

DAILY TRUST

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The Man of the Moment The Great Reformer

2007

Kyan Tafiya
Dawowa



Courtesy: Dr. Haruna Usman Mashegu

STAR FEATURE

Dilemma of tamed lepers



Pages 24 & 25



Courtesy:
Yerima Solidarity
Association

ANPP Reps challenge constitution review c'ttee

The National Assembly caucus of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), has set up a seven-man committee to advise it on the constitutionality or otherwise of the Senator Ibrahim Mantu-led Joint Constitution Review Committee.

Headed by Senator Timothy Adudu from Plateau state, the committee is to report back to the caucus tonight.

Terms of reference for the Adudu committee is to find out whether it is constitutional for the National Assembly to have a joint constitution review committee instead of having two separate committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives for that purpose.

Dependable sources told *Daily Trust* yesterday that the decision was taken at the caucus meeting held behind closed doors on Thursday to deliberate on ways to tackle President Olusegun Obasanjo's alleged third term

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

agenda.

Confirming this to *Daily Trust* yesterday, leader of the ANPP caucus in the House, Hon. Aminu Tambuwal, said the committee was set up as one of the caucus's attempt to shoot down the alleged third term agenda.

"Yes, it is true that we have set up a seven-man committee headed by Senator Timothy Adudu to advise us on whether it is constitutional or it is within the rules of the House or of the Senate, to set up a joint committee of the National Assembly for the purpose of reviewing the 1999 constitution," he said.

Asked why this decision is coming now when the Mantu panel has been in place for years, Tambuwal said, "when you are fighting a war, you don't bring out everything from your arsenal

Cont. on Pg. 2



L-R: Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Governor Orji Uzor Kalu of Abia State, General Ibrahim Babangida and General Muhammadu Buhari at the wedding fatiha of the Vice President's children in Yola... weekend.

PDP govts may endorse 3rd term

My colleagues can't be trusted - Kure

Indications emerged yesterday that the meeting of the 28 governors of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), with the party's executive scheduled to hold on Thursday in Abuja, is expected to endorse a third term for the president and chief executives of the 36 states of the federation.

Daily Trust gathered yesterday in Abuja that five PDP governors spread across the geopolitical zones of the country are currently working actively to actualize this goal.

The five pro-third term

By Ahmed I. Shekarau,
Deputy Editor, in Abuja &
Aideloje Ojo, in Minna

governors, one each from the North West, North East, North Central, South South and South West, are said to be currently mobilizing their colleagues to ensure that the agenda sails through when tabled at the meeting on Thursday.

A newspaper report said yesterday that the PDP has summoned its governors to

rally support for the proposed constitutional amendments which may also deliberate on the tenure of the executive.

Daily Trust learnt that the PDP meeting might have been hurriedly arranged to pre-empt the meeting of the 19 Northern governors scheduled to hold on Friday in Kaduna.

According to a dependable source, top on the agenda of the Northern Governors Forum (NGF), meeting is the constitutional amend-

ment and tenure of office of the executive.

The source hinted that the NGF has constituted a six-man committee of professionals drawn from the three geopolitical zones of the North to advise it on the best line of action to take over the constitution review and the widely reported third term

agenda.

The source disclosed further that the six-man committee is supposed to present its report at the next meeting of the NGF, which *Daily Trust* learnt, was earlier scheduled for Thursday.

Daily Trust learnt that the NGF meeting had to be shifted to Friday, "after the

ruling PDP hurriedly summoned its governors to that pre-emptive meeting."

But an official of the Kaduna state government declined comments on the alleged rescheduling of the NGF meeting. The official could neither confirm nor disprove allegations that the

Cont. on Pg. 2

Ladoja: Thugs break up Soyinka's rally

Hundreds of people believed to be political thugs, yesterday broke up a massive rally scheduled by Professor Wole Soyinka to protest the unconstitutional removal of former governor of Oyo state, Rasheed Ladoja, two weeks ago.

The protest was set to take-off peacefully as the crowd gathered at Oke Adu near the NTA, Ibadan, as early as 7am to await the arrival of the Nobel laureate, Professor Soyinka and others.

However, the protesters were attacked by hundreds of machete-wielding thugs who arrived the venue in commuter buses.

They were suspected to be supporters of a powerful

From Olumide Bajulaiye
who was Ibadan

Ibadan politician.

The thugs on arrival, fired gun shots sporadically into the air and threw bottles as they attacked the protesters, injuring some of them in the

process.

During the attack, a photojournalist with *The Sun* newspapers, Dada Osasona, was injured. He lost his handset and his camera was damaged.

Some of the thugs were

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NITEL sale to be revisited - BPE

The federal government has revealed plans to review the privatisation process of the Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), together with its mobile arm, Mtel.

Director General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), Mrs. Irene Chigbue, made this known during a

By Anas A. Galadima,
Business Reporter

press conference in Abuja yesterday where she said the sale of the company would be revisited to allow more competitors to bid for the firm as a way to get a better offer for the company.

Cont. on Pg. 2

COUNT DOWN TO CENSUS 2006
(21 - 25 March)

57 DAYS TO GO
MAKE SURE YOU ARE
COUNTED ONCE ONLY



News

PDP govts *Cont. from pg. 1*

NGF meeting was rescheduled at the instance of the PDP members of the forum, some of who are alleged to be the pro-third term advocates.

Meanwhile, the Niger state governor, Engineer Abdulkadir Kure, yesterday confirmed the perceived crack in the ranks of the 19 northern governors over the 2007 presidency, the ongoing constitution review and several pertinent issues of interest to the region.

Similarly, the governor who spoke yesterday in Minna when he received a delegation of the Northern Union (NU), also blamed the region's elite for its seeming unending woes.

Engineer Kure said that the problems of the North are compounded by the 19 state governors, whom he said are not united in the pursuit of the interests of the region.

He told the visiting members of the union led by its vice chairman, Professor Anjo Abdullahi, that while he and some few other governors of the region are conscious of their term's limit in office, "the same cannot be said of some of our colleagues."

According to him, anytime he walks into the conference room of his office, he looks straight at the portraits of those who preceded him. He said this readily beckons on him the fact that he must one day vacate the throne as chief executive of his own

state.

In addition, Kure said he also remembers at every given moment his pact with the Almighty God and the fact that he is accountable to God. "I also remember my commitment to uphold the Nigerian constitution."

In a veiled reference to the division among the 19 northern governors over the 2007 presidency and the rumoured third term agenda, the governor said: "But I'm afraid to tell you that several of my colleagues cannot be trusted on this (third term agenda)."

Engineer Kure reiterated that some of the northern governors cannot be taken for their words on the north's efforts to resist the much-talked-about third term agenda of President Olusegun Obasanjo. "And it's a matter of regret because it's a breach of the trust our people have in us," he regretted.

Professor Abdullahi had earlier told the governor that they were in Niger State as part of the group's efforts to mobilize northerners to come up with a united front in 2007.

The former vice chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, also lamented that the North has been marginalized in the scheme of things under the present dispensation stating that the North wants power shift for equity and fair-play.

ANPP *Cont. from pg. 1*

at the same time. This action is one of our weapons to fight the emerging trend in our political scenario. Of course, I am talking about the third term or extension of tenure agenda."

He said immediately the Adudu committee reports back today, the caucus will swing into action.

Daily Trust learnt that the ANPP committee comprises lawyers who are also members of the Mantu panel.

The strategy of the ANPP legislators, according to a source, is that if the Adudu committee confirms the unconstitutionality of the Mantu panel, then two separate motions would be presented to the two chambers asking for the disbandment of the constitution review committee.

Should this fail, Daily Trust learnt that the caucus may go to court to stop the committee from going ahead with the review process.

Section 62 of the 1999 constitution that gives powers to both chambers of the National Assembly to appoint committees reads: "(1) The Senate or the House of Representatives may appoint a committee of its members for such special or general purpose as in its opinion, would be better regulated and managed by means of such a committee and may by resolution, regulation or otherwise as it thinks fit, delegate any functions exercisable by it to any such committee."

"(2) The number of members of a committee appointed under this section, their terms of office and quorum shall be fixed by the House appoint-

ing it.

"(3) The Senate and the House of Representatives shall appoint a joint committee on finance consisting of an equal number of persons appointed by each House and may appoint any other joint committee under the provisions of this section.

"(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorising such House to delegate to a committee the power to decide whether a bill shall be passed into law or to determine any matter which it is empowered to determine by resolution under the provisions of this constitution, but the committee may be authorised to make recommendations to the House on any such matter."

seen chasing the protesters with machetes while damaging vehicles parked near the protest venue.

Before the hoodlums got to the protest ground, about 2,000 armed policemen had earlier arrived with three armoured vehicles stationed at the entrance of the venue. Despite the development, the organizers however vowed to go ahead with the rally.

Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy (CD), Comrade Moshood Erubami, who came out to address the rally, was arrested and beaten to a state of unconsciousness by policemen as he tried to march out with protesters.

Some parts of Ibadan like Gate and Beere were com-

Female student stabbed to death

From Aideloje Ojo,
Correspondent (Minna)

The Federal Polytechnic Bida, Niger State, was shut down as students went on rampage to protest the murder of a female student of the institution by unknown person.

The victim identified as Miss Olayemi Bolaoluwa Janet, was an HND one student of the department of Hotel and Catering Management.

Daily Trust gathered that the institution was forced to shut down when the students

reportedly embarked on the violent protest immediately the death of Miss Janet was made known.

Daily Trust also learnt that the quick intervention of the Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar, saved the situation and prevented the further escalation of the violence which was already spreading to Bida town.

The Etsu Nupe, who ad-

ressed the restive students on the campus, urged them to remain calm and promised that the perpetrators of the gruesome murder would be tracked down.

The royal father was said to have invited the student union leaders to his palace from where he prevailed on them to maintain peace and go back to their hostels.

It was learnt that peace has returned to the institution.

Contacted, the police

public relations officer (PPRO), Niger State police command, Lawal Haliru, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), confirmed the incident.

He said the police has drafted a contingent of anti-riot policemen to the campus to maintain peace and prevent the destruction of property.

The PPRO said that the police have restored law and order in the institution.

MUP begins GSM campaign against 3rd term

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

Campaign against President Olusegun Obasanjo's alleged third term bid has gone digital as the Movement for Unity and Progress (MUP) began sending GSM text messages asking Nigerians to oppose the agenda.

"Are you a patriotic Nigerian? Just say no to third term! No to money politics! No to mandate purchase. Courtesy: Movement for Unity and Progress." One of such text messages received on Sunday reads.

MUP protem chairman, Col. Abubakar Umar (rd), confirmed to Daily Trust yesterday that the group was behind the 'texting' mode of the anti-third term crusade.

Meanwhile, MUP has called on all Nigerians to brace up for a mass action against unconstitutional tendencies.

Umar in statement in Abuja, said his group backed by Professor Wole Soyinka's call for civil disobedience to protest government's alleged rape on the constitution particularly the ouster of the Oyo state governor, Rasheed Ladoja.

"We wish to further repeat our earlier appeal to all Nigerians to join in the strike action embarked upon by the people of Oyo state in protest against the efforts of agents of the federal government to illegally depose Governor Rasheed Ladoja. Every citizen must tag along or in concert with other Nigerians all actions that are needed to rescue our country's democracy and unity and assure its progress," the statement said.



President Obasanjo



Rescue workers check for survivors under the rubble of a collapsed building in Nairobi. At least six people were killed and about 200 others injured... yesterday.

NITEL *Cont. from pg. 1*

She said, "the government has decided to revisit the entire transaction process. Due to the limited competition at the close of the presentation, we are working with our advisers, BNP Paribas, to introduce further competition in order to have a more robust financial bid exercise."

Orascom Group of Egypt emerged winner of the telecommunications firm by offering to pay \$256 million at the opening of financial bids in Abuja on December 29, 2005, following the refusal of the second bidding firm, Newtel International, to submit its bid in the second round of bid-

ding.

But the amount offered by the firm fell far below the government's reserved price hence the sale was declared inconclusive by the National Council on Privatisation (NCP).

The BPE boss explained that while Orascom was still on board, other interested bidders would be allowed to bid for NITEL/Mtel. She however did not say when and how the other bidders would be brought on board.

She also revealed that the federal government has so far realised N80 billion from the sale of public enterprises out of which about N43 billion

was raised in 2005 alone. A total of 24 enterprises were sold last year.

Speaking on the BPE's privatisation target this year which she tagged "vision 2006," she observed that over 50 enterprises have been slated for sale within the year, including the Kaduna, Port Harcourt and Warri Refinery companies as well as the seven successor companies to Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN).

Others are Nigerian Railways, NITEL, Nigeria Gas Company, LPG plants, The National Hospital, National Stadium, Stallion Property Development Company, Lagos International Trade Fair Complex and oil service companies.

The federal government, according to her, will also commercialise some public companies within the year. These include the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Federal Housing Authority (FHA) as well as the River Basin Authorities.

The DG also spoke on the sale of the Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON). She said while the financial transaction for the company has been concluded, there are still certain issues that are yet to be resolved. "ALSCON came to financial closure long ago but in terms of handover, there are still issues that are yet to be resolved," she disclosed.

Ladoja *Cont. from pg. 1*

pletely shut down by the protesters. Most residents of the city also stayed indoors while some commercial drivers withdrew their vehicles from the roads leaving many commuters stranded.

An attempt by the protesters to converge again at Gate bus stop was disrupted by heavily armed policemen stationed at strategic spots around the city.

The policemen were seen all over the city moving menacingly as they dispersed commuters gathered at bus stops.

An activist of the Yoruba Revolutionary Movement (YOREM), Comrade Wale Balogun, was also attacked by the policemen at a road

junction near Gate.

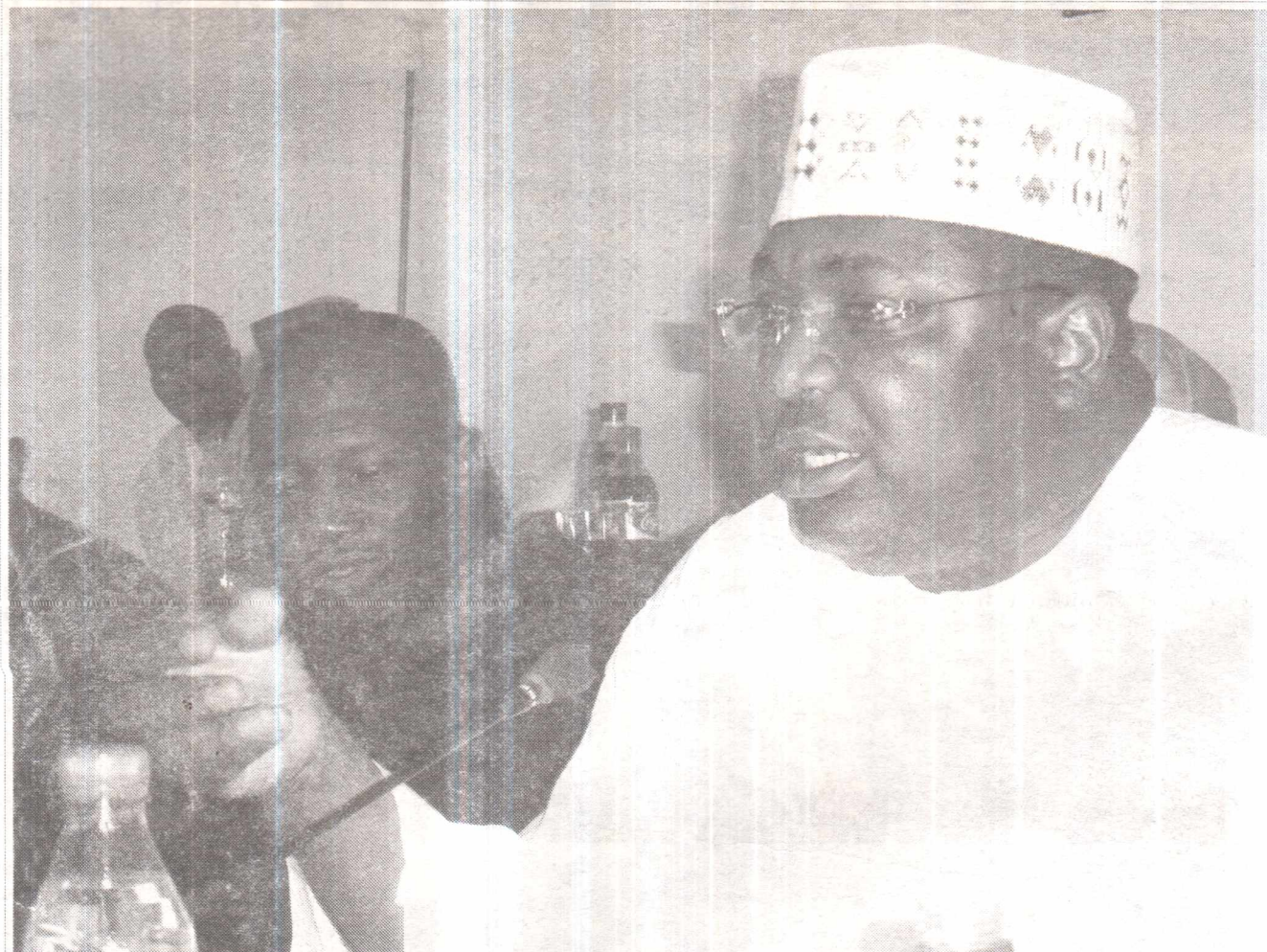
Balogun who was addressing the crowd before the disruption, said the rally was organized to save democracy in the country. "We are not supporters of Ladoja or Alao-Akala. We are not members of the PDP or AD.

We are here to demonstrate our support for democracy," he said.

Armed mobile policemen stormed the junction and fired teargas into the air disrupting the rally.

As at the time of filing this report, Prof. Soyinka was yet to show up and his whereabouts was uncertain.

NEWS



Chairman, House Committee on FCTA, Hon. Phillip Aduda (right) and Hon. Abdullahi Farouk during the FCTA budget defence at the National Assembly in Abuja... yesterday. Felix Onigbinde.

N290 billion: CNPP calls for independent probe of NNPC

Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) has called for an independent probe of the oil industry, saying that the President Olusegun Obasanjo administration has no moral high ground to probe itself.

The call came on the heels of the setting up of an investigation by the Federal Government into the accounts of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), following the disclosure by the Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC) that N290 billion had been diverted by the corporation from the Federation Account.

In a statement released yesterday in Abuja signed by the national Publicity Secretary, Mr. Osita Okechukwu, CNPP said "it wishes to note also that the revenue Fiscal and mobilization Commission, had in the past notified the nation that the NNPC has been very irresponsible, unaccountable and less than transparent from its records to the Federation Account and indeed to the Nigerian people.

"Whereas, CNPP agrees with the efforts of the Obasanjo regime to fight corruption, we wish to alert the nation that, monumental corruption going on in the petroleum sector, diminishes and makes nonsense of the anti-corruption crusade of

By Sufuyan Ojeifo
(Special Correspondent)

the administration".

The statement said "CNPP does not need to highlight the flagrant abuse of due process in the management of facilities and allocation of oil blocs in the industry, but bemoans the grandstanding and hallow agitation, of transparency for a regime that runs a filthy and corrupt oil industry".

The Conference maintained that corruption in the NNPC has to be traced to the doorsteps of President Obasanjo who "doubles as the substantive Minister of Petroleum and the buck stops at his table".

It stated that "there is no reform programme that will be meaningful without a transparent and truly genuine administration of the Federation Account", adding "CNPP consequently calls for an independent probe of the oil industry, as the regime has no moral high ground to probe itself".

The Conference said that if government fails to institute an independent probe, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should probe the NNPC, adding that if none of these happens, "we shall institute an order for mandamus, to probe the reckless abuse of process in the oil industry in the preceding years".

3rd Term: Governors did not meet in Bauchi - Zailani

Contrary to media reports that governors of the nineteen northern states are meeting in Bauchi, the state, commissioner of information, Alhaji Ibrahim Zailani, told *Daily Trust* that this was not the case, dismissing it as a rumour and

By Emmanuel Bello,
Political Editor

handiwork of Governor Adamu Mu'azu political trickster.

"As you are speaking with me, the governor is in his private room sleeping and has no plans for any

meeting with governors on any issue. Governor Mu'azu, like all good Nigerians, is committed to obeying the constitution, working for the good of his people.

"He, Governor Mu'azu, is committed first and foremost to ensuring the social good of the Bauchi people and Nigeria in general. So, please, our good leader has nothing to do with convening the meeting of governors for any issue. Please, count him out

of such issues. We do not know about such meetings," he stressed

Media reports said that the Bauchi state capital was to play host to a meeting of governors to foster the third term project. In particular, northern governors at the said meeting, were to endorse proposed constitutional amendments and foster the public hearings, a prelude to the amendments for the third term.

Hajj stampede: Saudi to pay N4m to victims families

The Saudi authorities are reported to have agreed to pay N4 million to families of each of the 400 victims who died in a stampede during the hajj.

An official of the Nigeria Technical Committee on Hajj (TCH 2006), told *Daily Trust* in Mecca on condition of anonymity that sequel to various complaints and demands from the affected countries, the Saudi government has agreed to pay 100,000 Saudi Riyals (N4m) to each of the affected families.

Daily Trust learnt that various countries that recorded casualties angrily wrote the Saudi government for compensation demanding about N8 million.

But after several meetings, the source said, the parties settled on N4 million.

It said arrangements were being made by the affected governments to confined the necessary data about the victims.

About 18 Nigerians died in the stampede which occurred during the symbolic stoning of the devil.

Meanwhile, the Technical Committee on Hajj has

From Hassan A. Karofi,
in Mecca

threatened to deport an official of the Meridian airline after the TCH security team in Saudi Arabia accused the airline of breach of contract.

Monetization: Obasanjo indicts ministers

President Olusegun Obasanjo has accused ministers of violating the monetization policy of the federal government by allocating to themselves fleet

By Isa Sanusi,
Assistant Head (Home News)

of vehicles for their personal use. The president said: "This is a disturbing trend consid-

ering that it is being perpetrated by senior government officials".

A letter Obasanjo addressed to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, made available to *Daily Trust*, also banned ministers from the use of siren and pilot vehicles within Abuja with the exception of the minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

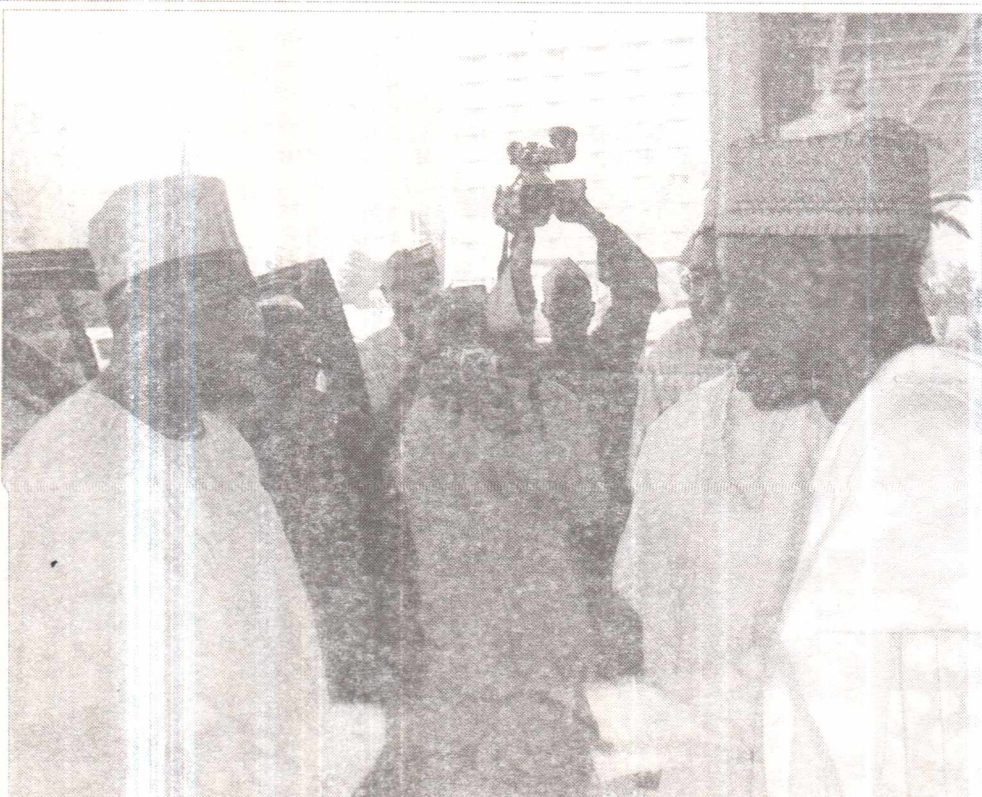
The President's directive to the ministers says: "No official vehicle and driver are to be attached to ministers, special advisers, senior special assistants, permanent secretaries, even though each ministry is allowed to maintain a pool of utility vehicles. No utility vehicle is to be

assigned permanently to any minister, special adviser, senior special assistant or permanent secretary. Such vehicles are to be assigned to them as well as other senior officers as their duties may warrant."

"Ministers and other entitled officers are not to use pilot vehicles and sirens within Abuja. Such vehicles can only be used when they have cause to embark on official duties outside Abuja." However, the President said, "only the minister of the Federal Capital Territory by virtue of the peculiar nature of his office has been exempted from the above restrictions."

Daily Trust recalls that this is about the third time that the president has barred ministers and other senior officials from using sirens.

President Obasanjo first issued the directive when he came to power in 1999, but it was ignored with time. About three years later, he again had cause to issue the directive again.



Chairman, Media Trust Nigeria Limited, Alhaji Bello Muhammad (right) welcoming Zamfara State Governor, Alhaji Ahmad Sani Yarima to the Third Trust Dialogue at Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, Thursday.

OUR ERROR
We inadvertently misplaced the captions of the weddings of the Vice President son and daughter in our page 3 of yesterday's edition. The correct caption is Abdullahi Babalele and his bride former Miss. Aisha Atiku Abubakar while the second picture is between Adamu Atiku Abubakar and former Miss. Safiya Dahiru Waziri. The error is regretted.
Ag. EDITOR

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly JENNIFER OJKWU NKIRU, now wish to be known as OFFOR NKIRU JENNIFER. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

BAIL APPLICATION

MASSOB Leader knows fate Friday

The leader of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Chief Ralph Uwazurike and six others will on January 27, know whether they will regain temporary freedom or continue to remain in the custody of the State Security Services (SSS), where they are alleging maltreatment.

Justice Binta Murtala Nyako of the federal high court, Abuja, had adjourned the case to rule on the bail application filed by the MASSOB members after listening to arguments from both the defence counsel, Chief Mike Ahamba (SAN) and the Director of Public Prosecution PDP, Salihu Aliyu, both urging the court to exercise its discretion in their favour.

The DPP had told the court to dismiss the MASSOB members application for bail due to the overwhelming evidence against them, stressing that the suit was not meant to violate the human rights of the accused persons nor does it contain malicious intent.

Salihu argued that the magnitude and gravity of the charge for which they are being arraigned is treason which is a capital offence that carries the death penalty or life imprisonment.

He added that the prosecution has in its possession a picture where the accused was seen receiving a salute from a military trained Biafran Army who were ready to proceed on war against the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The DPP claimed that there was a valid charge to warrant their trial in view of exhibited picture portraying armed Biafran Army personnel on training adding that Ralph was earlier arrested in Togo where he was

By Ruby Rabiou,
Senior Reporter

parading himself as the President of the Federal Republic of Biafra. He told the court that releasing the suspects will constitute a risk to national security as well as jeopardize investigations because Ralph had boasted in SSS custody that no one will have the guts to testify against him.

He added that there is the likelihood that if released on bail, they would commit a similar offence with impunity since they have no apology in trying to drag the entire nation into war.

However, countering DDP's submission, Ahamba asked the court to admit the accused persons to bail more so when there was no prima facie case, valid charge and or prove of evidence against them.

"I submit that the charge before the court was brought in deliberate disobedience of an Owerri federal high court order and I ask this court to quash it where the court holds that there is a charge, I urge it to grant bail to them because the prosecution has placed nothing to warrant their continued stay in custody"

According to the senior advocate, the treason charge arose in contempt of a subsisting restraint order and to intimidate Uwazurike whom he said claimed N5 million from the State Security Services for invading his residence without warrant.

Ahamba who also argued that there was no ingredient for the possible further trial of the accused stressed that "the law does not change because there is this case or the name Biafra is mentioned"



One of the MASSOB youth at the Federal High Court Abuja, yesterday clamoring for justice after their trial. Pix: Felix Onigbende

Man in prison over rape of seven months old baby

By Ruby Rabiou,
Senior Reporter

A 32 years old man has been remanded in prison custody for raping a seven months old baby.

The accused person, Emmanuel Samuel who was remanded in prison custody pending when a court of competent jurisdiction will hear the matter admitted to the offence but said he was drunk when the action took place.

According to the police report the baby's mother, Mrs Fatimat Awwal who resides at Galadima village, Gwarinpa had told the police that the accused person who resides at the same with had asked her to give him her baby in order to allow her cook.

The report that Mrs. Fatimat Awwal had obliged him because she was cooking, but added that when the accused returned

the baby, she was crying but she thought nothing of it.

The mother said that when the baby refused to stop weeping, she decided to loose her napkin so as to change her but to her shock and total dismayed she discovered blood oozing out of her baby's private part.

She stated that she had immediately gone to confront the accused person who did not deny the allegations but had started begging that it was a mistake.

The accused person who is being charged for Gross indecent contrary to section 285 of the penal code pleaded guilty to the charge but told the court that he did not know what came over him as he was drunk when he had sexual intercourse with the baby.

The prosecuting police officer, Corporal Salihu Mohammed urged the Magistrate to trial the accused person summarily in view of his plea.

However Magistrate Abdul Dogo said the case before him can only be tried by a court of competent jurisdiction that he had only entertained the suit because the Chief Magistrate was not on sit.

He then transferred the

case to the chambers of the Chief Magistrate to pronounce sentence on the accused person since he has pleaded guilty to the charge.

Earlier, the prosecutor had told the court to remand the suspect pending when his case will be entertained by the Chief Magistrate.

Magistrate Abdul Dogo obliged the prosecutor and remanded Emmanuel Samuel to prison custody pending the return of the Chief.

'Police will flush out bad eggs'

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

The Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Mr. Christopher Yekini Jimoh weekend in Makurdi, lamented the prevalence of bad eggs in the force but assured that the drive to flush them out would

continue in order to restore confidence in the police.

The DIG who was in Makurdi on a visit to the headquarters of the Zone 4 Command of the force, acknowledged that there are still bad elements whose illicit acts, particularly bribe taking has removed confidence from the force.

Mr. Jimoh charged the commissioners within the zone namely, Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa, to instill discipline in their personnel.

He said the present leadership would not overlook any act of indiscipline and acknowledged that for a better force, officers and men needed an improved welfare package but urged them to continue to be patient while the new salaries and allowances are being fully prepared.

The DIG who commended the spirit of good policing among some outstanding personnel, urged them to continue in the same spirit



Cross section of suspected armed robbers paraded by FCT Police Command...recently.

Pix: Shehu Abubakar

POLICE EMERGENCY PHONE LINES

Route/coverage area	Telephone numbers
Apo (Gudu) Legislative Mechanic Village	0806 580 3210 0804 231 5582
Asokoro/Maitama District	0806 580 3206 0804 490 7942
Central Business District (Construction and Independence Avenues)/City Gate Giri Junction	0806 580 3203 0804 490 7939
Garki I & II	0806 580 3205 0804 490 7941
Jabi/Utako/Gwarimpa I & II/Karmo/Gwagwa	0806 580 3207 0804 490 7943
Karu/Nyanya	0806 580 3208 0804 491 1520
Kubwa/Bwari/Zuba/Dei-Dei Route	0806 580 3209 0804 491 1496
Roving Unit	0806 580 3211 0804 491 1526
Wuse I & II	0806 580 3204 0804 490 7940
Zuba/Giri/Kwali/Abaji Highway (1)	0806 580 3201 0804 491 1523
Zuba/Giri/Kwali/Abaji Highway (2)	0806 580 3202 0804 491 1524

Other Hot Lines

Compol/DC OPS Numbers	
FCT Police Commissioner's Director Line	09-2341470
Office of FCT Police Commissioner	09-2341800
FCT Deputy Police Commissioner (operation)	09-2341811
Co-ordinator MOPOL Visiting Units	0802 301 9123 0805 591 7706

Others

0803 200 3913, 09-2341199, 09-2341198, 09-5238711

Daily Trust Hotlines

08039686854 and 08056418945

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Robbers raid Benue secretariat

● Cart away N9m

The Benue state government at the weekend lost cash worth over N9 million to suspected armed robbers who raided the state secretariat in Makurdi.

The robbers whose number could not be ascertained at press time, were said

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

to have visited all ministries and parastatals at the secretariat, except the information ministry.

They were said to have overpowered the private security personnel guarding the secretariat and made straight to the accounts sections of the various ministries and broke open safes,

carting away huge sums. Police public relations officer (PPRO), Mr. Adesanya Jinadu, confirmed the robbery incident but declined to give further details saying preliminary investigation are

still on going. However, Daily Trust investigation revealed that a bulk of the sums carted away came from the safe in the office of the Head of Service where the robbery terminated.

Top civil servants who sought anonymity told Daily Trust that the weekend robbery was the first at the secretariat since it was built in the early eighties.

Also some private security personnel spoken to said the robbery was successful because of the com-

plete absence of policemen at the secretariat while the private security guards no arms but only batons.

Daily Trust could not reach the Head of Service, Mr. Mike Iyordye, for comments but it was gathered that part of the sum taken from his treasury was brought in a few days to the robbery incident.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of Criminal Investigations Department (CID), has visited the secretariat to assess the situation.

...Police foil robbery attempt, arrest drug dealers

By Ibrahim Kaimos

The police in Abuja said yesterday that they foiled an armed robbery attempt in old Maitama area of Kubwa following a distress call.

The FCT police commissioner, Mr. Lawrence Alobi, said one Justice Igweke called the police and reported that suspected armed hoodlums had

attacked his shop and were in the process of breaking through to steal his property.

Briefing newsmen in his office, he said when a team of police men on patrol stormed the area, the suspects escaped and abandoned a locally made pistol and some cartridges.

Motor park workers charged with civil disturbances

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

Six workers of the Ojodu motor park in Lagos have been docked before an Ikeja magistrate court for alleged rioting and civil disturbances.

The accused persons are Morufu Oduyebo, 33, Ismaila Adeleke, 33, Ogunmodede Kayode, 28, Horacio Godwin, 27, Leku Morakinyo, 20 and Sikiru Shiyabula, 58.

According to the charge, the accused were alleged to have taken part in a riot in the area on January 5.

They were charge under

section 516 of the criminal code.

The prosecution told the court that the accused had in their possession dangerous weapons like axes, cutlasses and broken bottles.

They all pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The accused were granted bail in the sum of N30,000 each while further proceedings was slated for February 8, 2006.



Indian Hemp seized by the FCT Police Command on display ...recently.

Pix: Shehu Abubakar.

Two brothers arrested for armed robbery

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani, Bureau Chief, Port Harcourt

Two brothers, John Ibeka and Promise Ibeka of no 45, Eligbulo Town, Rumuokoro in Port Harcourt have been arrested for being in possession of illegal fire arms suspected to be their tool for robbery.

A police statement said the two were arrested at Arocukwu Street, Rumuomasi in Port Harcourt during a stop and search operation. The suspects were said to be driving in a milk colour Mercedes Benz V-Boot car with registration number DG 725 PHC.

When the police conducted a search on the vehicle and the occupants they recovered two pump action guns, eight live cartridges, one cutlass and a bag containing substances suspected to be Indian herm.

The two brothers are said to be now helping the police to find out how they came

about the guns and what they have been doing with them.

In a related development the police has arrested some hoodlums during a raid on Enka in the Trans Amadi area of Port Harcourt. The police said a pistol and some ammunition were recovered from the hoodlums although they did not say how many of

them were arrested.

The police had stormed the hide out of the hoodlums following a tip off on their activities in the area. A large quantity of substances suspected to be Indian Herm was also recovered from the suspects who are said to be helping the police with investigations on their activities in the area

Meanwhile the special anti robbery squad have arrested three suspected armed

robbers in a commercial bus during a stop and search operation. The suspects names were given as Chijioke Ani of Rumuobikani, Ikechukwu Azubuike and Ifeanyi Chukwu Egwu. The police said it discovered two live cartridges, two locally made pistols on the suspects.

Police public Relations officer in the state, Mrs Ireju Barasua, who confirmed the arrest said the investigations were still on.

Police nab 72 motorcyclists for flouting curfew order

The police in Rivers say they have arrested and prosecuted 72 commercial motorcyclists for flouting an order restricting their operations to 7 p.m.

Last year, the state legislature signed into law a

bill restricting the motorcyclists, citing the increasing number of crimes linked to them.

The restriction order came into force on October 9, 2005.

According to the Rivers

Police Command's spokesperson, Mrs Ireju Barasua, the offenders have been charged to court. "You can see that street robberies and other crimes associated with motorcycle operators have ebbed in the city," she said.

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Opinion

The South must tread softly

The political elite of Southern Nigeria met at Enugu recently to ostensibly discuss the state of the Nigerian nation. I use the word 'ostensibly' advisedly, because it would appear that not only had the tone of discussion been predetermined, but that the communiqué appeared to have been drafted at Aso and edited at Otta.

There were a few facts that could be gleaned from the chaff that were the insults aimed at the rest of Nigeria, interspersed with grandstanding, falsehood and doublespeak. The facts were then embellished with half-truths and formalised into propaganda that would make Joseph Goebbels turn green with envy in his grave.

In the inordinate desire to belong, even delegates from states that are not oil-producing under the dubious premise of 'equity' and unconvincing newly-found 'Southern brotherhood' simply outdid the Niger Delta in the clanging of the cymbals for Resource Control—as if they have any more resource to control than, say, Yobe. But that is nothing to lose sleep over as it is part of democratic licence to permit even loose canons to let off.

We however have cause to begin to worry seriously for the health and survival of the nation when persons in position of authority, and by implication, responsibility, choose to make irresponsible noises that are clearly treasonable in pursuit of the self-seeking agenda of an individual with a chequered history of intransigence, arrogance and insensitivity.

Where you had the likes of Bode George, who is OBJ's alter

ego, and Tony Anenih, his elections enforcer cum bagman, declaring that the Presidency has to remain in the South or the nation will disintegrate, you do not need a soothsayer to know where the thrust for the third term is acquiring its gas.

Southern apologists of the third term bid or elongated tenure are making less and less sense. This is not surprising as they are not the authors of the script from which they are performing, having also hardly had time to study it. They point to the amalgamation of 1914 between Southern and Northern protectorates as a mistake. If it was indeed a mistake by the British colonialists, because the people were not consulted before the decision to merge and therefore it must be reversed, we would like to be educated as to whether the Ibibio, the Anang, the Efik, the Ijaw, the Bini, the Igbo and others in the South had decided in a referendum or at some conference of ethnic nationalities to join the Yoruba to constitute a sovereignty which was converted by the British into a protectorate. Or if the Tiv, Idoma, Igala, Ebrira, Kanuri, Nupe, Fulani, etc, were consulted in the British decision to create an administrative unit to be known as the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Why then are these intellectual crooks making it appear as if what they had put together, the British had come to put asunder?

It is saddening when people seek to rewrite history and make such a bad job of the assignment. Epictetus, the Greek philosopher said, "The beginning of wisdom is to know the state of one's mind. If his is in a weakly state, he ought

By Abum Swem

not to apply it to matters of the greatest moment. As it is people who are not fit to swallow a morsel, buy whole treatises and try to devour them. They vomit them accordingly and therein come indigestion, fevers and fluxion, whereas they should have stopped to consider their capacity."

Persons who should be thankful to the British for their timely arrival that put a stop to the inevitable extension of the coercive influence of the Shehu Uthman Danfodio forces to the Atlantic Ocean ironically take time out to insult them each time a Southerner, especially from the South-West, is unable to get his way with the North. That is being smart by half and historically fraudulent. The British simply saw the complementary components of this vast region and hastened what was indicated in the inevitable clash of forces in trade and commerce, technological attainment, military prowess and administrative structures to offer mutual advantage. People must not be ashamed to acknowledge these facts.

Again fraudulently, they insist on holding onto the Presidency by citing the number of years the country has been under the leadership of Northerners, including the military. They refuse to acknowledge the fact that the two instances at which Northerners were ruling in a democracy (which is the only bonafide mandate Nigerians can confer on anyone), they were overthrown by the military. And it is usually Nigerians of Southern descent that are most vocal in clamouring for such military intervention. Can anyone truthfully say that in either of the instances, it was the will of the North that soldiers should replace the Nigerian peoples' chosen leaders? Is military rule no longer an aberration as we had often heard in the past?

The fact is that Obasanjo has been the longest serving civilian head of state; another fact is that if you are of a mind to put his years as a military dictator together with

the over six years that he has so far spent in this spell as a civilian dictator, he emerges as the longest serving leader in Nigeria's history and has ruled for a longer period than the Northern civilian duo of Tafawa Balewa and Shehu Shagari put together. What then are these mischief-makers talking about?

Furthermore, even if the leadership of the country has come from the North for a longer spell, was that not also the case with the USA after the North had overcome the South in the American Civil War? If it took the US nearly 200 years to get over the phobia of anyone South of the Dixie line getting into the White House, there is absolutely no justification for people who personally prosecuted a rebellion to be clamouring to rule after barely thirty years unless they want to execute an earlier agenda. This would be treason. But we hate truth so much in this country that we want to pretend that scenarios like that are not applicable in our circumstances, and yet we would want to grow as strong and virile as a nation like the USA.

From every indication, Obasanjo appears unreasonably bent on being permitted a third term or he will supervise the break-up of this nation. If the Bode Georges would declare that nothing short of a prolonged Southern presidency would ensure the continued corporate existence of Nigeria and at the same time Obasanjo is in full steam on the project of self-succession, there is little left to speculate as to how the US intelligence report arrived at the prediction of a failed statehood.

It is ironic that the same Obasanjo who received the instructions of surrender from the defunct Biafra is the same person championing the enactment of the events of 1966-67 that led to the civil wars of 1967-70. Have we not learnt anything at all from the needless bloodletting that was the civil war? This must go down as a perversity that is destructive of every principle of decency and even probity and is as injurious to morality, pernicious to civil society, seditious

and dangerous to all persons of our sovereignty. Is there no thought of the danger to our liberty and welfare in a scheme that in its very nature has so little to promote the unity of our country?

The late statesman, Rt. Honourable Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe had quoted a figure of 12 million as the number of lives lost in the Nigerian Civil War. There has not been so far any figure suggested to controvert this. If we allow that one million died on the Biafran side, we can assume that the other half were on the Nigerian government side. Of these, 95 per cent were from the North with Bode George's kinsmen adroitly avoiding to enlist in the infantry for obvious reasons; preferring to be in support services where they could make money with minimal hazards, or in command positions where they could receive honour and glory with the least of efforts. That is how come people like Benjamin Adekunle, Ayo Ariyo and Olusegun Obasanjo not only survived but also emerged heroes of a war in which hundreds of thousands of the *crème de la crème* of our youths perished unsung.

If any of them experienced the pains of the civil war, it must have been on an impersonal level at Divisional or Brigade command; and so for one of them to be pushing a personal agenda that is creating a situation that may result in another bout of needless human sacrifice troubles him little. The fact that he emerged from the previous war some sort of hero albeit not a very deserving one, coupled with an almost miraculous escape from Abacha's gulag, may have created a suicidal form of megalomania in Baba indeed. But then for any form of profligacy, there is stored up wrath against the day of wrath, so says the Lord. There is hardly any Nigerian living or dead whom the country has been so kind to with yet so little effort on his part.

Nigerians from the South-East and the Middle Belt had suffered and continue to suffer too severely from the effects of the civil war to watch torpidly as insensitive des-

potions on random ego trips continue to propel the nation towards the precipice. The noises emanating from Enugu to Lagos are ominously reminiscent of reverberations from the Aburi Conference and the after events. No nation in known history has been able to survive two civil wars, especially that some of the principal actors of the first are not just still alive but are the main characters in the precipitation of a second.

A civil war is a messy affair, in this one that some people are currently promoting, there is no saving where the battle front may be. Those of us from the Middle Belt area have spilled too much of our blood on the Nigerian projects to permit it to be truncated on the altar of over-ambition. If we had derived material benefit from the nation in compensation, we would have considered that we have been justly rewarded for our exertions. Had we been honoured by the nation and acknowledged by her people accordingly, we would have been content just basking in the glory. The current muscle flexing amounts to trivialising a tragedy that in the not-too-distant past wasted the cream of our youths and that appears to be stretching democratic licence a little too far. For us, the only side to be on is where "the labours of our heroes past shall never be in vain." Period!

But most unfortunately, the rattling of sabers has to cease to permit sanity some way. The noisiest of the warmongers will be halfway to New York, London and Paris by the time the first shot is fired, complete with their families. Nigerians must refuse to be part of this hopeless venture whose only 'advantage' may be to open a new line of business in arms dealing for oil bunkers and treasury looters.

Obasanjo must be compelled upon by those who love this nation to cease his threat of Armageddon and drop his third term bid immediately. The art is too gross and immoral.

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"We however have cause to begin to worry seriously for the health and survival of the nation when persons in position of authority, and by implication, responsibility, choose to make irresponsible noises that are clearly treasonable in pursuit of the self-seeking agenda of an individual with a chequered history of intransigence, arrogance and insensitivity."

Certainly, the recent re-registration exercise in the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), which was supposedly meant to weed out disgruntled, disloyal, indiscipline and subversive elements in its fold has introduced an interesting dimension to political mobilisation and support within the party. The idea is that PDP has been repositioned ideologically.

Perhaps, it was in apparent reaction to the sorry state of the PDP before the re-registration exercise that prompted Mr President, during the repositioning exercise in Ogun State where he participated to urge party faithfuls not to reduce the party to 'big for nothing'. Experts interpreted the comment as signifying the end of the era of anointing from the top in the party. The idea right now in the party from President Obasanjo's comment is that every party member must be relevant from ward to state levels in every PDP state in Nigeria. The re-registration exercise appeared to have repositioned the party for ideological politicking ahead of 2007. Pundits believed that those that lost out in the exercise are ideologically incompatible with those in the party today.

In the light of the foregoing, therefore, it is incumbent on any member of the party who is interested in any elective office in any state of the federation to embark on aggressive grassroots mobilisation in view of obvious threat from opposition parties that may form the decision

Imo Platform, PDP and 2007

By Emeka Oraetoka

of those disgruntled elements affected by the repositioning exercise. It will thus be suicidal for any politician to think that someone somewhere will ensure his electoral victory without aggressive campaign in his state.

Just recently, Senator Arthur Nzeribe floated Imo Platform (IP), a political pressure group within PDP ostensibly to give direction and platform to any politician ready to be part of the new PDP in the state. The frenzied atmosphere in Imo State arising from Imo Platform's activities could be seen everywhere; offices could be sighted everywhere; jingles were heard every now and then. Before now, everybody was aware that Senator Ifeanyi Ararume is seriously eyeing the office of executive governor of Imo State. In a nutshell, he desperately wants to take a shot at the governorship position in the state. Pundits are aware that his legitimate ambition is being marketed only on the pages of newspapers. In view of the new spirit in the new PDP—PDP post-registration, one had expected to see functional structures/offices in the nooks and crannies of the state, to the credit of Ararume. Pundits are of the view that the creation of functional structures in Imo State by Ararume would have clearly offered him reasonable edge over any would-be candidate for

the position (Imo State governorship seat) in the People's Democratic Party, but the reverse is the case. What then is Ararume's joker in PDP as regards his smoldering ambition? Unless Senator Ararume has big masquerade(s) somewhere ready to go at length to install him as the candidate of the party in Imo State ahead of 2007 gubernatorial elections, pundits believe that his best bet is to embark on aggressive erection of structures, and membership drive in the entire Imo State as signs of seriousness on his part; otherwise, the belief in some quarters that the "trinity" (Ararume, Uzordinma and Kema Chikwe) installed the current party executive in Imo State to pave way for Ararume's endorsement in PDP without functional structures, could hold water after all. If so, the scenario could be dangerous to the political health of Imo PDP as some other serious-minded candidates would have been sidelined in the party.

Information has it that the idea behind Imo Platform (IP) was to ensure that the peace in Imo State PDP is sustained at all cost. According to the promoters of the IP, the possible rupturing of peace in Imo State PDP arising from the supremacy struggle between the 'trinity' group as fondly called by political analysts in Imo axis, and

Governor Udenwa's camp could automatically signal the epitaph of the party in the entire South-Eastern states. Pundits also reasoned that it is only in Imo State that serious-minded politicians who believe that charity must begin at home as a first step towards national relevance can be found. Therefore, rupturing of peace will leave the South-East at the mercy of outside political poachers.

Peace-loving politicians in Imo State were said to have heaved a sigh of relief upon the coming on board of the Senator Nzeribe-led Imo Platform; who was incidentally mandated by the National Chairman of the party, Senator Ahmadu Ali, to coordinate the reconciliation of Udenwa's group and the 'trinity' group. The failure of that reconciliation effort led to the formation of Imo Platform. The idea according to them was for the leader of the Platform, Nzeribe, not to be seen as a leader who used his privileged position to give victory to one of the warring groups, particularly when one realises that Senator Nzeribe by virtue of his office as a senator, is also an Abuja-based politician like the 'trinity' group whom Udenwa's group relentlessly accuse of using their connections in Abuja to subvert and undermine constituted authority in Imo State.

One disturbing but interesting script playing itself out in Imo

State ahead of the 2007 gubernatorial election is the amazing impact of Imo Platform in Imo State. With the constant denial by Senator Nzeribe that he is not interested in becoming the next governorship candidate of PDP in 2007, and the amazing speed at which politicians in Imo State are embracing Imo Platform, the lightning speed at which functional structures have sprung up and are still springing up in almost the 27 local government areas in Imo State, and with the sheer velocity at which serious-minded politicians are trooping into Nzeribe's country home in Oguta for homage, one could be left with one guess only—which may be as good as yours.

Information has it that through the Imo Platform, Nzeribe is on the verge of reincarnating The

CARIA Movement strategy, and also on the threshold of unleashing it in just one state. Recall that CARIA was a powerful political movement that controlled eight (8) states then, the whole of what was referred to as the Eastern region? One can only imagine the impact of Imo Platform on the political landscape of Imo State. Nzeribe is known to be a deadly, silent and efficient operator. This writer is waiting to see who will dare stand in the way of this moving train. It must be understood that Nzeribe does not start anything unless he is sure of it; and once he starts, he never stops. He gets to the very end—win or lose.

This poser is pertinent here: If Nzeribe denies gubernatorial ambition, who then is he doing all this for?

Emeka Oraetoka, Information Management Consultant, Imo State. email: oramekllis@jycos.com.

"Just recently, Senator Arthur Nzeribe floated Imo Platform (IP), a political pressure group within PDP ostensibly to give direction and platform to any politician ready to be part of the new PDP in the state. The frenzied atmosphere in Imo State arising from Imo Platform's activities could be seen everywhere; offices could be sighted everywhere; jingles were heard every now and then."



YOUR LETTERS

Letter to President Obasanjo

Baba, I will like to seize this opportunity to condole you on the untimely death of your wife and our mother, Stella Obasanjo. I sincerely pray to Almighty God to continue giving you the fortitude to bear the loss. I will also not forget to offer my condolence to you over the tragic incidents of Bellview and Sosoliso aircrafts. This condolence was supposed to have come much earlier than now (since the death of Chief (Mrs) Stella Obasanjo and the two aircraft mishaps months ago); but like I said earlier on, lack of effective means, however, prevented me. And I hope and pray that you will not consider these condolences belated.

Baba, I must confess to you that I have been your ardent admirer since your military days, precisely when you were a military head of state. I was in primary six then and I have been following you and appreciating all that you have been doing since then. I can vividly recall when you embarked on a nationwide farewell tour sometime between late 1978 and 1979. I happened to be among the first to be at our Emir's Palace in Lafia, then in Plateau State to capture a glimpse of you. In fact, I forfeited my breakfast and early morning lessons to enable me to see you physically and at a closer range. I remember you arrived Lafia from Jos, between 10 and 11 a.m. and you nearly shook hands with me when you arrived the Emir's Palace, but I think my age at that time cheated me. I was only a little above 13 years old. But despite my inability to shake your hands, I remained satisfied since my goal was to see the man I so much admired.

When you left office in 1979 and settled at your Otta farm, my admiration for you instead of diminishing somehow increased. What further made me to admire you was the manner you handed over power despite opportunities openly available for you to extend your tenure beyond 1979; though I later learnt that you made some moves to extend the timetable

beyond October 1979. But whatever it was then, I believed you sincerely meant to go.

The other thing that made me to be happy with you at your retirement was that you refused to close your eyes over the maladministration of the regimes that came after yours. We are of course living witnesses to your criticism on measures of the Shagari administration and the inhuman treatment of citizens by the Buhari/Idiagbon regime, as well as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of Ibrahim Babangida's administration. The Sani Abacha administration could not stomach your criticisms, especially on his attempt to succeed himself and therefore roped you in, in a phantom coup and subsequently sent you to Yola prison.

Baba, I wept when I saw you on our television screen live during your trial. But I consoled myself with the fact that truth shall one day prevail. And I consoled myself further with what the late Dele Giwa said shortly before his death through

a parcel bomb that "any injustice done to man by man shall be re-dressed if not immediately then certainly later; and if not by man then by God." Barely two years into serving your sentence, the truth about the whole saga came out. The man who sent you to prison died. This was nothing but an act of God to the extent of your not only being freed but you got crowned.

I had cause to argue recently in a private conversation with a group of friends that in spite of all what the Northerners are saying about you today, your election in 1999 was still not a mistake. My argument was based on the fact that if it were any other Southerner instead of you at the helm of affairs, the story of Nigeria could not have been the same today. Nigeria could have been a failed state by now.

One other aspect that I think Nigerians are not regretting your election, apart from ensuring the unity of Nigeria, is of course your efforts at stamping out corruption in our body polity

through the instrumentality of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). At least, if not for anything, Nuhu Ribadu has succeeded in instilling fear in the minds of our so-called leaders who find pleasure in looting public funds. Today, the fear of Ribadu is the beginning of wisdom. In the field of economy, Nigeria is not faring bad as all indicators point to a brighter future. Your efforts at the cancellation of the debts we were owing Paris Club is equally a pointer.

But Baba, you see, there is one thing that I think if you are not careful with would make nonsense of all these your achievements and ruin the good reputation you have built over the years, both at home and abroad. And this thing is the issue of "third term". Since the issue started making the rounds, I have never considered it to be a matter that one should lose his sleep over. Whenever I read or hear people discussing the issue, I always dismiss it with a wave of my

hand. It was your dislike for self-succession and seat-tightism of leaders that led you into a confrontational course with Abacha, which later earned you life imprisonment.

Baba, I have never believed that you will reduce yourself to the level of trying to extend your tenure until last month during your NTA live programme, the "President Speaks". To my surprise, when a caller from Sokoto asked you to comment on the issue of third term, you did not only dodge the question, but you went ahead and spent the better part of the time in explaining irrelevances. Of course, oil and gas are very important and relevant to an economy such as ours. So, Baba, the deviation in answering this question left me with no option than to believe that there is really an agenda on third term.

Chief Gani Fawehinmi, I believe you know him better than I do, wrote you a letter last Christmas in which he raised a very fundamental is-

sue concerning the third term. Baba, I want to appeal to you to take a very hard look at the content of that letter. It is very important that you go through it again and again and heed his advice and that of millions of Nigerians.

Professor Omo Omoruyi was right when he said that all those that are selling the idea of third term are planning to ruin you.

Agreed, Baba, power as often said, is sweet that whoever tastes it would not like to let it go, but one point that needs to be stressed is that the freedom of being a private citizen at your age now is even much sweeter than the power itself.

Baba, I beg to stop here. I will write you again if God permits but that should be next year after you must have retired to your Otta farm. So long.

Rayyanu Bala, No. 42, beside PHCN headquarters, Lafia, Nasarawa State.

Re: Letter to Sokoto State governor

When I stumbled on a letter written to the Sokoto State governor by one Dahiru Maishanu supposedly from far away London and carried by the Daily Trust newspaper of January 3, 2006, what initially captured my attention was the heading of the letter. As I went through the piece, the heap of lies and shameless mockery therein prodded me to scribble down this rejoinder.

Sokoto is still a torch-bearer and trail blazer in affairs that border on human emancipation and development. Yes, it did produce a generation of leaders who left indelible footsteps in the sands of time. Sokoto is still and shall remain endowed with resourceful leaders who can hold their own anywhere in the country and beyond. Sokoto has come a long way.

While Dahiru Maishanu has every right to say his mind, however, as a scion of Muhammadu Moyijio, he ought to imbibe the spirit of decorum and

camaraderie in his utterances. His attacks recently on the state government, including the letter that prompted this rejoinder, portrayed him as an ingrate and further put to question his self-acclaimed descent from the family of Moyijio.

How Maishanu chose to dress the present leadership of the state government in garbs of corruption reeks of horrible, and if you like, decomposing hatred for no just cause. I wonder who Dahiru Maishanu is to call people names - rogues, thieves and what-nots. It is clear that he could be out of his mind by starting a fire of raging inferno that may soon consume him. The truth is you don't blind yourself to all evidences of performance simply because you want to constitute yourself into a megaphone of some directionless cabal.

It is true that Sokoto nurtured, is nurturing and shall continue to nurture a crop of technocrats and professionals who despite your dismal rating can compare

and compete favourably with their counterparts anywhere. Whether Maishanu likes it or not, Attahiru Bafarawa by God's Will is today one of such technocrats. After all, it is Almighty God that gives power to whom He desires when He desires.

You could come down and fill the vacuum by vying for an elective post as 2007 is just around the corner.

Among what families were positions in the state shared? You should learn to buttress your arguments with concrete unassailable facts. In any case, are you referring to your blood brothers and sisters who are now occupying juicy positions in various ministries and departments in the state civil service? Maybe you should prevail on them to relinquish such positions since you are not satisfied with the set-up.

Constructing the fly-over bridge at the State Polytechnic junction has nothing to do with hunger of the people. In an effort to save lives and property

as a result of road mishaps at the crossroads, the Bafarawa administration decided to construct the fly-over bridge. It is not surprising that you have not been conversant with your home state for many years now. You continue to harangue your audience with allegations of kickback; why don't you produce facts?

Education does not only mean the kind of negative education *oyinbo* people like you boast of; education means clear conscience, understanding of the people's hopes and aspirations and working towards building a better society.

Maishanu, do you indeed wish Sokoto well? I am afraid you don't. Who nurtured beggars in Northern Nigeria? You are a poor student of history. *Almajirci* dates back to the establishment of the Caliphate itself. So it is not Bafarawa's making that people should beg. After all, the menace of begging still remains a serious one to all Northern state governments.

Bafarawa in his strides to alleviate the menace evolved measures to integrate *Makarantun Zaure* into his mainstream elementary education.

Whatever you say is laced with unrepentant hatred, so you are eternally blind to the good works Bafarawa is doing to make life more meaningful to the people.

One of your brothers is an experienced teacher. Ask him, why is it that today, most graduates in Nigeria are half-baked. The state media machinery is well-equipped that it does not need to import mercenaries to write rejoinders. Nobody is forcing any so-called professionals to leave. I guess you left of your own volition.

Your articles are built on quick sand. Your arguments and points are as porous as your understanding of what it takes to form a vanguard of opposition.

Usman S. Abubakar, Torankawa Yabo, Sokoto State.

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INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAIHIR RAJI'UN

It feels like today, but it is exactly one year ago that you answered the call of your creator,

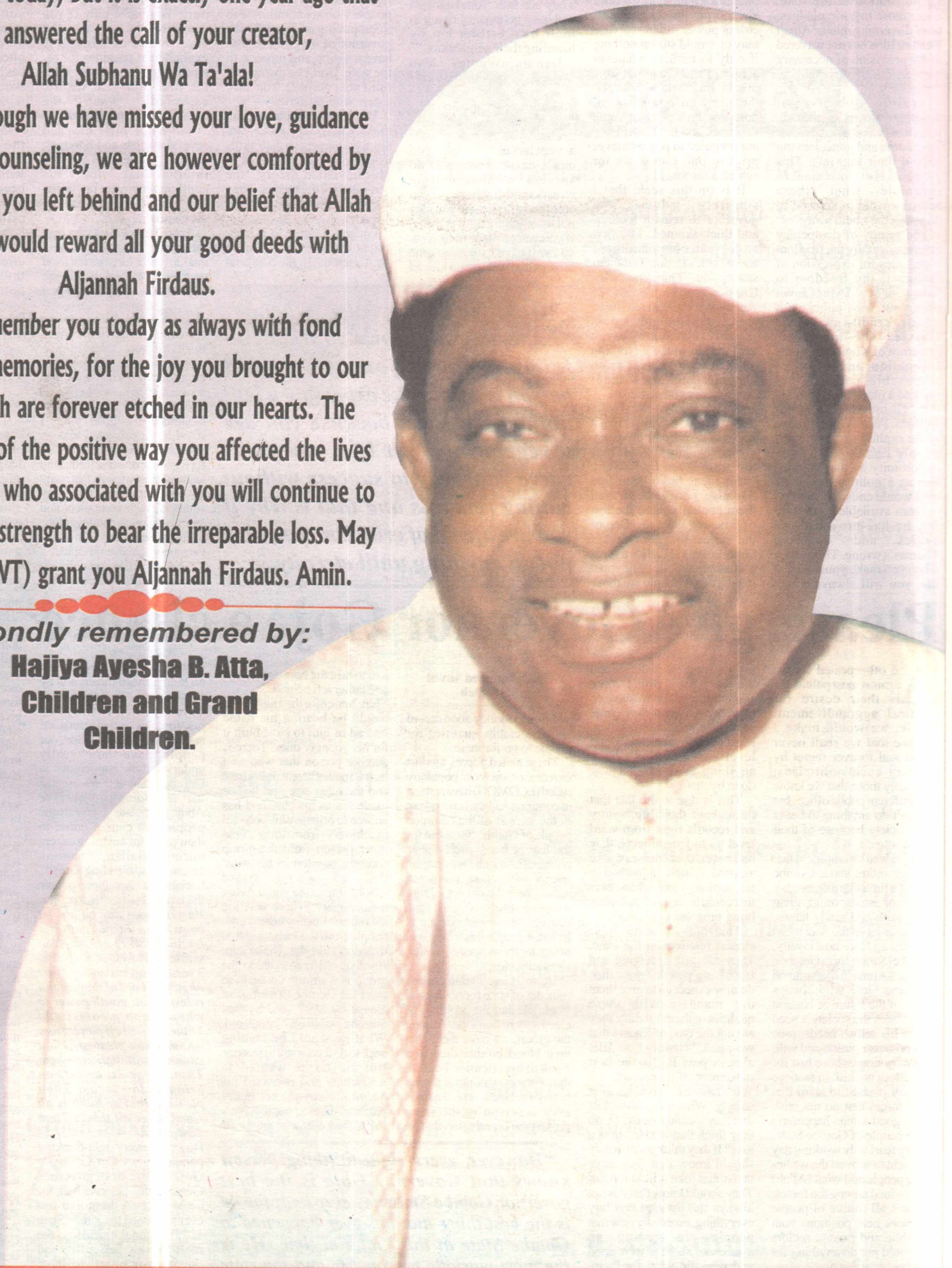
Allah Subhanu Wa Ta'ala!

Alhaji, though we have missed your love, guidance and wise counseling, we are however comforted by the legacy you left behind and our belief that Allah (SWT) would reward all your good deeds with

Aljannah Firdaus.

We remember you today as always with fond indelible memories, for the joy you brought to our life, which are forever etched in our hearts. The testimony of the positive way you affected the lives of all those who associated with you will continue to give us the strength to bear the irreparable loss. May Allah (SWT) grant you Aljannah Firdaus. Amin.

Fondly remembered by:
**Hajiya Ayesha B. Atta,
Children and Grand
Children.**



Late Alhaji Mahmoud Ibrahim Atta (OFR)

Opinion

Governor Idris and critics

When on May 29, 2003, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris took oath of office as the Executive Governor of Kogi State, he promised fairness, justice, equity and accountability among other pledges in the administration of the state. Since those historic pledges, to all discerning minds, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris has not wavered in the provision of necessary ingredients of governance/democracy.

As a keen observer of developments in Kogi State, it is a truism that many leaders have come and gone, leaving behind their imprints. This piece is not intended to chronicle what these helmsmen did or refused to do when they held sway.

The beauty of democracy is fundamentally the freedom it provides for expression of thoughts; the freedom to have your say if you cannot have your way, either with utmost crudity or utmost finesse. The incumbent governor of Kogi State in my estimation and in every reasonable person's has booked a place for himself in the Guinness Book of Records. Prior to his elevation to the exalted seat, not many people gave him any opportunity as they taunted him as a political neophyte who would end up dismally.

From available records so far, he has proved those cynics and doubting Thomases wrong. This is why when you make your mark in life, you will always attract

erasers. Year 2007 is around the corner and my heart bleeds for democracy. Those clamouring for change at all cost or power shift as the case may be would stop at nothing if only to rubbish whatever achievements Governor Idris might have recorded. To them, the governor has not done anything since he came to power, and I mean it. They are prepared to pay whatever price to pull him down for selfish reasons.

It is on this scale that I sincerely advise the governor to remain focused and thick-skinned. The first and great commandment about critics is, don't let them scare you. That was why Charles Dodgson said, "If you limit your action in life to things that nobody could possibly find fault with, you will not do much." Nothing significant has ever been accomplished without controversy and criticism.

Christopher Morley said, "The truth is, a critic is like a gong at a railroad crossing, clanging loudly and vainly as the train goes by." Many great ideas have been lost because people who had them couldn't stand the test of time and gave up. One of the easiest things to find is fault. William Hazlitt, a great philosopher said, "The most insignificant people are those

By Sani Mohammed

most apt to sneer at others. They are safe from reprisals and have no hope of rising in their own esteem but by lowering their neighbours." Dennis Wholey also warned, "Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting a bull not to attack you because you are a vegetarian." In life, you can't carve your way to success without cutting remarks and that is why if you are afraid of criticism, you may not do anything until eternity. If you want a place in the sun, you will have to expect some blisters and some sand kicked

in your face. Criticism is a compliment when you know that what you are doing is right. Peak performers are people who are committed to a compelling mission. As the governor of Kogi State, you have a vision and mission in the state. Don't be distracted, fulfil your purpose. You have a date with posterity.

You know and I know that those who desire power are already sharpening their skills using whatever means as in Machiavellian theory, 'the end justifies the means. They want to reap where they did not sow.

For me, I agree to a large extent the recent position of Dr Ahmadu Ali, the National

Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) that you don't change the cloth you are wearing if it is not dirty. You bathe only if you are dirty. After all, the constitution of Nigeria is explicit as it provides for reelection of a governor after his first four-year tenure, especially when the incumbent is a performer.

Governor Idris has had several awards and honours; local, national and international for his commitment to the provision of realistic democracy dividends.

Apart from self-seeking ego, can anyone be truly right to posit that Governor Idris has not lived up to expectations? Is it in the area of health, transportation, and above all, human development? Governor Idris combines wonderfully and effectively both infrastructure and human developments. Since the creation of Kogi State, no administration has tendered civil servants with care like the incumbent has been doing. I stand to be corrected that no administration has offered civil servants car or car-refurbishing loans. It is also a truism that many government offices are today equipped with computers and their accessories, courtesy of the bumper monthly imprest. Pensioners are even happier.

There is a silent revolution (not with blood) currently

taking place in Kogi State. If you were in Lokoja about a year ago and visited the ancient colonial town now, you would marvel at the great change. Critics for lack of what to do or say have often argued that no project has been commissioned in the state. But I agree in totality with the submission of Governor Idris that the end result of any project is not in the ceremonial commissioning for people to witness, but in the overall benefit of the project to the user community. Are the new primary school buildings dotting the entire landscape of Kogi State not being effectively put to use? Or is the dreaded Meme Bridge not wearing a new look (double lane) now and people the happier for it? Are new tractors purchased by this administration not assisting farmers on their farms and the teeming unemployed youth not benefiting from the services of the tricycles?

This piece is not targeted at sector achievements which abound throughout the length and breadth of the state, but as Oral Roberts reflects, you cannot bring about renewal or change without confrontation. I urge the governor to keep up the good work.

Sani Mohammed wrote in from Ungwar Kura, Lokoja.

"Dennis Wholey also warned, "Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting a bull not to attack you because you are a vegetarian." In life, you can't carve your way to success without cutting remarks and that is why if you are afraid of criticism, you may not do anything until eternity."

Please, give Governor Goje a chance

An oft-repeated charge against most politicians is their desire for political aggrandisement. Surely, we would make a mistake that we shall never forget and forever regret by electing such politicians; especially those that we know held different public offices but couldn't do anything to better their society because of their selfish interest.

It is indeed an empirical fact that our infant state, Gombe State at a time like this, needs a person of strong mind, great heart, faith and ready hands. Men who have the society as their first and foremost loyalty; men like (Sarkin Yakin Gombe), Sardauna Ahmadu Muhammad Danjuma Goje who always thinks of the future of Nigeria first; places the society's need before his selfish needs; men who possess opinion and will; men of honour whose lust for office does not kill. In fact, we are very pleased to learn that some forces that do not wish to see good things happening to the people of Gombe State, and are fearlessly working day and night to subvert the wishes of the people and what (Allah) has destined among the forces, we have all calibre of people that have held positions both in public and private sectors that could not do anything for their people at that time and are now afraid of the great successes that Governor Goje has achieved within a very short period of time as our governor in the areas of road, water, education, health, agriculture and others, which

to them is a great challenge and by that, they don't have anything to tell or to show to their people when they come again for any elective position. Most of them are from federal level and they don't have anything to show that was done by them.

This is due to the fact that throughout their life history and records right from ward level up to federal level, they had never, ever even as a joke assisted a single individual in terms of anything whatsoever that could directly or indirectly bring progress to our state.

That includes even their closest relatives in the state. They are just deceiving and frustrating people. How then do they expect us to give them our mandate with these qualities of theirs? Really, they are not the type of leaders that we need. "History," as IBB always puts it, "is the best judgement of human action." What have they done for their society? What makes them feel that they should rule us? Or do they think that leadership is a joke? If they think so, then they should know that they have taken that joke a little too far. They should know that it is not always that money can buy everything, especially now that people are getting an awareness about who is good and who did what for them. There may come a time when unfocused men in the society cannot have the guts to come and seek for any political position in our midst. And that would be a shame and too distant future. You ought to have in

By Mohammed Auwal Saifullah

addition to money good record and leadership qualities for people to go for them.

These failed forces against Governor Goje now popularly called (ECOMOG) have nothing in common and the union is not in the interest of the common people of Gombe State, but for the fear of being irrelevant in politics (no doubt a common enemy brings about a common reason for unification). Goje has done everything in Gombe State that nobody would come and lie to the people that he too will bring to them sports, water, electricity, etc.

During Goje's tenure as the minister of state for power and steel, we had no problem of electricity nationwide. Among the group, we have those that their blood brother died as a result of hypertension because that person was not assisted to pay for house rent. There is even a person in the same group who bluntly said that he

had to buy the house that their late father left behind.

That henceforth, the house would be bearing his name instead of him to have built it for his younger ones. There is another person that who said he has made Bauchi as his base and the other one said he has made Jos as his base and has chosen to organise his political machinery from there. One other person from the group recently boasted in his ward that he would award scholarship to the youth. What amazement? Where was the idea since? Luckily enough, the people from the ward said that they don't like the scholarship. Another old man outside the group is warming up again to enter the Gombe Government House by 2007; and by that time, he would be 77 years old. What he would be coming back to do then is still a mystery. But maybe he wanted to resuscitate and re-award his balanga sugar company projects. These people have a lot of skeletons in their

cupboards, which they are bent on hiding by all means and by pretending to showcase Governor Goje as an errand boy just to achieve their personal ambitions. Thanks to God, our people have now really understood the happenings in Gombe State and are against the 'Yan Bariki politicians or Abuja politicians. These are the people that cannot come to their place for anything except during Sallah, naming ceremonies, wedding fatihah, burials, etc. Are these people the type to lead us? Haba, 'Yan Bariki, Goje dai ba shi ya bawa kansa wannan matsayin ba Allah (SWT) ne. As Allah said in the Holy Qur'an chapter 3 verse 26 on leadership: "Say oh Allah! Lord of Power (and rules). Thou giveth power to whom Thou pleasest and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest. Thou endorses with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest. In Thy hand is all Good. Over all things Thou hast power.

However, every right-thinking person knows that Governor Goje is the best governor Gombe State has ever had; for he is the best thing that has ever happened to Gombe State at this material time. He is the most patriotic personality and the state is proud to have produced someone like him. He is an esteemed statesman; a seasoned administrator; a bold initiator and a dependable team player. He is also a conscientious servant of the people and an efficient manager

"However, every right-thinking person knows that Governor Goje is the best governor Gombe State has ever had; for he is the best thing that has ever happened to Gombe State at this material time. He is the most patriotic personality and the state is proud to have produced someone like him. He is an esteemed statesman; a seasoned administrator; a bold initiator and a dependable team player."

of resources.

"History," as Sardauna always put it, "a good and credible politician is one who can contest and win election, who can support a candidate to win election, who is always loved to form part of any government, to give it a sort of credibility and who, when he is in a particular party, people tend to be attracted towards the party, because of his credible personality. Not just a parasite or a political office-seeker who simply joined politics to gain recognition. In conclusion, given the general situation and feeling on ground, we strongly believe that these failures called ECOMOG are simply nothing but "spoilers" in the game.

We all know that this game is not about traditional title; it is about the people's mandate that we cannot give you. You can go and do your Bariki elsewhere. You deserve the king of rejections that you now face. If you have listening ears or eyes, fine. Let me use this opportunity to tell all and sundry, including 'Yan bariki that Governor Goje has no grudges against anybody. He has forgiven all his political rivals as he has repeatedly said on many occasions.

His major preoccupation now and always is the development of Gombe State and whoever has that vision, let them come and join hands together, so that we can move our dear state forward. And if not, please give Governor Goje a chance. A chance for Goje is a vote for prosperity, continuity and perpetual development.

Mohammad Auwal Saifullah wrote in from No. 58, New Market, Road, Herwadana Quarters, Gombe, Gombe State.

Trust International

Foreign & Diplomatic

Iran: What next for the nuclear 'diversion' game?

By Abdullahi Bego,
Assistant Editor

There is something perplexing about the veneer of 'multilateralism' that the United States has adopted in its opposition to Iran's alleged attempt to develop 'nuclear weapons'. Until the active involvement of the European-3, namely Britain, France and Germany in a flurry of diplomatic activities to resolve the Iranian nuclear stand off, America had always sought to torpedo the Iranian attempt at developing peaceful nuclear technology, by threatening fire and brimstone over arguments of suspect authenticity.

The US opposition to Iran's attempt at achieving its objectives in the field of nuclear science has been long standing. Back in 1983, for instance, it was pressure from the United States which led the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to terminate a 'cooperation agreement' reached when inspectors from the IAEA went to Iran for inspections, under which the IAEA agreed to help Iran manufacture enriched uranium fuel as part of the country's ambitious programme in the field of nuclear power reactor technology and fuel cycle technology.

Increased US pressure has now ensured that the IAEA would refer Iran to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for possible sanctions, when its board meets on February 3, because of Iran's insistence to continue uranium enrichment in sites previously sealed by IAEA inspectors.

Is the West's (and particularly America's) opposition to Iran's attempt at acquiring nuclear technology a benevolent intervention to enforce the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or is Iran a victim, as it seems, of a range of political and geo-political issues which must be determined and addressed in keeping with President Bush's policy for a 'new Middle East'?

There are at least three factors which must be considered in attempting an answer to this question. One of these

is the coming to power, in Iran, of President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad nearly six months ago, seen in the West as a very conservative non-cleric leader determined to lead Iran down the path of nuclear armament.

Ahmedinejad's description of the Jewish holocaust as a 'myth' and his earlier call for the wiping of Israel off the face of the earth, although demonstrably political, have been interpreted in the US and the rest of the Western World as more evidence why Iran must be stopped from acquiring nuclear weapons.

The second factor is Israel. Throughout the Middle East, Israel is the only state with nuclear weapons capability. It is believed to be developing nuclear weapons at its Dimona site in the Negev area for over forty years now, and is also believed to have a stockpile of 100 to 200 nuclear warheads. Mordechai Vanunu's revelations to the British *Sunday Times* in 1986 also make the fact of Israel being a nuclear power an open secret.

One senior Israeli army officer even boasted to the Ha'areth newspaper sometime in 2002 that his country has several nuclear weapons, including their delivery systems, and can carry out attacks against Islam's holiest sites in Mecca and Medina if attacked by a Muslim country. And there have been talks lately that Israel might carry out pre-emptive air strike at Iranian nuclear facilities in the Natanz, Bushehr and Isfahan as it did with Iraq back in 1983, when it carried out a pre-emptive air strike against an Iraqi nuclear facility at Osirek; although this will complicate the issues and certainly draw an Iranian response.

Israel's long standing usurpation of Palestinian lands and its continuing crimes against the Palestinian people, plus the fact that it is surrounded by 'hostile' neighbours whose lands it has usurped therefore makes the emergence of a rival nuclear power

in the region eternally unacceptable to Israel itself, to America and the rest of the Western World.

In the case of Iran, it seems even more unacceptable since the State of Israel and the Islamic Republic have been each other's worse enemies since the Islamic revolution that brought the Iranian religious clerics to power in 1979.

The third factor, of course, has to do with America's growing unease with its inability to stabilize the situation in Iraq and the growing influence of neighbouring Iran in Iraq's political affairs.

Taken together, these factors conveniently deconstruct US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns' statement on November 30 last year that Iran must be banned from enriching uranium because it 'supports' international terrorism, 'undermines Iraqi sovereignty', has 'abysmal human rights record' and because Iran is 'not a democracy'.

If Burns' statement were anything to go by, it clearly shows that the US is not as much concerned about the alleged threat that the Iranian nuclear programme posed, as it is with other 'political' issues it is obsessed with. For instance, he seems to suggest that if Iran does not 'undermine' Iraqi sovereignty, does not 'sponsor' terrorism, and tries to improve its human rights record, whatever that means, the US would consider the country as a 'democracy' which could lead to the de-escalation of the confrontation now going on between the West and America on the one hand, and Iran on the other.

But even more mind boggling is the fact that while the US continues to apply pressure on the issue of nuclear 'proliferation', not even a speck such pressure was applied on Israel, which is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) but whose military officials have, whenever it was convenient, threatened to deploy nuclear force in the



President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad

event of an attack by a Muslim country. Paradoxically, no Muslim country in the Middle East or elsewhere has ever threatened such attack on Israel or ever boasted to use nuclear weapons to defend itself if attacked by Israel.

It is not clear what measure the UN Security Council would decide to take on Iran once the IAEA refers the country's uranium enrichment controversy in less than ten days from now. Clearly, the IAEA has not declared Iran in breach of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty.

That Russia and China, two members of the UNSC, have called for more dialogue and diplomacy to address the impasse and the fact that Iran has kept the door for further negotiations open could turn out to disappoint those bent on making a pariah of Iran, particularly the US, which would leave no stone unturned to slam punitive measures against the Islamic Republic.

More importantly, Iran has continuously denied trying to acquire nuclear weapons and all IAEA inspections so far have not found a 'smoking gun'. Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei has himself issued a Fatwa on August 9, 2005 forbidding the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons to underscore the fact, also powerfully repeated recently by President Ahmedinejad,

that Iran 'does not need a nuclear weapon'.

At a high level UN Summit in New York on September 15, 2005, President Ahmedinejad, while reiterating Iran's right to develop peaceful nuclear technology according to the provisions of the NPT, has also offered a compromise solution where Iran would allow foreign companies to invest and participate in the Iranian nuclear programme, so that the programme would remain transparent and open to the rest of the world.

Thus, while we wait for the decision of the UN Security Council when Iran is referred to it shortly, it is important that the next review of the NPT, which comes in 2007, critically looks at the issue not just of nuclear proliferation but also of nuclear disarmament. It must be able to ask, and determine, whether the big nuclear powers are themselves pursuing the path of disarmament. This is because, suddenly, no one is talking about what many countries in the Non Aligned Movement see as America's own violation of Articles I and II of the Treaty through its so-called Nuclear Weapons Sharing Agreements with NATO countries.

Records show, for instance, that at the time that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was being negotiated back in the 1960's, "NATO had in place secret nuclear

weapons sharing agreements whereby the United States provided nuclear weapons to be deployed by, and stored in, other NATO states... Up to 2005, the US was said to be supplying around 180 tactical B61 nuclear bombs for use by Belgium, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey". Even if the US can put argument to defend this operation, there is no doubt that it undermines the general spirit of the NPT, which aims to restrict the possession of nuclear weapons.

Times like this certainly call for caution and reflection. It was not long ago that the US made so much hype about Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction and being in a nebulous 'axis of evil'. It is now common knowledge that Iraq did neither have those weapons nor was it any more 'evil' than many current US allies and friends around the world.

Unfortunately, this knowledge comes after the waging of an illegal war, loss of countless number of lives, misuse of nearly a trillion dollars of American tax payers' money and the relegation of diplomacy as an effective tool for conflict resolution.

As many voices of moderation have continued to point out, diplomacy can, and does, have the potential to resolve the Iranian nuclear impasse and even determine that the country indeed 'does not need a nuclear weapon'.

"Ahmedinejad's description of the Jewish holocaust as a 'myth' and his earlier call for the wiping of Israel off the face of the earth, although demonstrably political, have been interpreted in the US and the rest of the Western World as more evidence why Iran must be stopped from acquiring nuclear weapons."

Trust International

Middle East & Asia

Israel warns Iran on nuclear work

The Israeli defence minister has warned that the country will not accept an Iranian nuclear capability.

Shaul Mofaz said that at this stage his government gave priority to diplomatic action aimed at convincing Iran to give up its nuclear programme.

But he added that Israel was preparing for any eventuality and had the "capability to defend itself", after Iran resumed nuclear research.

Iran insists the programme is purely aimed at meeting its energy needs.

However western countries suspect Tehran may be seeking to develop nuclear weapons, and talks over the

issue are stalled.

The UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) agency is due to meet on 2 February to discuss whether to refer Iran to the Security Council.

Mr Mofaz told a conference in Herzliya that Israel "must have the capability to defend itself, with all that that implies, and this we are preparing".

Israeli leaders have repeatedly stated that any military action would be part of an international effort, and Israeli officials have denied plans for a unilateral preventive strike.

Israeli concerns about Iran have grown since the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map".

The warning appears to

be a veiled suggestion that if diplomacy fails, Israel may be planning a repetition of its pre-emptive strike against Iraq in 1981.

At the time, Israeli aircraft destroyed the Osirak nuclear research centre near Baghdad.

However analysts say it would be hard for Israel to achieve similar success in Iran, which has learned from the Osirak attack.

Its nuclear sites are dispersed around the country and heavily protected.

Washington, Israel and many European powers distrust Iran, partly because it had kept its nuclear research secret for 18 years before it was revealed in 2002.

The crisis intensified earlier this month when Iran resumed research on uranium enrichment.

The campaign advert opens with a black background and the word "corruption," which explodes into flames. The same thing happens to "nepotism," "bribery," "chaos," and "stealing."

Then comes footage of Palestinian gunmen fighting the Israeli army, and an image of the Al Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third-holiest site.

"Our blood will be a wall to protect our holy site," the narrator says in closing.

An unusual sort of political advertising is hitting the Palestinian airwaves as the Islamic militant group Hamas campaigns in Wednesday's parliamentary elections.

The group is running for parliament for the first time, polling neck-to-neck with the Fatah party of Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and

Hamas campaign focuses on corruption

dismaying Israel, the US and Europe.

Hamas has focused on halting corruption and restoring law and order to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while Fatah has been unable to shed its corrupt image and overcome infighting and chaos.

The expected move into power by Hamas, which has killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings and still calls for Israel's destruction, has thrown Palestinians' international aid and future relations with the Jewish state into question.

Acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert met

with top military and political officials Sunday to discuss the growing likelihood that Hamas could dominate the elections.

The Hamas television ad was approved by the Palestinian election commission. Commercials for independent candidate Mustafa Barghouti and Fatah, meanwhile, resemble those of American political candidates.

In Barghouti's ad, Palestinians from a boy in a wheelchair to an elderly woman talk about how his policies would improve their lives.

The Fatah commercial says women are important to advancing the Palestinian cause.

Suicide car bomber kills three in Baghdad

A suicide car bomber killed at least three Iraqis Monday near the Green Zone housing the US Embassy and Iraqi government, and the US military said two American airmen died in a roadside bomb blast north of the capital.

Intensive efforts continued to secure the release of kidnapped American Jill Carroll, 28, with US and Iraqi authorities conducting joint operations in a bid to free the journalist. Carroll was abducted in Baghdad on Jan. 7.

The suicide bomber targeted a police patrol near the Iranian Embassy, which is close to the checkpoint into the Green Zone known as the "Assassins' Gate," said the top Baghdad police officer, Maj. Gen. Abdul-Razaq al-Samarie.

Two civilians and a policeman were killed and six Iraqis wounded, including five more policemen, al-Samarie said.

The two US airmen were killed and a third was wounded in an attack on a convoy Sunday near Taji, where a US air base is located 12 miles north of Baghdad, the military said.

The deaths brought the number of US military personnel killed since the war in Iraq began in March 2003 to at least 2,226, according to an Associated Press count.

Another car bomb exploded on a highway about 20 miles south of Baghdad, killing one Iraqi civilian and wounding four others, said police Capt. Hussein Shamil. Drive-by gunmen also shot dead a doctor who worked at the Iraqi Health Ministry as he drove to work in Baghdad's Saydiyah neighborhood, said police Capt. Qassim Hussein.

Carroll has not been heard of since her kidnappers released a videotape that was first aired on Jan. 17 and accompanied by a threat that she'd be killed if US forces did not release all Iraqi women in military custody.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

40th ANNIVERSARY OF SIR S AHMADU BELLO AND ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA



SIR ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA



SIR AHMADU BELLO

Our commemorative publication on the life and times of Sirs Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto and the Premier of Northern Nigeria and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister of Nigeria will continue till **January 31, 2006.**

This is to enable us accommodate all those who have indicated interest in the project but were unable to send their materials on time and those whom we were not able to reach.

Interested participants can book their advert space with the Special Projects Department on any of these numbers: **08037038663, 08062097206, 08023762061, and 08051680339, 08035864788 or 09-6720346**

Trust International

Africa

Building collapses in Kenya killing eight

A five-story building collapsed Monday in central Nairobi with more than 280 construction workers inside, killing at least eight people and injuring more than 50, witnesses and officials said.

Dozens of rescuers dug into the rubble with their bare hands while the injured were loaded into any available car to be taken to hospitals. The hand of one trapped person could be seen waving for help from under a concrete beam.

Tens of thousands of people ran to the site, clogging the roads and climbing on top of the debris to watch the rescue. Riot police deployed to the area began using truncheons to beat back the crowds and to clear roads for emergency vehicles.

At the same time, however, police appealed for anyone with emergency training to come to the scene and help the rescue.

Dozens of soldiers, firefighters, police officers and Red Cross workers responded, using crow bars and metal cutters to free those trapped.

An Associated Press reporter at the scene saw eight bodies of those killed in the collapse.

One of the construction workers said that 280 men were on the site. Another, who would not give his name, said an inspector had warned last week that the structure was unsafe and they were trying to stabilize the building.

"We saw the building sink slowly and then sway from side to side. As we saw this, we fled the area. We never got that far — it collapsed," said Serengo Wekesa, who had been working at a neighboring building.

One worker, James Ofunyi, said the workers were on their lunch break, with many asleep in the building when it collapsed.

"I was taking a nap after having had lunch when I heard someone shouting to run, but I didn't get downstairs fast enough because the building started falling," Ofunyi said. "I jumped to the other side."

Immediately after the collapse, hundreds of bystanders formed lines to carry away chunks of concrete and wooden scaffolding, which a front loader then pushed away from the site.

Two survivors were pulled from the building more than an hour after the collapse, prompting the crowds to erupt in cheers. But there were fears that more people were caught between the floors that collapsed on top of one another.

Parts of the exterior walls were still standing.

A nurse at Kenyatta General Hospital said more than 50 people had been admitted.

She hung up the phone without identifying herself.

The hospital issued an appeal for blood donations. The lower floors of the

building were filled with construction workers when it suddenly collapsed, said one of the laborers, Patrick Opiyo, who was digging for survivors.

"This is all about building standards," said army Brig. George Kyaka, who was leading the military response. "But those who are alive are the priority now."



Passers-by joined professional rescuers in the search

DR Congo troops fight each other

Many rebel soldiers have been integrated into the army. Two battalions of the Democratic Republic of Congo army are fighting each other close to the border with Uganda, reports from the area say.

The governor of North Kivu province, Eugene Serufuri, told the BBC that one group comprises soldiers drawn from former Mai Mai rebels.

The other battalion comprises soldiers integrated into the army from the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD).

The fighting is centred on the town of Rutshuru, 90km from Bukavu.

There are no details of casualties. Thousands of refugees are reported to be crossing into Uganda.

The Congolese army, backed by UN peacekeeping forces, has recently been engaging rebel groups in eastern DR Congo in an effort to drive them out ahead of

elections planned for later this year.

About 40 people have died in recent months, in fighting between Ugandan-based rebels and Congolese and UN forces.

The east has been out of the control of central government for many years.

Despite an end to the civil war, bands of militia groups still terrorise civilians and use the rich minerals and timber of the region to finance their operations.

Several neighbouring countries were drawn into DR Congo's brutal five-year conflict in which 3m people were killed.

Egypt releases Sudanese detainees

Egypt has freed most Sudanese women and children from among the hundreds of migrants arrested in a police operation in Cairo earlier this month.

At least 27 people died in a raid on a park, where many migrants, some facing deportation, were staging a sit-in.

Among the 233 released detainees were people from the war-torn Darfur region.

The United Nations refugee agency has said there have been no assurances from Egyptian authorities that the migrants would not eventually be deported.

Thousands of migrants, many of whom had been refused refugee status, had been camped in the park outside UN offices since September, saying they faced discrimination in Egypt.

They had been asking the UNHCR to send them to Western countries.

They were removed in a violent dawn raid by Egyptian police wielding truncheons and firing water cannon.

"We are extremely relieved that this group has been released, and an additional group of 39 - women, children and UNHCR card holders - will also be released today," said UNHCR official Radhouane Nouicer, AP news agency reports.

More than 220 of more than 600 people arrested remain in custody.

The UNHCR is speaking to them all individually to see whether any are refugees, who will then not face deportation.

The UNHCR has until 26 January to determine their legal status.

Millions of Sudanese fled a 21-year war between north and south.

The war ended a year ago but those in Egypt say it is not safe for them to return.

A separate war is still raging in the western region of Darfur.

Liberian leader breaks rape taboo

Liberia's new president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, came to power on a huge surge of support from women voters, hopeful that a woman leader would right some of the wrongs done to them during 14 years of civil war.

One of her first pledges was to do something about the scourge of rape, using new legislation that came into force the day after her inauguration.

Rape is not a word you often hear in polite society. It is certainly not something that presidents talk about in their inaugural address.

But after being sworn in on Monday, Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf stood up and said something that galvanised her audience.

"I know of the struggle because I have been a part of it," she said.

"I recall the inhumanity of confinement, the terror of attempted rape."

Sister Barbara Brilliant, a nun and midwife who has lived in Liberia for nearly 30 years - including right through the war - was in the audience and heard the taboo being broken.

They are so badly damaged that most times, they will not even have children.

"I felt, thank God. It's about time. Even here, we had a situation. We had soldiers who got over the fence," she said.

"The first thing we did was shut off the light, we lay on the floor and we did not dare to breathe. And all we were thinking of was, 'We don't want to be raped.' This is us, at our age!"

The war in Liberia was very brutal. Many of the rapes were carried out with extreme physical violence.

Working alongside Sister

Barbara on issues of violence against women is a group led by Grace Boiwu.

"If you have a man of the age of 50, 40, wanting to rape a girl of 13, 10, they have to be violent," Ms Boiwu said.

"If you have two or three men raping, they will have to be violent, or you have soldiers who can rape a group of young girls," she added.

"They are so badly damaged that most times, they will not even have children. There was one at the clinic, I think up till now, she's not even walking because of that."

What has finally made

this a public issue is the fact that the fighting is over, but the rape has not stopped.

Liberians like Grace Boiwu are being forced to confront the fact that the war may have done permanent damage to their society.

"Men were forced to have intercourse with their daughters in front of the soldiers," Ms Boiwu said.

"The soldiers forced brother and sister or son and mother to have sex in front of the husband ... So it broke the family ties."

A public information campaign on Liberian radio

reassures women that "rape is a wicked thing that the law can take care of".

But there is severe doubt about whether the law can handle rape cases in Liberia.

Until very recently, rape was aailable offence. That meant that even if a suspect was arrested, he could be out of jail and back home the next day - and in a position to intimidate anyone who might give evidence against him.

Lois Bruthus, the president of the Liberian Association of Women Lawyers, says that in the past, it was almost impossible to bring a successful prosecution.

Graft claims rock Kenyan cabinet

Kenya's opposition coalition has urged the president to dissolve his cabinet following new allegations of corruption against four senior ministers.

Over the weekend, a report by former anti-corruption chief John Githongo was published, saying the four had tried to block corruption investigations.

Two of the four, who include the vice-president and the finance minister, publicly denied the charges.

President Mwai Kibaki was elected in 2002 on a pledge to fight corruption.

But Western diplomats have launched strongly-worded attacks on his administration, saying corruption has continued unabated.

Energy Minister Kiraitu Murungi has angrily denied the claims, which he said were "untrue" and an attempt to bring down the government.

Mr Githongo resigned a year ago, amid reports that his life had been threatened because of his investigations into corruption allegations.

Opposition Orange Democratic Movement leader Uhuru Kenyatta said: "This is clear evidence that the government can no longer be trusted to conduct detailed and honest investigations into this saga."

In a 31-page report seen by the BBC, Mr Githongo accused Mr Murungi, Vice-President Moody Awori, Finance Minister David Mwiraria and sacked Transport Minister Chris Murungu of having links to a huge contract given to a non-existent company, Anglo-Leasing, to print new high-technology passports, and build navy ships and forensic laboratories.

President Kibaki is under increasing pressure.

He said he was told by ministers that his "digging around had gone too far" and that he should "go easy" with his investigations.

The money raised by the alleged scam was to be used to fund the ruling Narc coalition's campaign in elections due next year, Mr Githongo

said.

He said President Kibaki had known about the scam but had done nothing to stop it.

Mr Awori has also denied the claims, according to local media.

Mr Murungu was internal security minister at the time of the Anglo-Leasing contract, responsible for forensic laboratories.

He was sacked from government after the UK and US refused to give him a visa.

He has denied all wrongdoing.

The government promised to investigate the latest claims but said there would be no "lynch-mob tactics".

Mr Kibaki is already under pressure after losing a referendum last year on a new constitution.

Kenya has been plagued by corruption for many years.

Last year, the Anti-Corruption Commission said that 80% of new police recruits had either paid bribes or used their connections to get jobs.

Trust International

World Report



Osama bin Laden

Osama 'endorsement' boosts book's sales

Osama Bin Laden has seemingly propelled a book by an obscure historian into the US best-seller list, by endorsing it in an audio message aired on Thursday.

Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower had reached number 21 on the Amazon list by Sunday, leaping from below the 200,000 mark.

Author William Blum, 72, said he had no regrets about the endorsement.

The 320-page book is highly critical of US foreign policy, and says the War on Terror is doomed to failure.

The message, thought to be from Bin Laden, contained threats of new attacks on the US, but also a call for a long-term truce.

But he also told Americans: "If Bush carries on with his lies and oppression it would be useful for you to read the book *The Rogue State*."

Bin Laden quoted a line from the writer that he would end US interference in world nations if he became president.

Mr Blum, speaking from his Washington apartment, said he was "surprised and even shocked and amused" by the al-Qaeda leader's apparent words.

"I was not turned off by the endorsement," he told a New York radio station.

"I'm not repulsed and I am not going to pretend I am."

Mr Blum said there had

been no threats against him since the endorsement.

He has described the 11 September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington as "an understandable retaliation against US foreign policy", but makes clear that this is not a justification of them.

US Havana messages outrage Castro

Cuban President Fidel Castro has condemned the US for broadcasting illuminated messages on the building of its mission in Havana.

The US says the messages, including quotes from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are an attempt to break Cuba's "information blockade".

President Castro said it was a gross provocation and a US attempt to break off all relations with Cuba.

He called for a mass protest on Tuesday outside the US interests section.

In a three-hour live television address, President Castro launched a fierce attack on the US administration, describing it as being run by a bunch of bandits.

He said that his long-term ideological enemy was in no position to talk about human rights.

The large scrolling display appeared last week outside the building housing the US interests section, carrying messages such as "everyone has the right to free thought".

US diplomats say they are only attempting to launch a dialogue with the Cuban

Canadians to elect new parliament

Canadians are preparing to cast votes in a general election with opinion polls suggesting the first Conservative government in 12 years.

The election, the second in 18 months, was triggered when Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin lost a confidence vote late last year.

Conservative leader Stephen Harper has pledged to cut taxes, tackle violent crime and clean up government.

His critics say he will destroy social programmes and has extremist views.

Correspondents say that although the Canadian economy is buoyant, the Liberals have struggled to shake off accusations of corruption.

Two last-minute opinion polls put Mr Harper's Conservatives 10 points ahead of the Liberals - 37% to 27%. But they suggest the Conservatives will not gain a majority in the 308-seat house.

The political leaders headed across the country over the weekend to try to persuade any undecided voters among the 22.7-million-strong registered electorate.

The Bloc Quebecois' Gilles Duceppe makes a final plea to voters

Voters in 60,000 polling stations across six time zones will choose from candidates including the Greens, the left-wing New Democratic Party and French-speaking separatist Bloc Quebecois - but the main battle will be between the Liberals and Conser-

vatives.

Mr Harper, 46, said in Winnipeg on Sunday: "We can win because it is time for a change, time to move forward, time to get beyond the scandals and investigations and corruption."

"Let the Liberals claim, for Canada, this is as good as it gets. I know for our Canada, the best is yet to come."

Mr Martin, 67, told

supporters in Vancouver: "We have the numbers. We can stop Stephen Harper. We can elect a government that reflects the Canada we believe in."

"It is up to us. So I am asking you to dig deeper, go further, to fight harder."

The Liberals have been focusing on economic successes, pointing to eight cons-

ecutive budget surpluses.

But the BBC's Daniel Lak in Calgary says the corruption scandals that have beset the Liberals in recent years seem to matter more to Canadians than Conservative policies.

The confidence vote was triggered by a public inquiry that found Liberal politicians in Quebec had taken kickbacks in return for government contracts.

Chile's Bachelet Buoy women's hopes

Michele Bachelet's rise as the first Latin American woman to be elected president without a powerful husband appears to be galvanizing women in Chile and around the region, prompting demands not only for more political power, but social equality, too.

Chilean women are hoping her victory will help solve all sorts of problems, from a paucity of day care to domestic violence. They are also calling for equal pay with men and other signs of respect.

A political cartoon in a Santiago newspaper captured the feeling by showing a housewife leaving her husband at home: "When I get back, I want the house clean and dinner ready."

There remains only a handful of women with political power in Latin America. Among them are Argentina's first lady, Sen. Cristina Fernandez

de Kirchner, and Lourdes Flores, a former congresswoman running for president in Peru who predicts Bachelet's success will help her win.

"With what has started in Chile ... history in Latin America will be different and we will be two women leading our countries," Flores told the Chilean newspaper *La Segunda*.

There have been at least a half dozen female presidents in Latin America, but Bachelet is the first to win her place without the help of a husband's political career in a region where many countries were slow to give women the vote. Bachelet, a socialist pediatrician, is a separated mother of three.

Chilean women have high expectations for her presidency, which begins March 11.

"This is a major change," said Congresswoman Maria Antonieta Saa, a Bachelet supporter. "This represents pressure on Michelle. She needs a very clear agenda to try to end all forms of discrimination against women."

Thousands gathered to celebrate outside Bachelet's campaign headquarters when her victory was confirmed a few hours after voting ended in the Jan. 15 run-off election.

"Chile is no longer our fatherland - it's our motherland," actress Malucha Pinto proclaimed to a loud ovation.

Vendors did brisk business selling replicas of Chile's red-white-blue presidential sash to women who wore them with obvious pride.

"There were only women wearing the sash," Saa said in an interview with *The Associated Press*. "They feel they are part of women conquering power."

Their hopes clearly differ from what women have expected from male presidents.

Maria Fuentealba, a 49-year-old maid, said a woman president "will protect women who are beaten by their husbands and will create more

nurseries where women can leave their children and be able to get jobs."

One of the most frequent demands is for Bachelet to end wage disparities, citing studies that say men in Chile often earn up to 40 percent more than women in similar jobs in one of South America's strongest economies.

Bachelet, 54, who ran the health and defense ministries under outgoing President Ricardo Lagos, is seen by many women and men alike as having played a key role in reconciliation among Chileans after the divisive 1973-90 dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Noting that Bachelet herself was jailed and tortured under Pinochet, Roman Catholic Cardinal Francisco Javier Errazuriz praised her "for overcoming hatred."

"She is a sign of great confidence," he added.

Bachelet has acknowledged that her victory was a momentous step for women, but she also warns any doubters that she will be as tough a leader as any man.

At her first after-victory news conference she indicated that politicians negotiating for government jobs were wasting their time. She also pledged to make at least half her Cabinet women.

"I will make the decisions," she said, adding that "I was elected by citizens."

When a reporter asked about her love life during her presidency, she replied sternly: "You wouldn't be asking me that question if I was a man."

Still, Bachelet likely will find it difficult to shake the particular expectations that come with her gender in a region known for machismo.

"People will be harder on her, precisely because she is a woman," said Patricia Navia, a political scientist. "She herself has recognized that she will have to work double to demonstrate that she is capable of ruling the country."

Turkish court drops charges against Pamuk

A Turkish court on Monday dropped charges against Turkey's best-known novelist for insulting "Turkishness" in an interview with a newspaper, ending a high-profile trial that outraged Western observers and cast doubt on Turkey's commitment to free speech.

Orhan Pamuk went on trial Dec. 16 for saying "30,000 Kurds and 1 million Armenians were killed in these lands" in an interview with a Swiss newspaper.

The comment referred to two of the most painful episodes in recent Turkish history. The massacre of Armen-

ians during World War I, which Turkey insists was not a planned genocide, and recent guerrilla fighting in Turkey's overwhelmingly Kurdish southeast.

"The court dropped the case," said Haluk Inanici, the author's lawyer. "This case should not have been opened in the first place."

The controversy comes at a particularly sensitive time in the overwhelmingly Muslim country's push to join the European Union, which severely criticized the trial, questioning the commitment to freedom of expression in a country that opened membership negotiations with the bloc in October.

Woman arrested in "kill for a job" case

Brazilian police have arrested a woman they believe ordered the killing of a female former co-worker and an attempt on the life of another to get a permanent job next to a man she loved.

A duty police officer in Cubatao, an industrial city next to Sao Paulo, said Carolina Farias Santos, 22, confessed that she had hired friends for about \$1,300 to kill

Monica Tamer, a full-time employee at an oil processing company where Santos had worked temporarily.

Santos told police she wanted to work next to a man she had fallen in love with during her stint at the company. She had been hired to temporarily replace another woman, Renata Boreli, who was filling in while Tamer was on maternity leave.

In November, Boreli was

wounded as two assailants fired shots at her car, and then started to receive telephone threats warning her not return to work. The following month, Tamer, a mother of two, was killed.

Police traced phone calls to Boreli's house, which led them to Santos and four friends. Two were arrested along with Santos on Wednesday and two remained at large.

Marijuana growers gathered in Europe's pot-smoking capital on Sunday for a trade show that is taking on the trappings of a major industry fair, complete with scantily clad models, glossy brochures and, of course, samples.

But instead of posing next to muscle cars, the models explained the intricacies of hydroponics culture such as the "iGrow-box Intensive Irrigation System" and exhibitors showed off their bongos, grinders, rolling paper, reflective film, hemp-fabric apparel and how-to marijuana growing videos.

"This gives you an uplifting high, up in the mind, not in your body," marijuana cult-

Marijuana show aims for new high in Amsterdam

ivator Arjan Roskam said of his latest Cannabis Cup-winning strain, "Arjan's Haze #1".

Roskam, who says he has hosted celebrities such as 50 Cent and Eminem in his Amsterdam coffee shops, was selling his prize-winning plant seeds for 100 euros (69 pounds) alongside other strains such as the "Great White Shark" and "Hawaiian Snow".

Andre Beckers, the organizer of the International Highlife Hemp Fair, said he was expecting 15,000 to

20,000 visitors at the fair, held for the first time in Amsterdam instead of Utrecht, a smaller Dutch city to the southeast of the capital.

"This is part of the normalisation process," Beckers said. "People see this as a normal fair."

While Dutch "coffee shops" are allowed to sell small quantities of marijuana, growing and distribution of cannabis remain illegal in the Netherlands. Police were at the fair but did not appear to be taking action against the growers.

Marriage builds wealth more than being single?

Staying married has its benefits, especially financial, as a new US-wide study shows the wealth of a married person is almost double that of somebody who is single.

Divorce among US baby boomers reduced personal wealth by about 77 percent compared to that of a single person, while the financial standing among those who remained married almost doubled, according to a nationwide study released this week.

"If you really want to increase your wealth, get married and stay married. On the other hand, divorce can devastate your wealth," said Jay Zagorsky, author of the study and a research scientist at Ohio State University's Center for Human Resource Research. Married people will see an increase in wealth that is more than just adding the assets of two single people, according to the study that was published in the Journal of Sociology.

Those who remained together saw a 93 percent gain in wealth compared to that of a single person, while individuals facing divorce saw their financial situation deteriorate long before the decree became final, according to Zagorsky.

The study used data from surveys taken over a 15-year

period involving 9,055 Americans who were between 21 and 28 years old in 1985.

Those respondents who remained single had a steady, but slow growth in wealth, from less than \$2,000 at the start of the surveys up to an average of about \$11,000 after 15 years.

However, those who married and stayed that way showed a sharp increase in wealth accumulation after marriage, growing to an average \$43,000 by the 10th year of marriage or by about 16 percent a year.

For people who married and then divorced, there was a slow build-up of wealth during the early years of marriage and then a steady decline about four years prior to divorce.

"Many of these people may have separated before the divorce became official, which would help explain why wealth starts falling so early," Zagorsky said. "Divorce is often a long and messy process, and you can see this in the four-year decline in wealth." The study also cast doubt on a common assumption that divorcee is much harder financially on women than on men. In fact, it showed that women suffered financially only slightly more than men.



Participants of Improv Everywhere's 5th Annual No Pants! Subway Ride are detained by the New York City Police on the 59th St. uptown 6 train platform, Sunday, Jan. 22, 2006 In New York. Eight participants were detained by the New York Police.

Eight Nabbed for no pants subway ride in New York

From the waist up, they looked like perfectly normal commuters. That wasn't good enough for police.

Eight pranksters who dropped their pants and showed their underwear on the subway on Sunday were taken into custody and issued summonses for disorderly conduct. All were ultimately released, said Improv Everywhere, the group that organized the stunt.

The group said more than 160 riders participated in the fifth annual No Pants Subway Ride before police halted their No. 6 train about 5 p.m.

Charlie Todd, who founded Improv Everywhere in

2001, said it's not his group's intent to offend. He said he wants to create scenes of chaos and joy in public places around New York.

"It was our intent to make

people laugh," he said. "We try to give people a great story to tell."

Todd, a teacher and performer, said the police overreacted when they turned a

harmless event into something that inconvenienced lots of subway riders. A judge will determine whether those issued summonses will be punished.

Animal rights activists stage nude protest

Baring all in chilly weather, animal rights activists staged a naked protest Saturday in northeastern Barcelona to denounce the torture and slaying of animals to make fur coats.

Representing the number of minks it takes on average to make a fur coat, the 70 men and women lay down, curled up on the pavement outside

Barcelona city hall.

The protest, staged by AnimaNaturalis and PETA international animal rights groups, was watched by several dozen passers-by.

In a statement, AnimaNaturalis said millions of animals were captured, tortured and killed each year to make fur coats. In Spain alone, 26 million animals — among

them rabbits, foxes, minks and lambs — were killed in 2003 to make coats, the group said.

"If people could see the animals in fur farms, they would never use a fur coat," AnimaNaturalis president Leonora Esquivel, said in the statement. "The look on those animals' faces stays in your mind, a look that says: 'why?'"

Trust International

'Africa must be free of conflicts, hunger, disease and want'

I would like to extend our sincere appreciation, to President El-Bashir, the Government and people of the Sudan for the warm reception and generous hospitality they have extended to us since our arrival here in the beautiful city of Khartoum. May I congratulate the government and people of the Sudan on the fiftieth anniversary of their independence. May I also seize this opportunity to welcome all the Heads of State and Government as well as other heads of delegations to the sixth ordinary session of the assembly of the African Union.

Let me welcome President Viera of Guinea Bissau, President Nkurunziza of Burundi, and President Kikwete of Tanzania to our midst. And let me give the apology of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia, the first elected woman president in Africa, who is absent today because she is addressing her parliament and who will join us tomorrow. We will be able to give her appropriate welcome when she arrives.

Given that the theme of the Ordinary Session is "Education and Culture," we must take some time to reflect on the relationship between culture and education especially their centrality to our survival, prosperity and development as a continent. We must interrogate history to see how much we have lost from our communal values, the impact of foreign values and cultures, the implications not just for family and community but also for peace, security and development. Culture is the essential cement of every social group, it is the primary means of inter-communication as well as interaction with the outside world. It is therefore the soul, the anchor, the ability and the capacity for identify, stability and change.

Culture, in its widest and most complete sense, is the

Being a text of a speech by President Olusegun Obasanjo at the sixth ordinary session of the assembly of the African Union, Khartoum, the Sudan, January 23, 2006

means through which people give shape and meaning to their lives, convey the social, political, economic and technical fields of human endeavour. A people that fail to value their culture cannot value history, identify and protect those specific issues that give them identity and strength and they cannot make progress. From this perspective, therefore, the inter-linkage between culture and education cannot be over-emphasised. Having said that, I would leave the rest to my brothers and colleagues of Algeria, President Bouteflika who is ably represented and President Mbeki of Kenya who is also ably represented and they will be speaking to us on education and culture, in view of the fact that their two countries hosted the Ministerial Conferences on education and culture respectively. On this note, I welcome our invited guests, Professor Ali Mazrui and Director-General of UNESCO, whose presence here with us is an affirmation of our collective resolve to work with renewed vigour and determination to refocus attention on the important issues of education and culture.

Your Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to express my sincere appreciation for our collective efforts in repositioning Africa for peace, security, stability, development and democracy. We have demonstrated our preference for democracy and peace in all their ramifications and thereby we have started to turn around the view of an Africa characterized by endless violence.

Over the past year, particularly since our last gathering in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005, we have demonstrated the unprecedented capacity to champion the cause of

peace, unity and development in Africa. Our readiness to change the fortunes of our continent for the better has reinforced the hope and expectations of our peoples. With the parameters that we set to pursue the African Renaissance and the manner in which the implementation of the African Reform Agenda has been undertaken, it is obvious that we are on the right path and that we do mean business.

Distinguished colleagues, no doubt, the milestone reforms in governance and socio-economic development we recently introduced on the continent have begun to yield dividends. Our new ways have rekindled genuine confidence not only from within us but also from the perspective of the international community. More than any time before, the mood in Africa is generally positive and enthusiastic. Our development partners, to whom we are sincerely grateful, are today encouraged to sustain their role in complementing our efforts to transform our continent. The challenge before us therefore is to sustain the momentum, carry our people along, encourage best practices and consolidate the gains of reform.

Your Excellencies, at the last summit, we recommitted ourselves to continue to seek amicable political settlement in situations where conflicts persisted. Similarly, you will recall that we also mandated some follow-up actions on a number of initiatives where the final position of our Union remained pending. This, of course, is in the realization that it is only when peace and security reign that the dividends of our reform efforts will translate into socio-economic development and happiness of our long suffering peoples.

This summit gives us the opportunity to review critically these situations and to take stock of the achievements that have been made as well as the challenges that still lie ahead of us.

While there are enormous challenges ahead, I am pleased to state that we have recorded some modest achievements, in the areas of peace and Cote d'Ivoire mark positive developments in our collective and renewed determination to build a continent free of conflicts and instability. While unfolding situation in Democratic Republic of Congo and again in Cote d'Ivoire give us room for cautions optimism.

Similarly, the Union has made some strides in its attempts to resolve some socio-economic and political preoccupations. In this regard, Africa has made its modest contributions to the Review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) resulting in the outcome document adopted at the United Nations Summit. We also refocused attention on the promotion of gender equality and parity in the African continent through the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the resuscitation of the Pan-African Women's Organisation and the establishment of the African Women Leaders Think-Tank.

With regard of the deadly HIV/AIDS pandemic and related diseases, we have launched a continent wide awareness campaign, AIDS Watch Africa (AWA), and held series of conferences on the way forward on these issues. This year (2006) will mark the fifth year of the HIV/AIDS Summit in Abuja, and the sixth year of the Roll Back Malaria Summit. It will therefore be an auspicious time to assess and review progress in the efforts to implement the various plans and programmes of action. There is no doubt however that some progress has been made, as these issues have now been brought to the fore in our various national endeavours and modest successes have been recorded in the battle against these diseases.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce that a meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) is being hosted in Stockholm, Sweden by the Nobel Forum and the Karolinska Institute to find ways to better coordinate and integrate responses and financing for such diseases. Organised under the auspices of the UN Millennium Project, it will bring together representatives from Africa, the scientific and donor communities; and establish a unique public-private partnership model to maximize results.



President Olusegun Obasanjo

In our effort to find innovative ways to put agriculture at the core of our development agenda, we held a roundtable on fish production in Africa in 2005, the objective of which was to tap the potentials of aqua-culture as part of the food security and poverty alleviation agenda. It is my hope therefore that we will work together towards propagating, and putting into effect some of the knowledge of aqua-culture learnt from the different workshops held on this important source of food and employment creation.

An international conference on Water Security is scheduled for Abuja in February 2006 as well as an International conference on fertilizer later in the year. The way forward is to remain focused, exchange information and data on best practices, encourage mechanized agriculture without ignoring the peasants and small holders, and use the necessary inputs to expand productivity. We must never forget to link agriculture with processing and manufacturing.

A major conference to bring together all Finance Ministers in Africa, International Finance Institutions and other critical stakeholders in a follow-up to the commitments made at the G8 and the UN General Assembly in 2005 on financing for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in the continent is being planned for Abuja in March 2006. The conference will be co-hosted by Nigeria and the ADB.

The meeting of the Ministerial Follow-up Mechanism on the UN Security Council Reform, held in Bamako on 2

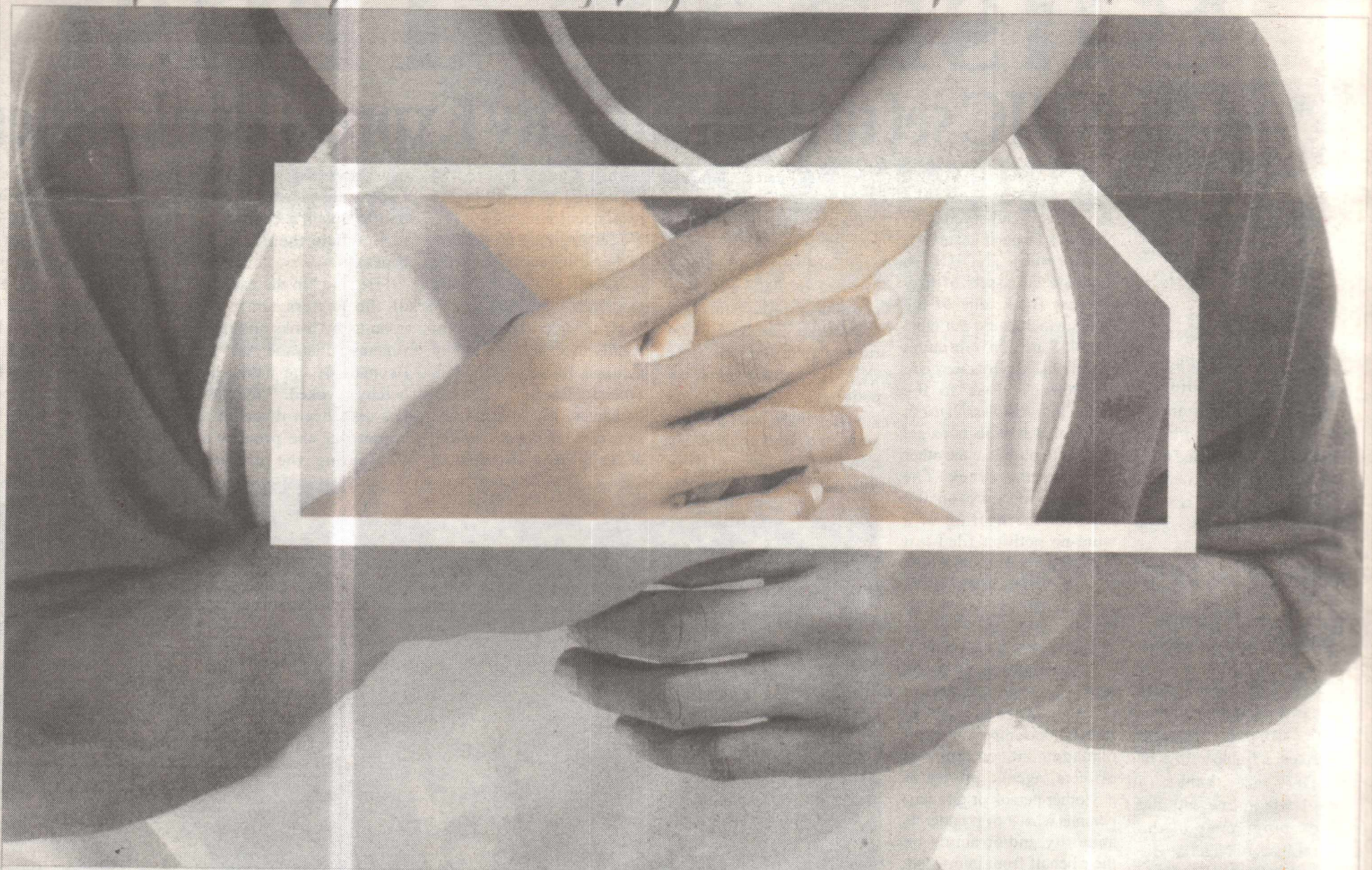
December 2005, decided to submit the Draft Resolution on the African Common Position to the United Nations General Assembly as was decided by the AU Extraordinary Summit of 31 October 2005. Consequently the draft, which embodied the Sirte Declaration, was resubmitted. The Summit should call upon the Mechanism to ensure that action is taken on the draft by the General Assembly when it resumes. To this effect, an appropriate draft decision will be submitted to the Summit.

I would like to seize this opportunity to commend the United Nations Secretary General, our brother Kofi Anan, for his doggedness and determination at ensuring that multilateralism remains anchored on solidarity, shared responsibility and joint management of global affairs. We hereby reaffirm our confidence in his leadership and total support for his commitment to global peace through rule-based international order.

Your Excellencies, in the area of multilateral cooperation, we have striven to strengthen Africa's relations with other regions of the world, and in particular with our development partners, by continuously engaging our friends and allies. In this respect, may I mention the G8 countries and the European Union for their understanding and support in "showing concrete concern for Africa's external indebtedness, leading to the agreement to write-off the debt of heavily indebted poor countries, (HIPC) which include fourteen Member States of the African Union.

To be continued tomorrow

"Over the past year, particularly since our last gathering in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005, we have demonstrated the unprecedented capacity to champion the cause of peace, unity and development in Africa. Our readiness to change the fortunes of our continent for the better has reinforced the hope and expectations of our peoples. With the parameters that we set to pursue the African Renaissance and the manner in which the implementation of the African Reform Agenda has been undertaken, it is obvious that we are on the right path and that we do mean business."



What is as **old** as the **past**?

What gave birth to the **present**
and will shape your **future**?

Clue

The word **Trust**
has become a verb



Business Trust

NDIC set to liquidate City Express Bank, others

ING to advise Access Bank on retail banking

Access Bank Plc has entered into a technical management Programme with the ING Banking unit called IGA (Institutional and Government Advisory - IGA), which specializes in advising financial institutions in developing markets.

According to a release from the bank, the program is for an initial two year period and will assist Access Bank in the implementation of its retail banking strategy.

Access Bank is one of the first three banks to consolidate in line with the reform programme of the Central Bank of Nigeria. The Dutch FMO (Netherlands Development Finance Company), which is also a shareholder in Access Bank, will provide partial funding and other support throughout the duration of the programme.

The bank disclosed that under the Technical management programme, two experts will be stationed in Nigeria to facilitate the rollout of the necessary structures to achieve the bank's growth objectives of becoming one of Nigeria's top five banks by 2010.

As the release posited, the experts from ING will advise Access Bank on the organisation of marketing as well as operational implementation of its retail banking strategy.

It would be recalled that Access Bank's CEO, Agboje Aig-Imoukhuede recently disclosed that the bank will be focussing on the retail end of the market post-consolidation



Prof. Charles Soludo, CBN Governor

Federal High Court in Lagos, at the weekend ordered the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) to liquidate the assets of City Express Bank, one of the banks which could not meet the N25 billion minimum recapitalisation requirement.

Sources close to the NDIC told *Business Trust* in Lagos that it expects to get the nod to liquidate the other 13 banks this week. The court's nod came on the heels of the hearing of a wind-up petition filed last Tuesday by Ubong-Abasi Inyang, counsel to the NDIC.

According to the presiding judge, Justice Tijjani Abubakar, the NDIC is given an interim injunction restraining the respondent (City Express Bank) shareholders, directors, staff, management, employees, officers, agents, privies or any other person or group of persons whatsoever under its authority and/or acting on their behalf from interfering with the assets and properties of the respondent (City Express Bank), pending the appointment of a provisional liquidator, or until otherwise ordered by the Court.

He also granted the Nigeria Police an interim order to assist the officers of the petitioner (NDIC) to remain in, or take control of the premises of the respondent (City Express Bank), and continue to

From Mohammed Shosanya
Correspondent, Lagos

within Lagos where the registered business of the respondent situates. The winding up petition of the NDIC, according to the Judge will however be heard on February 22, 2006. Our correspondent recalls that the governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, Professor Charles Soludo had on January 16, 2006 in Abuja shortly after the revocation of the licenses of the failed

banks, directed the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation to obtain a court order to liquidate them (the 14 banks).

He said "In the exercise of the powers conferred upon us by banks and other financial Institute Act, the licenses of the banks are hereby revoked. The NDIC has also been directed to commence the process of liquidating the affected

banks." Among the banks whose assets would be liquidated this week by the court order are; African Express Banks, All States Trust Bank, Assurance Bank, Eagle Bank, Fortune International Bank, Gulf Bank and Hallmark Bank Plc. Others are Lead Bank, Liberty Bank, Metropolitan Bank, Societe General Bank, Trade Bank and Triumph Bank.



L-R: Muhammadu Danmadamu, chairman, First Inland Bank Plc, Okey Nwosu, MD/CEO and Isah Ladan, the executive director, during the formal unveiling of the bank's new brand image in Lagos...recently.

CBN may blacklist more bank chiefs

Indications are that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN's) new corporate governance guideline and accounts verification of the 25 surviving banks will ultimately push out more bank directors from the industry.

It would be recalled that of the 762 directors confirmed by the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) at the end of 2004 only about 50 percent still remain in the industry as a result of the banking sector reform.

Nevertheless, expectation is that more directors will be shown the door, especially in the family owned banks that survived the recapitalization process.

This is because of a clause in the guidelines that bars two or more members of an extended family from serving on the same board and that limit government ownership to five percent in banks.

Sources close to the industry said weekend that banks that will be affected by the new CBN guidelines include Oceanic Bank Plc, Diamond Bank, First City

From Bright Ewulu
Deputy Business Editor

Monument Bank among others.

A Lagos shareholder, Mr Nona Awo said that the issue should not just be about family members serving on bank boards, adding that stooges could be set up in

their places which could be more detrimental.

According to him, the CBN should focus more on the issue of openness and accountability, saying that unless shareholders are made privy to the goings on in a company and its board the whole essence of good

corporate governance is defeated.

CBN Governor Prof. Charles Soludo had last year indicated that the apex bank was set to change the rule of banking saying whereby those whose only banking knowledge is to cook books will not survive in the

industry.

This is why jitters are spreading through banking halls over the CBN verification exercise and staff audit which will apparently show that some of the banks that made it to this time still have dirt in their books.

Jimoh Ibrahim confirms interest in NITEL

From Abdulwahab Isa
Business Correspondent, Lagos

Executive chairman of Global Fleet oil and gas, also owner of VGC Communications Limited, Chief Jimoh Ibrahim has confirmed that his firm will bid for the Nigerian Telecommunications (NITEL) if the National Council on Privatisation (NCP) decides to void the bid offer by Orascom group of Egypt.

Barrister Jimoh, whose Consortium, Assurance Acquisition Nigeria Limited also won 70 percent stake in National Insurance Corporation (NICON) October last year informed *Business Trust* in an exclusive interview over the weekend that he was already finalizing discussions with two renowned world

telecom firms, Ericsson and

British Telecom and they had given their acceptance to partner with his firm to bid for NITEL. "Ericsson has given acceptance of letter of merit. Ericsson is the biggest in the world and they are giving us support. They have accepted to go along with us and I am expecting another letter from British Telecoms (B/T). Until our letters are full before I begin to make noise. When you go there, if I have a letter from BT and Ericsson, I want to find out who BPE wants to sell NITEL to", Barrister Jimoh said.

He said his resolve to bid for the giant telecom firm is never to die as he will gladly offer his

congratulations to whoever emerges the preferred bidder noting "if they are ready to sell to Ericsson to who has the highest and biggest telecom company and BT whom everybody knows for their efficiency.

Well, we will just sit at the background to hold the board. But that is by the way. I am preparing, if we do not win, we will be a good loser, and we will not make comments but if we win, we expect congratulations", he said.

Orascom of Egypt had emerged the highest bidder for NITEL with an offer of \$256 million (about N33.3 billion) at a financial bids opening supervised by the National Council on

Privatization (NCP).

The bid offer price was said to be below the reserve price and the transaction was declared inconclusive by the NCP chairman, Mr. Akin Kekere Ekun.



Irene Chigbue, BPE DG

Business Trust

Ownership tussle persists as Kaduna Fair nears

The ownership tussle over the Kaduna International Trade Fair Complex between the federal ministry of commerce, the Kaduna State government and the (KADCCIMA) is far from over. Briefing newsmen in Kaduna, KADCCIMA president Hajjiya Sarat I. Aliyu said the federal ministry of commerce last week set up a committee to iron out the problem which has been simmering since the complex was constructed by the late General Sani Abacha in 1987.

While the federal government has hung on to its ownership through the ministry of commerce, the Kaduna State government as well as the KADCCIMA have tried to wrestle ownership from Abuja.

Hajjiya Saratu however expressed the hope that with the committee set up by the permanent secretary ministry of commerce and KADCCIMA as well as Kaduna state government officials the problem will be resolved after this year's trade fair slated for between February 17 and 25.

Also briefing newsmen at the occasion the chairman of the main organizing committee of the 27th Kaduna International Trade Fair, Alhaji Wada Yunusa said the theme of this year's fair is, "consolidating the impact of the reforms in commerce, Industry

From Sani Babadoko
Regional Editor, Kaduna

and Agriculture".

He said exhibitors are expected from Egypt, Ukraine, Niger Republic, Peoples Republic of China and Germany adding that President Obasanjo is expected to declare it open.

Alhaji Wada said this year's fair is unique considering the fact

that the opening ceremony will be witnessed by all the European Union (EU) Ambassadors in Nigeria. The KADCCIMA, director-general, Alhaji Usman Saulawa called on state governments to use the opportunity of the fair to express their commitment to the reforms and the economic development of their states.

N. Delta group demands \$1.5bn from Shell

From Mohammed Shosanya,
Lagos

Militants holding four foreign oil workers hostage have said they will shortly resume their attacks in the Niger Delta. The militant group, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) that has waged a month long campaign of sabotage against the oil industry has again called for Royal Dutch Shell to pay \$1.5 billion in pollution compensation to affected villages in the Niger Delta or make a firm commitment of its desire to pay immediately.

In an email the group said: "When this is done, we will still not halt our attacks, but concentrate less on Shell and spread our attacks evenly between the companies operating in Nigeria."

Meanwhile, the NUPENG and PENGASSAN oil workers' union issued a joint statement

warning they would withdraw their workers if the government failed to control violence.

The statement said: "It needs be mentioned that if the restiveness and consequent harassment and violence on workers in the oil and gas industry persist, we shall not hesitate to withdraw our members in the various oil and gas companies operating in the region." The unions said that 22 people have been killed since January 11, 2006 when militants kidnapped four foreign oilmen at a Shell oilfield and sabotaged pipelines. "...we will still not halt our attacks, but concentrate less on Shell".

"Our attention has been drawn to the violence being unleashed by a militia group in the Niger Delta on our members,

The Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA) and the African Development Bank are currently reviewing the activities of the Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF) to harmonise its operational manual.

The NTCF consisting of 25million US Dollars was created by the federal government as funding window from the Nigerian Trust Fund (NTF) with the African Development Bank

FG reviews technical fund performance

By Abubakar Haruna,
Reporter

(ADB) group in 2004 to promote technical cooperation and integration in the African continent. The goal was to facilitate effective participation of the African continent within the rapidly globalising world economy.

Speaking during the two-day review meeting in Abuja yesterday, the acting director of the Technical Cooperation in Africa, Engr. Sule Yakubu said that the meeting was aimed at harmonizing and ensuring the sustainability of the negotiations so far undertaken under the fund between Nigeria and ADB.

He stated "Since the creation of the NTCF, a lot of negotiations have gone into ensuring its operationalisation. Series of meeting held between the technical team from Nigeria and ADB"

According to him, the negotiations include among others, signing of the Technical Cooperation Agreement (TCA) on 5th April, 2004, between Nigeria and the ADB to create the NTCF to be jointly administered by DTCA and the ADB, and negotiations on the operationalization of

the NTCF held in Tunis from 12th -16 June, 2004.

Earlier, the minister of Cooperation and Integration in Africa, Senator Lawan Gana Guba who was represented by his permanent Secretary, Dr. Ada Okuwasa described the NTCF fund as the first of its kind to be instituted by an African country at ADB with the objective to promote regional cooperation and integration in Africa.

She stated; "From the responses we have received thus far within the relative short period of existence of the fund, I wish to place on record that the concept and of the NTFC have been well received"



Idris Waziri, commerce minister

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Business Trust

Motoring

Tips

The size and makeup of your family and the types of activities in which you participate influence what type of vehicle is best for you. Can you get by with a small, economical sedan, or do you need the extra passenger and cargo space of a minivan or sport-utility vehicle? Do you need something practical, but really want something sporty? Then perhaps a sport sedan or a modern wagon is the best compromise. Whatever your needs, you have a greater range of choices now than ever.

What kind of car should you buy? Safety, reliability, economy, and personal concerns such as ease of access, child-seat compatibility, and size of the cargo area should be considered when purchasing a family car.

"Finding the right family vehicle doesn't have to be a difficult, or long, process—if you invest some time to research your options before you go out shopping so that you know what to look for," said David Champion, the director of Consumer Reports' Auto Test Facility in East Haddam, Conn. Champion has three kids. "Parents need to think about how they'll be using the vehicle, what type of cargo they intend to carry, and how their needs may change during the years they own the vehicle."

In general, parents should focus their search on a vehicle with a roomy and versatile interior, plenty of cargo space, ease of access, and windows that make it easy for kids to look outside. "If they can see what's going on, kids are much happier," Champion said. "If the back seat is low, they can't look out the window. And that can trigger boredom and bickering among siblings."

Four-door sedans and sporty wagons are fine for families with one or two children. Bigger families (and those that use the family car for long road trips or need room for carrying friends) should consider a vehicle with a larger cargo area and/or more seating capacity.

Culled from *Customercare.com*



Peugeot 207

Peugeot 207 debuts, to succeed 206

The Peugeot 207, has been designed to succeed but not replace the 206 with three strong points of visual appeal, personality and technical ability.

Indifferent, the 207, offers clear and appealing advantages that turn the need for mobility into genuine driving pleasure Peugeot the car manufacture said.

An original design with two different front styling looks, but both with large headlamps, one with a "classic" styling look, the other more "sporty", featuring a distinctive "triangular" profile that reveals a large glazed surface area, characterised by sculpted wheel arches and a powerfully curved rear design.

According to Peugeot a length of 4.03 m, a wheelbase of 2.54 m, a width of 1.72 m and a height limited to 1.47 m create a balance, a sense of

By **Hamisu Muhammad,**
Business Reporter

dynamism and security, reinforced by wide tracks and large wheels.

It also added that precise control and durability are the hallmarks of the 207's suspension, which is 'assisted' by power steering that feels efficient and comfortable both in town and on the open road

The car statement said

petrol versions come with three engines, 1.4 litre 54 kW (.75 bhp), - 1.4 litre 65 kW (.90 bhp) and 1.6 litre 80 kW (.110 bhp), soon to be supplemented by new high-tech engines, a result of the cooperation between PSA Peugeot Citroen and the BMW Group.

While the Diesel range features three HDi engines and a diesel particulate filter system (DPFS), 1.4 litre 50 kW

(.70 bhp), 1.6 litre 66 kW (.90 bhp) and 80 kW (.110 bhp). They share a liking for economy and driving pleasure, as well as respect for the environment, with CO2 emission values ranging from 120 g/km to 126 g/km.

In the 207, interior space is equipped with its length of 1.675 m. Numerous large storage areas (12.2 litre glove box with air conditioning) and a regularly shaped boot with

a capacity of 270 dm3 VDA housing the spare wheel under the floor, bears witness to a meticulously designed layout.

With new accessories that flatter the senses, such as automatic dual-zone air conditioning, fragrance diffuser, static directional lighting, and not forgetting the JBL hi-fi system and its refined acoustic environment.

Toyota introduces Camry 2007

Toyota Motor Corporations aims to break new ground and tug on some heartstrings with a bilingual ad that will run during this year's Super Bowl.

The hybrid version of the Camry comes out in May. The Camry has been

America's best-selling car for eight of the last nine years.

Toyota says about 4 percent of its Prius and Highlander hybrids are currently bought by Hispanics.

But the company says that data can be imprecise because it's based on

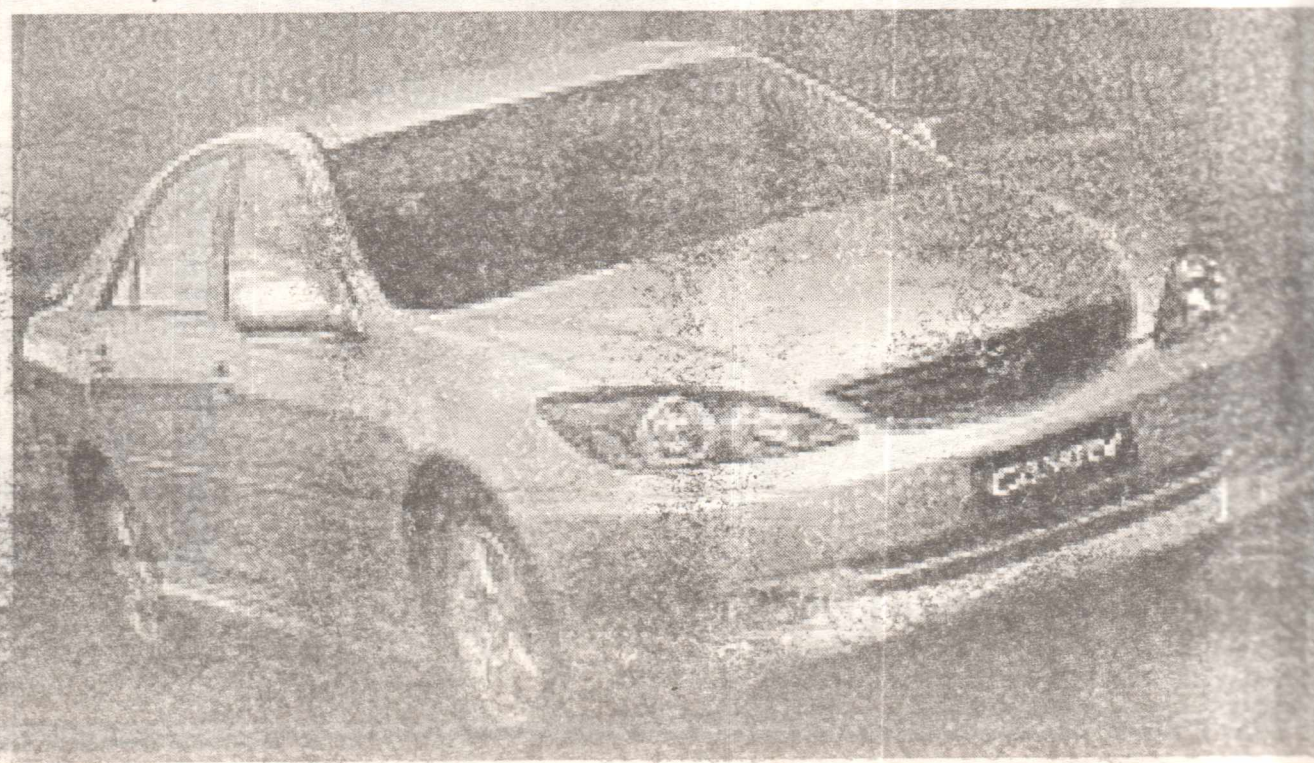
buyers' surnames. Around 4.2 percent of all vehicles were bought by Hispanics in 2005, according to J.D. Power and Associates.

Toyota says the Super Bowl is popular with Hispanic viewers.

Twenty-five percent of all Hispanics over the age of 18

watch the game, and half of those are under 35, a key demographic for the automaker.

The ads will reappear this spring on both English- and Spanish-language channels. Farley said the company also is working on spots that are geared to blacks and Asians.



2007 Toyota Camry

Auto briefs

BMW to build up to 10% fewer minis

BMW, said it expects to build up to 10 percent fewer Minis this year due to the retooling and expansion of its plant in Oxford, Britain.

After selling just over 200,000 Minis in 2005, BMW estimates a production cut of between 15,000 and 20,000 units in 2006. The company had already said early in November that it would build fewer Minis but had not given a figure at the time.

European car sales fall by 0.7%

European car sales dropped by 0.7 percent to 15.2 million in 2005 with most European automakers reporting falling sales, the European Automobile Manufacturers Association said yesterday. Italy's Fiat SpA and French carmakers Renault and PSA Peugeot Citroen SA were the worst. Fiat reported a 1.2 percent drop in sales compared to 2004. Renault was down 5.2 percent and the PSA group by 2.9 percent. General Motors Corp., which makes Opel and Saturn, fell 1.1 percent.

Germany's BMW Group, which is an AG backed by the BMW Group, posted a 9.8 percent increase. Volkswagen, which is the most cars at 2.94 million also reported slightly stronger sales at 3.9 percent.

Business Trust

Analysis

Clogs in insurance sector recapitalization

As the race towards re-capitalisation of the insurance sector takes off in earnest, **Abdulwahab Isa** of our business desk (Lagos bureau) in this analysis takes a look at the trend in the sector and argues that the huge successes

to stand the test of time. And where barriers capable of inhibiting its steady growth are noticed, such are eliminated from its path.

With the successes the reforms and re-capitalisation of banks have recorded, the federal government through the ministry of finance is on

mergers and acquisition talks. And when last week CBN made public pronouncement on the fate of non-recapitalised banks, it ordered revocation of operating licenses of the 14 affected banks. The minister of finance Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala blew whistle for re-

government decision as untimely.

Yet some welcome it as most imperative if the sector must be well-positioned. Similar to the skepticisms and criticism that greeted the proposed new capital base for banks by the CBN, which ultimately fizzled out and paved

insurance firms are adopting the modalities of banks to raise funds to capitalize: private placements and going to the capital market to raise funds through public offers.

The managing director of Sovereign Trust Insurance Plc, Mr. Seun Ajayi confirmed to *Business Trust* that his firm

include tax incentives from federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS), incentives from Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) as well as Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

However, the face of the insurance sector may never be the same again at the end



Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Minister of Finance



Chief O. E. Chukwulozie, Commissioner for insurance

recorded in the re-capitalisation of the banking sector may not be attainable in insurance due to seeming public apathy to insurance stocks.

A replay of the on-going overhaul of the banking sector whose cardinal strength is the concluded mandatory N25 billion re-capitalisation for all the existing banks was last September extended to the insurance sub-sector, obviously another vital sector of the economy.

The banking sector and indeed insurance over the years have been viewed as inseparable key ingredients capable of reshaping the economy of a given nation

course to carry out 'surgical operation' on insurance sector.

The recapitalization of the sector is being driven by the sectors' regulatory agency, National Insurance Commission (NAICOM). Already, anxiety of huge casualties in the face of the concluding stage of the exercise is now visible within the rank of insurance operators and chieftains.

When the Central Bank of Nigeria drew curtain on the recapitalization race 31st December 2005, only 25 banks crossed the N25 billion hurdle out of the hitherto 89 existing banks. This was even after collapse of several

capitalization of insurance sector. From a hitherto existing capital base in ranges of N150 million (life Insurance business); General Insurance (N200 million), composite (N350 million) and reinsurance (N350 million), the minister has raised the stake, and would expect insurance underwriters that will remain in the business to capitalize to the tune of N2 billion for (life insurance), N3 billion for General Insurance and N10 billion for reinsurance underwriters on or before February 2007.

As expected, divergent reactions trailed the announcement. A cross section of operators tagged the gov-

way for commendations, the sing song by operators of insurance sector is praises and commendations for a well conceived policy.

And in earnest, existing insurance firms are busy strategizing on ways and means to achieve the new capital base. As at last week, chief executives of insurance firms who spoke with *Business Trust* unfolded their plans towards meeting the minimum recapitalization.

More firms have concluded plans to convene board meetings and extraordinary meeting where crucial decisions on this issue are to be taken. Nonetheless, indications have shown that in-

will adopt the two strategies. Mr. Tony Osame of Niger Insurance Plc also spoke in the same direction.

In all of these however, analysts have expressed reservations on the replay of huge success recorded by banks in their public offer initiatives, and argued that public apathy towards insurance may not endear its stocks to the public as witnessed in the banking sector. Of course, the assertion represents a personal opinion which only time and event can prove right or otherwise.

The palliatives also known as incentives promised by the regulatory agency are yet to be in place. These

of the recapitalisation exercise expected to end February 2007. The terrain will be dominated by active players who have enough financial muscle to underwrite risk businesses in such capital intensive sectors as oil and gas and aviation.

Insurance is vital to National development. It is rated as a productive resource which enhances the quality of life and ensures the development and survival of other businesses in general. The main purpose of this vital sector apart from its basic function is to enhance national development through effective wealth creation, protection and conservation.

"In all of these however, analysts have expressed reservations on the replay of huge success recorded by banks in their public offer initiatives, and argued that public apathy towards insurance may not endear its stocks to the public as witnessed in the banking sector. Of course, the assertion represents a personal opinion which only time and event can prove right or otherwise."



Offer-Circular Pursuant to the Debt Management Office (Establishment) Act 2003 and the Local Loans (Registered Stock and Securities) Act (Cap 214) LFN 1990

THE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
on the authority of the
DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE
on behalf of the
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA
Offers for Subscription by Auction and is authorized to receive applications for
N25, 000,000,000

3rd FGN BOND 2009 (3-YEAR TENOR)*

Application List opens 23rd January 2006
Application List closes 25th January 2006

- Interested investors and authorized dealers (Banks, Discount Houses and Stockbrokers) are invited to collect application forms from any office of the Central Bank of Nigeria ("CBN") nationwide.
- Interested members of the public are to submit their bids through any authorized dealer nationwide to reach the CBN, Lagos not later than the closing date as specified. Application forms are also available on www.cenbank.org and www.dmo.gov.ng for download and completion.
- Authorized dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A bid may be for own account or made on behalf of interested members of the public.
- Completed application forms should be submitted by the Authorized Dealers to **Issues Office, 5th Floor, Old Building, Central Bank of Nigeria, Tinubu Square, Lagos.**
- This is the 1st in the series of the programmed issues for the **1st Half of 2006** as set out below**:

Month	Tranches	Opening	Closing
January 2006	N25,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 1 (3-Year Tenor)	23rd January 2006	25th January 2006
February 2006	N10,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond Series 2 (3-Year Tenor) N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 3 (5-Year Tenor)	20th February 2006*	22nd February 2006
March 2006	N10,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 4 (3-Year Tenor) N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 5 (5-Year Tenor)	27th March 2006	29th March 2006
April 2006	N10,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 6 (3-Year Tenor) N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 7 (5-Year Tenor)	24th April 2006	26th April 2006
May 2006	N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 8 (5-year tenor)	22nd May 2006	24th May 2006
June 2006	N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2013 Series 9 (7-year tenor)	26th June 2006	28th June 2006

- Payment in full for the amount of the accepted bids must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30 p.m. on the allotment day (i.e. 2 days after closure of Application List).** This will normally be effected by direct debit to the account of the Authorized Dealers who should ensure that their accounts with the CBN are adequately funded for this purpose.

*The DMO reserves the right to vary the amount allotted in response to market dictates.
** The Issuance Calendar may be revised in response to market realities.

Note: The issuance will continue during the second half of the year, the issuance programme for the second half of the year will be published in due course.

SUMMARY OF THE OFFER

ISSUER: Federal Government of Nigeria ("FGN")
THE ISSUE: N25 billion 3rd FGN BOND 2009 Series 1
UNITS OF SALE: N1, 000 per unit subject to a minimum subscription of N10, 000 and in multiples of N1, 000 thereafter.
PURPOSE: To restructure part of the outstanding 91-day NTBs into longer-tenored bonds, provide benchmark instrument for the pricing of other securities in the capital market, facilitate the development of the bond market in general as well as fund the budget deficit.

TENOR: 3 years
INTEREST RATE: To be determined by auction. The Marginal Rate that clears the volume on auction or the highest accepted rate becomes the coupon for the issue.

INTEREST PAYMENT: Payable semi-annually.
MATURITIES: The series will mature as shown below:

N25 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 1	27th January, 2009
N10 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 2	24th February, 2009
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 3	24th February, 2011
N10 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 4	31st March, 2009
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 5	31st March, 2011
N10 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 6	28th April, 2009
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 7	28th April, 2011
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 8	26th May, 2011
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2013 Series 9	30th June, 2013

REDEMPTION: Bullet repayment on the maturity date.

STATUS:

- Qualifies as securities in which trustees can invest under the Trustee Investment Act
- Qualifies as Government securities within the meaning of Company Income Tax Act ("CITA") and Personal Income Tax Act ("PITA") for Tax Exemption for Pension Funds amongst other investors
- To be quoted on The Nigerian Stock Exchange
- Not subject to a single obligor limits for banks
- Zero weighting for capital adequacy purposes for banks
- Qualifies as liquid asset for liquidity ratio calculation for banks

SECURITY: Issue of Bonds is based on the full faith and credit of the Federal Government of Nigeria and is charged upon the general assets of Nigeria.

PAYMENT TERMS: Payable in full on application

UNDERWRITING: This offer will not be underwritten at the instance of the FGN

PARTIES TO THE OFFER

ISSUER: Federal Government of Nigeria
ISSUER'S AGENT: Debt Management Office
AGENT BANK: Central Bank of Nigeria
STOCKBROKER: Trade Link Finance and Securities Ltd.
REGISTRAR: Central Bank of Nigeria

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2006

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
CUTIX PLC 10	3.17	140,000		445,333.80
Sector Totals	10		140,000	445,333.80
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC. 2	2.21	15,250		32,052.50
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC. 1	0.90	46,480		41,832.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC. 2	18.60	500		9,300.00
PRESKO PLC. 3	11.50	10,990		120,950.00
Sector Totals	8		73,220	204,134.50
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC. 27	2.80	449,474		1,243,708.80
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC. 17	6.00	101,045		632,952.00
Sector Totals	44		550,519	1,876,660.80
ACCESS BANK PLC 168	2.68	7,949,394		21,357,901.97
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC. 20	9.10	2,208,153		20,094,192.30
DIAMOND BANK PLC 1	7.75	30,000		232,500.00
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC. 3	2.26	27,745		62,703.70
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC 5	5.11	113,000		577,430.00
FIDELITY BANK PLC 2	2.93	38,470		112,717.10
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC. 465	33.61	9,511,274		314,301,072.72
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC. 4	1.14	216,250		246,525.00
GTBANK PLC. 288	13.05	5,861,860		76,277,719.70
INVESTMENT BANKING 23	4.57	1,478,743		6,757,855.51
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC. 1	0.84	58,214		48,899.76
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC. 138	8.78	4,926,887		42,218,788.90
NAL BANK PLC. 6	2.80	9,435		26,418.00
OCEANIC BANK PLC 68	5.86	1,930,463		11,319,068.65
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC 1	1.91	2,200		4,202.00
PLATINUM BANK PLC 2 ½	2.60	100,000		260,000.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC. 155	13.00	4,103,084		53,309,147.64
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC. 75	25.48	346,499		8,828,794.52
WEMA BANK PLC. 19	3.74	166,457		622,549.18
ZENITH BANK PLC 15	19.64	93,195		1,830,349.80
Sector Totals	1,459		39,171,323	558,488,836.45
CHAMPION BREWERIES PLC. 1	1.78	6,500		11,570.00
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC. 85	101.00	488,345		49,490,052.00
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC. 370	36.00	2,493,317		92,228,617.48
Sector Totals	456		2,988,162	141,730,239.48
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC. 69	33.75	660,395		22,110,752.06
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC. 1	6.50	437		2,840.50
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC 5	7.46	38,415		275,148.40
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC. 128	16.50	3,709,479		61,211,658.86
Sector Totals	203		4,408,726	83,600,399.82
BERGER PAINTS PLC. 13	3.90	68,843		275,006.86
CAP PLC. 1	8.86	3,740		33,136.40
D. N. MEYER PLC. 5	4.00	32,731		132,024.00
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC. 7	4.31	82,500		355,132.55
Sector Totals	26		187,814	795,299.81
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC. 2	1.33	2,196		2,920.68
Sector Totals	2		2,196	2,920.68
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC. 6	1.27	170,000		213,400.00
C F A O NIGERIA PLC. 12	3.40	43,882		147,952.66
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC. 41	16.20	78,291		1,268,314.20
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC. 100	16.22	938,710		15,364,617.82
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC 123	20.62	620,112		12,936,039.74
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC. 4	0.81	14,311		11,591.91
Sector Totals	286		1,865,306	29,941,916.33
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC. 3	1.09	7,267		7,921.03
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC. 4	21.50	5,270		113,305.00
Sector Totals	7		12,537	121,226.03
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC 40	26.50	132,533		3,506,832.90
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC. 128	65.50	503,447		32,970,983.53
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC. 65	26.15	196,568		5,130,423.00
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC. 56	60.98	109,932		6,668,464.35
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC. 37	187.00	1,156,579		215,417,421.30
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC. 6	15.48	61,628		918,527.09
Sector Totals	332		2,160,687	264,612,652.17
EVANS MEDICAL PLC. 12	2.40	344,250		856,080.00
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC 27	10.00	258,945		2,612,250.60
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC 4	5.36	18,000		96,480.00
PHARMA-DEKO PLC. 1	4.55	2,200		10,010.00
Sector Totals	44		623,395	3,574,820.60
TOURIST COMPANY OF NIGERIA PLC 1	3.80	200		760.00
Sector Totals	1		200	760.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC 6	2.98	157,500		460,120.00
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC. 5	0.73	151,500		111,110.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC. 81	4.85	1,124,245		5,384,225.69
VONO PRODUCTS PLC. 11	1.33	129,245		174,404.60
Sector Totals	103		1,562,490	6,129,860.29
AHICO INSURANCE PLC. 28	2.18	1,221,587		2,636,174.56
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC. 22	1.50	390,100		594,080.00
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC. 4	1.70	135,000		229,500.00
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC. 1	1.07	10,000		10,700.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC 2	1.45	5,200		7,540.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC. 18	2.90	472,278		1,341,768.24
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC. 5	2.04	100,967		203,934.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC. 10	2.91	155,760		451,196.60
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE 11	1.42	286,400		408,302.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC. 28	1.30	1,721,930		2,285,655.60
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC. 7	3.20	116,445		369,524.00
Sector Totals	136		4,615,667	8,538,375.00
C & I LEASING PLC 4	1.20	15,000		18,420.00
Sector Totals	4		15,000	18,420.00
JAPPAUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC 12	1.92	263,000		507,487.70
Sector Totals	12		263,000	507,487.70
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC 0	1.52	0		0.00
VAN LEER CONTAINERS (NIGERIA) PLC. 1	1.79	3,066		5,488.14
Sector Totals	1		3,066	5,488.14
AFROIL PLC. 5	0.51	280,000		142,000.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC. 97	43.00	286,960		12,512,671.13
CONOIL PLC 79	90.00	47,733		4,294,662.22
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC. 18	2.75	418,219		1,196,263.09
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC. 30	156.50	23,839		3,748,034.00
OANDO PLC 113	94.10	150,520		14,223,920.00
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC. 19	117.00	13,932		1,625,149.00
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC 18	185.02	14,278		2,679,332.00
Sector Totals	379		1,235,481	40,422,031.44
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC. 34	9.13	451,253		4,049,015.88
Sector Totals	34		451,253	4,049,015.88
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC. 9	0.38	105,237		39,990.06
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC. 4	2.16	71,316		153,333.09
Sector Totals	13		176,553	193,323.15
Overall Totals		3,560	60,506,595	1,145,259,202.07

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY			
SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
UNIC	1,721,930.00	2,285,655.60	28
OCEANIC	1,930,463.00	11,319,068.65	68
AFRIBANK	2,208,153.00	20,094,192.30	20
NB	2,493,317.00	92,228,617.48	370
WAPCO	3,709,479.00	61,211,658.86	128
UBA	4,103,084.00	53,309,147.64	155
INTERCONT	4,926,887.00	42,218,788.90	138
GUARANTY	5,861,860.00	76,277,719.70	288
ACCESS	7,949,394.00	21,357,901.97	168
FIRSTBANK	9,511,274.00	314,301,072.72	465

TOP 10 GAINERS			
SYMBOL	LAST CLOSE	YESTERDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
GUINNESS	100.00	101.00	+1.00
NNFM	14.75	15.48	+0.73
FIRSTBANK	32.98	33.61	+0.63
PRESKO	11.00	11.50	+0.50
ASHAKACEM	33.30	33.75	+0.45
UAC-PROP	8.70	9.13	+0.43
INTERCONT	8.37	8.78	+0.41
CCNN	7.11	7.46	+0.35
WAPCO	16.20	16.50	+0.30
CONOIL	89.70	90.00	+0.30

TOP 10 LOSERS			
SYMBOL	LAST CLOSE	YESTERDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	189.00	185.02	-3.98
MOBIL	160.00	156.50	-3.50
NESTLE	189.50	187.00	-2.50
NB	37.10	36.00	-1.10
UNILEVER	21.70	20.62	-1.08
OANDO	95.00	94.10	-0.90
GLAXOSMITH	10.40	10.00	-0.40
BETAGLAS	7.20	6.84	-0.36
GUARANTY	13.30	13.05	-0.25
OCEANIC	6.05	5.86	-0.19

RMRDC moves to attract investors

In order to encourage prospective investors to venture into production and processing of crops, the Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC) has concluded research into some crops.

Receiving reports on the findings over cashew, castor, ginger, mango, citrus, pineapple, rice, sugar cane, sorghum and sheanut recently in Abuja, the chairman, governing council of RMRDC, Mrs. Pauline Tallen said the survey on agro-raw materials was to provide comprehensive information on production, process technology, marketing and development.

"It is the considered opinion of the RMRDC that in the light of the required industrial growth and overall technological development of Nigeria, the role of fabricators in the production of processing equipment and machinery for agriculture and mineral raw materials cannot be overemphasised."

The former minister of state for science and technology said that the success of the first phase of the study conducted on beniseed, cocoa, cassava, gum Arabic, maize, rubber, oil palm, groundnut, cotton and soya beans necessitated the conduct of the second phase whose report she received recently.

"As part of its mandate, the RMRDC has been carrying out various surveys since its inception. I am happy to note that the council has now extended such activities to cover production of vast agricultural commodities in Nigeria. I understand that the programme started in 2004 and was handled in phases. This is a laudable achievement," she said.

Eleven committees were established to study each crop and processing machines under the second phase of the research programme.

IMF delegation to visit Zimbabwe

The International Monetary Fund sends a delegation to Zimbabwe this week to check its economic performance after narrowly escaping expulsion from the world lending body last year. Economists however are sceptical over whether the five-member team will leave with favourable impressions after their six-day visit starting Tuesday.

"They (IMF) will be very concerned with the upsurge of inflation. The other problem will be that the government still maintains 18 products under price controls," economic commentator Eric Bloch said. About 80 percent of Zimbabweans live under the poverty line. The IMF has threatened to expel Zimbabwe from its ranks for failing to pay back loans since 2001 and has given the southern African country until February to settle its accounts. Finance Minister Herbert Murerwa in December predicted economic growth of between two and three percent for this year, forecasting that agricultural production would now grow by 14.8 percent.

"They (government) had based their projections on inflation declining but inflation is continuously going up," said independent economist John Robertson.

Dilemma of tamed

The Muslim afternoon prayer had been said in this popular lepers' colony. All those who prayed in congregation at the main mosque of the ward, all of them lepers, had since poured out. Many had retreated to their shanty homes, many gone about their normal businesses, strictly confined to the ward. About ten had clustered on a long log bench and exposed tree roots under a sufficient shade of a densely leaved tree, just behind a spacious room, standing alone in the space between the mosque, a few metres away, and the tree itself. The room apparently serves as the reception parlour of their Chief, Ali Isa. About twenty, however, a number that could pass for the majority of those who prayed in the congregation, had remained in the cool shady corridor of the mosque, some sitting, some lying in various resting positions, savouring refuge from the blistering tropical heat of this Tuesday afternoon.

Wadata ward, lying between the old federal secretariat at Area One of Garki district and the Apo legislative quarters in Abuja, homes about three hundred lepers, comprising household heads and their families. Many years ago, they were roaming the streets and lurking in shades and sparse slums, emerging in the growing federal capital city of Nigeria, begging for alms as a traditional means of livelihood. The federal capital territory administration observed that their movement all about town tended to cast an ugly shadow upon the beautiful face of the city. So, it herded them into the ward and tamed them there.

They were banned from begging. Each leper household

By Uthman Abubakar

head confirmed resident in Abuja, was placed on a N4000 monthly stipend. The FCT administration felt they needed training to fend for themselves and their families, instead of relying on this pittance. So, under the destitution management programme it designed for all the destitutes in the territory, the Wadata lepers were trained in modern farming skills with their consent.

After the nine-month training, lengthened to 15 months by destabilisation, following the sporadic demolition exercises all over the FCT, 61 of them, apparently constituting most of the household heads and adults in the ward, were then given N35,000 loan each under the programme at the end of August, 2005, for farming projects. Those issued the loan ceased to collect the N4000 monthly stipend. They were expected to farm and trade with the loan to fend for themselves and their families.

Initially, they were to pay the loan at five percent interest rate in 12 months, beginning 31st, December, 2005, after a moratorium of three months, which showed that they would be paying N3600 monthly. The interest rate, amounting to N600 monthly, was later waived to lift all unnecessary constraints off them, and help them establish their own businesses for a livelihood away from begging for alms, which now showed that they would be paying N3000 in 12 months. After they complained of severe constraints



A leper at his "workplace" beside the road.

and inability to pay that much monthly, the FCT administration Micro-credit consultants approved the N1,500 they (the lepers) suggested as affordable for them. The loan recovery, which would now last for 24 months, was due for com-

mencement 31st December, 2005. They pleaded severally for extension. It would now commence, Wednesday, 25th January, 2006.

Now they are in a fix. Most of them were not able to establish viable farming businesses

with the loan, which was expected to yield proceeds, out of which they would take out some to pay the loan accordingly. For most of them, virtually nothing remains of the N35,000 they received. They are finding it extremely difficult to feed. They cannot go out begging, at least within the federal capital city. So, how can they fend for their families? How can they pay the loan? As Wednesday, 25th January hurries towards them, they are in a dilemma.

"We have been banned from begging, and settled at this place," an elderly leper called Mamman Ali Majidadin Sarkin Kutare, complained, recalling, "they (FCDA) were giving us measures of rice before. Then they replaced that gesture with a N4000 monthly stipend. They also stopped that later, when they gave us the N35,000 loan to farm and trade," querying, "look at me very well, can I do any trade if it is not the sitting type and, even at that, will I not need any helper?"

Mamman said some of them bought heads of cattle and motorcycles for taxi purposes (*Okada*), but the cattle died, and the motorcycles were either snatched by robbers or stolen

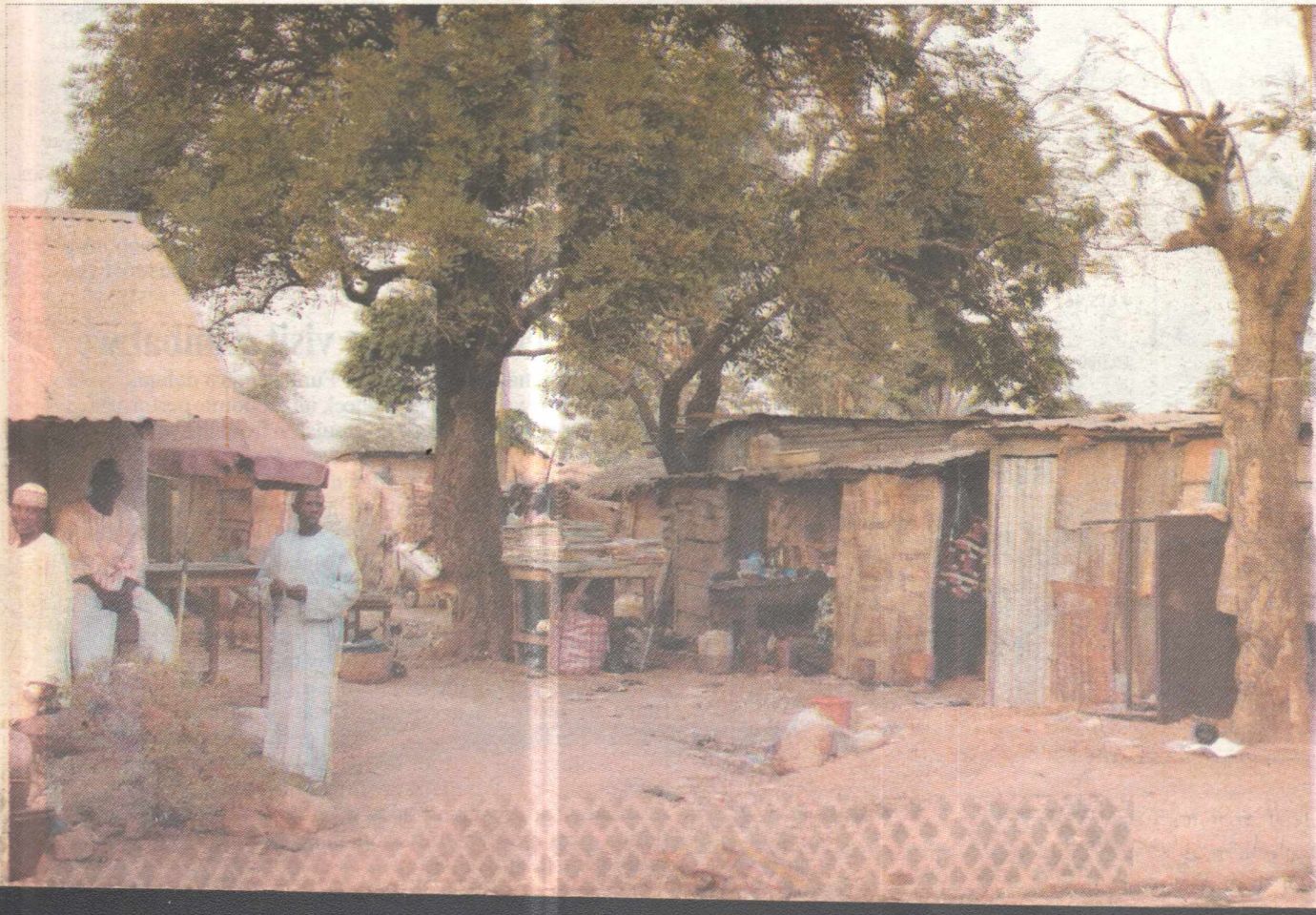
from begging, and they have no other means of livelihood, most of them pounced on the loan to feed and satisfy all other necessities of life of their families.

"A few days ago," he continued, "they (loan recovery team of the micro-credit consultants) came and told us to prepare to start paying the loan next week Wednesday (25th January). How can we pay? Can there be life without feeding, clothing and satisfying the other necessities of life? So we have spent the whole amount on those needs. All I have now out of that amount is N1,500. That N35,000 was what we depended on for feeding and other necessities of life. We did not use it to marry more wives."

Mamman complained further: "For God's sake, you are arrested when found begging along the streets and made to pay N5000, N3000 or N1,500, or even imprisoned. One of us was imprisoned for three months at Kuje. What is the meaning of this? We are Nigerians. It is the land of our birth. We are not immigrants," querying: "Can we feel good about the situation in our land of birth?", adding, "So we plead passionately with government to give us enough capital of, say, N250,000 and a monthly stipend of, say, N17,000, then we will be alright, and we can dance around town, thanking government."

Umaru Kofur also recounted the same build-up of their pathetic situation. "We have been banned from begging. There was a promise for us to be served rice. They started, and then stopped. They then started giving us a N4000 monthly stipend. They asked us if we would be able to farm. We said we would. They promised to give us fertiliser, maize and other inputs. They didn't give us any. They gave us the N35,000 loan to farm, although not all of us got it. Because of this, for about six months now we have not been paid the monthly stipend."

He complained: "They now want us to start repaying the loan. We don't have the money, because we have spent the whole on feeding and other necessities of life. To be candid, most of us don't even have N200 on them now. So, how can we pay? We can only rest our case in God. But the fact is: right now we don't have the money to pay the loan. If the government will pack us with our wives and children and lock us up, because we can't pay the loan, it could do so."



Lepers

ting us here in this situation, to be candid, is suffocating us. They should allow us to beg. We prefer begging than staying here. What are we getting here? Only good Samaritans bring cooked food to us."

Sa'idu Isyaku Yariman Sarkin Kutaren Abuja also cursed their situation in the colony. "Settling us here in this situation grieves us, because you can't do anything to feed your family. We prefer settling in the bush. In the bush we will know how to go about doing something for a living. Our main problem here now is that we can't do any trade. Even the bush wind blowing on us is better than staying here. We plead with government to restore the payment of our monthly stipend, because right now, we feel we are in famine-stricken Niger Republic."

Jibrin Inusa and Sama'ila spoke on the effect of the situation on their children. According to Jibrin, "our problem here naturally affects our children. If the father is well fed and satisfied, the child will look well fed and satisfied also. As the father, if you are well fed, you will look after your children well, as is required of you. Even in this situation, we go out begging to as far as Masaka, Suleja and other towns outside the FCT."

Sama'ila dwelt on the education of the children. "Our problem is school fees. I have seven children. Last year alone, I paid N6,500 school fees. In our present situation I cannot attempt doing that. One Dr. Mamu undertook to educate our chil-

dren free in our primary school here. This year she enrolled 25 in the school from this ward. She has promised to do so every year."

Muhammadu Bello gave a condition for the payment of the loan. "If they can restore the payment of our monthly stipend, we will pay the loan with even N2000 monthly. They gave us the loan and warned us against using it for feeding and helping relations or paying the children's school fees. Are we logs? We used it for all these. That is why the money finished."

He said courageously: "So, even if they come for it, they will have to leave us alone and go back to where they have come from, without getting anything from us. We don't have a dime to pay them. They better forget it."

Elderly Muhammadu said the FCDA has threatened not to relocate any defaulter to the



A group of lepers at Wadata ward. First left is their Chief, Ali Isa

new settlement at Yangoji in the Kwali area, believing that nine-tenth of them would not be able to pay and, so, they may have

to disperse and mix among other people in the city.

Usaini Cinkoso Likitan Kutaren Abuja and Sanusi

Bello, shared all complaints with their fellows, with Sanusi saying: "They never told us that with the disbursement of the

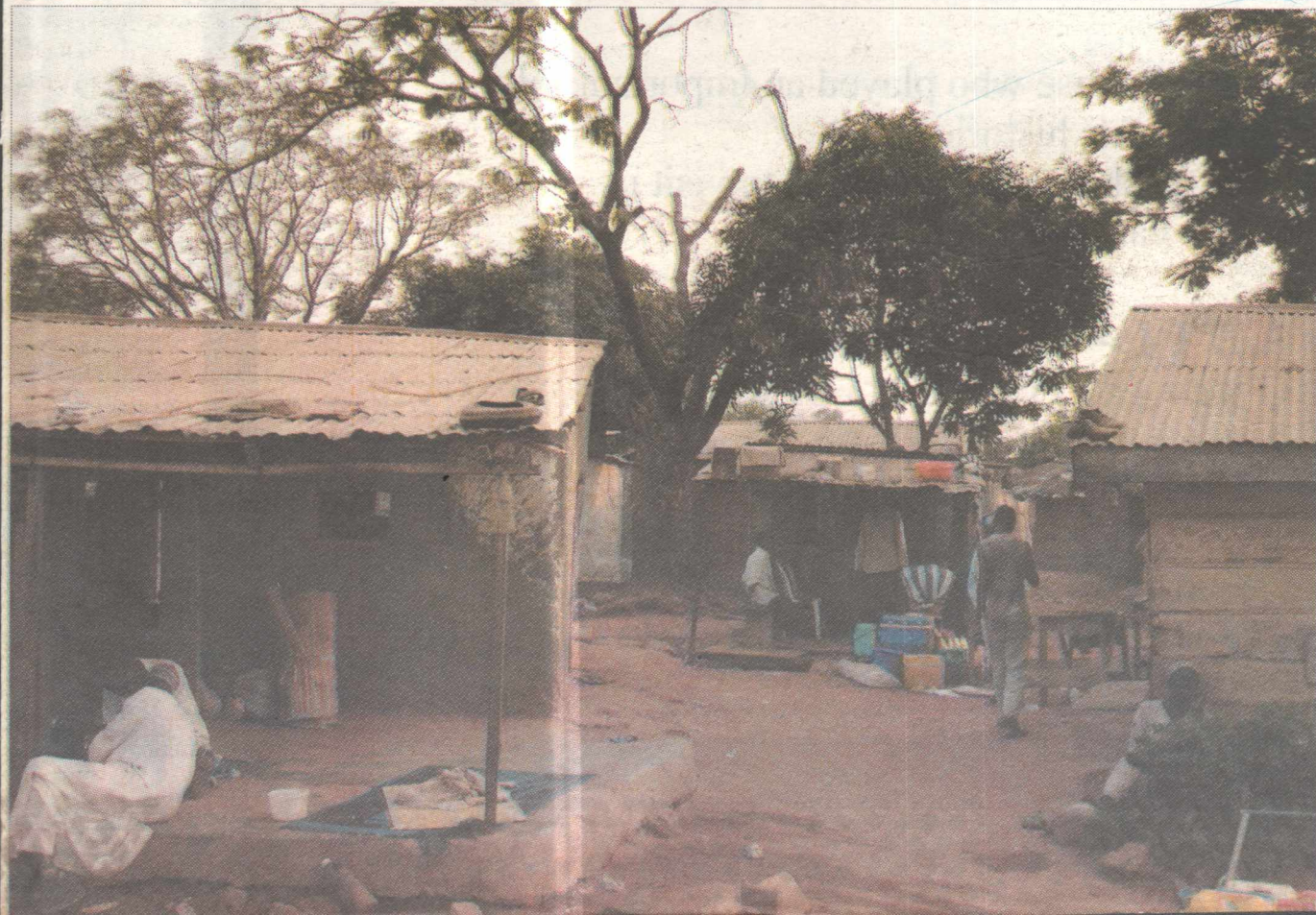
The officer in charge, Umaru O. Idris, allayed the fears of the lepers on possible tough measures against them for defaulting in the loan payment. "We will not take any tough action against them if they refuse to pay the loan. We will not invite the police to arrest them. We will only write our report to the government, and the government will not offer any help to them in future if they refuse to pay. They will certainly seek help from government in future, and that is when they will regret not paying the loan."

Idris recalled the conditions for the issuance of the loans under the rolling programme as: Training and adequate capacity; and loan beneficiaries should invest in a trade or project on which they have adequate skills. He expressed a fear: "We are faced with the risk of the continuity of the programme because of default. If they don't pay how can other destitute populations benefit? So the programme is at a risk. It is threatened by default."

He said so far, they have disbursed a total of N2.130,000 to 111 of the 255 resettled destitute populations, which showed that apart from the 61 Wadata lepers, 49 destitute at Bwari, and one at Karu also received N35,000 each, under the first phase of the programme.

So, the Wadata lepers have to pay the loan, at least to enable them receive more help from government in future. Most of them did not invest in ventures that could yield proceeds to pay back the loan. They have been tamed in their colony, and banned from begging in the federal capital city. How can they pay the loan?

Umaru Kofur also recounted the same build-up of their pathetic situation. "We have been banned from begging. There was a promise for us to be served rice. They started, and then stopped. They then started giving us a N4000 monthly stipend. They asked us if we would be able to farm. We said we would. They promised to give us fertiliser, maize and other inputs. They didn't give us any. They gave us the N35,000 loan to farm, although not all of us got it. Because of this, for about six months now we have not been paid the monthly stipend." He complained: "They now want us to start repaying the loan. We don't have the money, because we have spent the whole on feeding and other necessities of life. To be candid, most of us don't even have N200 on them now. So, how can we pay? We can only rest our case in God. But the fact is: right now we don't have the money to pay the loan. If the government will pack us with our wives and children and lock us up, because we can't pay the loan, it could do so."



loan, the payment of the monthly stipend would stop. Only about 30 percent of us were even receiving the stipend."

The Director of the Abuja Environmental Protection Board, and former Chairman of the Committee on the Rehabilitation of the Destitute, Hajjiya Hadiza Abdullahi, scolded the lepers in a telephone response to their utterances. "When they were given the loan, it was not one of the conditions that they would have to do *bara* (beg) to pay. When they were receiving it they thought it was just one of such government largesse. That is why people shy away from social responsibilities."

The Finance and Investment Management Services are the micro-credit consultants engaged by the FCT administration for the Destitution Management Programme. They trained the lepers for the agri-



ABTI - AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

Lamido Zubairu Way, Yola By-Pass, PMB 2250 Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria



In Appreciation

The Founders,
the Board of Trustees, the President,
and the faculty and staff of ABTI-American University of Nigeria
wish to express sincere thanks to those who participated
in the university's Orientation for its first spring intake.

The presence and support of families is deeply appreciated. We are honored that parents have chosen to entrust their sons and daughters to AAUN for some of the most important years of their lives. We believe parents have chosen well, and we will do all that we can to justify their confidence in us. We also would like to express our gratitude to all well-wishers and especially to Yola residents who are our immediate hosts and custodians of AAUN facilities.

We are most proud of our students for choosing AAUN. A challenging curriculum is designed to ensure the quality of their learning and the satisfaction that comes from intellectual endeavor.

Boundless thanks goes to all those who played an important role
leading to this historic event.

We extend our well-wishes and invitations to visit us
on campus soon.



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GOMBE STATE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

GOMBE WATER CORPORATION

Following the successful completion of the Gombe Regional Water Supply Scheme, His Excellency, Alh. Muhammad Danjuma Goje, (*Sarkin Yakin Gombe*) Executive Governor of Gombe State, will perform the **official commencement of system testing of the water project**, preparatory to its formal commissioning.

The general public is hereby invited to witness the ceremony which will take place as follows:-

Date: - Wednesday 25th January, 2006.

Time: - 11:00am.

Venue: - Lower Zone Water Reservoir, G.R.A, Gombe

Signed:

Dr. Danlami Arabs Rukujei, FCIM
(Zannan Tangale)

Executive Chairman, Gombe Water Corporation

KANO TRUST

Murder of Rimi's wife politically motivated - Residents

Residents of Kano have alleged that the recent assassination of Hajiya Sa'adatu, wife of the former governor of old Kano state Alhaji Abubakar Rimi has a political undertone.

In separate interviews with *Daily Trust*, people of the state stated that although the perpetrators and sponsors of the barbaric act were yet to be uncovered however, argued that Alhaji Rimi was the actual target of the assassination, but apparently realizing that he was not at home,

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru,
Correspondent (Kano)

the assassins killed his wife. According to Malam Musa Abudulkadir of Makwarari quarters in the metropolis, the plan to assassinate Rimi could have been planned since long time, especially due to his extreme position on political affairs.

He alleged that those behind the ungodly act planned to hatch the agenda at this time ahead of the 2007 general elections.

Alhaji Sani Hassan of

Kabara quarters, expressed dismay that the innocent Hajiya Sa'adatu could have been killed due to the political stand of her husband, which has been perceived by his opponent as capable of thwarting their 2007 political agenda.

In his words "I believed that the assassins were hired

to kill Rimi, but it was unfortunate to turn his wife as the target, just because their prey was not at home, what positive role does the late Hajiya Sa'adatu offered to her husband, that has warranted her this merciless killing."

According to Malam Mukhtar Bello of Fagge quarters, all indications have

proved beyond reasonable doubt that, political reasons could not be ruled out behind the assassination of Rimi's wife, and since those behind were not yet fished out, the entire Muslims of the state should embark on extensive prayers and other forms of worship to seek the assistance of almighty God to unravel the

sponsors and perpetrators of the assassination so that they could face the wrath of the law.

He enjoined the supporters and well-wishers so the former governor to shun taking law into their hands and remain calm, saying almighty God will soon unmask those behind the act.

Kano sets up c'ttee to reposition Rimi Market

Kano state government has set up a 9-man committee to reposition the Abubakar Rimi market and to restore its status as an international market.

The commissioner for commerce Alhaji Ahmed Yakasai who disclosed this while inaugurating the committee though Abubakar Rimi market is one of the biggest markets in the country its standard has fallen drastically.

He noted that poor sanitation, security problems the owing of about 1.4m naira electricity and water bill as well as general market control has militated against the development of the market.

He therefore stated that Kano state government had directed the setting up of the 9-man committee to look into the issues with a view to repositioning the market which has the capacity of over 10,000 stalls and serves the people of Kano state and neighbouring countries.

Alhaji Ahmed Yakasai said that the terms of reference include accessing the

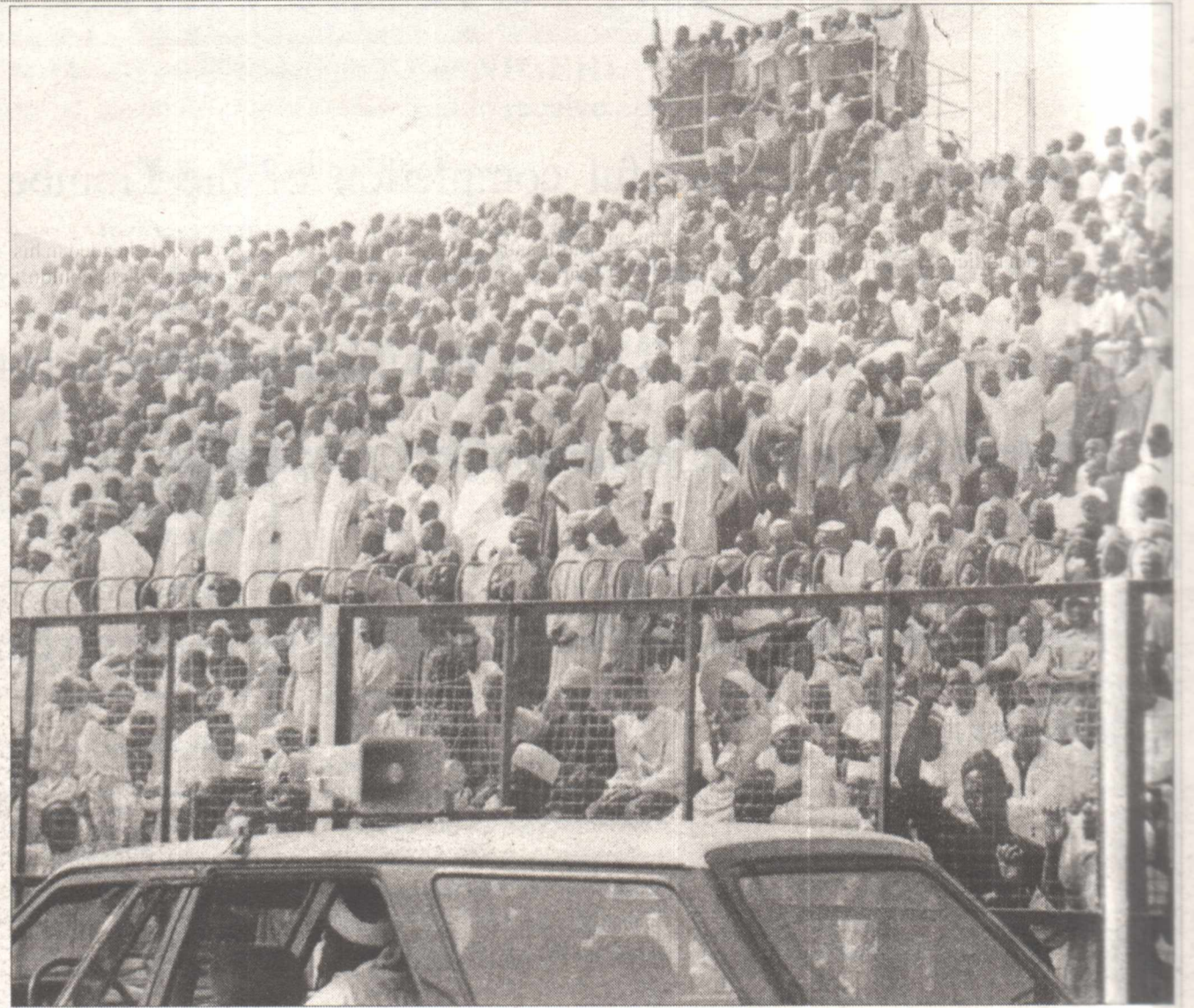
By Jamilah Nuhu Musa,
Correspondent (Kano)

present, market structure and ownership with a view to ascertain government owned and private stalls, the security problems, sanitation, finance situation to help improve revenue generation, activities of market traders, union management as well as modalities for peace and harmony.

Adding that the committee has 6 weeks to complete and submit its report, promising government, commitment towards implementing the recommendations for the benefit of the people of the state.

Responding the chairman of the committee who is also, a prominent businessman Alhaji Bala U. Shehu commended the state government for its transparency and commitment to duty.

Alhaji Bala U. Shehu stated that the committee would work as a team with stakeholders in order to ensure that the right recommendations were made to move the Abubakar Rimi market forward.



A view of the attendance during the closing ceremony of the 20th National Quranic recitation competition in Kano...recently

Shariah commission boss commends KNSG over tricycles

The Kano state government has been commended for providing tricycle "A Daidaita Sahu" motorcycles to assist in the mass transit in the state.

The commendation was made by the chairman Shari'ah Commission, Sheikh Ibrahim Umar Kabo while receiving the executive of the state tricycle keke NAPEP Motorcycle Association in his office.

Sheikh Ibrahim Umar Kabo thanked the association for the recognition to the commission and for the courtesy call which signifies the existing co-operation between the association and the commission.

The chairman assured the association of the state government's determination towards Shari'ah implementation in the state through Human and Societal Development.

He urged them to always be honest in discharging their commercial responsibilities

especially in dealing with women and children.

Also speaking the commissioner I. sheikh Umar Sani Fagge urged them to be patient with their female passengers and not hike the price for them. he emphasized the importance of God fearing in discharging any responsibility on people.

The commissioner also urged them to always be meeting with their members and their officials to discuss their problems and find a lasting solution, and also to organize seminars for the benefit of their members.

He emphasized the importance of organizing seminars among their members; he assured them that the commission is always ready to provide instructors to present papers on how to discharge

their responsibilities in accordance with Shari'ah injunctions.

Speaking earlier, the chairman of the Association, Malam Bala Muhammad Hassan told the chairman that they are in his office to express their thanks and appreciation to the state government for providing them with job opportunity.

He further emphasized that the provision of tricycle motorcycles in the state is very significant especially in alleviating the sufferings of masses with regards to mass transit in the state.

Malam Muhammad Hassan called on the commission to organize a seminar for members so as to acquaint those with the Shari'ah guidelines as it affect their responsibility.

Jigawa dep gov faults Ladoja's impeachment

The Jigawa state deputy governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia has faulted the recent impeachment of the Oyo state Governor Rasheedi Ladoja.

Speaking with newsmen in Dutse, Deputy Governor Hassan Hadejia described the entire impeachment process as breach of law of the country and violation of the concept of due process the federal government is advocating.

The deputy governor who is a lawyer by profession and was a one time attorney

general of the state condemned the action of the Oyo state house of assembly on the issue which a competent court of law had restrained the house from executing.

He expressed concern about the future of democracy in Nigeria if those in government continue to disregard court rulings and constitutional process in conducting affairs of the nation.

The Deputy Governor also spoke on the murder of the wife of former governor of Kano state, Alhaji Muhammed Abubakar Rimi calling on the federal govern-

ment to take urgent measures to apprehend the culprits and punish them accordingly.

He said Sa'adatu Rimi's murder like the Oyo state governor's impeachment might be purely political and appealed to the government to halt such crimes to save democracy from imminent collapse.

Confident that the police were committed to ensuring full investigation into the murder case in Kano with a view to protecting the image as an impartial organization out to ensure security of all citizens of the nation.

EKO TRUST

OPC Clash: Fadeyi residents flee possible reprisal

Residents of Fadeyi area of Lagos have begun to flee their homes in droves for fear of possible reprisal attack by a faction of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), which suffered heavy casualty in a bloody clash a few days ago.

The areas mostly affected are residents of Ibeju, Ogunjobi and Ayodele areas of Igbobi, Fadeyi, Lagos.

Stories by Olumide Ejulaiye, Correspondent (Lagos)

to be mostly inhabited by a faction of the group who have now deserted their homes.

Meanwhile, hordes of armed mobile policemen have been drafted to the affected area to forestall a renewed clash.

Competent sources told our correspondent that trouble

started in the area last week Saturday when a boy working for the trio - Femi (alias Jpron), KB and Arugbo - all staunch members of Fasehun-led faction in Igbobi area, went to steal a mobile handset at Oluwakemi area, behind Cole Street, near the demolished Bobby Benson Hotel, Fadeyi, dominated by Gani Adams-led group.

It was gathered that the stolen handset was retrieved from the suspect after whom he was beaten and later released.

Shortly after, hoodlums, led by the trio of Femi, KB and Arugbo invaded the area with sophisticated weapons and unleashed mayhem on the area to avenge the assault of their boy.

Unfortunately, a member of another group was shot dead during the ensuing encounter.

As a ploy to dissuade the Gani Adams boys, who have their secretariat at Power Base, Railway Line, behind Kajola market, from meddling in the crisis, it was learnt that the three musketeers went to appeal to the boys to remain calm as the situation would be amicably settled between the two groups.

But to the utter dismay of many onlookers, hoodlums led by the trio invaded the secretariat at Railway Line on Tuesday midnight during which the chief coordinator, one Aro, was beheaded in his sleep when bullets couldn't penetrate his body.

The victim, a source said, was shot several times but when bullets couldn't penetrate his body, his head was severed from his body and taken away by the assailants to an unknown destination.

Several appeals made to the attackers for the release of the victim's head, our correspondent gathered, proved unsuccessful when the body was to be interred.

However, during the dawn raid, a house along Ogunjobi Street was riddled with bullets and two people sustained gunshot wounds, including a Mallam, who prior to the incident was selling cigarettes and other items in a kiosk at the end of the affected street.

A boy who was injured during the melee was said to

have given up the ghost on Thursday at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Idi-Araba, where he and the Mallam were rushed to, for treatment.

Many vehicles parked along the Ayodele Street were not spared during the incident as the attackers smashed their windscreens.

Similarly, two commercial motorcycles popularly referred to as Okada and mobile handsets were allegedly stolen from the residents.

As a result of the heavy casualties suffered by one of the group, there has been a manhunt for the trio of Femi (alias Jpron), KB and Arugbo, who are known for their notoriety in the affected area.

Lagos Island residents accuse PHCN of sabotage

Officials of the power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) under Lagos zone headquarters, Marina have been indicted as the brain behind the cutting and stealing of 35metres of live 33KV cable at Ilubirin axis of the third Mainland expressway in Lagos Island.

Mr. Raheem Ibrahim, a resident in Lagos Island who spoke on the incessant power outages and exorbitant bills to subscribers in the area alleged that the cutting and stealing away of the 35metres cable could not have been done by any outsider without the connivance of the officials of the PHCN especially when the power was on.

In his argument, Mr. Ibrahim contended that only PHCN officials with the overall uniforms and heavy duty vehicle are capable of cutting and removing the cable without disturbances from members of the public and security agents around the place.

He also revealed that such act was not the first of its kind at the same venue which some major markets like Pelewura, Bombata and Sawmill at Anikantamo allegedly contributed #50,000.00 each to PHCN Idumagbo Undertaking office to assist in replacing the earlier stolen cable before last year Christmas.

According to him "this was the third time when such thing in 2005 and the last time which happened about two days before Christmas, put about 22 transformers under Idumagbo PHCN office in

darkness throughout the festive periods, including Eid-il-Kabir holiday and up till now, the transformers were put on rotation of one-day on and one-day off which was not also regular".

"Despite all this unwelcome action when residents sleep in darkness, the PHCN bring exorbitant bills to the customers and failure to pay the amount on the bill two days after, the officials goes out to disconnect wire from polls", he lamented.

He added that all efforts by groups and individuals who visited PHCN office at Idumagbo to complain and urged them to find a quick and lasting solution to the problem proved abortive as the marketing manager always dispatched them with flimsy excuses.

Mr. Ibrahim however called on the state government and the authority concerned to look into the matter and find quick and lasting solution to the incessant power outages, "they should not wait until when the consumers started attacking innocent PHCN officials who were seat out to perform their legitimate duty".



Members of Nigeria Association of Military Pensioners protesting over the non-payment of 43 months arrears by the federal government at the laying of wreaths ceremony in Lagos...recently
Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

Police take over Ereko Balogun over chieftaincy squabble

Armed policemen have taken over Ereko Balogun on Lagos Island following the power struggle within the Kosoko chieftaincy family over the stool of Oloja of Lagos, which

has paralysed commercial activities on the Island in the last one week.

The factions — Kosoko Chieftaincy Family and Kosoko Descendants Union — had engaged in judicial bat-

tle, resulting in a Lagos High Court declaring vacant the seat and ordering the incumbent Adebola Disu-Ige to stop parading himself as the Oloja of Lagos.

Disu-Ige was installed in

2002 by the late Oba of Lagos, Adeyinka Oyekan, after which the factions headed for court — one seeking validation of position, the other declaration of vacancy of the throne.

The deposed king addressed pressmen on Wednesday at his palace where he claimed to have gone the Appeal Court praying it to quash the judgment of Justice Morenike Obadina.

Disu-Ige, in the notice of appeal of January 12, 2006 with number Id/1057/86, is praying the appellate court for "an order restraining the respondents in the suit from commencing or initiating the election process of candidates for the stool of the new Oloja of Lagos."

He filed the appeal on December 13, 2002, the hired thugs who were over

100 immediately spread out with dangerous weapons, throwing bottles and making attempts to gain entry into the palace from various points. Some of the thugs who had surrounded the entire palace area tried to enter through adjoining buildings," he alleged.

But in a swift reaction, Secretary to the Kosoko Descendants Union, who identified himself as Prince Kosokó, said the deposed king was going against the ruling last December of a court, which ordered that the status quo be maintained.

He denied his faction ever attacked Disu-Ige, saying "he was trying to blackmail us".

Nonetheless, Kosoko confirmed that the notice of appeal was filed on their behalf, although he said the substantive appeal is still pending in court.

Fear as NURTW, RTEAN clash spreads

The recurrent confrontation between the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) in parts of Lagos State may soon spill over to Ajeromi-Ifelelodu Local Government.

Investigations show that the crisis brewing in the area is not unconnected with the plan by RTEAN to re-launch its operation in the council, but the plan has not gone down well with the NURTW, which has effectively been operating in the council for

many years.

RTEAN had three weeks ago held a crucial meeting in which final touches were put to its plan to begin fresh operations in the council.

A top executive member of the association said his members would have been "on the road" before now but that the leadership of NURTW has not agreed with the desire of the union to operate in the area.

He said RTEAN has been in the council for years, even though it was not recognised as its counterpart, but that the association is now ready

to go ahead and perform its function since its executive arm has been constituted with the backing of the state government.

"We are a legally recognised association. We will soon start operating in the council like our counterparts in other councils. We have spoken with the NURTW so that there will be no problem but they don't want to understand us," he said. Already, Prince Tajudeen Olowu heads the executive arm of the association.

Attempts to speak with the Chairman of NURTW,

Wuami Ashiru (a.k.a. Zola) were futile as he was said to be out of office for other engagements on several occasions that our correspondent visited his office.

It would be recalled that on several occasions, the two associations have had violent confrontations in parts of Lagos over who actually ought to be on the road collecting dues.

The RTEAN has always maintained that NURTW ought not to be on the road but instead was to be in possession of dues to it from the former.



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New Academic Programmes (2006/2007 session)

Introduction

The University of Abuja has introduced new academic programmes which took off during the 2005/2006 Academic session. The programmes are in the Faculties of Agriculture, Engineering, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has provided course codes for the new courses.

Courses, Entry Requirements, Codes and Duration

Listed below are the various courses and their entry requirements, the JAMB Course Codes for Information and guidance.

1) Faculty of Agriculture

- a) Agricultural Economics-Course Code: 12604 H
- b) Animal Science-Course Code: 12605 D
- c) Soil Science-Course Code: 12606 K
- d) Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology-Course Code: 12607 G
- e) Fisheries.....-Course Code: 12608 C

Course Duration

All the courses listed under the Faculty of Agriculture run for 4 or 5 years depending on the mode of entry.

Entry Requirements

(i) Direct Entry

Two 'A' level passes in Chemistry and any one of Zoology/Botany/Agricultural Science/ Biology, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Geology, Economics and Health Science.

ii) U.M.E. Entry

Five 'O' Level credit passes in English language, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology/Agricultural Science and one of Physics, Geography or Economics.

iii) U.M.E. Subjects

Chemistry, Biology, Agricultural Science, Physics or Mathematics in addition to English.

2) Faculty of Engineering

- a) Agricultural Engineering - Course Code: 12596 I
- b) Chemical Engineering - Course Code: 12597 E
- c) Civil Engineering - Course Code: 12598 A
- d) Computer Engineering - Course Code: 12599 H
- e) Electrical and Electronic Engineering - Course Code: 12600 B
- f) Mechanical Engineering - Course Code: 12601 I

Course Duration

The courses listed under the Faculty of Engineering run for 5 years.

Entry Requirements

(i) Direct Entry

'A' level passes in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics.

ii) U.M.E. Entry

Five 'O' Level credit passes to include Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, English Language and one science subject.

iii) U.M.E. Subjects

Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics and English.

3) Faculty of Medicine

- a) Medicine - Course Code: 12602 E
- b) Dentistry - Course Code: 12603 A

Course Duration

The courses listed under the Faculty of Medicine run for 5 or 6 years depending on the mode of entry.

Entry Requirements

(i) Direct Entry

Three 'A' level passes in Physics, Chemistry and Biology or Zoology

ii) U.M.E. Entry

Five 'O' Level credit passes in English language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

iii) U.M.E. Subjects

Biology, Chemistry, Physics and English

4) Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

- a) Veterinary Medicine - Course Code: 12609 J

Course Duration

The Veterinary Medicine course runs for 5 or 6 years depending on the mode of entry.

Entry Requirements

(i) Direct Entry

'A' level passes in Chemistry, Biology/Zoology, Physics or Mathematics.

HND distinction in Poultry Production, Animal Health and Animal Products Inspection

ii) U.M.E. Entry

Five 'O' Level credit passes to include Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics.

iii) U.M.E. Subjects

Physics, Chemistry, Biology and English.

**Signed:
M.B. Modibbo
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2. FIRE SUPERINTENDENT (FSP/001)

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EXPERIENCE:

At least 2 years post-qualification.

AGE: Not above 25 years

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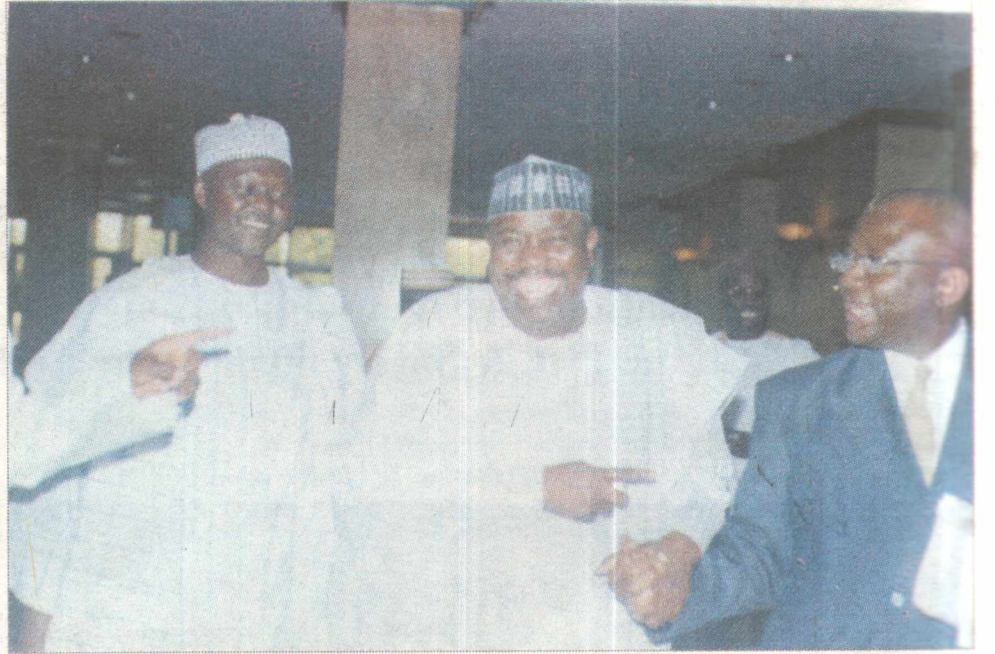
Please note that only **SHORTLISTED** candidates will be contacted.

News

3RD TRUST ANNUAL DIALOGUE



The special adviser to Kano state governor on economy, Musa Bichi (L) and former secretary, Vision 2010, Alhaji Ibrahim Ida (Danmajen Katsina) (R) at the 3rd Annual Trust Dialogue.



ANPP House Leader Aminu Waziri Tambuwal flanked by his deputy, Hon. Victor Lar (L) a guest.



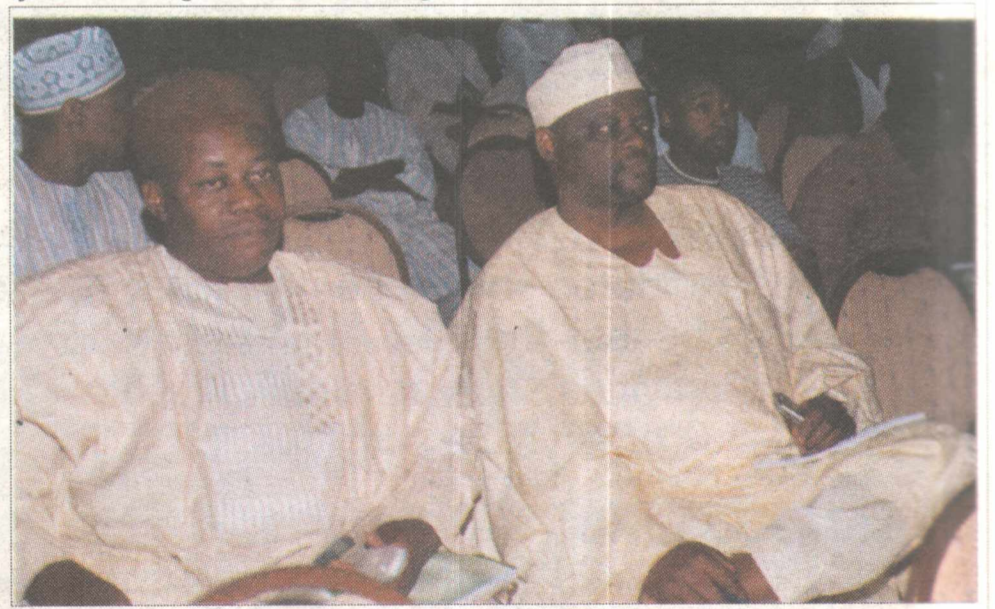
L-R: Alhaji Isyaku Ibrahim, Dr. Bashir Kurfi, lecturers ABU, Zaria and Alhaji Buba Galadima.



R-L: Magatakarda Babba of the Sokoto Caliphate, Barrister Inuwa Abdulkadir, Malam Yau Darazo of The Buhari Organisation (TBO) and a guest.



A cross section of guests.



The country director, Global Rights (L) and former presidential adviser in President Olusegun Obasanjo's cabinet, Dr. Ibrahim Lame (R).



The Deputy General Manager, Corporate Affairs, NICON Insurance, R-L: Alhaji Yakubu Akor and Emmana Omadiri, a manager with NICON Insurance and others last week.



Another cross section of dignitaries.

Pixs Kennedy Egbonodje.

News

Turaki's suspension a joke - ANPP

In what may seem a swift reaction to the suspension of Jigawa State governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, from the other faction of the ANPP in the state, the Turaki ANPP faction has described it as "a big joke of the century that does not hold any water."

In a press conference at the state ANPP Head Quarters in Dutse, the party's publicity secretary, Alhaji Aminu Ahmed Babura, described the proclamation by the Honourable Farouk Adamu Aliyu Birnin Kudu's led ANPP faction to have suspended the governor "huge joke that should be disregarded by peace loving community members."

Alhaji Aminu Ahmed Babura, declared that the Farouk Adamu ANPP led faction is not a legal segment of the party which was why they could not hold their conference at the ANPP secretariat

From Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent, Dutse

which is not far from the location the conference was held.

He said, Farouk Adamu, together with his group are not bone-fide members of the ANPP as the party have since expelled them. While a letter of dismissal was copied to the National Head Quarters of the ANPP in Abuja. Adding that, "the action of the Farouk ANPP faction is a last resort for them to make themselves politically relevant as politicians everywhere are gearing up for the 2007 elections," he said.

He said, "People of Jigawa State have lost total confidence on the member and his cohort collaborators who do not see anything good in what Saminu Turaki is doing for the people of the state, and that is why the people he is representing at the national house of repre-

sentative withdrew their votes on him."

Also speaking at the conference, the Publicity Secretary announced that it was as a result of Turaki's single-handed contribution to the ANPP at the National level that the party leadership

sought for the hosting of the National Executive Council (NEC), meeting in Jigawa State.

"Because of Ibrahim Saminu Turaki's pertinent support for the ANPP in the country, the National body deemed it fit to carry out its NEC meeting in Jigawa

State."

While commenting on Turaki's alleged anti-party activities during the recent PDP de-registration exercise saying, "The governor as a citizen of the country he is free to choose to belong in any political party in the country."

Among those at the conference were the State Houses of Assembly Speaker, Alhaji Mustapha Yan Dutse, member Federal House of Representative, representing Gagarawa Gumel/Sule Tankarkar Federal Constituency, Alhaji Ibrahim Hannun Giwa.

Cleric advocates over-hauling of Hajj operations

By Abubakar Haruna, Reporter

The Deputy Imam of Area One Central Mosque Abuja, Ustaz Muhammad bin Yahaya, has called on the Federal Government to over-haul the Hajj operations for the benefit of intending pilgrims in the country.

Ustaz bin Yahaya, who made the call while delivering his Friday sermon said that the total over-hauling of Hajj operations was the only solution.

He said "we observe that the Hajj operations have collapsed and deteriorated to an extent that

the total over-hauling of the entire operations is the only alternative."

He also attributed lack of proper preparations to the shoddy plan of successful Hajj operations in the country.

According to him, Nigeria should emulate other countries in ensuring safety and welfare of their pilgrims both within and outside the country.

He described politics as one of the major obstacles effecting

Hajj operations saying that if politicians realise that the entire hajj is a divine obligation for God Almighty, there wouldn't be failure in the entire system.

But according to him, politicians have made the task given to them as personal, alleging that some of them politicised the entire system for their own benefit.

Bin Yahaya, expressed dismay over the disgraceful attitude of some Nigerian pilgrims in the Holy land saying some of them are involved in scavenging rather

than concentrating on their religious obligation of Hajj.

He observed that Government should sermon all the stakeholders in the Hajj system and fashion out modalities to address what he referred as mess in the last Hajj operation.

He advised the government not to listen to the section of people calling it to withdraw from Hajj operations insisting that some people want to use mischievous tactics to divert government's attention from its primary responsibilities.



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NEWS

Hajj: Return flights to Kano slow

Airlift of pilgrims back to Kano is experiencing a hitch as out of the over 7000 pilgrims only about 2,766 has returned so far made up of Jigawa and Kano since the commencement of the operation a week ago.

The Kano zonal coordinator of the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs, Alhaji Mustapha Chinade, confirmed this to newsmen in Kano.

He stated that the "speed of operation is slow due to some reasons given by the airline carriers, Kobo Air," adding that, "there are some minor problem which they are trying to rectify."

He however, stated that the Meridian Air has just started the airlift of pilgrims, but that it has already airlifted all Jigawa State pilgrims and is about to start the airlift of other pilgrims from Bauchi.

Alhaji Mustapha Chinade

From Jamilah Nuhu, Kano

expressed optimism that everything would be in order as he was going to Jeddah to help coordinate the exercise.

As at the time of filling this report investigations indicated that only seven flights have operated since the commencement of operations in Kano zone.

Meanwhile, further investigations have shown that so far pilgrims who have returned have expressed satisfaction with the Pilgrims' Welfare Board as most of them have collected their luggage.

They also said that their luggage was intact and had not been tampered with.

They called on Kobo Air and the Pilgrims Welfare Board to see that the remaining pilgrims in Saudi Arabia return on time as most of them have spent all their money there.

Obasanjo endorses Tourism Development Fund

In a bid to fast-track tourism development in the country, the federal government has endorsed the establishment of Tourism Development Fund (TDF) to enable stakeholders have access to the fund in form of soft loans.

The TDF is part of the draft National Tourism Development Master Plan currently before the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and expected to be submitted to the federal government in April this year.

The fund, when established will assist tourism operators like hoteliers, airliners, leisure and travel agencies to have opportunity of accessing the fund as loan on long term period with low interest rates.

Speaking at the stakeholders' forum with tourism operators in Abuja, President Olusegun Obasanjo highlighted the importance of the master plan in the federal government's determination to reposition the tourism sector with a view to making Nigeria a world tourist destination.

"We want Nigeria to come into the mainstream of global tourism as the largest industry in the world," the President said.

He noted that the master plan "is rich enough to propel us" into giving the tourism industry a new face.

According to him, when completed, the project will also attract tourism investment into the country not only in monetary terms, but also in job creation, and

By Mohammed S. Shehu & Benjamin Auta

appealed to all stakeholders to make input into the draft tourism plan.

Reacting to the development, the Culture and Tourism Minister, Ambassador Frank N. Ogbuewu, described the project as a dream come true for the tourism sector, and urged stakeholders to consider it as spring board for the development of the sector.

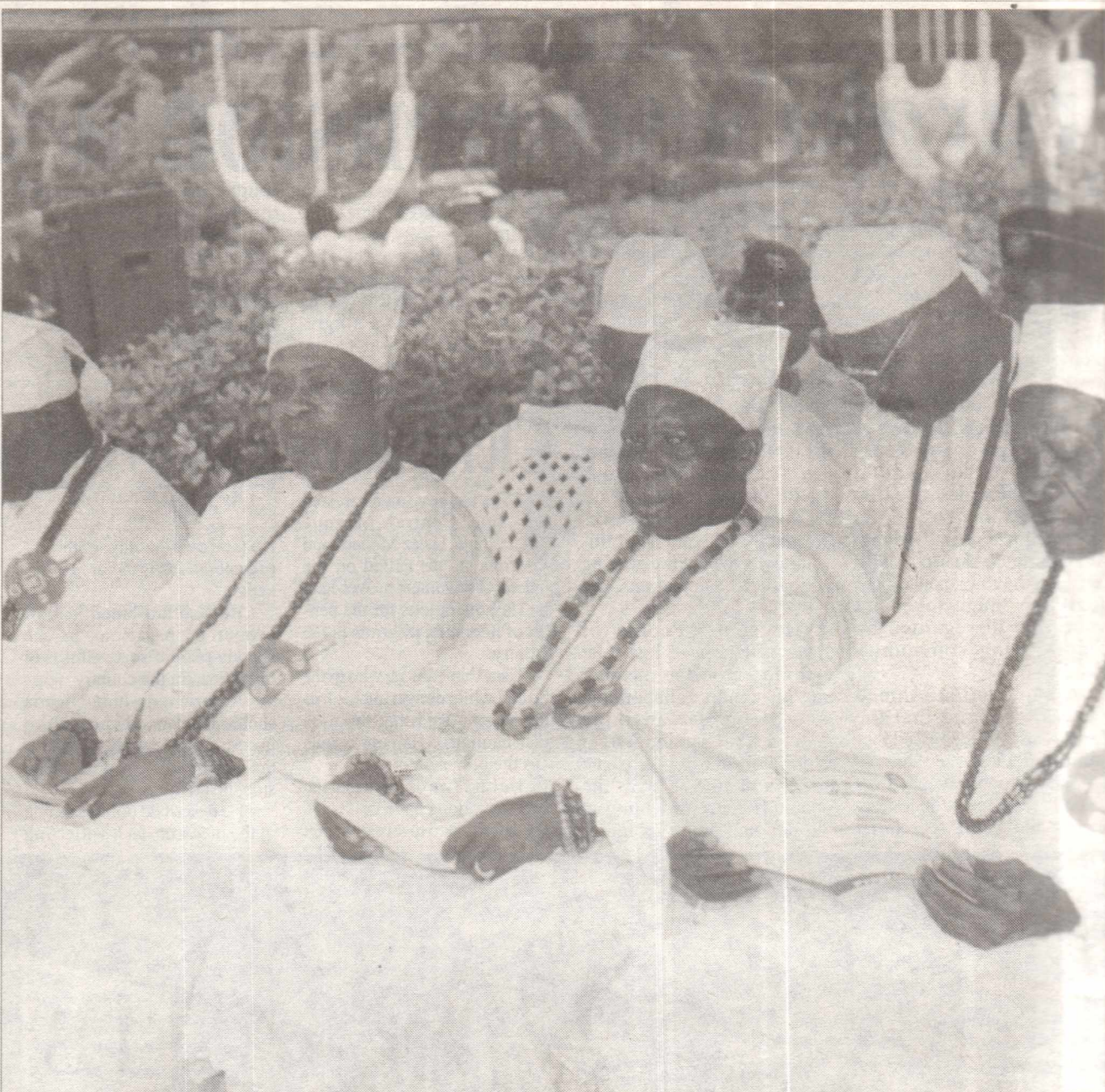
The project will be presented to the Council on Tourism and the Presidential Council on Tourism; the highest tourism decision body in the country, before the final approval by the Federal Executive Council.

In addition, the government has set up machinery to formalize cultural cooperation between Nigeria and Romania.

The tourism minister disclosed this when the Romanian Ambassador to Nigeria, Dr. Emil Rapcea, paid him a courtesy call in his office in Abuja.

Ogbuewu, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Mr. Solomon D. Matankari, said the bilateral cooperation between the two countries would be of benefit to both countries through cultural exchange as well as in the area of tourism facilitation and promotion.

The Romanian ambassador later presented a Romanian globe trotter, Mr. Galatanu Virgil, to the minister as a symbol of Romania's interest in tourism.



Lagos White Cap Chiefs at the laying of Wreaths Ceremony in commemoration of 2006 Armed Forces Remembrance Day celebration held in Lagos ...recently.

Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu.

Ladoja: We will wait for the court before we react -FG

By Ruby Rabi, Senior Reporter

The federal government has said that it will depend on the decision of courts over the controversial impeachment of the Governor of Oyo State, Chief Rashidi Ladoja, before it makes any public pronouncement on the issue.

Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bayo Ojo (SAN) made this known while briefing journalists on the recent actions the federal government intends to take in order to decongest the prisons.

"As we all know when a case is in court, it becomes pre-judice to comment on it. "We will wait for the courts to give judgment. As you are aware many cases had been instituted on the issues, some in Ibadan and another at the Federal High Court in Abuja so let us wait for the outcome of these cases," Ojo said.

On measures to employ to decongest the prisons, Ojo said that the Federal Executive Council had directed that Awaiting Trial Persons who have awaited trial for five years and above for whatever offence be considered for bail.

Also ATPs charged with minor offences who have stayed in prison for a term longer than they would have ordinarily served if convicted should be granted unconditional release immediately.

He said that FEC had also directed that police officers who were in charge of missing case files be prosecuted for obstruction of justice.

Other measures put in

place to decongest the prisons are: the designation of six locations in each of the geopolitical zones as half-way homes for the rehabilitation and re-education of about to be released inmates.

Meanwhile, the new governor of Oyo State, Otunba Christopher Bayo A. Akala, yesterday declared that he cannot be sued in any civil proceedings.

In a motion on notice filed on his behalf by Chief Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), at the Court yesterday, Akala who asked for an order striking out his name and that of the Acting Chief Judge of Oyo State, as 5th and 6th defendants also

requested for an order dismissing the suit for "want of competence of jurisdiction."

The grounds of his application include: The 5th defendant (Akala) cannot be sued in any civil proceedings as he enjoys immunity under and by virtue of section 308 of the 1999 Constitution; The 6th defendant (Acting Chief Judge) as sued is not a juristic personality; The 6th defendant enjoys judicial immunity in the discharge of his judicial function and cannot be sued; The claim of the plaintiff has nothing to do with the interpretation of the Constitution vis-à-vis any agency of the federal government; The filing of the suit is an abuse of court process;

The plaintiff's claim has not disclosed any reasonable cause of action, and that the Federal High Court is not the appropriate forum to file this suit.

One Omosanya Popoola from the Chambers of Lateef Fagbemi (SAN) in an 18 paragraph affidavit deposed claims that there are appropriate courts in Ibadan where the complaint being raised by the plaintiff can be determined and that the plaintiff deliberately joined the Attorney General of the Federation and Inspector General of Police who had nothing to do with the impeachment process so as to confer jurisdiction on the Federal High Court.

Kano targets over N6bn revenue

By Yusuf Adamu Ibrahim, Kano

The Kano State government has targeted over N6 billion as revenue generation of the state for this year. The state Commissioner of Finance, Alhaji Musa Sulaiman Shanono, has said.

Speaking at the monthly briefing in his office, Alhaji Musa Shanono disclosed that the State Board of Internal Revenue is expected to generate the total sum of 2.1 billion in the year 2006.

The commissioner therefore appealed to all revenue generation agencies to put heads together to ensure that the target set in place is actualised.



Governor Ibrahim Shekarau

Alhaji Musa Sulaiman Shanono also implored all accounting officers in the state to ensure that all their returns for the year 2005 are being forwarded to the appropriate organisations on time.

Turning to the monthly receipts and disbursements for the months of December 2005, the commissioner said the state has received the total of N6.7 billion, and disbursed the sum of N6.5 billion.

He said as at 31st December, the state government has a balance of N262,771,029.56 as against November which stand at N235,150,249.58.

NEWS

Controversy rocks chairmen tenure in Benue

The thorny issues in respect of the tenure of local government chairmen in Benue State have given rise to fresh complications as civil societies are now pitched against both the state government and the legislature, demanding a clear definition of the Local Government Act 2000 and its amendments.

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

Tenure of three years was in February 2000 passed into law by the state's House of Assembly, but was later amended to only two years in 2002. In 2003, the House revisited the amendment Act, which was assented upon only six months later, thereby

throwing confusion in between chairmen and the legislature as the former questioned why they should spend only two years at a time the Act for three years ushered them into office.

As a result, chairmen requested the state government to recognise the law which ushered them into office, by allowing them to complete

their three years term, a development which has placed the state's Independent Electoral Commission (BSIEC) in a state of dilemma, as it does not know whether or not to conduct the LG election next March.

But civil societies in the state have risen to face the commission by requesting to either kick-start preparations

towards conducting election in March or to state the next step to take.

Lawyers Alert, a Makurdi based civil society organisation, in a statement on behalf of other groups in the state and signed by its president, Mr. Rommy Mom, said it would not condone any further silence from the commission in respect of the awaited March 2006 local government poll.

"Whichever way, we pray you (BSIEC) to commence preparations in concert with the law of voter education and other logistics. We in the civil society will at the same time bring pressure to bear on

relevant authorities on the need to aid BSIEC in the conduct of the next local government polls," it added.

Meanwhile, the LG chairmen in the state have continued to lay pressure on the state's Assembly to properly define their status in office in respect of period of tenure.

On the forefront on the agitation are council chairmen for Otukpo, Konshisha and Ushongo, honourables Godwin Obla, Joseph Alire and Isaac Mtu, respectively.

But the Assembly has continued to maintain silence even less than three months to the election date of March 27.



Deeper Life Bible Church overseer Pastor, Pastor Banji Adebunaya (right) and the church Group Co-ordinator Pastors, Brother Sunday Udosen, during the Pre Heralding the Abuja Liberation Crusade, held in Abuja ...Saturday.
Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Kwara govt cautions ex-governor

The Kwara State government has cautioned former governor, Mohammed Lawal, to shut up and tackle the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) currently investigating his past shoddy deals in the defunct State Primary Education Board (SPEB).

Reacting to Lawal's utterances recently, the state's Commissioner for Education, Barrister Lanre Daibu, at a press conference in Ilorin declared the former governor as unfit to seek any political office in 2007 because he has been indicted by the Justice Olujemisi Ajayi Judicial Commission of Inquiry report which also asked him to refund over N600 million allegedly squandered at SPEB.

Similarly, Alhaji Lawal is also to refund over N1.2 billion water rehabilitation fund which report has been forwarded to both the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the EFCC for investigation

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo,
Correspondent (Ilorin)

and appropriate action.

The former governor had addressed press conference in Lagos claiming that his rising profile was scaring Governor Bukola Saraki-led administration.

However, the education commissioner faults his claim declaring that "Lawal should shut up, as he has a case to answer with both EFCC and ICPC," while his 2007 ambition hangs in the balance due to the dirty deals, and the cruel conspiracies he was allegedly enmeshed in while in power.

Barrister Daibu described Lawal's utterances as unfortunate, and asked him to face his problems with the EFCC and ICPC.

In the same vein, the state's Commissioner for Information, Alhaji Abdul-Rahim Adedoyin, said Lawal who could not win his ward while in power could not claim any rising profile.

He said while some of Lawal's aides who perpetrated the scandal were cooperating with the concerned authorities on how to refund their alleged loot, "Lawal who should be behind bars is still talking about rising profile."

The information commission further cautioned other opposition groups in the state to be ready as the government is prepared for them in their coordinated attacks on government.

Gov Mu'azu decries insecurity

The Bauchi State Governor, Alhaji Ahmadu Adamu Mu'azu, has expressed concern over the nation's insecurity situation, just as he said the nation's insecurity is everybody's responsibility.

Speaking to newsmen in Kano, Governor Mu'azu disclosed that it is the responsibility of all Nigerians to ensure security of both lives and property of Nigerians.

"Nigerians should put heads together at all levels to ensure adequate security in the country for their own benefit."

From Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Kano

He pointed out that the police, the soldiers, the SSS, the farmers, the businessmen, the students and all stakeholders have their roles to play in the nation's security, and therefore they should play their roles to complement government's effort in that respect.

Alhaji Mu'azu, who was in the state to condole the former Kano State governor, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, over the death of his eldest son, Alhaji Adamu Abubakar Rimi, said that government alone can not shoulder the security

responsibility in the country, and therefore Nigerians should assist government in that respect.

"People should remember that we are in democracy and democracy needs everybody's participation," Mu'azu emphasised.

Governor Mu'azu

therefore called on Nigerians to embark on serious prayers with a view to preventing future occurrence of such unfortunate incidence. He also prayed to Almighty God to grant the souls of both late Hajia Sa'adatu and Alhaji Adamu Abubakar Rimi eternal rest.

FG to relocate two prisons

The federal government has revealed plans to relocate Abeokuta and Ikoyi prisons for security reasons as the present environment has been overtaken by urban development.

The Acting Comptroller General of Prisons, Mr. Uche Kalu, made this known during an interactive session with senior Prisons officers, where he emphasised that the two present locations constitute security risk to the inmates in view of the recent jail-break.

He explained that due to the urgency of the situation, the federal government has already awarded a contract for the construction of new Abeokuta Prison, which will be followed by that of Ikoyi.

He also stated that Ogwashi-Uku Prison, where there was a jail-break, would be completed and commissioned this year, alongside the Aguta Prison.

On Nigerian prisons, Kalu said that he had set up a

By Shehu Othman Shehu

committee to pursue the Austrian prisons project and to see that it is pursued to its logical conclusion to ensure that 'we have a modern convict prison'.

In the Federal Capital Territory, he continued, 'the Austrian government in 2004 promised to build a full-fledged prison and accessories in the FCT. All these are efforts geared towards expanding the prison infrastructure to enable us to contain our inmates in secure custodies'.

The acting comptroller added that the federal government is re-shuffling top Prisons management staff in order to inject dynamism into the administration of Nigerian Prisons Service.

Mr. Kalu added that some Assistant Comptrollers General and Comptrollers of Prisons were being moved throughout the country to reflect this change. He added that circulars on Prisons

security and environment were released last year, but these circulars were either half implemented or not at all.

"The reshuffle of these officers is intended to energise the contents of these circulars so that security-based Prisons administration could be achieved all over the country," he added.

Kalu, while commenting on the health of inmates, said plans were underway to commission the drug compounding laboratory at Kuje, which will ease the flow of drugs to prisoners.

Sounding a note of warning to the officers and men of Prisons, Kalu said they should be innovative in managing the changing faces of 'our prison today'. The prisons we manage today are markedly different from those we had before. In the past, we used to have convicts in custody who we try to reform. But today, many of the awaiting trial persons have been in the custody for so long.

Senate task NACRDB on loan recovery

Nigeria Agricultural Co-operative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) has been charged to ensure total recovery of loans given out to farmers and other investors.

Speaking during a visit of the Senate Committee on Agriculture to the Kaduna headquarters of the bank, over the weekend, chairman of the committee, Senator, Mohammed Ohiare said it is

From AbdulRaheem Aodu,
Correspondent (Kaduna)

only total recovery of such loans that can ensure the sustenance of the bank and save it from liquidation.

Senator Ohiare said further that the bank's efforts to boost agriculture and rural development will soon be uplifted as a bill on agriculture development fund is currently receiving attention at the Senate.



Governor Bukola Saraki

NEWS

Nigerian becomes BBC's Africa and M/East editor

A Nigerian, Mallam Isa Abba Adamu has been appointed the executive Editor of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)'s Africa and Middle East region. He is the first Nigerian to be appointed to this position. Isa Abba Adamu from Kano state joined the

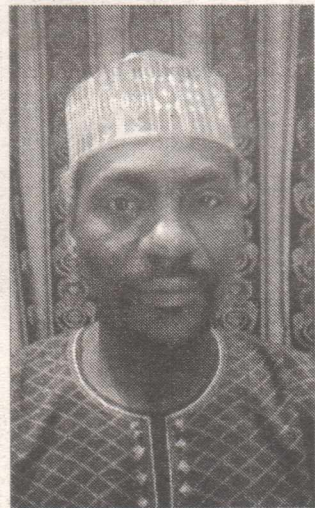
By Isa Sanusi,
Assist. News Editor

BBC Hausa service in 1987. The Head of Africa and Middle East Region of the BBC, Mr. Jerry Timmins who announced the appointment it followed a competitive interview. Until his appoint-

ment, Isa Abba Adamu is the head of BBC's Hausa Service in Bush House, London.

Born in 1961, Isa Abba holds a Bachelors Degree in Mass Communication of Bayero University, Kano and Master of Arts degree in mass Communication from University of Leicester, United Kingdom.

He started his journalism career at the former Gongola Broadcasting Corporation as Radio Producer and Presenter. Married with four children, Isa Abba Adamu is the first Nigerian to Head the Hausa service of the BBC.



Isa Abba Adamu

MRD is blackmailing us — INEC

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has accused the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) of engaging in blackmail in its quest to be registered as a political party. MRD, which has merged with the Movement for the Defence of Democracy (MDD) to form MRDD now seeking registration from INEC, had accused the commission of imposing stringent, unconstitutional registration conditions.

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

executive members; (iii) the constitution and manifesto of the association; (iv) tenancy agreement of association's headquarters office in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and evidence of payment of one hundred thousand naira (N100,000.00) as application fees.

"It is therefore necessary to state that (i) MRD has not submitted its application form for registration as political party up to this time of press release. (ii) MRD's claim to the effect that it should establish offices in thirty six states, including Abuja, as a precondition is not only spurious, but mendacious and is a figment of the association's imagination."

But INEC in an undated statement made available to *Daily Trust* in Abuja on Friday said the conditions set were statutory and that the group was playing to the gallery rather than going by the rules.

The statement, signed by INEC's director of public affairs, Segun Adeogun, said the commission had said time and again that it would not stop any group from partaking in the 2007 polls provided the conditions are met.

"Therefore, rather than engaging in ungodly blackmail, all political associations, wanting to be registered as political parties, should expeditiously complete the application form and return same with necessary requirements to the Independent National Electoral Commission for necessary action. MRD should do same." The statement said.

Dismissing the alleged MRD's grouses, INEC said further that it had not seen any application form from the group and all claims of stringent conditions were "baseless and of no substance."

It said "It is necessary to state that the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy applied for the application form for registration as a political party and was supplied immediately stating the conditions that must be met for registration as political party."

"Conditions for registration as applicable to other associations that were registered include the following: (i) address of the national headquarters of the association at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT); (ii) names, addresses and signatures of its national

Health workers task NASS on Bill

Medical and health workers across the country have called on members, of the National Assembly to ensure the immediate passage of the National Health Bill currently before the legislators.

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma,
Reporter

what they referred to as "discriminatory manner" in which the monetization policy of the federal government is implemented, saying that the workers in national tertiary institutions were being short-changed by the authorities concerned.

Rising from a national executive council meeting, the medical and health workers said that the immediate passage of the bill to an act by the legislators was necessary as the document seeks to address the problems of healthcare delivery in the country.

President of the Medical and Health Workers Union of Nigeria (MHWUN), Comrade Ayuba Wabba and the secretary general of the union, Comrade Marcus I. Omokhuale, said that the bill also seeks to establish a National Healthcare Commission to tackle problems of healthcare delivery in the country.

According to them, the bill would also enshrine the establishment of State Primary Healthcare Boards in the 36 states of the federation, including the Federal Capital Territory as well as local government healthcare authorities in all the 177 local governments across the country.

The medical and health workers also condemned

Confusion mars distribution of national ID card

Confusion has trailed the distribution of the national identity cards in Ilorin, the Kwara state capital.

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo,
Correspondent (Ilorin)

Daily Trust investigations revealed in Ilorin yesterday on the third day of the exercise that some members of the public could not find their ID cards at their registration centres which also served as the collection centres in the heart of Ilorin township.

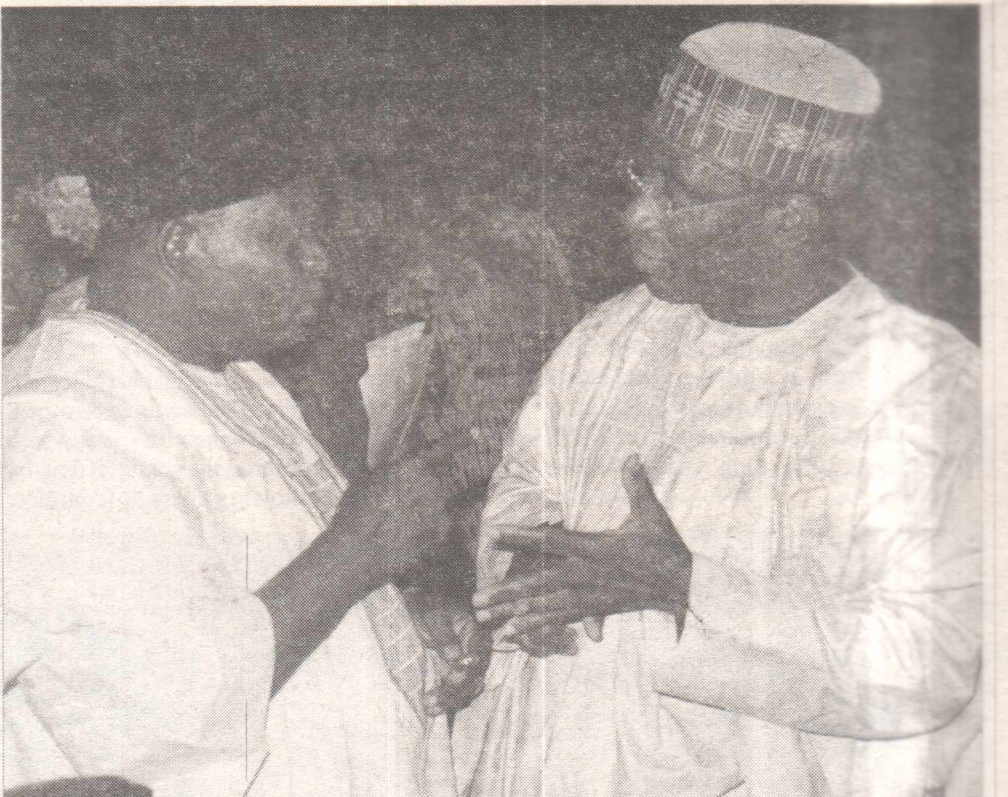
Others had to search from one centre to the other without success, while only few were successful to locate their ID cards at centres where they did not register initially.

Officials in charge of the distribution exercise also failed to report at 8 am at their duty posts, as some were re-

ported to have been reporting for duty at 11 am, leaving interested members of the public to wait endlessly.

At centre RC. 095 off Adangba road, Ilorin, where *Daily Trust* visited at 9.30 am Mr. Adetoro Adedayo, an official in charge of distribution, said "there has been a mix up of the ID cards" and advised those who could not get the cards at their initial registration centres to lodge their complaints to the DNCR office at Oloje in Ilorin.

Daily Trust noticed that ID cards meant for people from Pakata, Gambari and Airport areas were found at registration centres in Adangba and Omoda quarters.



The Minister of State Internal Affairs, Dr. Joseph Odidi Itoto and the Minister of Industry, Chief Fidelis Tapgun (right) discussing during a function at State House, Abuja... recently. Pic: Joe Oroye.

Treason: Dokubo goes on appeal over trial judge

The Leader of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo Asari has asked the court of Appeal to disqualify, Justice Peter Olayiwola of the Federal High Court from hearing the case of felony treason filed against him by the Federal Government.

By Ruby Rabi,
Senior Reporter

insisted on hearing the matter.

Dokubo Asari who was saddened by the judge's decision to continue to hear the case flared up and reined abuses on the judge in open court telling him that he was simply an instrument in the hands of the President Obasanjo who is determined to clamp down on all opposition.

A copy of the appeal made available to *Daily Trust*, Dokubo stated that the trial judge erred in law when he refused to disqualify himself from adjudicating further on the case.

In their particulars to explain the grounds of appeal, he maintain that the trial judge had failed to realise that the question was not if the Chief Judge was administratively competent to assign cases but rather 'the circumstances and unorthodoxy surrounding the appointment of Justice Olayiwola all the way from Benin and the impression it would leave in the minds of the ordinary members of society'.

In their grounds two, he averred that the Judge failed to exercise his discretion judicially and judiciously when he adjourned the case for nearly two months.

He argued that it was unreasonable for the judge to adjourn the matter for such a long time without giving any valid explanations bearing in mind that criminal cases are adjourned on day to day bases.

He stressed that it was the constitutional right of an accused person to have his matter heard expeditiously and this has been violated by the Judge.

In the reliefs sought by the Dokubo he is asking the Appeal court to make an order overruling all decisions

made by the trial Judge and also seeking that he be made to disqualify himself from adjudicating on he said matter.

Daily Trust had reported that Justice Peter Olayiwola, giving his ruling on Dokubo's application that he disqualify himself from the case because he [Dokubo] was apprehensive that he would not get justice because of the various circumstances surrounding the case, Justice Peter Olayiwola said that it was a normal practice for the Chief Judge to decide to assign any judge from any division to hear a particular case at the Federal High Court.

The Judge said 'I do not think that because a judge was transferred from one division to sit on any case is enough grounds for any one to allege bias, and since the applicants are not saying that the Judge is biased, and no facts has being tabled to that effect, this application is dismissed'.

Festus Keyamo, counsel to the accused person had told the court that they intend to exercise their judicial powers by way of appeal as they were not satisfied with the judgement of the court but that they would not complain further.

Alhaji Dokubo Asari had interrupted the court proceedings asking for permission to address the court since he felt he was the subject matter of the litigations.

Dokubo said 'I want to oppose this act of injustice to me, what sort of a country is this [he was screaming and shouting at the top of his voice, the court room grew quite], how can a judge send me to prison for two months without any sort of evidence against me. Without any proof of evidence, you are simply disgracing yourself and the judiciary.'

He said he is asking the Appeal court to make an order overruling all decisions

NEWS



Wives of Vice President Atiku Abubakar are (L-R): Hajiya Titi, Princess Ruqayya and Jamila at the wedding reception of the vice president's children in Yola ...weekend.

Obasanjo condoles Oniyangi family

President Olusegun Obasanjo has described late former Defence Minister, Alhaji Mahmud Akanbi Oniyangi as

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

a great son of Nigeria who served his community and nation with distinction in

many spheres during his life time.

In his condolence letter to the elder son of the deceased, Alhaji AbdulRazaq Oniyangi and delivered by the Chief of Staff, Presidency, General Mohammed Abdullahi at the *Fidau* on Friday the president said "he touched many people in a positive way and the nation will miss this political giant whose intellect, integrity, hardwork and vision improved not only his immediate community in the Ilorin emirate but also Kwara state and Nigeria as a whole."

President Obasanjo said the late minister's life of long devotion to self-development propelled him to pursue and acquire educational qualifications and encourage others to improve

themselves.

In his sermon at the well attended ceremony the guest speaker, Mr. Justice Saliu Mohammed urged Muslims to do good because life is transient adding that "people should have the fear of God and not make people afraid of them."

Among eminent personalities who graced the *fidau* prayer which was led by the Chief Imam of Ilorin, Alhaji Mohammed Bashir, were Chief Justice of the Federation, Justice Mohammed Lawal Uwais, Minister of Justice, Bayo Ojo (SAN), Justice Mustapha Aka-nbi, Generals David Jemibewon and David Bamigboye, and the Chief of Army Staff, Maj. Gen. Martin Luther Agwai among others.

3rd term: Shinkafi calls for grand alliance against Obasanjo

The vice presidential candidate of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) in 1999, Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, has said only an alliance of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), Movement for the Defence of Democracy (MDD), the Movement for Unity and Progress (MUP) and the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) can forestall the third term ambition of the Obasanjo presidency.

In a statement titled, the urgent need for a National Political Focus made available to the *Daily Trust* in Kaduna yesterday, the pioneer director general of the State Security Service (SSS), said "the challenges facing on politicians concerned at the long term stability of our nation as democracy stems from the gathering storm of conflict and competition over the 2007 presidency and the various clandestine schemes to tinker with the 1999

From Sani Babadoko, in Kaduna

constitution in order to create an unwarranted avenue for the perpetuation of the PDP administration beyond 2007.

"The impetus of opposition to the third term agenda in my view, should concentrate on a strong coalition of political opposition inside and outside the PDP against such a venture, if it were to be come real and non-speculative.

"The so-called third term agenda has been elevated to the main pre-occupation of the hijackers of the PDP in recent times at the expense of critical national issues, such as the real crippling economic situation, as opposed to the bogus statistics that are being bandied about, and the ensuring pauperisation of the workers and the masses as well as unemployment, threats to individual freedom and liberty and general insecurity of lives and property.

Zamfara to establish own prisons

The Zamfara state government has vowed to establish its prisons which will accommodate offenders arrested by the *hisbah* commission members in the state.

Governor Ahmed Sani, made the disclosure at the weakened at the Ali Akilu Square, Gusau, the state capital while attending Juma'at special sermon organised by the state government in collaboration with the Ministry for Religious Affairs.

He, said it is not true that members of the commission have no right of arrest as earlier speculated, as the law

From Salisu Zakari Maradun, Gusau

establishing the commission empower them to make arrest.

The governor, who was furious over the current immoral activities taking place in the state despite the reintroduction of the Sharia legal system also directed the chairman of the commission to ensure that they bring to an end, all the social vices.

Sani, further, explained that he will be at the fore front during any arrest, should the offenders resist, directing the chairman of the commission to always inform him of situations and the progress so far.

Why corruption persists - Gov Sheriff

Borno state governor, Alhaji Ali Modu Sheriff has identified poor remuneration packages for public and political office holders as one of the reasons why corruption persists in the country.

The governor, made this observation in Maiduguri at the weekend while receiving members of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), who visited the state to consult with senior functionaries in the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of the government on proposed review of remuneration packaged in the country.

Governor Sheriff, explained that poor take home pay for public servants and political office holders often make them device illegal ways of increasing their earnings so as to enjoy a good living.

The governor, who expresses support for the ongoing effort of the RMAFC to work out a new remuneration package for civil servants and political office holders, added that corruption can be fought if the right payment package is put in place in the country. "Corruption can be totally fought in the country by providing a realistic salary package for all public and political office holders," he said.

Sherrif, also said that his administration has presented a bill before the state House of Assembly on the payment of pension for past governors of the state.

The bill, he explained, is part of his administration's effort at curbing corruption among political office holders

From Abdullahi Bego, Assistant Editor (Maiduguri)

before and after leaving office, saying that it would make them concentrate on serving their people and not worrying about life after leaving office.

A commissioner of the RMAFC, Bello Kware, who represented the chairman, Engineer Hamman Tukur, said that the ongoing effort at reviewing salaries and their remuneration packages for public and political office holders was meant to determine a remuneration package that is 'fair, realistic and generally acceptable,' particularly following the receipt of complaints from various beneficiaries of the remuneration package which was reviewed back in 1999.

These complaints, he added, ranged from the payment of severance allowance, vehicle loan, accommodation, placement to omission of certain categories of office holders in the package review.

"In the light of the foregoing, and having applied the remuneration package since May, 1999 and (also) given the changing economic realities in the country over the same period, the commission embarked on a review of the remuneration package... in consultation with top government functionaries in the executive, legislature and judiciary at all levels of government with a view to obtaining their inputs which would guide the commission in determining a remuneration package that is fair, realistic and generally acceptable," he said.

NBTE to accredit Federal Training Centres

The six Federal Training Centres (FTC) located in the six geopolitical zones across the country will soon be accredited by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

Speaking at the first joint graduation ceremony held for



Dr. Chinwe Obaji, Education Minister

From AbdulRaheem Aodu, Correspondent (Kaduna)

the 2,436 graduates at the FTC Kaduna over the weakened, the Head of Service of the Federation, Alhaji Yayale Ahmed, said plans have almost been concluded to have the schools accredited as well as the courses they offers.

In line with the programme, the curriculum of the schools have been reviewed and recommendations made to enable the schools be at same level with counterpart monotechnics and polytechnics.

"The National Assembly, National University Commission (NBTE) and the federal government have accepted the recommendations, the review have been straightened and has gained necessary standard and accep-

tability. All as run have been fully equipped with computers to improve the services and training of the staff," the HOS said.

He added that the students should remain focused as they are in the centres to improve their skills, and to learn to treat matters.

The Permanent Secretary Manpower Development Officer, Dr. (Mrs.) Lami Hamza, said many staff from the federal, state and local government, including foreigners have benefited from the services of the centres.

"Students from foreign countries like Cameroon, Liberia, Zimbabwe and Angola benefited from the training. The curriculum has been revealed and services updated to meet up with the current developments."

She later thanked the Power Holdings Company

Limited (PHCN), Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemical Company (KRPC), and Kaduna State government for their assistance and contributions to the school.

In his remarks, the Kaduna State Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, said he supports the planned accreditation of the centres because the students are already civil servants, adding that it is what we have that we would be proud of.

The centres, which are located at Maiduguri, Kaduna, Ilorin, Enugu, Calabar and Lagos, graduated 2,436 students from four departments in 2002/2003 and 2004. Nine prizes were also awarded to the students in each category which spanned Diploma, Higher Diploma, Advanced Certificate, Intermediate Certificate and Ordinary Certificate.

NEWS

Census: NOA, civil societies partner with NPC

The acting Director General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Mr. Lanre Adebayo, said that the agency and the civil society organisations in the country will work with those at the grassroots by partnering with the National Populations Commission (NPC), in raising awareness for the forthcoming census.

Mr. Adebayo, made the statement on Friday January 20, 2005 in an interactive session with civil society groups

on the conduct of sensitisation workshops for civil society groups on census 2006 to hold soon in the country.

The NOA DG, said that the partnership building meeting with the civil societies is a critical element of development which will go a long way in raising awareness in the nation.

In his remarks, Dr. Dom Okoro, of Cism one of the group invited at the occasion, stated that the initiative by the NPC to include civil

societies in the planning of the forthcoming census, is a welcome development as he added that they will continue to dialogue with government in such critical matters.

He, however, said that roles for civil societies must be defined in the forthcoming census as they do not know what their contributions will

be towards the exercise.

In his speech, the chairman NPC, Chief Samu'ila Danko Makama, said that the commission believe that the involvement of civil society in the planning and conduct of workshops would make the deliberations more meaningful and rewarding.

He said, the desire of the

commission to work with civil society groups in coming up with acceptable mechanism for the monitoring of the main census can not be undermined.

Chief Makama added that the civil society workshop will hold in the six geopolitical zones with participations drawn from constituent states

attending the workshops in their respective geopolitical zones.

The NPC boss, further said that papers will be presented at the workshop which include modalities for monitoring the 2006 census-NPC's perspective among

Nigeria is a multi-religious country - Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo, has stated that Nigeria is a multi-religious country as guaranteed by the constitution.

The president, stated this in Abuja when a delegation of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), paid him a courtesy call led by its National President and Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Angelica Communion), Archbishop Jasper Akinola.

In a press statement made available to *Daily Trust*, yesterday, the president stressed that the national census scheduled for March 2006 was to establish a correct headcount of all Nigerians regardless of religion and ethnicity while emphasising that all citizens are equal.

He urged all Nigerians especially the various religious groups to support the census exercise.

NPC takes awareness campaign to markets

The National Population Commission (NPC), in Cross River State has started an aggressive grassroots campaign to sensitise rural dwellers on the forthcoming national population and housing census.

The commission has listed out 10 markets in which it intends to visit across the state.

Mr. Ogban E. Ogban, Executive Director and Leader of the campaign team, told *Daily Trust*, that the campaign will lead the team to visit various market square where there are huge population of people, approach and sensitise them on the essence of the census.

According to him the team has so far visited three markets including those of Okurikangin Odunpani local government area, Ishibon and Wanakande in Yala council area.

He said, that the team is sensitising the people on what the census holds, how it should be perceived and of course why the people must allow it succeed.

The commission chief said, so far experiences have shown that most rural dwellers mistake the census to be a common approach by government to make them pay tax.

At the market in Odunpani local government, Mr. Ogban,

From Bassey Ita, Correspondent (Calabar)

urged the village head, chief Akom Ayi, to ensure a successful head count in the area by making use of the community information dissemination mechanism such as town criers among others while also acknowledging the concern and formidable response of the people over the census exercise.

NHRC governing council chairman sworn in

The newly appointed Chairman of the Governing Council of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Justice Anthony Ikechukwu Iguh, was on Friday January 20, 2006 sworn in by the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), Chief Bayo Ojo, SAN.

In a press release made available to *Daily Trust*, Chief Ojo, described the NHRC as an important institution which government should continue to strengthen in order to promote democratic values, social justice and fundamental rights and freedoms.

He said, the entire government economic reform agenda was based on the need to improve the living standards of Nigeria and uphold this economic and so-



Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs, Youth Development and Special Duties, Col. Musa Mohammed (rtl) pointing to something of interest when Governor Chris Ngige of Anambra State (left) visited him...recently

Sokoto govt tasked on Onion, tomato factories

The zonal coordinator of National Productivity Centre, Sokoto, Mr. Samuel Wada Oyibo, has called on Sokoto state government to invite private investors to establish onion and tomato processing factories in the state.

Mr. Samuel Oyibo, who

From Sadeeq Aliyu, Senior Reporter (Sokoto)

made the appeal during the end of the year staff meeting in Sokoto, said the advantages of establishing such factories would be numerous to both farmers and the team-

ing unemployed school leavers.

Mr. Oyibo, also said, Sokoto being the second largest producer of cattle, it should find ways of exploiting and exporting gall stone for foreign exchange.

He said, towards the end of last year, the centre presented papers at the NYSC orientation camps in four states within the zone on the need for self-reliance among young school leavers.

While stressing that these are part of the centres efforts in increasing productivity in both private and public sectors of the economy in 2005, the coordinator pointed out that the era of depending on

government to provide everything especially white collar jobs are fast fading.

He, noted that a productive nation is a happy nation, peaceful and prosperous, all Nigerians must imbibe the spirit of productivity in their everyday lives in order to have increase income and better standard of living.

Also speaking, the representative of the Permanent Secretary, Establishment Department Sokoto, Malam Aliyu Abdullahi, commended the zonal centre for organising the ceremony which he said, would go a long way in encouraging workers to be more productive.

By Benjamin Anta, Reporter

cial rights.

Chief Ojo, observed that Nigeria has signed most of the international and regional human rights treaties and noted that considerable achievements have been recorded in the domestication of such treaties including the African charter on human and people's rights.

The Attorney General, commended the important role played by the NHRC in developing the National Action Plan for the promotion and protection of human rights and called for the development of an implementation strategy, including steps that needs to be taken to ensure that agencies of government and people of Nigeria are

aware of the contents of the plan.

In his remark, Justice Iguh, thanked the president for the appointment and promised to uphold the confidence reposed on him.

Masari charges poly students on studies

The Speaker, House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, has charged polytechnic students and graduates in the country to double up efforts in their studies to uphold the higher responsibilities bestowed on them by equating their status with degree holders.

The speaker made the statement when the National Association of Polytechnic

Students (NAPS), paid him a courtesy visit yesterday in a one day rally in support of the federal government upgrading the Higher National Diploma (HND) above grade level 14. Alhaji Masari, said that the students should avail themselves the opportunity to further their education as the responsibilities added to them will be determined by the levels, of their competence.

He further, added that they

should count themselves lucky with the reforms as the National Assembly will continue to support them in all their endeavours.

Earlier, the president of NAPS, Comrade Nkwocha Martin Luther, called on the federal government to convert the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), to the National Commission for Polytechnic (NCP) for more efficiency.

NEWS

2007 election will be peaceful – Emir of Gwandu

The Emir of Gwandu, Alhaji Muhammad Iliyasu Bashir, has expressed optimism that the 2007 general election would be conducted in peaceful manner.

Speaking to newsmen in Sokoto State while on a courtesy visit to the Sultan, Alhaji Muhammadu Bashair, explained that he has confidence that the country will remain one in spite of political skirmishes from various sections of the country.

The Emir argued that if Nigerians can fight a civil war to maintain unity and indivis-

From Sadeeq Aliyu, Senior Reporter (Sokoto)

ibility of the country there would be nobody who would wish to divide it.

He said people can express their opinions on different issues, but Nigeria's constitution stipulated that the unity of this country is not negotiable, adding that "I believe it is the wish of every Nigerian or anybody who loves Nigeria."

Alhaji Muhammadu Bashir noted that the idea behind democracy is for the people from different political

persuasions to talk to the electorate and get their support.

According to the Emir, as traditional rulers of his country, they are always seeking for peace and unity of this country which he said he hoped is the wish of every well-meaning Nigerian.

Commenting on the failure to airlift some pilgrimages to Makkah, the monarch cautioned that accusations alone can not solve the problem, rather the authorities concerned should sit down and find solution to the problem to forestall future occurrence of the hitch.



From L-R: Hon. Lawal Garba, ANPP House leader, Hon. Aminu Bello Tambuwal, Hon. Victor Lar and Hon. Haruna Yerima during the 3rd Trust dialogue held at the Sherato Hotel, Abuja...recently

Census 2006: NPC give modus operandi

The chairman, National Population Commission (NPC), Chief Samu'ila Danko Makama, has warned those who will want to influence or coerce census officials to make wrong returns in respect of individuals, or localities in the forthcoming census 2006.

Chief Makama gave the warning at the public presentation of the National Population and Housing Census Regulations (2005) yesterday in Abuja.

Chief Makama, who said that "it is an offence to refuse to be counted under the census regulations," added that official must speedily make a report of interferences or coercion to the commission for appropriate action.

He also said that only persons physically present in Nigeria during the exercise will be enumerated."

Presenting the NPC regulations 2005 to the public, the Attorney General and Minis-

By Benjamin Anta, Reporter

ter of Justice, Chief Bayo Ojo (SAN), described the census as the biggest peace time activity which is next to war in terms of mobilisation.

He warned those intending to cause problems during the census to be careful as the law will catch up with them.

Also speaking at the event, the Chairman, House Committee on Population, Honourable Faruk Aliyu, while commending the Min-

istry of Justice said that the exercise is meant for the development of the country."

In a goodwill message, the representative of UNDP congratulated the Ministry of Justice and the NPC for the NPC regulation 2005.

Also giving a goodwill message, the UNFP representative said that the introduction of the regulation is the greatest innovation for the forthcoming exercise.

He expressed delight in the systematic way the census is being conducted.

Group makes case for Hajj-by road

A non-governmental organisation, Hajj By Road (Nigeria) Trust, has urged government and intending pilgrims to explore travelling by road for future hajj operations to forestall the disappointment of missing flights.

Secretary of the organisation Muhammad Salisu Abu Abdullahi stated, adding that road transportation would not have failed the country.

From AbduRahem Aodu, Correspondent (Kaduna)

forts at such trips was not only feasible, but also viable.

"We should explore a supplementary way of going to hajj by road or even by sea instead of air transportation. Previous trial trips undertaken by road were not only possible, but successful," Mallam Abdullahi stated, adding that road transportation would not have failed the country.



THE PRESIDENCY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE OF THE WHITE PAPER ON THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO THE ALIENATION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LANDED PROPERTY

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Development and Chairman, Implementation Committee on the Alienation of Federal Government Landed Property, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko, wishes to notify successful bidders and legal sitting tenants of the Federal Government Landed Property in Ikoyi, Lagos, who have paid the initial 10% of the property price that in line with the provisions of the guidelines contained in the offer letters, they are requested to pay the next 15% of the property value and 5% transaction cost within 90 days of the date of their letters of offer.

2. In this regard, therefore, they are advised to send in the bank drafts for the 15% and 5% being the second tranche payment to the **Secretariat of the Committee in Room 4A:332, Phase I, Federal Secretariat Complex, Abuja or its Lagos Liaison Office at No. 28, Lugard Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos, on or before the due date.**

3. This announcement serves as official notice to all concerned, please.

Signed:

B. B. AWOJIDE
SECRETARY

NEWS

National Theatre tops BPE agenda this year

Worried by the deteriorating condition of the National Theatre, Lagos, the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) has resolved to fast track the concession of the edifice this year to save it from total collapse.

BPE's resolve to place the theatre on top of its 2006 agenda, *Daily Trust* learnt over the weekend was based on report submitted to the bureau by the Committee on Privatization and Commercialization to the House of Representatives early last December.

From Abdulwahab Isa, Correspondent Lagos

officials and recommended its outright concession without delay.

He said BPE will advertise for Expression of Interests to scout for private investors that have money to invest in the place for a turn around.

Daily Trust investigation revealed that desolate darkness enveloped the hall. The outgoing acting general manager, Mr. Pio, was said to be away in Abuja while the newly appointed general manager, Dr. Ahmed Yerima, is reportedly yet to resume.

Daily Trust learnt on a good authority that the ongoing rehabilitation at the complex was at the instance of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism which the bureau did not approve because such is seen to be at variance with privatization norm that forbids committing further funds on enterprises slated for commercialization. It was learnt that the theatre generates N24 million annually, but still depends on government for subventions.

The National Theatre located in Iganmu, Lagos State is an architectural

masterpiece. It covers an area of about 23,000 square metres and standing well over 32 metres tall surrounded by creeks and empty land area for future development.

Among its facilities are 5,000 seater main hall with collapsible stage, 2 nos 700-800 capacity cinema hall equipped with state of the art facilities, standard conference/banquet hall with facility for simultaneous translation of eight languages and roof garden. The staff strength is about 297.

Former external affairs minister Alhaji Sule Lamido has warned that the murder of Alhaji Abubakar Rimi's wife should not be associated to the current politics in the country, but taken as an act of God.

Alhaji Lamido told *Daily Trust* in Kaduna that instead of politicizing the death of the former Kano state governor's wife, people should rather pray for him and his family.

"Let us not look for any political undertone to the gruesome murder. The husband and family of the

Don't politicize Rimi's wife's death - Lamido

From Abdulraheem Aodu, Correspondent (Kaduna)

deceased are deeply affected by the event and the best thing to do is to pray for them and pray for the culprits to be caught.

"There is no reason to politicize the death or to attach the event to the politics of the nation, let us just pray for the husband of the deceased," the ex-internal affairs minister said.

Lamido, who said he believed that power, would shift to the north in 2007, however urged northern politicians to come together and actualize the struggle instead of just talking.

"Power swift to the north is definite. There is no question about that, power must shift to the north come 2007," he added. *Daily Trust* recalls that Rimi's wife was murdered in cold blood early Saturday morning.

Sources informed *Daily Trust* that, the report highlighted the deteriorating and de-generating state of equipments at the theatre, and advised against further funding and recommended it for immediate concession.

Confirming the development to *Daily Trust* in a telephone interview from Abuja over the weekends, BPE spokesman, Chigbo Anichebe, said the Privatization Committee of the House of Representatives did tour the facilities at the theatre complex along with BPE



The Director-General of BPE, Mrs Irene Chigbue right, presenting document of FSFC to the chairman of Hekio Consortium, Engr. G. S. Ede, during the handing-over of Federal Superphosphate Fertiliser Company Kaduna to the new executive (Hekio Consortium) in Kaduna..recently.

"Bauchi to expand TV station

The Bauchi State government is overhauling its information delivery infrastructure, according to its Commissioner for Information, Hon. Ibrahim Zailani.

By Charles Onunaiju (Senior Reporter)

is happening, but added that "Bauchi State is calm, peaceful and everything is going on very well".

In reference to the allegation of the former minister of aviation who is also an indigene of the state, Alhaji Isa Yuguda, that his life is under threat, Hon. Zailani said that "Isa Yuguda as a citizen of Bauchi State is entitled to protection of the government for both his life and property", stressing however, that as electoral politics is around the corner, it will not be fair for purpose of political ambition to paint Bauchi State as disorderly and ungovernable because "we all will reap of the image, we make of the state."

The former federal lawmaker who was best known to oppose presidency's heavy-handed interference in the legislature further said that Bauchi State government like every other responsible government has the onerous duty of protecting the lives and property of every one, and challenged the former aviation minister to avail the government of details of the alleged threat, promising that the state would discharge its obligation to all her citizens irrespective of status or political views.

Speaking to newsmen shortly after the third annual dialogue of Media Trust last week in Abuja, the commissioner said "we are embarking on 100% expansion of the Bauchi Television Authority (NTA) and have already built brand new digital studio for Bauchi Radio Corporation," adding that "by the time we finish the installation of our imported transmitters from the US, I can assure you that Bauchi Television would compete side by side with NTA."

Hon. Zailani further assured that the installation of the equipments would be completed in the next few months.

Briefing reporters on the situation in Bauchi, he said that the "minor incident on 30th December 2005" is long behind the state, as the government of the state is focused on real issues of governance and development.

However, in reference to the "minor incident", the commissioner said that "police have taken over and is better placed to say what

Bayero tasks FG, states on electricity, water

From Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent (Kano)

The Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, has called on federal and state governments to ensure adequate supply of both electricity and water in the state to enable industries perform their business effectively.

Alhaji Ado Bayero, who was speaking while receiving the members of the management of BAGCO Super-Sacks in his palace, said that the bedeviling problem of inadequate supply of both power and water has crippled the industries performance in the state.

He said that with the determined company like BAGCO in Kano adequate supply of the electricity and water will greatly help in boosting commercial activities in the state.

The emir, who called on governments at levels to review the issue of commercial activities with a view to mapping out strategies on how to improve it, said that with more faction industries in the state, the employment pandemic would

be drastically reduced.

Earlier speaking, the managing director of BAGCO Super Sacks, Mr. Peter Low, told the emir that the company had been in existence in the state since

1990.

Mr. Peter low said that due to the recognition the state earned from the company, BAGCO Super Sacks commenced with production of 300 thousands sacks monthly, but now has the capacity of producing

four million every month.

He disclosed further that by the end of 2006 the company will start producing seven million sacks per month and by the end of 2007 it would be able to produce 30 million sacks, monthly.

Politicians have failed the masses- Kure

From Aideloje Ojo, Correspondent (Minna)

The Niger State Governor, Alhaji Abdulkadir Kure, said over the weekend that politicians have failed the masses, explaining that recent events in the country had eroded the confidence of the people.

Addressing the Niger State Council of Chiefs led by Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar, on Sallah homage visit to Government House, the governor explained that the situation called for sober reflection on the part of the citizens and prayed for Allah intervention in advancing the course of the nation.

"We are now in a very precarious situation and the people gradually are loosing confidence in the country due to various happenings.

The development does not only call for sober reflection from the citizens, but for divine intervention, for the country to move forward," he said.

Kure called on Nigerians to rededicate themselves to prayers for Allah intervention in actualizing peace and understanding among the country's leaders.

The governor implored traditional rulers to mobilize their subjects towards embracing government policies, adding that they must ensure the peaceful co-existence of the people without ethnic and religious considerations.

Earlier, the Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar,

urged the government to make amends hitches experienced this year in the hajj operations.

The royal father also urged the governor to give priority to Muslims that missed the hajj next year.



Governor Abdulkadir Kure

Inside Politics

Etiebet is leading ANPP to extinction – Bafarawa

Governor Attahiru Bafarawa of Sokoto state in this interview with Olumide Bajulaye (Correspondent, Lagos) passes a vote of no confidence on the ANPP national chairman, Chief Don Etiebet. He says Etiebet is the root of the feeble nature of the ANPP and that unless the chairman vacates office, the party is doomed. Bafarawa also spoke on his achievements in the state. Excerpts:

Sokoto has this tag of an educationally disadvantaged state. Has that been a source of concern to you since you became governor?

Of course, I was, if not I would not be using my personal resources to improve education in the state. I think education in an on going thing, it is there for life. You can finish road construction, water project but education? You cannot. It is there for life. What the educational sector has witnessed in the last six years even though it is encouraging, I cannot say I have done enough, this is just the beginning because education is a continuous exercise.

After my tenure, I believe, hope and pray that whoever is going to take over from me will continue and even put more emphasis than I have done because any government that does not give education priority, is useless because when you educate the mind, you liberate the man thereby solving the problems of the society. So, I have just started as regards education.

Are you proud of what you have done so far?

No, I am not proud of it rather, I want the people to be proud of what they have got as part of dividends of democracy. What if the people don't even like what I have done, so I would really want to hear from the people whether they are satisfied or not with the giant stride we have made in education. If they are satisfied, I am, if they are not, I ask them where and which area do I improve upon.

Are you conscious of the maintenance culture of the infrastructure you put in place even after you must have left office?

Very simple, for more than 35 years, this country was under military rule, people thought some of the infrastructure they are seeing now could only be gotten under a military regime, now it has been done, so I believe that whoever is coming in now either military or civilian would know that it is either the infrastructure is improved upon or you don't perform at all, so anybody who does not fit for them I can assure you will never enjoy the people because at the end of the day,

they will ask where is their money because if the revenue, both internal and at the federal level does not match the performance, they will ask questions because their eyes are now open. During the Mr President's visit to the state last November, I told him that in the last six years, I have received over N90billion from the Federal Government and I have spent about N86billion, and I showed the balance of 4billion, I showed him the account number and the name of the bank where the balance is. So, with that, the people will know that the state has some money so if you don't live up to expectation, people will ask questions. Before 1999, we didn't have State Television in the state, we didn't have radio, the one we had was almost dead. Now look at the television now, there is no part of the state that it cannot be watched, so, they are getting aware of events around them.

Are you satisfied with the perception of the people to your achievements?

If I say I am satisfied with their response, I will be discouraged, so, when they say they are satisfied, I am not, until I leave the office and become a private person, may be, one can now sit down and reflect all that one has done during those years but right now, if I say I am satisfied with all that I have done for the people, I am deceiving myself and the public because I am still holding their money, I am still in office. So my dear I am not satisfied.

How true is the allegation that ANPP is not putting up the necessary opposition and that is why opposition groups like MRDD are emerging?

I have said about two three weeks back, ANPP is unfortunate to have a bad leader like Don Etiebet. Somebody can be good by appearance but when it comes to leading group of people or practicals, he may be a bad leader. Personally, he may be good but when it comes to leading group of people, he flops. That is exactly what has happened, this man did not lead our party well. It is really a disaster for Don Etiebet to lead our party and I want to give you a message whenever you see him, deliver it to him

that I said for the sake of the nation, democracy, he should resign because in the last three years that members of the party entrusted him with the leadership of the party, we have not seen the dividends of all that he has done. So we imploring him to hands off



Governor Bafarawa

from our party so that we can grow and democracy will grow because if democracy must grow, there must ruling party and opposition party. Without opposition, there will be no democracy, because there is no serious opposition in the polity, that is why there is no democracy today.

Which means you agree that ANPP is not formidable enough.

Of course I agree with you, we are not formidable, we

are not 100%formidable.

You said we don't have democracy, what do we have then?

Virtually , as far as I am concerned, when there is no opposition, there is no democracy.

But how did ANPP found itself into this mess?

For the last three years since Don Etiebet became the National Chairman of our great party, we have never held any NEC meeting to decide the fate of the party.

INEC is very lenient to us, otherwise we would have been disqualified as a political party because it is a rule

which is said to have divided the ANPP governors.

We are not divided but even if we are divided, that is the responsibility of the leader of the party to unite the people, that is why he is a leader.

Are you now heaping all the blame for the crisis in ANPP on the national chairman?

Say it loud.

Have you ever advised him on how to pilot ANPP affairs?

Several times.

How did he react?

He is not responding. I am not surprised that he is behaving this way because whoever he is not part of a building, he will not mind for the collapse of the building. Don Etiebet never worked for the position, he just got it on the platter of gold. He was pushed away from his former party unfortunately, I was the person who nominated him to become the National Chairman and that is why at the junction, I am tendering an apology to the entire ANPP members and lovers that I regretted nominating and supporting him as the National Chairman of our great party. I am indeed very sorry for all the disaster this man has brought to our great party.

So, what's the way out?

That is why I am appealing to him through you that he should hands off the party and we take over from there. This is a message, please send it to him. It is really unfortunate when I heard someone who used to be his P.A that I was not supporting South-South, if there is any politician who supports the South- South struggle is Bafarawa. I was the National Chairman who promoted Don Etiebet to take over from me, who promoted Aikhomu to be the chairman of the Board of Trustees, fortunately, all of them are from South-South. So, if Bafarawa is not interested in the South-South, how did he endorse Don Etiebet and Aikhomu to be leaders of our party?

Are you thinking of who succeeds you as governor?

The issue of grooming a

successor is not a bad idea but I believe the most important thing is to pray to God to give us. You know I may have someone in mind and install him but by the time he gets into office, he becomes something else but if everything is put in the hands of God, such person when chosen eventually will never go wrong because a man choice can be wrong and that is because we are not 100% perfect and that is why I think we should put everything to His hands who will give somebody who will even surpass all that I have done.

Talking about successor, what do you think could be reasons for the common rift between governors and their deputies?

But I think the constitution is very clear on this and if that is the case, why should there be quarrel? I know that I am the governor and my deputy knows he is deputy, he knows the work and functions of the governor before he accepted be deputy, so why the argument all about? It is the constitution we are following.

Why are you living in your own house and not the official residence?

This government thing is a temporary thing. If you get engrossed into much, you put yourself into trouble because it has a limit, it is either 4 or 8 years, that is the maximum, nothing more. If you say because you are now in government, you get everything free,

I think that is when one should even be more careful. If care is not taken, you may find it hard to adjust whenever you eventually leave office and that is I have not changed from being what I am from the very first day I came here and I can assure you, I will be like this till I leave office in sha Allah.

What are your fears for Nigeria's democracy?

Your fear is my fear, all your fears are mine too because we are in this country together.

After 2007, what next for you?

I was once a local government chairman, I was state party chairman of my party, I was Zonal Chairman, I was National Chairman of the party before I am now a governor. All these appointments were never planned, I never thought of being there. Now, if I start thinking of any position apart from the position I am, then, I am not being grateful to god. I contented with all God has given me, alhamdulillah, if I die today, I will be grateful to him.

“For the last three years since Don Etiebet became the National Chairman of our great party, we have never held any NEC meeting to decide the fate of the party.... If we are supposed to go by the rules, we are not a political party.”

Inside Politics

3rd term: Mantu, Hambagda on the cross

At last, senators have summoned enough courage to ask questions. They have been collectively linked with an agenda many of them truly know nothing of. And the condemnation is becoming too unbearable. Last week at a closed door session of the Senate, lawmakers spent almost two hours grilling Senator Ibrahim Mantu, chairman of the National Assembly Joint Constitution Review Committee. The main question was where did you find this proposal of three terms of four years? But two hours after, with Mantu in the dock, the senators were still as petrified as to how the thing was smuggled in.

Here is a proposal that was never mentioned in any of the public hearings held by the subcommittee or any documents presented to it. The convention is that a committee holds hearings and collate memoranda regarding a subject matter before it. But the subcommittee on executive of the constitution review committee, headed by Senator Omar Hambagda, came with a novel idea, which is to inject opinion of constituents ostensibly contacted on the issues at stake by their representatives.

According to the chairman, some committee members suggested that "look why don't lets have three terms of four years so that whoever is elected will have adequate time to work?" But some other members said no, preferring to maintain the status quo. When there was no consensus, the chairman decided to reflect all views in his report.

In fairness to Hambagda, if indeed the rules say all opinions must be reflected in the absence of consensus, he could not have refused to include the third term option. But did the rules say so? His defence is "If you are a chairman of a committee, some members give their proposal and the rules say you must summarise all opinions canvassed if there is no consensus, what do you do? As a democrat, I have no option but to push everything forward to the main committee. And that is exactly what we did. Mind you we did not say take this model, we said choose among the three options."

All this while Mantu had maintained sealed lips. But last Thursday he had to open up. Senators were understandably agitated. The resulting fury from the Hambagda committee proposal was enormous and directed at the entire legislature. Some of the senators have become targets of verbal and physical

By Habeeb Idris Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

attacks by irate constituents. Since the controversy germinated, they were only murmuring. They have now brought out the steel in them and confronted the man at the centre of the storm.

Findings indicated that Mantu, like Hambagda, was said to have defended the inclusion of the third term proposal in the subcommittee report because it was an opinion of the some members which they are entitled to. The deputy senate president also wondered why senators would be agitated by a mere proposal that only leaked but not officially released.

This position was countered by those who felt that leakage or no leakage, the thing was no farce, insisting that there was more to it than meets the eye in the proposal because it never surfaced at the previous hearings the subcommittee held. The fact that it was part of the subcommittee report, they contended, speaks volumes. There have been talks of awesome bribery. Senators wanted to know the brains behind the idea. But Mantu did not name names and denied being induced or pressured for third term.

So who are the brains behind the idea? Hambagda had also refused to say, as, according to him, it was not proper for a committee chairman to begin mentioning individuals that made specific submissions. The question now is, by hiding the identities of the third term agents, what benefits do Mantu and Hambagda stand? Why should they bear the criticism instead of allowing the pro-third term agents to stir their own stew?

Mantu had wanted to present an interim report of his panel to the Senate. But the lawmakers said there was no need for that. According to President of the Senate, Chief Ken Nnamani, "It will be premature to ask for an interim report at this moment."

Instead of the committee operating on a blank cheque and dragging its feet, as it



President Olusegun Obasanjo

were, the deputy Senate president was directed go and prepare a time table and present same to the Senate.

Before the recent directive, Mantu committee was operating virtually on impulse. It does not have a time table nor are meetings held regularly. In some instances, scheduled meetings were called off at the last minute without reasons. At another instance, a meeting slated for a particular Thursday was said to have held a day earlier.

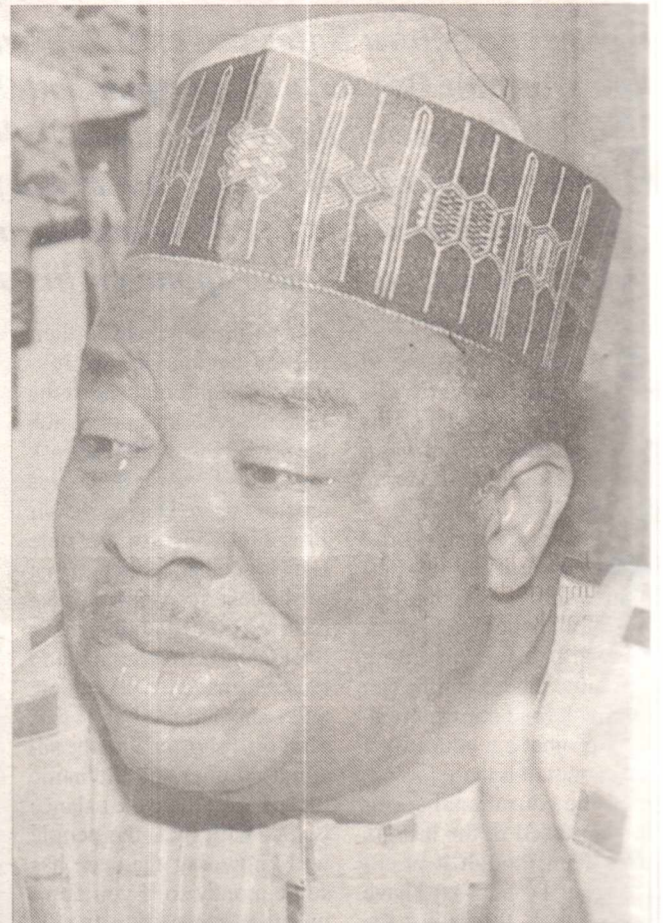
It was not clear what Mantu had wanted to achieve by presenting an interim report on the constitution review process. But sources indicated that he might have wanted to test the waters and see how the third term agenda could be received.

Chairman of the Senate committee on media and public affairs, Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba said the closed-door session was convened to douse heightening agitation among senators over the controversial proposal. But has the tension

been doused? Has the right questions been answered?

Indeed if the session was convened to clear issues, it ended up further beclouding same. *Daily Trust* learnt that heated argument broke among senators on the propriety or otherwise of continuing with review process in view of the mounting antagonism. Though the anti-third term campaign has been gathering momentum in the National Assembly, the PDP vs other parties in this matter only came to the fore during the session. The upper chamber was almost sharply divided between the opposition lawmakers and those of the ruling party, with the former insisting that the process must be suspended. But the PDP group said no, since nobody is known to have been contacted or contracted for third term, then it remains a rumour and so the process must go on. In the end the majority had their way, which is that the process should not only go on, but also be accelerated.

Ndoma-Egba confirmed



Senator Ibrahim Mantu

that Mantu was put to task to answer series of questions from the agitated legislators and after discussions, it was resolved that a compressive time-table for the constitution review should be provided in the next few days.

"During the executive session, we had the opportunity of dousing whatever the anxiety and whatever doubt senators have on the progress of work by the constitution review committee. The deputy senate president who is the chairman of that committee had the opportunity of briefing us and at the end it was agreed that a timetable for the work should be produced so that we can appraise what they are doing, whether or not they are making progress. Because right now as it is, their programme is open ended. We don't know when they are going to finish and we have absolutely nothing to hold them onto.

"Issues like hidden agenda, third term agenda were raised, and those who should know reassured the

senate that nobody approached them on any extension and then the senate as a body still has no request no material nothing whatsoever to indicate that there is third term agenda. But we got that reassurance. The subcommittees and the main committee are merely doing their work and that at the end it will come to the whole Senate."

Asked whether Mantu had explained how the third term idea cropped up, Ndoma-Egba said "members of the committee are entitled to their own opinion, they on their own may have generated that (third term)." But when asked to say whether those who brought the idea were mentioned, Ndoma-Egba insisted that whoever they were they had the right to do this.

The anti-third term elements in the Senate have lost on at least two counts in Thursday's session. One, the constitution review process they want stopped will go on with all the inherent dangers. The review train appeared to have developed cold feet because of the mounting opposition to the third term agenda, but with the directive to "accelerate" its job, the engines may start rumbling soon. Two, and more importantly, there was no decision to delete the contentious proposal from the subcommittee report.

Notwithstanding, the session provided an opportunity to shoot down, at least for the time being, subtle attempts of furthering the third term agenda through presenting an interim report.

"It was not clear what Mantu had wanted to achieve by presenting an interim report on the constitution review process. But sources indicated that he might have wanted to test the waters and see how the third term agenda could be received."

SPORTS

EGYPT 2006 AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

Eagles dim Stars

By Patrick Andrew, Asst. Head Sports Desk

Taye Taiwo's 85th minute cracking left grounder was all the Super Eagles needed to wrap up the maximum points off the Black Stars of Ghana in their group opening match of the African Nations Cup championship.

Wilson Oruma, who was in superb form, had been brought down about 34 meters away from the vital area. Yusuf Ayila stepped forward to toss the ball flaccidly to Taye whose pile drive sailed unperturbed into the net to the wilderment of goalkeeper Sam Adjei.

The result ensured that the Eagles stay top with three consecutive wins in four meets within four years.

The goal was a befitting climax to a pulsating encounter that had all the trappings of a classic with the Eagles showing why they are only second to Cameroun on CAF ranking and 24th in the world.

The crunchy clash that was too close to call lived up to top billings right from the blast of the whistle with the Eagles dictating the pace as Ayila, Oruma and Martins run rings around the Black Stars defence line that had Samuel Osei Kuffour and John Mensah in charge.

The first quarter of the hour saw the Nigerians sizing up their opponents with telling incursions which kept the Ghanaians on their toes as they resorted to counter attacks to turn the table against the Eagles. In one of such counter attacks, Stephen Appiah waltzed into the Eagles 18 meters box but his shot was blocked off course by Ayila who kept close watch over him throughout the match.

In the 21st, 23rd and 26th minutes respectively Adjei was on duty to prevent a dent on the Stars even as Kuffour had to draw from his vast experience to keep the score sheet even. The Ghanaians retaliated with Matthew Amoah floater that sailed off mark a minute later.

On the half hour mark, Osaze Odemwingie darted into the 18 meters delivered a volley of a cross that Ayila lept high to nod towards the far corner but Adjei again was equal to the task, then Julius Aghahowa mesmerized the defence but his scintillating drive narrowly missed to give their opponents momentary respite.

Oruma, who sparkled like a rare gem, took a blaster of a shot that drew the best from Adjei to keep the score line barren barely two minutes away from the end of the first stanza. Enyeama was on

course a minute into added on time when he parried off Amoah's shot before the referee sent the teams on recess.

On resumption, the Eagles turned the screw against the Stars pummeling them with consecutive bombardments but the Kuffour - led defence refused to crack. Within the

half hour into this half, the Eagles created 16 chances while The Stars had one that Ayila had to be at his peak to block Yakubu Abubakari away from hitting target. In the 69th minute Enyeama was in blistering form as he stretched full length to blocked Amoah's floater.

Coach Austine Eguavoen brought on Nwankwo Kanu and Obinna Nsofor for Aghahowa and Osaze to add

bite to the offensive while Joetex Frimpong was introduced by his opposite number to achieve same effect.

The Eagles goal was the tonic the Stars needed to launch onslaught on the Eagles as they came near twice in the dying minutes but the Eagles scrambled to safety. It was back slapping when the referee ended proceedings.



Nigeria's goal scorer, Ismaila Taye Taiwo congratulated by teammate Yussuf Ayila after scoring the winning goal in their African Cup of Nations opening game against Ghana in Port Said...yesterday.

Threat of early exit hangs over Morocco

Morocco's 2004 African Nations Cup finalists could find themselves making an ignominious early exit at the hands of host nation Egypt on Tuesday.

With Ivory Coast expected to comfortably beat Libya and reach six points in the day's earlier game, Group A's two slots in the quarter-finals could be wrapped up if Egypt notch their second win of the tournament.

Morocco are an attractive wide going forward, moving

smoothly through the gears with their neat short-passing game from midfield. But they paid a high price for a lack of finishing in Saturday's 1-0 defeat by the Ivorians and will need to make the most of what looks a more suspect defence.

While Arsenal's Ivorian defensive pair Kolo Toure and Emmanuel Eboue were kept busy, tackling and charging down most of Morocco's attacks, Egypt's defenders made a number of unforced errors in their 3-0

win over the Libyans on Friday.

Morocco's French-born striker Marouane Chamakh will doubtless provide a sterner test for a home team who view the support of their own fans as very much a double-edged sword.

Though euphoric in victory, the pressure they exert during games can be a real handicap to their players' performances and they may not be patient at Cairo's International Stadium on Tuesday.

BALL-TO-BALL ACCOUNT

Eagles soar!

By Ismaila Umaru Lere, Assistant Editor

Teams: Nigeria: 1-Vincent Enyeama; 2-Joseph Yobo (c), 3-Taye Taiwo, 5-Chidi Odiah, 6-Joseph Enakarihire; 13-Ayila Yussuf, 16-Wilson Oruma, 18-Chris Obodo, 20-Peter Odemwingie; 9-Obafemi Martins, 17-Julius Aghahowa

Ghana: 1-Sam Adjei; 4-Samuel Kuffour, 6-Emmanuel Pappoe, 15-John Pantsil, 18-Abubakari Yakubu, 21-Gabriel Issah Ahmed; 5-John Mensah, 7-Laryea Kingston, 10-Stephen Appiah (c), 23-Haminu Dramani, 14-Matthew Amoah

3:43pm: National anthems duly crooned, both sides shakes hands with each other as per the formalities, form themselves into a photogenic pattern for the assembled snappers, and finally take up their positions on either side of the half-way line. Let the battle commence!

1 min: Nigeria set the game in motion, and immediately launch the ball forward in search of Martins. But Taiwo's punt is too long and it's a kick-out to Ghana.

3 mins: After some zippy interplay from Nigeria, Ghana regain possession and Ayila tries to slip Amoah through. But his pass was like Tottenham's Andy Reid - it had far too much weight on it.

6 mins: Obodo concedes a corner, which Appiah overhits awfully.

17 mins: Obodo chops down Amoah, giving Ghana a free-kick about 35 yards out. The goalkeeper says he only needs two men in the wall - but, in fact, he didn't need any, as Appiah's pot-shot was, now that we've all gone metric, several kilometers wide.

22 mins: Obodo flicks the ball past Kuffour and is then hacked to the ground: free-kick to Nigeria. Taiwo's shot is nothing to write about.

24 mins: Issah curtails a swift Nigerian counter-attack by body-slammung Oruma to the ground. Free-kick from 40 yards ... and this time Taiwo gets it right: what a thunderbolt! Tremendous save by Sam Adjei, who manages to push it around the post for a corner.

25 mins: Adjei spills the corner inexcusably and it's scrambled out for another one ... which he spills again! Bizarre goalkeeping from the man who moments earlier produced a stunning save. His defence bail him out this time.

26 mins: Ghana race up the other end, and Amoah shaves the woodwork with a zinger from outside the box. Keeper well beaten.

31 mins: Both sides are winning plenty of free-kicks, which, of course, also means both sides are giving away plenty of free-kicks. And you'd be tempted to say a set-piece looks the most likely source of a goal, except for the fact that 90% of the deliveries so far have been of the sort that would get most postmen sacked.

36 mins: Sneaky long-range daisy-cutter from the hitherto invisible Peter Odemwingie - tipped wide by Adjei.

40 mins: Aghahowa receives the ball on the edge of the Ghanaian box, he twists and turns and waits for support. But none comes, so he side-steps Mensah and then unleashes a fine shot - just wide!

42 mins: Oruma out-muscles Appiah in the middle of the park then strides forward and lets fly with a 25-yard blockbuster - Adjei makes another spectacular save, and this time it was needed.

45 mins: Appiah scorches down the left, then turns inside Odiah and hammers a shot towards the top corner. But it beaten away by Vincent Enyeama, who's determined not to be outdone in the spectacular stakes by Adjei.

Half-time
46 mins: We're back, and Odiah immediately stings Adjei's hand with a long-ranger.

48 mins: The Eagles have started the second half in roistering form. Odemwingie went close from 20 yards, and then the entire Ghanaian defence had to descends on Martins in the box to prevent him shooting.

50 mins: Oruma sends one forward for Martins to scamper after ... which he does ... and so does the Ghanaian keeper! The striker gets to it first, dances past Adjei, and then rolls the ball towards the empty goal from a very acute angle ... and finds only the side-netting. A real reprieve for the Ghanaians, who have been besieged since the resumption.

51 mins: Ghana try to relieve the pressure and pile forward with purpose: cue chaos in the Nigerian box, and the ball breaks to Abubakari Yakuba, who unleashes a rocket - brave block by Taiwo!

53 mins: Excellent play by Taiwo, who nutmegs Pantsil at the by-line and stomrs into the box. He pulls it back to the penalty spot to the waiting Oruma. But the Marseille man volleys into the ground and wide. A shameful waste.

56 mins: Martins and Obodo perform a sumptuous, back-heeled one-two, the move culminating, oxymoronically, in anti-climax: Obodo shot straight at Adjei.

67 mins: Yobo dawdles at the back and is robbed by Appiah, who bounds into the box and feeds Dramani at the near post. Good save by Enyeama. The corner is cleared, but Appiah knocks it back in to Amoah, who's completely unmarked 12 yards from goal! His volley is turned away brilliantly by one hand by Enyeama!

74 mins: Ghana substitution: Yakubu off, Hans Sarpei on.

76 mins: Corner to Nigeria - but it won't be taken for a while, as no fewer than three Ghanaian defender have gone down injured. Seems Nigerian domination has trigged a mass outbreak of cramp. Or, gee, could they be time-wasting?

79 mins: Nigeria substitution: Aghahowa, who's done next to nothing, is replaced by Kanu.

80 mins: With Kuffour off receiving treatment, Issah is booked for barging into Kanu. Yobo dives to head the free-kick off the feet of Obodo. Corner to the Eagles.

81 mins: Kuffour is back on, and Ghana lift the siege long enough to win a free-kick a couple of yards inside the Nigerian half. It comes to nothing, so Nigeria can churn forward anew.

Nigeria substitution: Victor Nsofor on for Odemwingie

84 mins: Goal! Nigeria 1-0 Ghana Oruma is bundled over 40 yards out. Thinking quickly, Yussuf rolls it sideways to Taiwo, who hammers a wonderful shot past a bemused keeper! Having defends like bouncers for most of the match, the Ghanaians momentarily lost their concentration, allowing Taiwo to sneak a superb goal!

86 mins: Desperate for a goal, Ghana have thrown on JoeTex Frimpong, former top scorer in the African Champions League for Enyimba ... of Nigeria.

90 mins: The referee indicate six minutes added time!

90 mins: Unless the Black Stars invent a way to score without the ball, they're not going to equalise. The Eagles are hogging possession with poise and skill.

95 mins: The final whistle blows, signalling the start of jubilation among the Nigerians.

Strikers back in the spotlight

Francileudo dos Santos, although born in Brazil, is now in his third year with the Tunisian team and continued his scoring run for the Carthage Eagles as they defeated Zambia 4-1.

They are joined in poll position in the group by Guinea, who gained in confidence as their match

progressed against South Africa and scored twice late in the match for a 2-0 triumph.

The 2010 FIFA World Cup hosts turned in another disappointing performance and now have an uphill task if they are to make the knockout stages.

Dos Santos' hat-trick kept the goal tally at the tournament mounting,

following 24 hours after Samuel Eto'o had blasted in three for Cameroon in their game against Angola.

The Toulouse striker picked up where he had left off at the last Nations Cup in Tunisia, where his inclusion in the side was one of the catalysts for their 2004 triumph.

On Sunday, on the

Mediterranean coast where rain fell lightly through the proceedings, he came good again helping Tunisia to easily bounce back after Zambia had handed them an early scare.

Zambia were always going to pose a threat with the skill and the pace of James

Chamanga who caught the Tunisians out as early as the ninth minute. He latched onto a defensive error and pounced on the ball before Tunisia's 39-year-old goalkeeper, Ali Boumnijel, to score.

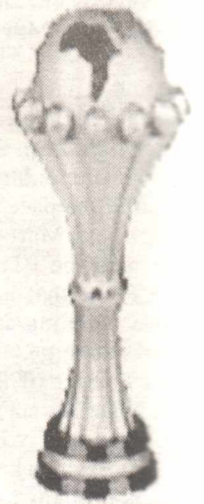
But that was as far as Zambia got with any enterprise as the slicker and more polished Tunisians quickly clawed their way back into the contest.

After a few near misses it was Dos Santos who got the equaliser, heading home Adel Chedli's cross 10 minutes before the break.

Soon after the interval, the writing was on the wall for the young Zambians, who fell victim to naïve defending as Tunisian captain Riadh Bouazizi snapped up a cross and swivelled a header past goalkeeper George Kolola.

Dos Santos finished them off in the last six minutes with a display of the direct running that was such a feature of the last Nations Cup tournament.

He took two fine goals to emphasise that the chase for the African title could yet be decided by the form of the continent's top marksmen.



Guinea saved their strikers for late on in the game against Bafana Bafana, bringing on Sambegou Bangoura and Ousmane Bangoura to take the two points.

Coach Patrice Neveu called it a "satisfying win against a prestigious team" and must take credit for his crafty changes.

Sambegou Bangoura scored just minutes after coming on, getting his body onto a cross from another substitute, the right-winger Ismael Bangoura.

It was a festival of Bangouras in the last minutes when Ousmane, who plays at Charleroi in Belgium, added a second from close range.

South Africa were never in the game, as their coach Ted Dumitru admitted afterwards.

He said his players had been complacent after the high of a pre-tournament win over Egypt in a friendly match eight days ago.

South Africa's tournament could well be over if they lose to Tunisia in their next match on Wednesday -- adding more woes after missing out on a place at the 2006 FIFA World Cup finals in Germany.



SHOCKER: Guinea batter South Africa

A quite atrocious South African side succumbed pathetically to Guinea in

Alexandria on Sunday night. The only surprise was that it took Guinea until the 77th minute to take the lead

in a 2-0 win, as they completely outplayed South Africa and should really have won by more.

In the end goals from two substitutes, Sambegou Bangoura and Ousmane Bangoura were enough to see off Ted Dumitru's side, who could barely string a pass together and got what they deserved -- absolutely nothing.

The Guineans tormented the Bafana Bafana from the off, finding acres of space down the flanks and were let down only by a poor final ball and a lack of presence in their penalty area.

South Africa, for their part, were shown up for the inexperience in their squad, while key striker Benni McCarthy once again looked lethargic and out of sorts in an international jersey.

In truth, there weren't

many chances for either side in the first half, though Guinea really should have taken the lead four minutes before half time.

Pascal Feindounou, playing in central midfield, had his free kick spilled by Calvin Marlin, and an almighty goalmouth scramble ensued where Marlin blocked another shot and the ball was eventually hacked clear.

The lack of ambition from South Africa was astonishing. They seemed content to play a counter-attacking game without the necessary ability to actually counter-attack.

After the break it was more of the same, though if anything Guinea dropped a little to South Africa's level and the game got worse.

Bafana may have snatched the lead when dodgy Guinean keeper Naby Diarso dropped Zuma's overhead-kicked

cross, but just gathered before McCarthy could get a cross.

Guinea, however, showed they simply had more strength than Bafana on the bench by throwing on two capable strikers in Sambegou Bangoura and Ousmane Bangoura.

And it was the former who broke the deadlock getting a touch on Ibrahima Bangoura's cross, with the ball deflecting in off Jimmy Tau.

South Africa had to now show some attacking purpose, and Siyabonga Nkosi did manage to inject some life into them, but they never really looked like scoring.

And Guinea got a deserved second when Feindounou's cross was headed down and Ousmane Bangoura fired home.



Guinea's Ousmane Bangoura celebrates after scoring against South Africa

Bafana coach castigates players after defeat

South Africa coach Ted Dumitru castigated his side after a 2-0 defeat by Guinea in their opening

match at the African Nations Cup on Sunday.

Dumitru said they showed little commitment in

Alexandria and needed to change their mental approach to have any

chance of progressing past the first round stage in Group C.

"We made a mistake in beating Egypt last week," he said in reference to a surprise 2-1 win over the host nation in Cairo in a warm-up match a week before the start of the tournament.

"My players heads were out of the game. We were totally exposed. The team were far too confident, they thought Guinea were not a serious team and were made to pay heavily.

"I have to go now and sort out this mental problem. Beating Egypt in a friendly is nothing compared to losing here to Guinea," said the veteran Romanian-born coach.

Dumitru, who was appointed in a caretaker role for the tournament after the resignation of Englishman Stuart Baxter, said South Africa fell short in all departments.

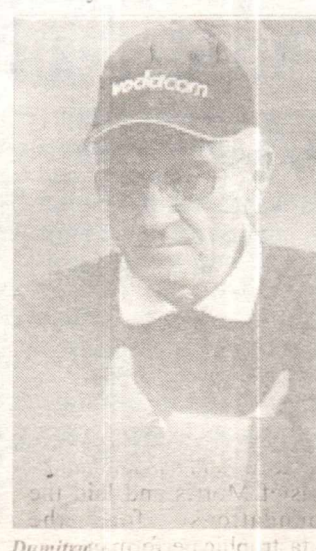
"We had a problem all over the lineup, not only in defence. We had a serious

problems with commitment."

But he added: "You have not seen the real South Africa in this tournament yet. What I can promise you is a totally different game"

South Africa play champions Tunisia in Alexandria on Thursday and defeat for the 2010 World Cup hosts will effectively condemn them to an early exit for a second successive Nations Cup tournament.

Tunisia won their opening Group C match with a 4-1 win over Zambia in Alexandria earlier on Sunday.



Dumitru's side were out of the game

Drogba doubt as Elephants face Libya

Ivory Coast may have to face Libya in Tuesday's African Nations Cup match without striker Didier Drogba after he suffered a recurrence of a knee injury in their opening match win over Morocco.

The Elephants, already missing striker Aruna Dindane after the sudden death of one of his twin daughters, could clinch a quarter-final place if they beat Libya and Morocco fail to beat hosts Egypt in the day's other Group A game.

Drogba scored the winner from a controversial penalty as Ivory Coast beat Morocco on Saturday but was surprisingly taken off in the 65th minute.

There were conflicting reports at the time and Ivorian officials have made no further comment on Drogba's condition. The

team avoided the media at their hotel on Sunday.

Coach Henri Michel said after Saturday's game: "He's got three days to recover before the next game and we'll have to see what we're going to do."

However, Chelsea's \$42.2 million striker said simply that he had asked to be taken off because he was tired.

Libya, who have failed to win a game for more than a year, were thumped 3-0 by hosts Egypt in their opener on Friday and need to pull off a major upset to keep their interest in the tournament alive.

The North Africans are without suspended Uruguay-born goalkeeper Luis de Agustini, who capped

an unhappy performance by being sent off after clumsily giving away a penalty against Egypt.

Turkish-based captain Tarek Tayeb has also been plagued by a muscular problem and was left out of the starting line-up against Egypt before coming on in the 64th minute.



Drogba

Sports

EGYPT 2006 AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

Tears of joy for Santos, tears for Adebayor

It was a tale of two strikers at the African Nations Cup - one who covered himself in glory and the other in shame.

Brazilian-born marksman Santos scored a hat-trick as champions Tunisia opened the defence of their title and their bid to become only the second side to retain the

trophy since it became a 16 team event with a 4-1 victory over a plucky Zambian side in Group C.

It took the striker's tally to seven in the African showpiece having scored five in 2004 and within seven of the overall record of 14 held by Ivory Coast's Laurent Pokou.

While he revelled in deserved glory Emmanuel Adebayor saw his status as Togolese national hero stripped away after he was labelled a 'cry baby' by national coach Stephen Keshi.

The 21-year-old, whose 11 goals inspired the country to their first ever World Cup finals this year, refused to play in Saturday's opening 2-0 defeat to the Democratic Republic of Congo, though he came on for part of the second period.

However it appeared on Sunday Keshi had had enough of his turbulent star striker, who recently agreed a 10-million-euro transfer from

Monaco to Arsenal.

"He (Adebayor) does not adhere to the discipline of the squad. He is a cry baby," said Keshi.

"If he really is a star then he should behave like one.

"He should behave like (Didier) Droghba with the Ivory Coast and (Samuel) Eto'o with Cameroon," added Keshi, who appeared for Nigeria in the final of three African Nations Cups eventually winning in 1994.

Keshi, whom Adebayor accused of trying to be his agent in arranging his transfer to England, remained non-committal as to whether Adebayor appears again in the tournament.

"He is still part of the squad. Will he play another match? That's up to him and how he does in training," said Keshi, though Adebayor claimed to have a painful left thigh after training on Sunday.

Adebayor's hopes of

retaining support among his team-mates seem to have fallen on deaf ears given the reaction of the captain, Jean-Paul Abalo.

"He can go," said Abalo, who earns far less than Adebayor playing for lowly French club Dunkirk.

"He didn't just betray his team, he betrayed the Togolese people. Everyone was mad at him for what he did on Saturday."

On the pitch, though, Santos was magnificent as Tunisia came back from conceding an early goal to Zambia to secure a comfortable victory.

However Zambia are far from no-hopers for the second spot and had they taken their chances they might well have given the champions a scare - a point highlighted by Tunisia's coach Roger Lemerre.

"They unsettled us with the opening goal but we did not lose our heads as we continued to play according

to our plan and this allowed us to come back and win," said Lemerre, who is bidding to become only the second coach to win two African Nations Cup titles.

"This was a great physical battle and the final result did not really tell the true picture of this fight."

His Zambian counterpart Kalusha Bwalya agreed.

"We did not deserve to lose by such a big score because we played well especially in the first half. However, in the second half we made some mistakes while Tunisia took their chances very well," said the former African Footballer of the Year.

The other Group C match saw Guinea gain an impressive 2-0 victory over the fallen giants South Africa as Sambegou Bangoura, who plays in the English Championship with Stoke City, and Ousmane Bangoura scored late in the second-half.



Brazilian-born Santos got a hat-trick for Tunisia against Zambia.

Determination key for Tunisia, says Lemerre

Coach Roger Lemerre paid tribute to the way Tunisia roared back from a goal down to open their African Nations Cup defence with a 4-1 win over Zambia on Sunday.

James Chamanga gave Zambia a shock ninth minute lead, but a hat-trick by Brazilian-born striker Francileudo Dos Santos and a Riadh Bouazizi header

sealed Tunisia's win in Group C.

"Zambia's early goal shook us up a bit," Lemerre told a news conference. "But the important thing is that Tunisia gave nothing away and just kept on playing their game - despite the scoreline."

"That's what enabled the team to equalise and then take the lead."

"Towards the end of the game, any team would have done what Zambia did - at one goal and then two goals

down they pushed forward and therefore exposed themselves at the back.

"And with the quality of the Tunisia strikers, and Dos Santos is a true quality player, the result was completely turned around."

Dos Santos, whose Tunisian nationality was rushed through in time for him to help them win Nations Cup in 2004, will be key to their World Cup hopes in Germany.

Lemerre, who steered his

native France to the Euro 2000 title, was in no doubt his African champions had been given a hard time.

"One thing was clear, both teams got stuck in early," he said. "The match was really intense from a physical point of view and the technical quality was good."

"The fans who turned up won't have regretted it." Lemerre pointed up Zambia's spirited performance, admitting: "The result doesn't fully reflect the physical challenge that Tunisia were put through."

Zambia coach Kalusha Bwalya felt his young team had been hard done by over the result.

"The scoreline is a bit tough on us. As a team, I don't think we deserved the scoreline we got," he said.

"We played well in the first half but they were dangerous on the break. Every time they got the ball, they hurt us more than we could take at this time."

"We made one or two mistakes and this is something we have to work on. They utilised all the chances they had and while we had some too, we couldn't take them."



Kalusha...He felt his young team had been hard done by over the result.

Bafana Bafana boss' words fall on stony ground

"We've beaten Egypt watch out Africa!" declared South African boss Ted Dumitru last week after a friendly victory.

On Monday, he was probably wishing he hadn't got so carried away.

The once proud 'Bafana Bafana' side that celebrated its return to international sport by landing the 1996 African Nations Cup were outplayed by Guinea in their Group C opening match of this year's renewal and were fortunate not to be beaten by more than 2-0.

Even the normally sober official African Nations Cup website didn't spare them.

"A quite atrocious South African side succumbed pathetically.... Ted Dumitru's side, who could barely string a pass together got what they deserved - absolutely nothing," was their reporter's blunt but honest assessment.

Dumitrescu, a 69-year-old Romanian born coach who earned his reputation in South Africa with back to back titles with the Kaizer Chiefs and the Sundowns, put it down to his younger players panicking.

"We lost it psychologically," said

Dumitru, who saw his previous chance of taking a side to the 1982 edition in Libya dashed when Zambia were allowed in but he was barred.

"You didn't see the real South Africa on Sunday.

"I am disappointed but I can guarantee that there will be a totally different team against Tunisia in the next match."

"Our team is a mixture of experienced players and young ones and some of the less experienced got carried away."

That was a touch unfair as the more experienced players left such as new captain Sibusiso Zuma and Benni McCarthy completely misfired.

However many will point the finger of blame at the ageing coach and his selection policy which saw him ditch from the squad the solid and experienced central defensive partnership of Blackburn Rovers Aaron Mokoena and Panathinaikos' Nasief Morris and laid the foundations for the catastrophic performance.

His decision to put Mokoena's captaincy to a vote which Zuma won, though Zuma voted for

Mokoena, indicated that the coach known as the 'Professor' would brook no argument in his squad.

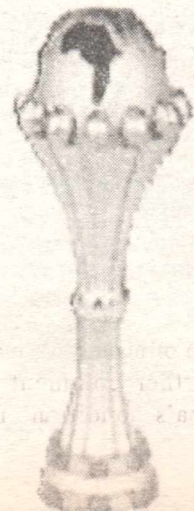
Instead Dumitru opted to select veteran Pierre Issa, who played in the 1998 and 2002 World Cup finals, proudly declaring he had been voted player of the month in Greece.

The Professor failed that exam when it was revealed that Issa hadn't actually played for his club OEL Crete for six months.

Two others of his squad probably weren't in the best frame of mind either as Vuyo Mere is facing charges of abusing police and Benedict Vilakazi - who played in the Guinea debacle - is up on charges of rape of a minor and both were allowed to travel because the judges postponed their respective trials.

With matches to come against champions Tunisia - ruthless 4-1 victors over Zambia - and the Zambians, who were very lively up front but porous in the back, the South Africans look set to complete their decline from African giants to also rans.

A sad tale just four years away from their hosting the greatest footballing show on earth, the World Cup.



Sports

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Sharapova, Petrova meet for third straight time

Maria Sharapova and Nadia Petrova seem to have a knack for meeting in Grand Slam quarterfinals.

The two Russians both won fourth-round matches Sunday at the Australian Open, setting up their third straight meeting in the quarters of a major.

That's not necessarily good news for the sixth-seeded Petrova, who lost both matches, at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, and trails 3-1 overall in head-to-head matches.

The fourth-seeded Sharapova, who wasn't sure she would play here due to nagging shoulder pain, showed no signs of the ailment as she ousted No. 17 Daniela Hantuchova with the roof closed on Rod Laver

Arena due to the sweltering heat outside.

She clearly wasn't unhappy to be playing in the air-conditioning, despite the adjustments that it meant.

"Today was probably one of the hottest days I've ever experienced in my life," the 18-year-old Sharapova, who trains in Florida, told the crowd. "I don't know how you guys do it."

"I was a little bit sluggish in the beginning. When they close the roof, the conditions are different. You hear the ball differently. So my rhythm was a little bit off."

Hantuchova, who beat Serena Williams in the last round, broke Sharapova's serve early in both sets only to see the Russian fight back each time.

"I really kept my

composure," Sharapova said. "Even though I got down those breaks, I still felt like I was playing pretty well."

Hantuchova had problems with her left leg in the second set, stretching it repeatedly before seeking medical attention and getting her thigh wrapped, but didn't seem to be affected afterward.

Playing well is a relief for Sharapova, who had no recent match experience coming into the year's first Grand Slam event.

"I'm happy that without knowing if I can play here, I'm in the quarterfinals," she said. "I feel like I'm playing better and better as the matches go on."

Sharapova finished with 25 winners and only 16 unforced errors and broke Hantuchova five times, the last at 4-4 in the second set. Trailing 40-0 in the next game, Hantuchova saved two match points before sending a service return long as Sharapova raised her arms in victory.

Like Sharapova, Petrova hasn't dropped a set so far,

beating another Russian, Elena Vesnina, 6-3, 6-1 on Sunday. Her matchup with

Sharapova guarantees that at least one Russian will make

the semifinals, with No. 12 Anastasia Myskina still alive in the other half of the draw.



Maria Sharapova, above, and Russian compatriot Nadia Petrova seem to have a knack for meeting each other

Aussie Open midterm grades

We're in the round of 16 at the Australian Open, the rare tennis tournament with enough atmosphere and soul to compensate for a rash of withdrawals. Who would have thought that Martina Hingis would outlast both Williams sisters? That Lleyton Hewitt would not only lose, but lose without much of a fight. That Fabrice Santoro and Paul Henri Mathieu would outlast French countryman Richard Gasquet and Gael Monfils. That Roger Federer wouldn't drop a set. OK, scratch that last one.

With a week in the books and a lot of intrigue left to go, here are our midterm grades.

A Martina Hingis: Sure didn't take long for three-time champ to shake off the rust after three-year hiatus. Looks surprisingly sharp, plus her draw has been most kind.

Roger Federer: Wafts into Round 4 without facing much of a test.

Andy Roddick: The U.S. Open sure seems like a long time ago.

Men's doubles: Signs sponsorship deal with Stanford Financial. Suddenly has gone from the red-headed stepchild to a hot property.

Daniela Hantuchova: Once a top five player, her upset of Serena Williams could represent a real turning point.

B+ Alex Bogomolov — Ashley Harkleroad: Husband/wife each wins first round matches. He upset Fernando Gonzalez (though he behaved abominably during the encounter); and she scored a nice win over Shuai Peng. They both lost in Round 2.

Mother China: In a sign of the times, seven Chinese women were in the draw though none advanced beyond Round 2.

Tsvetana Pironkova: In her first Grand Slam match, Bulgarian teen plays unflustered tennis to beat Venus Williams in Round 1. Comes back to earth against Laura Granville.

B Australia: Hewitt, Mark Philipoussis and Alicia Molik win one among them. But good-on-ya-maters to Sam Stosur and Pete Luczak.

Dominik Hrbaty: Wins all three five-setters he plays, but how much does he left for Week 2?

B- Lleyton Hewitt: Goes down with surprising meekness to his nemesis, Juan Ignacio (Great Expectations) Chela in Round 2. On the other hand, his baby-shielding skills were first-rate.

Serena Williams: Now likely to be outside the top 40. Will she rededicate herself to tennis?

C French teens: Neither Richard Gasquet nor Gael Monfils (both seeded) win a set in their first round losses.

Rob Ginepri: U.S. Open semifinalist squanders a two set and 3-0 lead to lose second-round match to qualifier Denis Gremelmayr.

Old Blighty: Both Tim Henman and Andrew Murray both get toe tags in Round 1.

Taylor Dent: When you're a hard-serving, attacking player competing on a fast surface and you can't muster a set against a Spanish journeyman, it might be time to return to the drawing board.

F Damir Dokic: We were sick of this guy in 1999.

Roscoe Tanner: In the latest twist in a sad saga, 1977 Australian Open champ was sentenced to two years in jail for violating his probation on a first conviction.

Hingis sharp again, joins Clijsters

...in q-finals

Martina Hingis took another step on the comeback trail Monday, beating Samantha Stosur 6-1, 7-6 (8) to reach the Australian Open quarterfinals.

Hingis, in her first tournament since coming back from a three-year retirement, converted on her fourth match point, showing the same savvy she used to win five Grand Slam titles.

"I started off very well, I knew that I had to be right there from the start — we both probably were very nervous," Hingis said. "I knew I couldn't

give her any momentum."

The 25-year-old Swiss star next faces her biggest challenge so far against second-seeded Kim Clijsters, who has spent nearly all of her off-court time getting worked on by trainers.

Clijsters showed no signs of the back and hip pain that has bothered her for the last week as she beat 15th-seeded Francesca Schiavone of Italy for a 7-6 (5), 6-4.

Hingis blunted Stosur's strong ground strokes with an often-stunning blend of perfectly placed baseline shots, crisp volleys and soft drops that had the Australian dashing to the net for a pickup only to see the next shot lobbing over her head.

Stosur, ranked 98th, seemed befuddled and almost on the verge of tears at times in the first set, giving the partisan crowd little to cheer about as she impatiently tried to hit winners.

In a sign of things to come, Hingis won the first point on a net court that dribbled over for a winner. She ran off the last five games of the first set, finishing it off in just 23 minutes.

But the second set was tougher, with Hingis getting the first break on a running forehand crosscourt pass that left Stosur virtually flat-footed.

Both struggled with their serves, trading breaks four times in 12 games.

Hingis had chances to serve for the match at 5-4 and 6-5, but was broken both times.

Stosur, feeding off the crowd's energy and finally showing the form that got her through three matches, refused to wilt.

Stosur pulled ahead 5-2 in the tiebreaker. This time, it was Hingis' turn to rally. She ran off four straight points to set up her first match point that Stosur fended off with a 33-shot rally that ended when Hingis sent a forehand that landed at her feet well wide.

Stosur saved two more match points before Hingis finally finished it off on her fourth chance when Stosur netted a forehand.

"Toward the end, I just don't want to remember the other finals I played here and lost in the second set," said Hingis, who blew four match points before losing to Jennifer Capriati in the 2002 final here.

Clijsters overcame the stinging baseline power of Schiavone.

"I was a bit scared," Clijsters said of the nagging injuries that had her questioning whether she would even show up in Melbourne Park this year.

"I've probably been in the physio room more in the last week than in my life," she said. "Hopefully it'll pay off."

Clijsters had trouble with her serve, with four double-faults and had 43 unforced errors that couldn't be attributed to staying off the court on her off-days.

"It's more important to exist than just be out there practicing," she said.

Rafter laments loss of serve-and-volley players

Serve-and-volley master Patrick Rafter does not expect to see the style revived by today's players.

The two-time U.S. Open champion from Australia could name only Max Mirnyi of Belarus as serve-and-volleyer among the current players, although American Taylor Dent also plays that style.

"Is that it actually? I don't know," Rafter said.

Mirnyi lost to top-seeded Roger Federer in three sets in the

third round on Saturday.

Rafter, who also made Wimbledon finals in 2000 and 2001 and reached the No. 1 ranking in 1999, said the types of court surfaces now being used "don't make it easy for a kid to serve and volley."

Plus, he said, players need to start practicing it at a young age because it takes time to perfect and success does not come quickly.

"You generally are pretty small, you get passed all over the place," Rafter said.

"You generally have to take the hits on the chin quite a lot. It's hard for a kid sometimes. You want to win, and a lot of times you don't win playing that type of game. It does need some years to develop."

Rafter, who made the semifinals at the 2001 Australian Open — losing to Andre Agassi in five sets — was in Melbourne for the announcement of his election to the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

A day after swimming with sharks, Patty Schnyder showed her own predatory instincts.

Sensing a weakness in the backhand — and psyche — of 12th-seeded Anastasia Myskina,

Schnyder pounded ball after ball to that side Monday.

The result was that Myskina, the 2004 French Open champion, self-destructed with 32 unforced errors, two-thirds from the backhand side, as Schnyder reached the quarterfinals of the Australian Open for the third consecutive year, 6-2, 6-1.

There's something about Australia that brings out the best in the 27-year-old Schnyder, who has won three of her 10 career singles titles Down Under. She has said she'd like to move here when she retires, though that could be a while since she's playing the best tennis of her career.

Schnyder's success at Melbourne Park certainly contributes to her love affair with Australia.

Then there are the extracurricular opportunities. Schnyder went swimming Sunday at the Melbourne Aquarium.

"It was just very exciting, diving in the tank with the sharks and the big stingrays and the mantas," she said, obviously still a little awed by the experience. "It's a great world there. I love it."



Rafter

Sports

EGYPT 2006 AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS

Eagles fire up Port Said

The populace of Port Said, North-East coast of the Mediterranean are anxiously awaiting the Super Eagles to kick-start their 2006 African Cup of Nations campaign against the Black Stars of Ghana yesterday afternoon.

The atmosphere in Port Said is that of excitement as

fans keep asking if the likes of Austin Okocha, Obafemi Martins and Kanu Nwankwo will be in action.

"I will be at the stadium to watch Nigeria and hope they will play Egypt in the final," Kareem Ahmed said.

For Sabir Hosny, the manager of a boutique on El-Gumeriya road, his joy has

been short-lived with recent pronouncement that Nigeria captain Jay Jay Okocha would be missing in action.

"I have bought tickets for me and my family to see Okocha, now he will not play but I will like to see Martins," Hosny added.

The mere sight of a black man on the street, the first

word that comes out of the taxi-driver, people on the street, cafeteria staff and young children is the scream of N-I-G-E-R-I-A.

Certainly, the Super Eagles will not be lacking support despite relative quietness on the arrival of the popular, Nigerian Football and Other Sports Supporters Club.

Mastroudes slams Africa's World Cup reps

After watching Angola, Togo and looking forward to seeing the Black Stars of Ghana take on the Super Eagles of Nigeria Monday, former Leventis United football club boss John Mastroudes has declared that Africa will be poorly represented at this years World Cup in Germany.

According to him, their performance at the on-going African Cup of Nations in Egypt has only shown that they are merely pretenders.

He stated, "I am very skeptical about Africa's chances at the World Cup. I don't rate Ghana, I don't rate Togo, I don't rate Angola"

He advised that if Africa is going to get any thing meaningful then Ivory Coast and Tunisia should step up their game.

Even without kicking the ball yet, Mastroudes is convinced that the Super Eagles will do well at the on-going Nations Cup.

He told brilafm.net "This is the first time I have a

strong feeling that we are going to do it all the way"



Oliseh

Oliseh retires

Nigerian midfielder Sunday Oliseh has announced his retirement and leaves Racing Genk with immediate effect, the Belgian club said yesterday.

"Sunday came to me this morning and asked to terminate his contract on the basis that he wished to finish his professional career," Genk Sporting Director Ariel Jacobs told Reuters.

"He says he wants to begin a new life on a personal level."

The 31 year-old Oliseh joined Genk last year from German club Borussia Dortmund and was under

contract until 2007. He played his last game on Sunday in a 2-1 defeat at Charleroi.

He began his professional career in Belgium in 1990 with Club Liege and had spells with Reggiana, Cologne, Ajax, Juventus, Bochum and Dortmund. He also helped Nigeria win gold at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.

Enjoy cup experience, Bwalya tells players

Zambia coach Kalusha Bwalya has urged his team to enjoy the African Nations Cup after

the disappointment of a 4-1 defeat to Tunisia in their opening match of the tournament on Sunday.

Bwalya, who played in six Nations Cup finals for his country, said the Zambian side needed to absorb the experience of the continental championship and savour the tournament if they were to have any chance of making the quarter-finals.

"We have done well to get to the Nations Cup finals but it is not enough just to be here," he told Reuters on Monday.

"We want to have a good feeling about the Nations Cup. We have to go out and play to our ability and have fun and enjoy ourselves and make something out of it. It is a chance for the players that only comes around once every two years, so they must learn to make the most of it."

Bwalya, among a generation of former Nations Cup combatants now on the coaching bench for their countries, said Zambia had no alternative

but to win their two remaining Group C matches to have any chance of reaching the quarter-finals.

"It's complicated now, we have to beat Guinea in our next game. They and Tunisia are now in the driving seat," he said.

Zambia play their next match in Alexandria on Thursday and Bwalya said he had much to work on in the next days to give his side a chance after the defeat to the defending champions

"We took the lead against Tunisia but gave the ball away too cheaply. We should have been more comfortable on the ball. We actually played into their trap.

"It was a bad result for us but not a true reflection of the game and the way we play. It was not good for our morale. We put in a lot of effort but without getting anything out of it," he added.

"We have to build ourselves up again and try and fight and go back to basics, defend properly. We have to lift our level."

Burning Issues

With Patrick Andrew

Passion for the game

Lately, controversy has dogged the country's numero uno game of passion: football. As embarrassing as it is, the country's dirty underwear has been displayed rather shamelessly before the public glare over the simple act of electing members of the Executive Committee. For four hours on Thursday, Nigeria was the subject of hot debate before FIFA and CAF officials, who against their wishes, had to sit in judgement over the election hiccups in the country.

FIFA Secretary-General, Urs Linsi, his CAF counterpart, Mustapha Fahmy, Heinz Marotzke, Jerome Champagne, Dr Amos Adamu, Brig. Gen. Dominic Oneya, Hon. Nduka Irabor, the chairman of the electoral committee that returned Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima, Aisha Folade, Amanze Uchegbunam and Shuaibu Ahmed Gara, who represented the Stakeholders participated in the meeting and the acting NFA scribe, Fanny Amun. Sadly, Galadima was not there to present his position due to the refusal of the Egyptian Embassy to grant him visa to Egypt.

At the meeting, Irabor presented his arguments and insisted on the legitimacy of the 66 delegates who voted in Kano. The former lawmaker said all 66 delegates were issued ballot papers at the point of entry for the actual voting exercise. Dr Adamu, he argued, failed to report to Kano to monitor the election not because of any security risk but as a civil servant had to act in obedience to the government directive.

He submitted that the police were coaxed by the government to write that security could not be guaranteed at the venue. This, in itself, tells a lot about the Nigeria Police if it is true that something as serious as the security for delegates could be toyed with or that at the beck and call of government they could falsified security report for the purpose of serving the selfish whims of the state.

Champagne specifically contended that Fanny Amun should not even participate in the Extraordinary General Assembly, in essence that Nigeria should not vote because he was guest of the state only few days to the January 6 stakeholders' meeting. Amun, according to him, is another civil servant out to serve the interest of his masters. The under secretary, according to Paul Basse, was said to have insisted that Amun is not the NFA scribe and thus should not participate in the meeting to resolve the impasse. Several unsavoury comments were made about the way and manner football is being run in Nigeria. Marotzke added his own bits all of which painted a pathetic picture for Nigeria football.

Uchegbunam, the chairman of the stakeholders' meeting stated his grouse and that of the south east delegates except Enyimba FC against the elections in Kano stressing that there was no formal letters of invitation to attend the congress in Kano, no board meeting where the venue was agreed upon. They, he said, had looked forward to a consensus on the venue.

Champagne again said the Abuja gathering was illegal because it failed to meet the requirement of the NFA Statute on length of time needed for such congress to be held. Uchegbunam responded that there was a vacuum, an emergence situation that required quick response to resolve existing problem.

Amun also spoke in manner that left much to be desired about the state of the game and the inclination of individuals to conduct business devoid of the statute.

At a stage, the atmosphere was so tensed up that the FIFA official had to intervene urging for caution based on the fact that all belong to a family and like every family wrangling the matter will be resolved amicably.

Linsi then asked the stakeholders to substantiate their position within seven days that all sort of persons voted at the Kano elections. They were specifically requested to submit the "authentic" list of delegates without voting right that partook in the voting exercise.

In all, the exercise unduly spotlighted Nigeria which should ideally be the continent's torch stone in administration of the game. It beats one's imagination why Nigeria should always be in the news for the wrong reasons and why it is so difficult for us as a people to adapt to international standard in handling responsibility. Again it beats one's imagination why our leaders can't fill the purse of the public, detect their mood and act in consonance with the yearnings of the public instead of insisting on their selfish inclinations in whatever form.

True, we individually and as a group have a passion for the game but a passion that tended to the negative no matter the zeal invested into its execution will in the end amount to nought. The only sad thing is the fact that the game itself will suffer untoward digression thus depriving the general public the joy derivable from the passion in these days of unpronounced austerity.

RESULTS

All results of the first round of group matches

- Egypt 3 Libya 0
- Togo 0 DR Congo 2
- Ivory Coast 1 Morocco 0
- Cameroun 3 Angola 1
- Tunisia 4 Zambia 1
- South Africa 0 Guinea 2
- Nigeria 1 Ghana 0
- Zimbabwe 0 Senegal 2

Today's fixtures

- Libya vs Cote d'Ivoire - 4.15 pm
- Egypt vs Morocco - 7.00 pm

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DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, January 24, 2006

Assessing universities accreditation results

By Ujudud Shariff

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Going through the results of the November 2005 university-wide accreditation released by the National Universities Commission (NUC) as conducted by 500 professors between November 13 and 26, 2005, we have to duff our hats for Professors Tijjani Bande and Attahiru Jega, Vice Chancellors of Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto and Bayero University, Kano respectively for being the first amongst equals. The exercise covered the evaluation of 1,343 undergraduate degree programmes in 48 universities (25 federal, 20 state and three private) and five colleges of education with government-approved affiliation with universities. The overall results were not only surprising in several cases but also shocking and disappointing in multiple cases, as the second-generation universities have taken over in excellence from the first-generation universities.

The in-house magazine of the NUC, *Monday Memo*, Vol. 5 No.3 of January 16, 2006 is now a must for all parents who want to look for good universities and degree programmes for their children and wards. For instance, out of the 1,343 degree programmes that were evaluated, 571 (42.5%) earned full accreditation status, 670 (49.9%) earned interim accreditation and 102 (7.6%) failed to meet the prescribed Minimum Academic Standards and therefore denied accreditation. According to the NUC, "more than half of the programmes evaluated in federal universities earned full accreditation compared to 26.5% of programmes in state universities where most (about 60%) of programmes earned interim accreditation". Furthermore, unlike the situation before the November exercise when a vast majority of the programmes in Nigerian universities (81.3%) were at interim accreditation, only about half of the programmes evaluated in November were at interim accreditation. An evaluation of academic programmes by proprietorship, according to the NUC, revealed that whereas only 17.8% of programmes in federal universities were at full accreditation status as at May 2005, the proportion of programmes with full accreditation status had risen significantly to 53.0% in November 2005. Similarly, although there was a remarkable improvement in the proportion of programmes with full accreditation in state universities (6.2% versus 26.5%), a preponderance of the programmes is still at interim accreditation.

The evaluation exercise of the 48 universities and five colleges of education with government-approved affiliation with universities were conducted by 500 full professors constituted into accreditation panels with three professors nominated by each vice chancellor of the universities. Each panel was constituted taking into consideration "requisite academic specialisations, a balanced geo-political spread and ensuring that no panel member was assigned to evaluate a programme in his/her own university, etc also participated in the evaluation of relevant programmes. Programmes were evaluated and scored based on the following criteria: Staffing (32), Academic Content (23), Physical facilities (25), Library (12), Funding (5) and Employer's Ratings (3) totalling 100. Each criterion has component indices with varying weightings as contained in the "Manual of Accreditation Procedures for Academic Programmes in Nigerian Universities". The accreditation status for a programme is determined after a summary of the scores awarded by each panel is entered into the Accreditation Panel Report Form (NUC/APRF), which now becomes the accreditation panel's recommendation. The criteria for award of accreditation status to a programme are as follows: (A) FULL accreditation status- overall score of 70% and above in addition to scoring at least 70% in each of the four-core areas of staffing, academic contents, physical facilities and library (University shall run the programme for five years after which the programme will be re-evaluated for accreditation to determine its current standing); (B) INTERIM accreditation status means an overall score of 60% or more but

less than 70% or an overall total score of 70% and above but with a score of less than 70% in any of the four-core areas as identified in (A) above (University shall run the programme for two years after which the programme is re-evaluated. If after two years, the deficiencies are not remedied, the programme will automatically revert to Denied Status) and (C) DENIED accreditation means an overall total score of less than 60% (University shall immediately cease to admit students into the programme. Students who are currently enrolled before the declaration of the denied status shall



Prof. Peter Okebukola, NUC Executive Secretary

complete the programme. Certificate issued to students illegally admitted after the denied status is proclaimed will not be recognised. Hence any student illegally admitted will not be mobilised for NYSC or accepted for governmental employment or post-graduate studies. Candidates should

city, Ile-Ife and the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. From Ibadan to Ile-Ife and Nsukka, the bad news is that law degree programme in the three premier universities is very soon joining history as it is proscribed. In other words, the three universities will no longer admit new students to study law. This new development is not only shocking but also greatly embarrassing to them bearing in mind the number of great lawyers that they have produced in the past. Equally embarrassing is the proscription of accountancy degree programme for Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Other emerging trends from the recent accreditation exercise have shown some remarkable improvements in the number of programmes with full accreditation in state universities (6.2% versus 26.5%), a preponderance of the programme is "still at interim accreditation". But beyond this improvement, the figures show an alarming number of those programmes that failed to attain the barest minimum of academic standards and therefore denied accreditation. Of the 102 programmes that were denied accreditation, 60 are from the 20 state universities. This is really bad news as it brings the quality of those universities to question. For example, University of Uyo tops the chart with a whopping 23 denied programmes out of its total 55 programmes. It is followed by Enugu State University of Technology that has 18 out of its 40 programmes denied accreditation. Lagos State University (LASU) bagged the third place together with Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye that got eight of their programmes each denied accreditation. Equally disturbing is the performance of the nine Federal Special Universities of Technology and Agriculture in Minna, Bauchi, Akure, Owerri, Abeokuta, Umudike, Makurdi, Yola and the Kaduna NDA. For instance, the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi should be watched closely because out of its 18 programmes, only one (Fisheries and Aquaculture) was fully accredited and 17 received interim status. On the other hand, however, no private university has a programme with denied status.

A further assessment of these results indicates a tremendous improvement by Northern universities that are giving a serious challenge to the Southern universities. We are very glad that the first three (that is, if you do not want to call them the best) universities in Nigeria today are the Bayero University, Kano, Usmanu DanFodio University, Sokoto and the University of Ilorin where Professor Sam Imole is presiding as the Vice Chancellor. We therefore urge Universities of Maiduguri and Jos to wake up

and ensure that they are not left behind. The exercise also revealed programmes and 20 interim in critical programmes such as Engineering, Accounting, Law, Sciences, Geography, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Sociology, Political Sciences, Mass Communication, etc. Similarly, University of Jos has every cause to worry with 19 programmes getting full accreditation, 12 interim status (Medicine, Political Science, Sociology, Pharmacy, Accounting, Business Management, Architecture, etc) and one denial in French/Linguistics. We are also happy that of the 20 universities that have no programme denied accreditation, 10 are from the North: Awka, Ilorin, Kano, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Port Harcourt, Akure, Abeokuta, Umudike, Makurdi, Nigeria Defence Academy, Yola, Anambra State, Benue State, Kogi State, Kano State, LAUTECH, Madonna, Igbinedion and Bowen. We are also glad that the Federal College of Education (FCE), Kano bagged the gold medal by emerging as the first among the five that were evaluated. It has all eight programmes fully accredited with no interim or denied status at all. Following FCE, Kano is FCE, Zaria that had nine of its 10 programmes fully accredited with only Education/Chemistry gaining interim status.

In conclusion, we wish to commend the NUC for this exercise that has all the elements of fairness and objectivity considering the low position of LASU where Prof. Peter Okebukola, the Executive Secretary comes from. We also call on all the universities to wake up and ensure better performance next time, especially on those programmes with interim status.

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