigeria needs a functional ideology to rally round and pursue a commonly agreed vision. We need a direction, a focus and a mission to accomplish as a nation and as a people. For too long Nigeria has been drifting aimlessly with dwarf leaders who cannot see beyond their noses. I sincerely believe given the time limitation of the conference, let them at least review the vision report and hand it over to the President as their modest contribution for growth and development of the country.