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Hajj: Borno refunds disappointed pilgrims

The Borno State Government has commenced the refund of money paid for this year's hajj to the over five hundred pilgrims who were disappointed following hitches that resulted in their non-airlift to Saudi Arabia.

This was disclosed by the state's *Ameerul* hajj and the Deputy Governor of the state, Alhaji Adamu Shattima Dibal,

From Isa Umar Gusau,
Correspondent (Maiduguri)

in Maiduguri yesterday. According to Dibal, the State Governor, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff, personally handed over cash refunds to some pilgrims from Gwoza local government area of Borno State, while arrangements have been concluded to refund all the disappointed pilgrims.

He said that the state

government intervened in the refund rather than leaving it to the state's pilgrims welfare board with a view to speed up the refunds to the disappointed pilgrims.

Dibal added that the state government has also provided an option to the intending pilgrims who wish to defer their money in anticipation of next year's hajj, saying that so many lessons have been learnt and "next year's hajj would by Allah's

grace be a total success."

The *Ameerul* hajj identified weather changes as a natural problem associated with the hajj exercise, saying that the problem was not anticipated as it contributed to the hitches of the 2005 hajj operations.

Adamu Shattima Dibal noted that there were also problems associated with visa allocations on the part of the Saudi authorities.

At the heart of the matter, he said, was the problem of airline operators, describing the situation as "full of issues to be addressed."

The *Ameerul* hajj described the non availability of aircraft landing aids as key factors that affected landing in periods of poor weather conditions along with late planning and execution of hajj operations.

He thanked Governor

Sheriff for coming to the aid of Borno pilgrims saying that "it was incredible that we got five aircrafts that airlifted about 1800 pilgrims within less than 48 hours owing to Governor Sheriff's intervention."

Dibal described the non-airlift of the governor along with the *Ameerul* hajj team, as due to exemplary leadership role," making the pil-

Contd. on Pg 2

EID-EL-KABIR Muslims advised to embrace Islamic injunctions

Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara State has called on Muslims to rededicate themselves to Islamic injunctions, which preach love, selflessness, patience and other virtues.

In his Sallah message in Ilorin, Saraki enjoined people

of the state to exhibit these virtues to sustain the existing peaceful co-existence in the state and for further development.

He also asked Muslims to be steadfast in their prayers for those in authority at all levels and thanked the people for their co-operation and support for his administration.

Saraki reassured them of his determination to provide more facilities and to revamp the economy, adding that he was optimistic that the various economic empowerment schemes would usher in an era of prosperity in the state.

Recalling the background to the annual sacrifice by Muslims, he reminded parents of the importance of obedience to Allah's injunctions and advised children to obey their parents.

In his message, the President of the Senate, Chief Adolphus Wabara, prayed that the teachings of Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) and the blessings of the holy season will continue to guide and guard Nigerians.

The Senate president reminded Muslims that prophet Abraham demonstrated total and absolute humility and devotion to Almighty Allah when he accepted the call to sacrifice his only son until Allah in his infinite wisdom, eventually directed that a ram be sacrificed instead and urged Nigerians to similarly rededicate themselves to Allah and to the service of the

Contd. on Pg 2

Protesting UNILAG students raze VC's residence

From Bola Ojuola,
Stringer (Lagos)

Crisis erupted at the University of Lagos in the early hours of yesterday following the death of a student leader, Mr. Oluolu Akoshile, a final-year law student.

The crisis in which the house of the Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Ibadapo Obe and three of his cars were set ablaze, has led to a temporary shut down of the institution.

Houses and six other cars belonging to the Dean of Faculty of Education and the Dean of Student Affairs, Professor Dele Oloruwadajo, were also burnt by the protesting students.

Daily Trust learnt that trouble started Tuesday morning when a group of students led a protest against the privatisation of hostels recently proposed by the fed-

Contd. on Pg 2



An aerial view showing tens of thousands of pilgrims praying at Jabal Al Rahma holy mountain, the mountain of forgiveness, in Arafat outside Mecca, Saudi Arabia yesterday. More than two millions pilgrims headed to Arafat for the annual Hajj pilgrimage which is one of the most sacred duties of the Muslim faith, required at least once for every able bodied Muslim who can afford it.

Anambra crisis: APGA protests PDP's violation of court order

The All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), has protested the continued sitting of the Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola-led Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), panel on Anambra saga, despite a court injunction.

APGA said the development shows that the "PDP has no respect for the rule of law. We urge the party to comply with the court order immediately if it has no hidden agenda."

Justice Ishaq Bello of the Abuja high court on Monday restrained the PDP and the panel set up by the party's national executive committee to probe the Anambra debacle from sitting.

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter (Senate),
Samson Ojo, Correspondent
(Lagos)

But the Oyinlola committee was at the PDP national secretariat on Tuesday, where it took evidence from

How NigeriaSat-1 mitigated tsunami disaster - Minister

Death toll in Indonesia hits 166,000

The Minister of Science and Technology, Professor Turner T. Isoun, yesterday said NigeriaSat-1 satellite has made tremendous contributions in the mitigation of the tsunami disaster through the provision of satellite images of the affected areas.

Isoun made this known at

the party's national secretary, Vincent Ogbulafor.

Reports said the panel went ahead with its deliberations allegedly because it did not receive the court order.

But in a statement in Abuja yesterday by its national chairman, Chekwas

Minister

Okorie, APGA said the panel's action was a deliberate disregard for the court order, as the PDP was duly served with the injunction.

"We are not surprised that the PDP will deliberately flout a high court order. We were duly served with the injunction."

Contd. on Pg 2

which is one of the four spacecrafts of Disaster Monitoring Constellation (DMC) responded immediately to the Asian disaster by acquiring satellite images of the affected countries.

Isoun said the DMC has been supplying two sets of data daily to the European space Agency (ESA), charged with the responsibility

Contd. on Pg 2

By Hamisu Muhammad & Elkanah Chawal Reporter
(Foreign Affairs)

a press briefing organised by his ministry in Abuja on the extent of involvement in the mitigation of the recent Asian tsunami disaster and its other implications.

He said NigeriaSat-1,

Contd. on Pg 2

News

Due process certified N290bn capital votes - Ezekwesili

By Ahmed I. Shekarau,
Group Business Editor

Senior Special Assistant to the president and head of Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU), otherwise known as "Due Process", Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, said in Abuja that as at December 31, 2004, the unit certified projects worth about N290 billion, which represents 80 percent of the total N349 billion capital votes for last year.

The head of BMPIU stated this apparently against the backdrop of allegations that the Due Process is cumbersome and slows down the execution of most government projects while delivering a speech at a media dinner held at Rock View, hotel, Abuja.

Dr. Ezekwesili who la-

mented recent comments by some elder statesmen on the activities of her agency, argued that criticisms of the Due Process are mostly based on misinformation, misconceptions and mischief.

She also announced plans to convert the BMPIU to a federal Bureau of Public Procurement under the National Council on Public Procurement, which will comprise of nine members to be headed by the president. She said these establishments would come into being after the passage of the Public Procurement Bill currently before the National Assembly.

Speaking specifically on the due process certification last year, she blamed delays in clearance of government projects on "most government establishments".

The head of due process said, however, that "be-

tween October and 31st December, 2004, many ministries, agencies and departments rose to the challenges of the 'Due Process' regime and scaled up their compliance both in speed and in documentation", adding that the BMPIU worked tirelessly throughout the end of last year to ensure that these spending units meet the deadline to commit capital votes for access until March 31, this year.

Lamenting public criticisms of notable figures like Professor Sam Aluko and Chief Sunday Awoniyi, both of whom she said she takes seriously, Dr. Ezekwesili noted that "the Civil Service (of the past) may be considerably different from the Civil Service of today", adding that nobody can compare a situation where Nigerians derive 45 kobo value for money ratio for every N1 spent that was the case pre-Due Process arrangement with the current estimate of 80-85 kobo

value for money, she claimed is derived per N1 since the due process policy was instituted.

Eminent statesman and chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Chief Sunday Awoniyi and renowned economist, Professor Aluko, had at the 2nd annual Trust dialogue held last Thursday in Abuja, took swipes at the "Due Process", saying that it breeds corruption and stagnates the country's development process.

Awoniyi who was permanent secretary in the Federal Civil Service in the 1970s, said in a remark at the dialogue that there was prudence in fiscal management during their time without the present type of "Due Process", while Aluko who was chairman of the National Economic Intelligence Committee (NEIC), during the Abacha era, also faulted the process, saying it causes undue delay in project implementation.

Hajj

Contd. from Pg 1

grims more important. The Ameerul hajj also announced that a delegation comprising members of his team would depart Nigeria for

Saudi as soon as arrangements were concluded with Saudi authorities, so as to meet the pilgrims, address welfare problems and ensure their return in good time.

Anambra crisis

Contd. from Pg 1

straining the Oyinlola's panel as it is acting a script crafted by the presidency to declare a state of emergency in Anambra State," Okorie said.

He contended that the PDP "was duly served the court summons and Hon. Justice Bello's ruling. The court bailiff, Mr. Salihu Idache, attested to this in his affidavit dated January 17, 2005. The Abuja high court at Wuse Zone 5 is a short distance to the PDP national secretariat. It could not have been a big burden for the bailiff to serve the party the court summons and its ruling."

Bello's injunction followed a suit by APGA challenging the competence of the PDP to investigate the conduct of the Anambra governorship polls following claims by Chris Uba that he rigged the election in favour of Governor Chris Ngige.

In his ruling, the judge gave a perpetual injunction restraining the Oyinlola committee from "investigating by either themselves or through their privy from investigating, inquiring into or meddling with or otherwise dealing in any manner whatsoever with the matter relating to the election into the office of the governor of Anambra State or any matter connected therewith." Media reports yesterday quoted an unnamed

member of the Oyinlola committee as saying "we have not received any court order. We do not operate from what we read in the newspapers."

At a million naira notice filed by its lawyers, Chris Uba (SAN), sought a declaration that the PDP as a registered political party in Nigeria lacked the legal competence to investigate or inquire into or determine any matter relating to the governorship elections which took place on April 19, 2003, particularly as it related to the office of the Anambra State governor or any controversy relating to the election.

The party contended that the PDP lacked the legal competence to investigate or determine any matter in Anambra State in so far that a tribunal of competent jurisdiction was still sitting.

Meanwhile, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) of Nigeria has warned the federal government against taking sides in the Anambra State political crisis, saying if urgent and concrete steps are not taken to bring the perpetrators to book, it may snowball into a major political crisis.

TUC in a statement tagged: "TUC cautions on Anambra crisis," observed that the Anambra State political imbroglio has continued to cause bad blood, mayhem and destruction of public

property, which does not augur well for the nation's nascent democracy."

In a two-page statement signed by its secretary general, Chief John Kolawole, the congress advised the federal government to exercise restraint and stop meddling in the affairs of the state.

The text of the TUC statement reads in part: "The TUC wants the federal government to mandate the law enforcement agents to bring to book, the enemies of progress in Anambra State by prosecuting them as nobody can be above the law."

According to the TUC scribe, the ugly Anambra State saga which has already caused the national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), his job due to pressure over his stance, may likely claim more victims if the major actors are not immediately made to face the music.

The congress reiterated that there is nothing much that the governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola-led committee on the Anambra State crisis could do when the evidence and identities of the perpetrators of the dastardly acts on the state are not hidden.

Comrade Kolawole called on the Inspector-General of Police to commence full scale investigations into the Anambra State crisis and allow justice to prevail no matter whose ox is gored, as according to him "a stitch in time saves nine."

Unilag

Contd. from Pg 1

eral government which if effected will see each student paying N10,000 per session.

Sources told Daily Trust that the late Oluolu Akoshile, Speaker of the University of Lagos Students Union went to address the students appealing for calm since they were to meet with the school authority over the matter.

The students were said to have dispersed and Oluolu went about attending to other matters.

At about 11:00 pm on Tuesday, he was said to have received a phone call from Professor Dele Olowodajo for about three minutes after which he went to sleep.

He was found in a state of coma in the early hours of yesterday, after which he was rushed to the school clinic where he was confirmed dead.

The students who alleged that the student leader must have died as a result of the phone call he received went on rampage and marched to the VC's house.

They set his house, ablaze

Eid-el-Kabir

Contd. from Pg 1

nation. Chief Wabara said Nigeria could be a better place if its citizens could imbibe the virtues of trust in Allah, love and sharing with the needy as demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad.

The Senate president urged Muslims to devote quality time to pray for unhindered peace and prosperity in the country. Chief Wabara also urged prayers for the nation's democratically elected leaders.

Chief Wabara said the task of making the nation the leading light in Africa is a collective one and thus urged all Nigerians to soberly reflect in this season about ways to contribute to the growth of the country.

along side with his Mercedes Benz car, Peugeot 505 and a Nissan car.

They also went to the house of the Dean of Student Affairs and set the official residence ablaze. Also burnt were his Mercedes Benz car with registration number DJ 606 AAA and a Volvo car.

Reacting to the incidence, Deputy Registrar of the university, Dr. Olu Shodimu, refused the students' claims. He said it was impossible for someone to die as a result of a phone call.

He also said that there is a possibility that Akoshile was exhausted. He, however, said that medical report is the only thing that can determine the exact cause of death.

He also denied that the VC had fled the school "but it is a safer environment."

Meanwhile, mobile policemen have been drafted to maintain security and peace. Most students have since fled the school.

ty of producing and delivering maps of the region to aid agencies managing the disaster.

He said: "the DMC also supplied images from its archives showing the region before the disaster occurred, helping to determine the extent of damage caused by the disaster."

"However, NigeriaSat-1 singularly acquired over twenty images (100km x 150km each) of the affected areas which it downloaded to the central archives of the DMC for onward transmission."

"The DMC would continue to image the area for several weeks in order to build up a good data base on the situation in the disaster zone," the minister said.

Other organisations receiving data from the DMC, Isoun said, include UNOSAT, Geneva, MapAction, UK, OXFAM, UK, SERTIT, France, Key Obs, Belgium.

Commenting on its role in assisting African countries affected by the tsunami, Isoun said there are no specific requests from those countries for such data.

He said: "we can not on our own send images to Somalia or Kenya. They need to be organised and request for us to respond."

Contributing, the director general, National Space Research and Development Agency (NSRDA), Professor Robert Borofice, said even though Nigeria is not among the disaster region on the earth, but his agency has put in place several measures to trace such disasters before it occurs.

According to him, images are subject to the request by any agency or country for

Tsunami

Contd. from Pg 1

some specific programs. He cited Darfur region as one of the areas in Africa which have been covered regularly by NigeriaSat-1 based on the request made by the United Nation and the Sudan government.

Borofice said apart from the disaster monitoring, NigeriaSat-1 has been used for corridor mapping and monitoring of oil and gas pipelines in collaboration with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), providing images and settlement mapping for the identification of Nigeria's forestry and land reserves.

"In order to fully actualise the educational, research and development values of the NigeriaSat-1, plans are underway to establish an international space research and development laboratory for which scientists and engineers can be provided with opportunities to develop and achieve innovations for the overall development of space technology."

"Plans are also underway for collaboration with some Nigerian universities to establish departments of space science and technology for short courses, first degree and higher degree studies," he added.

However, Isoun said the DMC has been commercialising its data to various organisations, stressing also that some of the organisations undertaking some activities in tsunami disaster areas are purchasing some data from DMC.

It could be recalled that NigeriaSat-1 was launched on the 27th September, 2003 and since then, beaming sharp images of the global environment back to the

earth station in Abuja.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's health ministry has raised the figure for the number of people killed by the Asian tsunami disaster to more than 166,000.

The latest figure is more than 50,000 higher than the previous total issued by the ministry.

The announcement raises the global death toll to about 220,000.

Most of the new tally of deaths came from the provinces of Aceh and North Sumatra, which were directly in the tsunami's path when it hit.

About 800,000 people were made homeless in Aceh and North Sumatra as a result of the disaster.

The director of the ministry's health affairs department, Doti Indrasanto, said the number of fatalities soared after health officials declared that thousands of people previously listed as missing were dead.

"We have cross-checked this information and it is correct," Mr. Indrasanto told Reuters news agency.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said the final death toll might never be known.

"Perhaps we will never know the exact scale of the human casualties," he said.

The BBC's correspondent in Aceh said that in the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, more than 14% of the population is confirmed dead.

She said there are still local districts that have not reported any figures at all, making it seem inevitable that the final death toll will be higher still.

News

Reps c'ttee recommend phasing-out of Black Maria

The House of Representatives sub-committee on Prisons, has recommended the phasing out of Black Maria vehicles from all prison services in the country to be replaced with other more human friendly ones.

The committee made the recommendation following its recent nationwide tour of all prisons in the country during which it said it witnessed deplorable conditions which required urgent attention.

The prisons sub-committee chairman, Hon. Jumoke Okoya-Thomas, told newsmen in Abuja that the Black Maria has proved to be unsuitable for conveying detainees from one location to another because so many have suffocated while others died in the process.

She disclosed that the project will gulp about N800 million and if approved, would take off with the implementation of the 2005 budget.

By Hammed M. Bello, Senate Political Reporter

The contract for the replacement of the black Marias with more friendly "Green Marias," as it is fondly called has been characterised by controversies it has been alleged that the prisons sub-committee is favourably disposed to importation of the so called Green Marias, rather than relying on the Nigerian-based automobile industry, the Anambra Motor Company (ANAMCO) for the supply of the vehicles.

This was perceived in some quarters as smacking of some alleged corrupt intentions and as promoting capital flight, but Hon. Okoya-Thomas said it was not the business of the committee to interfere with procurement processes, but that its work was to make recommendations which it did.

Tafa Balogun worst police boss - CNPP

The Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP), has described former Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun, as the worst police boss the nation ever had.

In a letter to the acting IG, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, dated January 19, made available to Daily Trust in Abuja yesterday, the group urged the new police helmsman to make a departure from his predecessor by exhibiting patriotism in his job.

The letter, titled: "patriotic advice," signed by CNPP's secretary general, Maxi Okwu, said "we state clearly here that in our view, Alhaji Tafa Balogun will go down in history as the worst Inspector General of Police, breaking the record of infamy of Chief Sunday Adewusi of kill-and-go fame."

Balogun served his notice of retirement with effect from March 6, in circumstances that are still curious.

Ehindero on Tuesday took over as acting police boss.

Okwu said the letter to Ehindero was "not a congratulatory letter, rather it is a genuine and patriotic exhortation that you discharge your onerous responsibilities with responsibility judge your tour of duty always in view."

By Habesh I. Findiga, Political Reporter (Senate)

He added that: "we conceded that at all times, your loyalty and respect for the government of the day must never be in doubt.

In addition to this, your ultimate responsibility is to the people and strict compliance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Governments come and go but Nigeria and its people shall out live any one administration or regime.

How you navigate through these concepts and not end up on the scrapheap of history is your historic burden," the CNPP said.

Blind man, nine others nabbed for robbery

The Plateau police command has paraded a blind man and son of a prominent man and nine others for armed robbery.

The suspects who were paraded before journalists by the state commissioner of police, Mr. Joseph Apapa yesterday confessed to the offences.

The police commissioner while briefing newsmen the suspects who are of different armed robbery gangs, said various items were recovered from them.

According to Mr. Apapa, the blind man, one Christopher Livingstone, was arrested when he went to survey the house of one of their victims for members of



From left are, the education minister, Prof. Fabian Osuji, the sports minister, Col. Musa Muhammad and the minister of works, Senator Adeseye Ogunsola during a press briefing on the outcome of Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting held at the state House, Abuja, yesterday.

Over 40 persons burnt to death in Lagos accident

Tragedy struck yesterday in Lagos at Maryland of the state when over 40 persons were burnt to death in a multiple accident which several others wounded which occurred early in the morning.

The accident was said to have occurred at about 8:30 a.m. involving five different vehicles under the Maryland fly over in Onigboghio local government area of Lagos State.

Eyewitness accounts inform Daily Trust that the accident was as a result of a head on collision of four of the vehicle with an already burning Bedford (mobile) which caught fire suddenly.

The vehicles involved one 911 Bedford, Peugeot J5 with registration number Kwara XA 565 WSN

From Oluvide Bajulaiye, Lagos Correspondent

believed to be heading to Ilorin, a Danfo bus with Lagos yellow colour, a coaster bus and a tanker lorry. Daily Trust gathered that the Bedford caught fire while on motion and sympathisers in a bid to rescue it from completely being burning down attempted to stop other vehicles with fire extinguisher.

In the process, the Danfo driver collided with the Bedford, the J5 that was behind it also hit the Damfo, while the coaster that followed the J5 hit the J5 and the tanker driver also followed suit behind the coaster.

The impact of the multiple collision was said to

have sparked off the fire which burnt all the passengers in the J5, and 10 other occupants of the bus.

When our correspondent visited the scene of the accident terribly burnt bodies of the passengers were seen while efforts were being made to evacuate them.

Meanwhile, bodies of those that sustained various degrees of burns have been taken to the Lagos State general hospital, while bodies of dead ones were deposited at the state mortuary.

As at the time of filing this report efforts were still being made to evacuate other dead bodies, as a combined effort by the police, FRSC and LASTMA/LASAM fought desperately to save others.

Security breach: Prosecution gets Jan 31 date over Al-Mustapha's prayers

A federal high court sitting in Lagos and presided over by Justice Daniel Abutu, has fixed January 31 and

From Muhammad Shoshanya, Reporter (Lagos)

February 5, this year for the continuation of prosecution's reply to the prayers of Hamza

Al-Mustapha for certain documents to expedite his defense at the on-going security breach trial.

The former Chief Security Officer (CSO), to late General Sani Abacha, was on October 21 last year, arraigned alongside Lt. Col. Mohammed Adaka and one Onwuchukwu on a two count charge of treason and conspiracy against the federal government.

Last Thursday, prosecution counsel, Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), had described Al-Mustapha's request for statements of all the accused persons arrested and detained with him as nebulous and unethical that the former Chief Security Officer had adequate mat-erials to guarantee his trial.

Continuing his reply at the weekend, the prosecution's counsel reminded the court that it is not their considered opinion he totally denied the accused person that can only be done at the trial stage.

Nigeria seeks UK support on debt relief

By Ahmed I. Shekaran, Group Business Editor

Apparently cashing in on the advantage of United Kingdom's (UK) strategic position as current chair of the European Union (EU) as well as the G8, the federal government is seeking assistance for debt relief from its creditors.

The acting director general of the Debt Management Office (DMO), Dr. Abraham Nwankwo, disclosed this in a 48-page presentation on the "challenges, Achievements And Plans of the DMO," at a forum with executives of the Abuja chapter of the Finance Correspondents Association of Nigeria (FICAN).

This bid for debt cancellation by the Nigerian government is coming at a time when a non governmental organisation, the Economic Growth and Development Centre (EGDC), is agitating for outright debt cancellation for the country.

Nigeria's total external debt currently stands at about \$32 billion (N4.88 trillion), having paid about \$48 billion so far, while debts owed local contractors stands at N1.3 trillion. This debt stock is undoubtedly one of the highest in the world today.

According to Dr. Nwankwo, the Nigerian government is also courting the support of friendly countries "to champion our case at the Paris Club," adding that Nigeria's optimism on debt relief and debt cancellation stems from its commitment to prompt debt servicing, progress being made in the implementation of the present administration's economic reform programme, among others.

Reacting to a media report purporting that Nigeria had defaulted in payment of a debt obligation to some of its Par Bond holders, the acting DMO DG, who is also the director, Portfolio Management in the organisation described the report as "absolutely untrue".

Dr. Nwankwo stated that while it is true that Nigeria entered into an agreement with holders of its Par Bonds that if oil prices rise above a given level, holders of such bonds would be paid certain compensation, "we did not in any way violate our agreements with them and we didn't receive any complaints from them or their representatives that Nigeria had defaulted".

NEWS

Gombe: NUF decries false alarm of Udawa invasion

Briefs

Ekiti
Ekiti state governor, Mr. Ayo Fayose, has launched 10,000 desks and chairs produced for secondary schools in the state to improve educational facilities at a cost of N40m.

Performing the ceremony at the Christ School, Ado-Ekiti, Governor Fayose noted that the performance of pupils and students in primary and secondary schools in the state has improved considerably.

Okorocho

The special adviser to the president on inter-party relations Owelle Rochas Okorocho has enjoined Nigerians where ever and muslims in particular, to pray for abundance for the nation in this month of Eid el-Kabir.

Owelle Rochas Okorocho charged those who are opportune to go on Pilgrimage to avail themselves of the chance to pray for the growth and stability of the nation. He tasked Nigerians to regard themselves as brothers and sisters in the common struggle nation saying "no nation on earth ever progresses without God".

Akwa-Ibom

A South Korean vessel in South Korea has been named after Akwa Ibom, called LNG Akwa Ibom.

Commissioning the ship, the wife of the Akwa Ibom state governor and chairperson of the Child Development Trust, (CDT) Nnenji Allison Attah, while in South Korea, prayed God to keep a ship safely and bless the crew members.

According to the release from the office of the wife of the governor it noted that the naming of the ship after Akwa Ibom state was in line with the liquefied natural gas company's policy of positive identification with and projection of the good image of communities, states and other physical landmarks in Nigeria to the world.

The National Unity Forum (NUF), has decried the alleged invasion of Gombe villages by Udawas.

In a statement made available to newsmen by the chairman, Malam Inuwa Abubaka reacting to Tuesday's edition of the Daily Trust, January 18, 2005 that one Abdullahi Maikano Batai raised alarm over the invasion of the state by Udawa cattle rears.

According to Abdullahi, the Udawas normally wreak havoc wherever they visit.

His words: "probably by now they (Udawas) may be in Billiri, Kaltungo Shon and Balanga areas of the state".

Malam Inuwa remarked that people should not rush to the press with unfounded claims just to satisfy their political God-fathers who are hell bent to discredit Goje's government.

The forum chairman

observed that the enemies of progress in the state are never appreciative of all the good jobs Governor Goje has

From Deji Ajikombi, Stringer (Abuja) performed in the state.

Inuwa then advised the good people of the state to always channel their grievances through the

normal route and the governor will listen to the complaints rather than to the press.



From left are Dr. Eddy Irok the Director General of the FRCN, former senate president in the second republic Dr. Joseph Wayas and the FCT minister Mallam Nasir Ahmed el-Rafal during the dinner organised for media executive by Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili at the Rockview Hotel Abuja...Tuesday

Okpara counsels Nigerians over National Confab

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Sir Austin Okpara has advised Nigerians to support the federal government in its plan to organise a national confab,

Gov Saraki puts civil servants on their toes

Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara state appears to be putting top civil servants on their toes with another surprise visit to the state water corporation, Ilorin, less than 24 hours to eid el-Kabir celebration.

He directed the general manager of the corporation, Engineer Kamila Malik to ensure that water supply reached all the 90 locations in the Ilorin metropolis.

Governor Saraki further directed that the water supply services must be sustained after sallah celebration, while the premises of the corporation must be cleaned up.

The general manager briefed the governor on the level of preparation by the corporation to make water available during the sallah celebration, saying all the eight pumps and the ten water tankers were currently functioning to ensure a hitch free supply of water in the state capital.

He said an average of N7m was realised monthly while N10m was realised as internally generated revenue in December last year.

From Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter (Reps)

noting that the outcome of the conference will strengthen the nation's constitutional development.

Hon. Okpara who is also the Vice Chairman of the National Assembly constitution review panel, opined that the documents to be produced by the amendments is such that only the National Assembly and state legislators have the constitutional powers to review and endorse.

"Nigerians should give the planned national conference a chance since the outcome may require constitutional amendments, which according to section 9 of the 1999 constitution, will require the endorsement of the national assembly and state assemblies," pleaded.

He also called on all Nigerians, especially Muslims, to use the occasion of the Eid el-Kabir to pursue moral rectitude, peace and harmony in the country, in a goodwill message contained in a press release signed by his special assistant, media relations, Mr. Austin Uganwa.

While congratulating them on the occasion, the deputy speaker urged Muslims to emulate Prophet Ibrahim adding that the Eid el-Kabir season is a period of stock-taking.

He therefore charged public office holders to re-examine themselves during the season and ensure that their activities are in the best interest of the masses and remained Nigerians that House of Representatives is committed towards making laws capable of enhancing the well-being of Nigerians and ensuring that they reap the dividends of democracy.

Adamawa crisis: police invites five clergymen

The tension that has pervaded Bachama land in Adamawa state almost seven months after the deposition of Freddy Bongo as the paramount ruler may have led to the invitation by the commissioner of police, Adamawa state, Mr. Hafiz Ringim, to five clergymen in the state to appear before him on Thursday, January 20th, 2005.

A letter invitation for the interview dated January 10th 2005, addressed to the Bishop LCCN cathedral, I Numan and signed by an assistant commissioner of police, Godwin Okereke, gave the names of the clergymen.

According to the letter, a copy of which was made available to Daily Trust in Jos, the clergymen to appear for the interview include the Bishop, Cathedral of Numan, Rt Rev. Dr. Damu Wonosikou, Rev. Jediel Kainde, General Secretary, General Church Chaplain of the LCCN and Rev. Nelson Malau- Assistant Bishop of LCN.

Others include Rev. Mark Morrison Pastor in charge LCCN, cathedral Numan and Rev. Herimus.

Though no reason the invitation was stated by the Daily Trust gathered that it may not be unconnected with the clergymen's uncompromising stand against the deposition of Hama Bachama, Freddy Bongo and the imposition of Mr. Asaph Zadok, as new Hama Bachama by Adamawa state governor.

It was also learnt that the clergymen had remained resolute in their stand not to accord Zadok recognition.

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

Daily Trust gathered that following their agreement not to recognise Zadok, when the latter went to the church for a Sunday service, his offering of N50,000 was returned to him, even as the

clergymen continued to preach against the imposition of Zadok as the traditional ruler of the Bachamaland.

According to sources, the police believe that the stand of the clergymen may be responsible for the continued tension in Numan and other Bachama towns and villages.

LG election tribunals: principal witness mached to death

From Edet Ekanem, Stringer (Jos)

Abak local government of Akwa Ibom state witnessed another bloodshed on Sunday as Mr. Idongesit Akpan, a principal witness who was to testify before the local government election tribunal sitting in Uyo was mached to death by unknown persons.

Mr. Akpan, a grade level 13 health officer attached to Obio Nka health centre was attacked in his residence on Nto Esiet street, Abak, a few hours before he was to testify in a case involving the conduct of the election in wards of Oruk Anam local government area of the state.

Before he last breath in the early hours of Sunday after the cuts on Thursday last check the accused a councillorship candidate who he said was a party in the suit sponised things since he knew that he could not succeed to persuade him to testify in line favourite the tribunal.

He disclosed that the councillor came to his house and pleaded with him to testify in his favour when the petition about the election came up for hearing but he declined.

The man came to me on Thursday a about 12-1 pm

and pleaded for favour at the tribunal but I declined.

He said the councillor along with other five men forced his doors open and began to attack him. He said during the attacks a lady visitor who was mistaken for his wife was attacked leaving her with body lacerations.

Late Akpan said his wife escaped unhurt and raised in raising alarm which resulted in the assassins attempt to chop off his head but fortunately for him his left hand blocked the machete resulting in his left arm being amputated.

He said police could not save the situation because they arrived the scene very late despite the fact that they were contacted early enough by neighbours.

He was however taken to Mercy Hospital, Abak and later to University of Uyo Teaching hospital, UUTH but could not receive any treatment because of the ongoing doctors strike. Daily Trust gathered that late Mr. akpan was serving as election officer during the past election.

CHOICES...THEY RACE
 THRU UR MIND LIKE THE
 HUNDRED METERS DASH.
 ONLY THEY DON'T STOP!



UI or ABU?
 White Collar or Business?
 Now or Later?
 Diet or Binge?
 Designer Labels or Books?



Share 'em with a friend.
 It helps make it less of a burden.

#12/veego/Chibua3/01/05

veego...I feel U

Idang Albi on Thursday

idangalbi@yahoo.com

“Things is Hard”

The story is told of a young Nigerian in his late 20's who took a degree in English and Literary Studies from one of our top universities. For over five years after his graduation, his determined search for a job could not yield any dividend.

Tired of job-hunting in his state capital, the young man migrated to the Federal Capital, Abuja where he reasoned that a better prospects abounded.

As a graduate of English, it dawned on him that he ought to expand his job search to mass media-related organisations and not limit himself to government ministries and parastatals. And so it was that one day our young friend went to see the Director-General of a federal mass communication medium.

When he arrived there and inquired, he was told the big man was attending a board meeting and so he needed to wait. About an hour later, the D-G finished his meeting and was entering his office when he saw the young job-seeker who he was told, wanted to see him, he asked: "young man, what can I do for you?"

The young graduate replied: "Ah sir, things is hard." The eyewitness who told me this story swore that the D-G who was born and brought up without a silver spoon and who is very proficient in both spoken and written English, responded: "Yes I can see. Things is really hard."

And with that remark he walked away to his office, leaving the job-seeker bewildered. He could not understand the big man's reply to his complaint and his other action of walking away without any hint that he would help him.

I do not know whether this story is one of these stories Nigerians call *fabu* (fabricated or apocryphal stories told to amuse audiences at especially dinners). But what it clearly illustrates is the quality of graduates the nation is now producing from some of its tertiary institutions.

The truth of the matter is that we have a serious unemployment problem on our hands. But this unfortunate reality is further compounded by the fact that many graduates of our school system (both secondary and tertiary) are simply unemployable. Some of them have neither the verbal, intellectual or technical skills to make them fit in any where. Where can a graduate of English and Literary Studies who confesses in his own unique English that "things is hard" ever fit in?

With his type of command of English language he can not even be employed as a teacher in a nursery school, not to talk of being given a chance to start a career in broadcast or print journalism.

I doubt if our friend in this story was taught and he understood irony, sarcasm or their cousin innuendo. I bet that our friend never detected the biting sarcasm contained in the D-G's response to his complaint. Since it is not possible for any one to give what he does not have, he will never ever realise that his statement was grammatically incorrect.

One of the most amazing things happening in Nigeria today is that some graduates of our universities cannot even read and write nor to talk of the fact that they have any skills to contribute to the growth and development of our society. How we have allowed this sort of anomaly to exist in the system is beyond my comprehension.

While university administrators and academic staff unions constantly battle with government for improvement in the condition of their service, it does appear that they are not seriously concerned about the quality of graduates they churn out.

It is common knowledge that a good number of our university students bribe lecturers to earn marks that they do not deserve or hire "academic mercenaries" to write tests and exams for them. This helps to explain why supposed graduates of English like our friend in this story, come out of school to talk of how an accident happened because the vehicles "tyre bursted," how BBC "broadcasted" one programme and how a very "fatal" accident happened but mercifully, no one lost his life.

Everyone-lecturers, university administrators, the government and just about everybody-is aware of what is happening but no one seems to be seriously bothered. We just shrug off the matter and blame it on the "rot in the system". A university system that produces graduates who are neither useful to themselves nor to the country, is wasting everybody's time.

If you seek to get to the root of the problem, the blame game will never end. But I seriously think that the university community, especially the lecturers and the administrators, must accept a larger share of the blame. The reality of students bribing lecturers with either sex, money or food items accounts in large measure for the sad fact that some students come out with

certificates that they cannot defend. Government certainly had its share of the blame but the lecturers must repent of the great evil they are unleashing on our country.

In the 60s, 70s and early 80s before the introduction of SAP and the subsequent terrible degeneration in our morals, Nigerian graduates used to be some of the great ambassadors for Nigeria. They could hold their heads high among their colleagues in international conferences, seminars and symposia. One sincerely hopes that we have not started exporting some of the half-baked or low-quality graduates of the early 90s to date to further do damage to our image.

For so long we have lamented the undue emphasis placed on the acquisition of certificate to the detriment of life-sustaining skills. Our unemployment problem will not be this acute if we produce graduates who not only have employable skills but also such skills as would make them to become self-employed or self-supporting and even become employers of labour.

It is certainly a big scandal for any university to produce uneducated or illiterate graduates. The National Universities Commission (NUC), universities' governing boards, lecturers and other stakeholders should rise up and confront this reproach. Each of the above mentioned has been passing the buck for too long. We have seemed to have decided to live with the evil of 419, bribery and corruption and other evils that are a severe reproach on our country.

We should not try to get used to producing graduates who do not have the intellect to acquire the big certificate they can not in any way defend. Once our education in general and the university in particular has nothing to offer, then Nigeria will be finished.

Quite fortunately for Nigeria, the unemployment rate has inevitably made competition for the few available jobs to be quite stiff. Prospective applicants now go through a rigorous weeding out process before deserving ones are employed. This should send a signal to those who are seemingly interested in acquiring certificates rather than life-serving knowledge, that at the end of the day, they are being clever by half.

But the matter should not end with the fact that those who cheated their way through and emerged with a certificate may be denied employment. A machinery should be put in place to ensure that those who parade false qualifications are made to explain how they came about their certificates in the first place and the institutions which did not do the proper gate-keeping should be punished in one form or another

Opinion

Nigeria's search for peace

By Hassan Hadejia

Until recently, our efforts at sending peace messages centred more on the protracted Middle East crises considering its religious undertone. It is not that back home in Nigeria here, we had complete peace. Not at all. Senchaw; it is just that we tend to, by the special grace of Allah, enjoy more peace than our brothers and sisters there are no incidences of daily suicide bombings and hostage takings in Nigeria like it has assumed the order of the day in the Middle East. Only last week, I commented on the show of shame that is the Anambra State political crisis, which I think could have been avoided if sense of maturity and reasoning were allowed to prevail.

At any rate, he who makes peace is only being Godly. And whoever is Godly, Heaven is his last abode.

Looking at our local scene we have had crises, but unlike the Middle East example which is more about self determination, ours have mainly been induced by communal and religion, and sometimes as a result of political miscalculation, and manipulations. In the last two, three, four years, the religious aspect tends to be more pronounced than other causes, though on the face value, however, it is not totally wrong to say our crises are consequences of economic, social and political problems.

To those who dress in religious garb to incite their followers to heat the polity which leads to destruction of lives and property through arson as we witnessed recently in Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and Plateau in that order, I say no religion preaches violence. So no matter what religion one practices violence in the name of such sentimental considerations do not hold positive value for humanity. Rather, perpetrators are cursed by God Almighty.

The two great religions, Islam and Christianity are unequivocally clear enough about peace. They both preach peace. Peace through tolerance, love and respect for one another. For instance, the word Islam is derived from its Arabic phrase 'salam.' In essence, salam means total peace. Real peace, which is the reason why any Imam or scholar who urges his followers into violence is not only cursed, he has the worst of portion in Hell fire. And by the same stroke of reasoning "Salam" in Arab as it is used in Islam is the direct and true translation of Hebrew's Shalom, the first language through which the Bible was conveyed to this mother earth. Therefore, why would our revered fathers, bishops encourage their followers to jettison the virtues of shallom and rather coddle arms to be used against fellow human beings on the account of religious differences?

Let me make it point blank here that, I am not saying that all our leaders in the two religions are war

mongers. No, very far from that. It is not possible that all people are the same.

The two religions admonish people to do unto others what they would want others to do them. So if violence is good, why do those who urge us into violence do not come out to join us any time there is religious upheavals if they are honest with themselves? For we commoners, this is a food for thought.

Should we just carry arms against our fellow brothers simply because somebody, who wants to be relevant in a system, manipulates religious scriptures and sentiments? I am not saying that we are blind followers, not like that. However, it is high time we did a rethink and let us all endeavour at all cost to get at the true meanings of our religious scriptures. We do not have to take every thing from some of these so-called men of God line hook and sinker. So we must educate ourselves properly about our various religions to avoid being misled.

In case we don't know, God does not permit anybody to take a fellow human being's life. There are almost impossible conditions set by God to be met by mankind before a man's life can be lawfully taken. In Islam for instance, if a Muslim takes the life of a man, the offender is sure to face capital punishment if the case is proven. How do you really prove the case? Surely the steps are stated, but of course, these steps are more than stringent, because of the sanctity of human life. Which is the reason why God said "If anybody's life is taken unlawfully, it is as if the lives of the entire mankind is taken." God's curse surely descends heavily on the perpetrator.

In Christianity, there are such laws which says "an eye for an eye." I am sure the import of this message has been lost on many people. If you remove somebody's eye, if you must remove the offender's eye, it has to be done according to the same degree and means through which the eye was removed or plucked, no less no more. As imperfect as man is, can that be realised as God commanded? Even if the Surgeon-General applies the best of his reserved technique, he cannot achieve perfection, for perfection is God's own exclusive preserve and right. So why would one go for vengeance when in His perfection is demanded? That is why God in His infinite wisdom, commands man to turn the second cheek if someone slaps him on the first one. Our modern day men of God misinterpret such verses to incite violence through vengeance.

How can we really appreciate peace in our life? There are many ways. For instance if you have all along been healthy, have you ever fallen sick? Of course you would have, and no matter how minute the ailment was, how did you feel? Certainly, you were not peaceful throughout the period of that

sickness. What do you feel, after hunger, and you were able to eat a well balanced diet? Satisfaction, isn't it? That's peace. After the day's hard job and deservedly you earn that day's pay, where do you return to? To be a comfortable home, isn't it? And you are so lucky, yes lucky, you got that satisfaction. I am sure you will be happy that's peace.

I was born in Hadejia town which is 170 kilometres east of the ancient Kano city, and by that stroke of providence I am a Muslim simply because the majority there are Muslims. It would not have been like that if I were born in Chris Ngige's Anambra State, and because the majority are Christians, I would have been a Christian too. So it is not anything extraordinary to be born in one place and as a result of that you begin to look at your neighbours whom you cannot chose with scorn, contempt simply because he is not what you are or he does not share in your faith. I mean, such sentimental possession is demeaning.

It is alright if you want to win more converts to your own way of worshipping God, the creator of mankind. However, God said it is the way we live our life that would either attract or repel someone or to away from your religion. So how effective have you been a good diplomat of your religion? Therefore if you, as a Muslim, thinks you devote and respect Islam, then you should expect a Christian to do the same to Christianity, sometimes even more. So, if you think the best way to do conversion is by destroying churches or mosques certainly, the motive is not just for that, it is something very ungodly.

I have many Muslim friends just as I have many Christians. And all of them belong to different walks of life. Whenever we meet, we observe a very high sense of respect for our individual person and religion. As the most complex creature of God, man can still not choose his neighbours but he has the freedom to choose friends, therefore, a person must be good, generous, helpful and protective of his neighbour no matter the tribe, political leaning, religion and economic as well as social status. Those are sure bets to winning new converts not by burning mosques or churches. And in case we don't know, if any Muslim burns a church in the name of Islam, such a Muslim does not have respect for his religion, so also the other way round. Therefore, man is man, but the most pious among you is the one who is Godly. And only God knows the pious man among you.

May I appeal to fellow commoners like me that as citizens of our great country, we should desist from condemning our leaders. Of course, we cannot run away from the truth that our leaders may have been found wanting in managing the affairs of the nation entrusted in their care. Since leadership is God given, who knows if one day, therefore, one of us may find himself in such position (to only

Hassan who is the Sherifman Hadejia writes from Kofarna.



YOUR LETTERS

Dialogue: Kudos to Media Trust

Kindly permit my commendation to the management and staff of Media Trust for organising an enriching "2nd Annual Trust Dialogue" with the theme, Reforming Nigeria, Which Model?

The theme of the Dialogue was timely in view of the wide criticisms that have trailed the economic reforms of this government. I was highly impressed with the scholarly and professional manner in which the three resource persons made their presentations.

They were frank, plain, open and lively in the way they marshalled out their arguments.

Well, one does not

Haba JAMB!

Please allow me a space in your widely read newspaper to register my displeasure over the withholding of my 2004/05 MPCE exams result.

With registration NO 44346425AI and exams NO 10504097. I prepared day and night for the examination but to my surprise after paying through the nose for the JAMB access card and internet service at an

expect anything less from the blunt professor of Economics Sam Aluko, Prof. Mike Kwanashie and Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi.

The event afforded the well attended audience an opportunity to appraise the various economic reforms we have had so far in Nigeria. A flip at the book "Discharging a Burden" which I understand is a compilation of the Maiden Annual Dialogue was really revealing.

I must commend the organisers for a splendid event. Worthy of note also is the master of ceremony whose sense of humour was exhilarating.

Ikegwuani Ifeanyi .N
Area 3, Garki, Abuja.

inflated price landed on a 'bombshell'.

My result is being withheld for reasons unknown to me. So, I am using this medium to appeal to JAMB to please release my result, to enable me use it for the purpose it is meant because, I believe they are out to help dedicated candidates secure admission and not otherwise.

Maktar A Saiki Okene,
Kogi state.

Obasanjo and Lokoja- Abuja road project

The Minister of works, Chief Adeseye Ogunlewe while addressing the house committee on appropriation during his ministry's budget defence at National Assembly, said that the dualization of Lokoja - Abuja road will begin this year but not expected to be completed during the tenure of the present administration.

This Government would be making history if it did complete this road during its tenure, hence the reduction of accident in this ever busy road. I believe that, government effort is seeing to construction of major roads in the country so that people will enjoy the benefit of travelling without any fear of their lives being lost in ghastly accident.

When one consider the importance of dualization of this road to the people of southern and northern part of this country is the economic transformation it would bring to the entire federal capital and the nation in general.

Also the members of National Assembly should

as matter of urgency ensure that the dualization is completed during their tenure to satisfy the needs of the electorate who voted them as members representing their interest.

Bala Nayashi. No 1
Yashi Area Lokoja.

What is worst than Tsunami?

At this point in time, one will find it difficult to come across what is more disastrous than Tsunami disaster.

But come to Nigeria and see the cancerous and unrehabilitable damage inflicted on daily basis by Obasanjo and his team to past, present and future Nigerians by siphoning our money, misleading over 120 millions to uncertain future politically, socially, economically, educationally etc.

Infact Obasanjo and his team are worth than Tsunami disaster. America International communities should please help us.

Ibrahim Sani
Malumfashi, AK 35
Wushishi Road Kaduna.

More questions on MT African pride

MT African Pride has for sometime now been in the eye of the storm. The story of its arrest, detention and subsequent disappearance is a well known issue to all.

The trial of masterminds of its disappearance by a properly constituted court marshal was to me a crux of the fight against corruption within the military.

The trial court should be commended for standing its ground even after pleas for mercy by legal representatives who had realised that their clients were clearly in breach of the law, this clearly shows the level of integrity of its members.

However, there are still questions left unanswered which made the issue to refuse to disappear. What happened to the ship and its content worth about \$2.2 million?

Also, is maximum sentence in a court marshal

dismissal? What about the Russian diplomats that visited the ship few days to its disappearance?

These questions are indeed begging for clear and concise answers. The convicted Officers cannot be absolved from economic gains arising from their actions.

The Police should also investigate the complicity of the Russian diplomats, if they are found guilty of any wrong doing, the maximum penalty (which I believe is expulsion) should be applied.

The Nigerian Navy should also, review its laws for court marshal, if maximum sentence for whatever offence is dismissal from service, as very clearly there is the need for jail terms for the convicted officers.

Answering these questions will strengthen our resolve to fight corruption to its knees.

Yusufu Abubakar 102,
Autan Bawo Street off Zoo road Kano.

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



HAPPY EID-EL-KABIR



On behalf of my family, the Government and good people of Nasarawa State, I wish all Nigerians a happy and joyous Eid-el-Kabir.

May the joy and Blessings of Almighty Allah that come with Eid-el-Kabir fill your hearts now and



BARKA DA SALLAH

SIGNED
ALHAJI (DR.) ABDULLAHI ADAMU
Executive Governor
Nasarawa State



His Excellency,
ALHAJI (DR.) ABDULLAHI ADAMU
Executive Governor Nasarawa State

Trust International

Abu Ghraib abuse: The true culprits

Specialist Charles Graner Jr. was found guilty on January 15 of five counts of assault, maltreatment of detainees and conspiracy. The first of the US troops involved in torture at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison to face a full court martial. Graner was sentenced by a jury of soldiers to 10 years in prison and a dishonourable discharge.

The main defence offered by Graner's lawyer, Guy Womack, was that his client was following orders. Under US military law, this is a valid defence only if the order is lawful, or if the soldier can reasonably believe it to be lawful.

So far, seven soldiers have been charged in connection with the scandal that erupted after the publication of last spring of photographs depicting the abuse. Three have entered guilty pleas, while three others have yet to face a court martial.

According to the statements of Iraqi detainees and some of his fellow, the US soldiers, Graner, a member of the 372nd Military Police company and a prison guard on the night shift at Abu Ghraib, was a ringleader in the systematic abuse of prisoners. He figures prominently in the infamous photos standing behind a stack of naked and hooded Iraqi prisoners and broadly grinning.

It was Graner who forced the prisoners into that position on November 7, 2003. On another occasion, he punched a hooded prisoner in the face so hard as to knock him unconscious.

Amecn Said Al-Sheikh testified that Graner was "the primary torturer" who beat him, handcuffed him to a door for eight hours, watched as another soldier urinated on him, forced other prisoners to eat from a toilet, and threatened them with rape.

Graner flaunted his sadistic exploits, sending e-mails containing photographs of beaten and bloodied prisoners back to his family, including his young children, and bragging about the "really cool stuff" he got to do on the job.

While he is guilty of brutal crimes, and deserves to be punished, the claim of the Bush administration and the US military that he is simply one of a few "bad apples" whose misdeeds in no way reflect on the nature of the US occupation of Iraq is an

By Joseph Kay
absurd and contemptible lie.

The photos in which Graner figured so prominently aptly sum up the American occupation. But the Bush administration continues to insist that Graner and the other soldiers who have been charged were "rogue" elements who acted on their own. The prosecutions of Graner and the others have been designed to buttress this lie and enable the media to promote the fiction that those responsible for the torture at Abu Ghraib are being brought to justice. The small-fry offenders are being sacrificed in order to whitewash those at the highest levels of the Bush administration and the military who authored the policies sanctioning the use of torture.

Graner and his cohorts were encouraged by military intelligence officers to abuse and torture detainees. These actions were the direct outcome of policies and guidelines set by the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, and ratified by the White House.

The Judge in the Graner case, Army Colonel James Pohl, sought to exclude any evidence pointing to the culpability of higher-level military officers or government officials. Pohl denied the requests of Graner's attorney to call to the stand the former commander of the US forces in Iraq, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, as well as Rumsfeld and his Undersecretary for Intelligence, Steven Cambone. He further denied attorney Womack's request to grant immunity to Colonel Thomas Pappas, the Head of the Military Intelligence Brigade at Abu Ghraib, so that he could testify.

Having excluded these top military and civilian officials, the judge disallowed any questioning of witnesses about orders given by officers regarding the treatment of prisoners. In a classic "Catch-22" maneuver, he refused to permit witnesses to explain what higher-level officers knew about the abuse on the grounds that such statements were "hearsay." The most senior level

officer that Pohl has allowed to testify in any of the cases is Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, who did not testify in the Graner case, but will testify in another case, that of Javal Davis Karpinski, a one-time head of the US prisons in Iraq, has herself accused Sanchez, Major General Geoffrey Miller, who was sent to Iraq to evaluate interrogation methods, and Major General Barbara Fast, the former chief of military intelligence in Iraq,

incident involving naked prisoners stacked in a pyramid, though the performance report chastised Graner for smashing a prisoner's head into a wall. Graner was not punished for this action, but was offered time off to deal with stress.

According to a Washington post article of January 11, Private Ivan Frederick, who has also pleaded guilty to charges relating to the Abu Ghraib

Jordan, Pappas and other top officials at Abu Ghraib. "The higher up they go," Volzer said, "the more problems they have with people leading to the Pentagon. Pappas gave them to Sanchez, and they don't want that. Sanchez can give them Rumsfeld, and they don't want that. Rumsfeld can lead to Bush and [White House Counsel Alberto] Gonzales, and they definitely don't want that." Michael Ratner, head of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), noted, "Whatever Charles Graner did, however heinous his acts may have been, we believe he is taking the fall for the architects of a policy that empowered him to torture and abuse those being held at Abu Ghraib." The CCR has called for a special prosecutor to examine Rumsfeld's role. The organisation has already filed war crimes charges against Rumsfeld and others in a German Court.

It is worth recalling the background to the Abu Ghraib torture revelations. Immediately following September 11, 2001, the Bush administration sought to exploit the attacks of that day to carry out a far-reaching assault on democratic rights, including the rights traditionally granted under international law to prisoners of war.

The Bush administration decided not to treat prisoners in Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions. A CIA request led to a memo submitted to Gonzales, who is currently Bush's nominee for attorney general, which so narrowly defined torture as to allow methods banned by international and the US laws against torture. The memo, written in August 2002, declared that the president, as commander-in-chief, had the right to order the torture of prisoners.

Bush had a direct hand in these developments. Scott Horton of the American Bar Association told the Age, an Australian newspaper, "It is now reasonably clear that there was action by the president. I have now seen several further documents which persuade me that there is in fact a determination by the president that dates from roughly April 2002. It is addressing extreme interrogation procedures,

though not in detail." Journalist Seymour Hersh reported in his book, Chain of Command, that sometime in late 2001 or early 2002, Bush signed a top-secret finding authorising the Defence Department to set up a Special Access Program (SAP) operating outside of any regulation or oversight. The SAP was responsible for secret interrogation practices in Afghanistan.

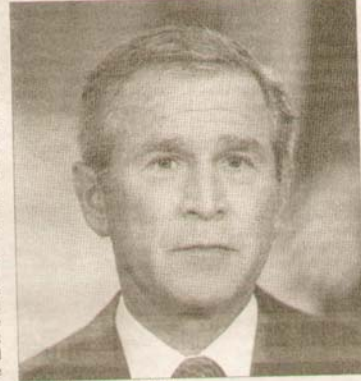
According to one of the army's own investigations, led by Major General George Fay, by December 2002 "interrogators in Afghanistan were removing clothing, isolating people for long periods of time, using stress positions, exploiting fear of dogs and implementing sleep and light deprivation."

In April 2003, Rumsfeld approved a more extensive list of interrogation methods for Guantanamo Bay that include many of these techniques. Though the list was formally withdrawn later, there is much evidence, including a series of documents recently released by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), showing that torture in Guantanamo Bay became institutionalised.

Major General Miller, who at the time was head of the Guantanamo Bay facility, was sent, in the fall of 2003, to Abu Ghraib. Even the whitewash report by a panel headed by former defence secretary James Schlesinger, released in August 2004, felt obliged to acknowledge that practices carried out in Cuba "migrated" to Iraq. An ACLU-released document from an FBI agent states that Miller was sent to implement what the FBI considered to be illegal techniques, and that he received his authority directly from Rumsfeld.

The torture and abuse methods employed at Guantanamo were transferred to Iraq in an attempt to counter a growing insurgency that the American military found increasingly difficult to handle.

Far from being punished, those who are most responsible for the policy of torture have strengthened their position in Bush's second term administration. Gonzales has been selected as the new Attorney General and Rumsfeld is staying on as Secretary of Defence. Condoleezza Rice, who, according to Hersh, approved the Special Access Program, has been elevated from national Security Adviser to Secretary of state.



US President, George W. Bush

of responsibility in the torture.

The testimony of witnesses who did appear in Graner's case, mainly fellow soldiers at Abu Ghraib and some detainees, indicated that culpability extends well beyond the seven individuals who have been charged. Some of the other soldiers who had already pleaded guilty noted that Graner and others were encouraged in their actions by military intelligence and CIA officials in order to "soften up" prisoners for interrogation purposes.

Former Specialist Megan Ambuhl, who has pleaded guilty to charges relating to the Abu Ghraib torture, said, "They encouraged us all the time." She said military intelligence officers "would come down and let us know what they wanted us to do with the detainees." They told her "to point at detainees and laugh at them while they were in the shower" in order to humiliate them.

Ambuhl also said that Lieutenant Colonel Steven Jordan, Head of the Joint Interrogation and Detention Centre at Abu Ghraib, saw photos of the abuse that had been placed on the screen of a desktop computer at the prison.

Master Sergeant Brian Lipinski testified that Jordan commended Graner for "doing a good job" shortly after the

torture, "said he had consulted with six senior officers, ranging from captains to lieutenant colonels, about the guards' actions, but was never told to stop. Frederick also said that a CIA official, whom he identified as 'Agent Romero,' told him to 'soften up' one suspected insurgent for questioning. The agent told him he did not care what the soldiers did, "just don't kill him."

Sergeant Kenny Davis said that after visiting Abu Ghraib in the fall of 2003, he told his platoon leader that military intelligence "was doing some pretty weird things with naked detainees over there". Pohl refused to allow further questioning on the subject.

If military intelligence and the CIA were encouraging military police soldiers, including Graner to torture detainees, as they certainly were, they were not doing so on their own initiative. The pressure to step up interrogation practices at Abu Ghraib and other facilities in Iraq came directly from Rumsfeld and Sanchez, and was part of Bush administration policy.

Harvey Volzer, the lawyer who represented Ambuhl, suggested a reason why Pohl was so eager to cut off questioning about the role of

Trust International

UN, Southern Sudanese postpone peacekeeping talks

The top United Nations envoy to Sudan postponed talks yesterday with rebel officials in southern Sudan until he can meet with their leader to negotiate the deployment of up to 10,000 peacekeepers to monitor an accord aimed at ending Africa's longest-running conflict.

John Garang, chairman of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement, was expected to arrive there by yesterday. But by mid-afternoon there was still no sign of him, and U.N. envoy Jan Pronk flew to Ethiopia to

meet with African Union officials about the proposed peacekeeping mission.

The United Nations plans to deploy troops within six months, during which time the government and rebels have committed under a Jan. 9 peace deal to set up a national power-sharing administration with an autonomous south. At the end of a six-year transition period, the 10 southern states will hold a referendum on whether to become independent.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is to submit a

report on the peacekeeping mission to the Security Council later this week, including the proposed mandate, size and deployment schedule. Pronk has said he believes the force would need 9,000 to 10,000 troops.

France's U.N. Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere and U.S. deputy ambassador Anne Patterson said Tuesday that Annan's recommendation for the force would probably be in the range of 9,000 troops.

Asked at U.N. headquarters in New York whether that number would be acceptable to Washington, Patterson said, "In that range is acceptable. ... We're working on that range."

U.N. and U.S. officials have said they hope a solution to the 21-year-old war in the south will help end a separate conflict in the western Darfur region.

Hardships including disease and malnutrition are believed to have killed more than 70,000 of the nearly 2 million displaced in Darfur since March.

Sudan's southern civil war pitted the government, led by Arab Muslims who dominate the north, against rebels fighting for greater autonomy and a greater share of the country's wealth in the mainly black Christian and animist south. The conflict is blamed for more than 2 million deaths, primarily from war-induced famine and disease.

Mugabe vows improved Iranian relations

President Robert Mugabe hailed Iran as a "critical partner" and vowed to take cooperation to "new heights" as he played host to President Mohammad Khatami, the state-run newspaper reported.

Khatami, who arrived Monday on the penultimate leg of a seven-nation African tour, visited the National Heroes Acre in Harare where those who fought in Zimbabwe's liberation war against British colonial rule are buried.

Although he was scheduled to hold talks with Mugabe Tuesday morning, Khatami instead met the country's two vice presidents, Joseph Mshaka and Joyce Mujuru.

No reason was given for the cancellation of the meeting with Mugabe but the two vice presidents said they discussed Zimbabwe's land reforms and bilateral trade opportunities.

Khatami also met Islamic religious leaders based in Zimbabwe and local business people and industrialists.

He flew out to Zimbabwe's prime resort of Victoria Falls, where he was also to visit a crocodile breeding farm.

Speaking at a banquet in Khatami's honour late Monday, Mugabe hailed oil-rich Iran as a key partner in Zimbabwe's drive to shun the West.

"We attach great importance to this visit as it will enable us to work towards strengthening and diversifying our relations," Mugabe was quoted in the state-run Herald newspaper as saying.

"Your visit affords an opportunity to raise our bilateral cooperation to new heights as my government has embarked on a deliberate 'Look East' policy in which your country is a critical partner," he said.

Iran is one of the countries Mugabe has been warning up to as part of this policy, partly forced by Zimbabwe's isolation from the West over controversial land reforms and allegedly fraud-marred

elections in 2000 and 2002.

Khatami said although the two countries were miles apart geographically, they shared a difficult past.

"I share your historical suffering and grief and I value the victorious struggle of heroic people of Zimbabwe," Khatami said in response to Mugabe's speech.

Mugabe also slammed Western powers opposed to his land reforms, saying they were the same ones who had branded Iran part of an "axis of evil", a reference to the policy outlined by President George W. Bush in 2002 that put Iran, Iraq and North Korea at the top of a US list

Odd World

Man lands jail for harassment

An Italian man who slapped a young woman on the bottom while she was making a telephone call has been handed a 14-month suspended jail term by the Supreme Court.

The tough sentence made headlines in Italy where judges have been cracking down on sexual harassment with a string of ground-breaking verdicts against unsolicited advances.

A man in northern Italy was fined 300 euros (\$392.5) last year for sending a flirtatious text message to a woman.

In the past such cases would rarely have made their way into the courts of a country renowned for its macho society.

Italy's high court ruled that the slap was an act of sexual aggression, which belittled the woman and caused her "duress."

The aggressor, identified only as Ivan P., told the court that the victim was a relative, who had invented the story to get revenge in a family feud.

"I don't believe in justice anymore. The sentence has ruined my life," he told Il Messaggero newspaper. His prison term was suspended because he was a first time offender.

Man with nail in Skull has \$100,000 headache

Doctors who removed a 4-inch (10-cm) nail from a Colorado construction worker's skull have left him with huge headache — a \$100,000 hospital bill.

Patrick Lawler, 23, who was recovering on Tuesday from surgery to remove the nail, said he had no health insurance and would have to find a way to pay the whopping bill after he is released from the hospital this week.

Lawler walked around with the nail in his skull for six days before seeking medical attention after accidentally shooting himself with a nail gun on a construction site.

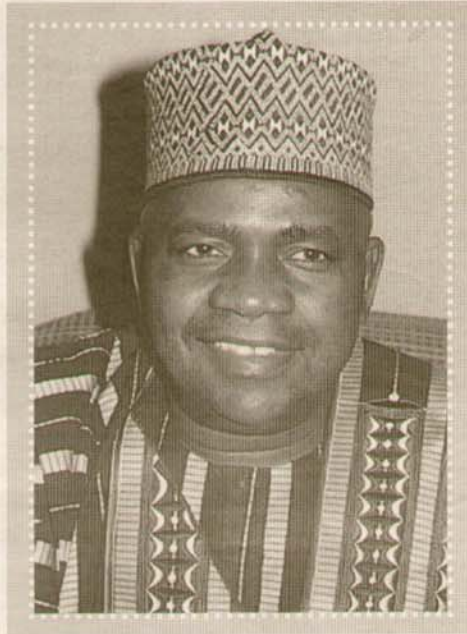
He said he did not realise the pain in his mouth and blurred vision were the result of a nail in his head.

"We just thought it was like a big contusion or a punch," he told reporters.

Asked what was going through his mind as he sat in a press conference contemplating the nail, Lawler replied: "a new career."

GOMBE STATE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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ACHIEVER, OUR DEAR GOVERNOR, ALHAJI
MOHAMMED DANJUMA GOJE, THE
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF GOMBE STATE.**



*His Excellency,
ALHAJI MOHAMMED DANJUMA GOJE,
Executive Governor of Gombe State*

Honour is given to whom it is due. In the spirit of the Eid-El-Kabir Festival, the entire sons and daughters of Gombe State resident in Lagos under the auspices of Gombe State Development Association (GOSDA) wish to felicitate with our dynamic Governor, His Excellency Alhaji Mohammed Danjuma Goje, the Executive Governor of Gombe State as we celebrate the EID-EL-KABIR festival and New Year.

We would also like to congratulate you on your wonderful achievements in our state within your short reign as Governor.

We are proud of your achievement in the improvement of social infrastructure in the state.

Special mention would be made of your Education policies leading to the establishment of a State University, Township Road Construction, Rural Electrification and Water Supply.

GOSDA, a non-political, religious or tribal organization of Gombe State indigenes in Lagos State work for the Unity and Development of Gombe State.

We wish the Government and people of Gombe State a wonderful Eid-El-Kabir festival and a prosperous New Years.

Signed
Publicity Secretary
Gombe State Development Association (GOSDA)

Trust International

Al-Qaida claims embassy blast in Iraq



Osama bin Laden

The al-Qaida in Iraq claimed that it carried out a truck bombing at the Australian Embassy in Baghdad that killed two people yesterday, according to a statement posted on an Islamic Web site.

The embassy blast was the first in a series of car bombings in Iraq within 90 minutes of one another.

Iraqi authorities said nine people were killed in the blasts. The US military put

the death toll at 26, based on initial reports from American soldiers who responded to the attacks. The discrepancy in the count could not immediately be resolved.

Al-Qaida in Iraq is led by Jordanian-born Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a militant who has allied himself with Osama bin-Laden's terror network and is among the Americans' most wanted.

"A lion of monotheism and faith ... carried out a martyrdom operation nearby the Australian Embassy in

central Baghdad, and the number of the injured was big," the group said in the statement on a Web site that frequently posts such claims.

The United States has offered a reward of \$25 million for information leading to Zarqawi's capture, the same bounty out for bin Laden.

Officials said several people were wounded, including two Australian soldiers, when the explosive-packed truck exploded around 7:00 a.m. outside the cement blast barriers in front of the embassy compound.

In other developments, a car bomb exploded southwest of Baghdad International Airport, killing two Iraqi security guards and leaving three others wounded, the US military said.

In another bombing, a white pick-up truck resembling those used by Iraqi security forces pulled up outside the gates of an army base located in an old airport in western Baghdad, killing two Iraqi soldiers and a civilian, said police and hospital sources.

Another 11 people were wounded, eight of them soldiers, hospital sources added.

A car bomb exploded in the dangerous Haifa Street of Baghdad between the western Al-Karkh district's hospital and a police station. An AFP reporter saw a corpse slumped on the ground by his overturned bicycle. There was no immediate official toll.

South of Baghdad, another car bomb exploded in the predominantly Shiite provin-

ce of Babil between al-Mahawil and Hilla, killing one policeman and wounding two others, Polish-led forces said.

Meanwhile, China said it was "taking all measures" to win the release of eight hostages and was contacting the Iraq Muslim Presbytery which helped in the release of seven Chinese kidnapped in the war-torn country last year.

The China Daily said the abductors were from the Movement of the Islamic Resistance Nuamaan Brigade.

In a tape broadcast Tuesday on Arab news networks and showing the eight Chinese nationals held up by their passports guarded by two hooded men, the kidnappers charged the group had "worked with US forces in Iraq".

Iran warns

Accusing Washington of trying to disrupt its nuclear negotiations with the EU by evoking the threat of a military strike, Iran warned the U.S. on yesterday it would respond to any "unwise measure."

"With reliance on enormous popular support, diplomatic capacity and full military capability, the Islamic Republic of Iran will firmly respond to any unwise measure or plan," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said in a statement responding to "recent comments by US officials".

In recent remarks, US President George W. Bush said he wouldn't rule out launching military strike against Iran, if the Islamic Republic refused to halt its nuclear programme.

The US claimed that Iran is covertly trying to develop a nuclear weapons programme. Iran repeatedly rejects those claims, asserting that its

US over planned attack

nuclear programme is solely used in peaceful purposes.

On Tuesday, US secretary of state-designate Condoleezza Rice also called on world powers to take a firm action against Iran to keep it from producing nuclear weapons, repeating a threat to refer the Islamic republic's nuclear dossier to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

"We see such moves as a psychological campaign and political pressure," Asefi said.

Asefi, moreover, noted that one of the US aims is "not to help and encourage Europe to peacefully settle some disagreements through diplomacy and talks, but to disrupt the Iran-EU nuclear talks by pretending they are unsuccessful."

The EU's "big three" - Britain, France and Germany - have been holding nuclear talks with Iran aimed at reaching a long-term solution that would ease international

Palestinians vow action against activists

The top Palestinian security commander yesterday promised swift action to stop violence against Israel, a day after a suicide bombing in Gaza disrupted fledgling efforts by Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to coax activists into halting their attacks.

Abbas, who is under tremendous pressure by Israel to take action, arrived in Gaza on Tuesday for truce talks with Islamic militants in Gaza. But the Hamas suicide bombing, which killed an Israeli security agent and wounded eight, clouded his prospects.

Abbas huddled with his security advisers and commanders in an emergency meeting after the bombing late Tuesday and later held talks with leaders of the two Islamic groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Lt. Gen. Abdel Razeq Majaide, the top Palestinian commander in Gaza and the West Bank, said yesterday that Palestinian forces would soon be deployed near the border with Israel.

"Preparations are under way to deploy Palestinian national security soldiers along the borders to stop any sort of violations," Majaide said in a radio interview.

Palestinian activists near the Gaza-Israel border frequently launch rockets into southern

Israel.

Majaide did not say when the deployment would begin.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has warned his patience is running thin. Israel is demanding that Abbas put a stop to a recent wave of Palestinian violence and has threatened a large-scale raid into Gaza if he fails.

Abbas has rejected Israeli calls to crack down on activists. Instead, he hopes to persuade them to halt their attacks. In exchange, the Palestinians want Israel to stop attacking militants - a demand that Israel is unlikely to accept.


Abbas planned further talks with Palestinian faction leaders yesterday, including a meeting with leaders of his Fatah movement and talks with Islamic Jihad.

Palestinian officials said yesterday they believed an agreement could be reached soon.

"I have realistic optimism that this can be done, and this can be done in a fairly short time," said Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath. "I think both the Palestinian and Israeli people long for security and peace and return to the peace process."

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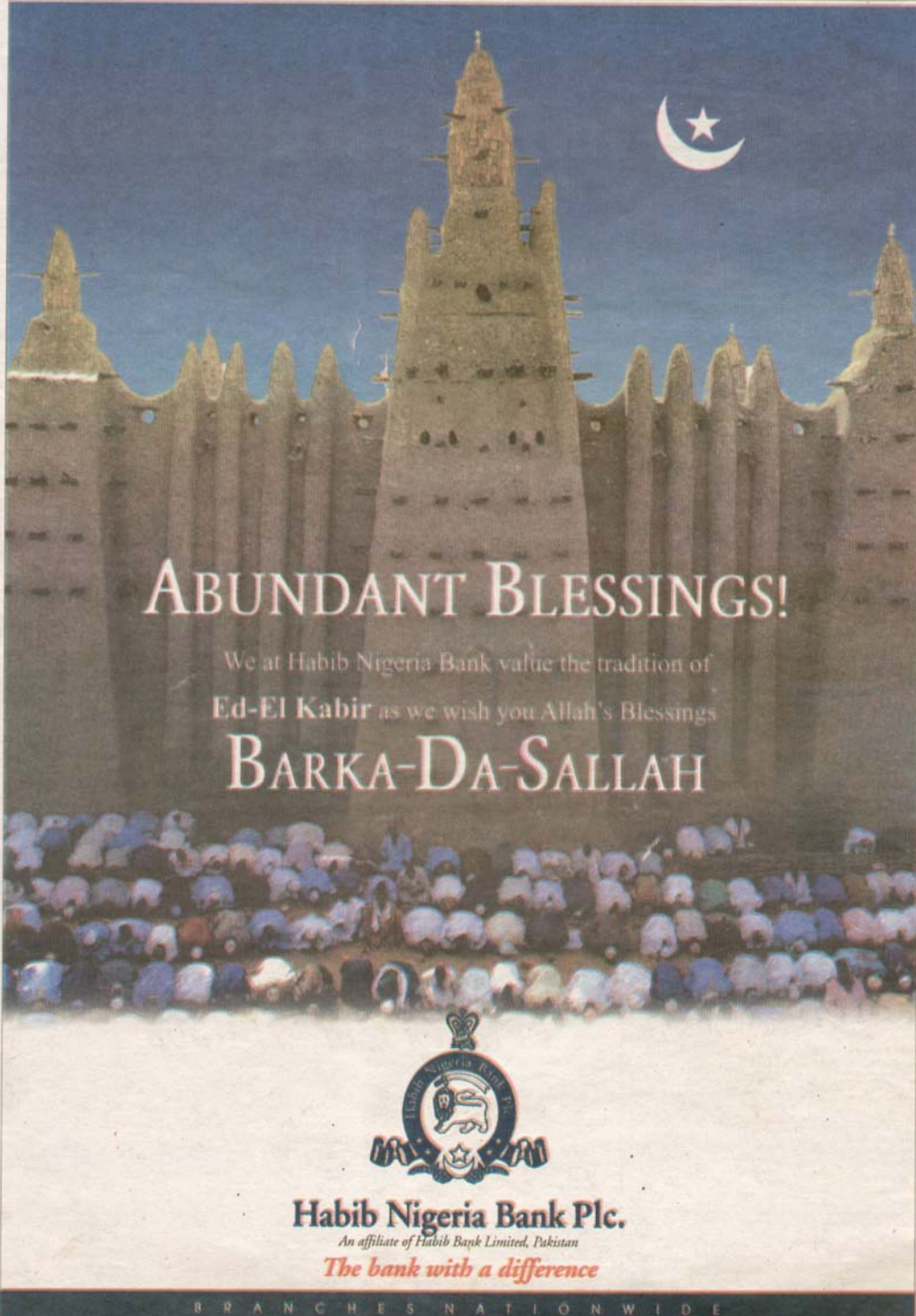
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Albarka Air	
Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja 06:50	
Abuja - Maid.	17:00
Lagos - Yola	1:00 p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.
Chanchangi Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
PH - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.
IRS Airlines	
CBQ - Abuja	8:00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - CBQ	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.
EAS Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos	2:30p.m.
Dasab Airlines	
Auja-Lagos	8:30am.
Lagos-PHC	10:30am.
PHC-Lagos	12:30am.
Lagos-Kano	2:30pm.
Kano-Lagos	4:30pm.
Lagos-Abuja	6:30pm.
ADC Airline	
Lagos-Abuja	7:15am.
	12:45pm.
Abuja-Lagos	8:55am.
Lagos-Cábir	11:15am.
Cábir-Lagos	7:20am.
PH-Lagos	9:45am.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

Director general of the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE), Dr. Julius Bala, has said that the privatisation of NITEL is the only way to make the company meet the current challenges in the telecommunications sector and provide better services.

Speaking during a press briefing in Abuja yesterday, Dr. Bala said "NITEL is facing increasing competition in both fixed and mobile markets. Unfortunately, NITEL is unable to meet this challenge." As a result, it becomes imperative that a "core investor be secured to enhance the development of the operations of the company."

Dr. Bala further explained that the BPE has received renewed interests by investors wishing to acquire majority stakes in NITEL as core investors and "in response to this clamour by potential investors, the federal government recently approved that the Bureau revisit the core investor sale."

According to him, 51 percent of the company would be sold to a core investor while "the remaining shares would be sold to Nigerians in sequential tranches through an Initial Public Offer (IPO) on the Nigerian Stock Exchange."

To this effect, the Bureau has developed "an agree-

NCC plans guidelines on installation of telecom towers

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) said it is in the process of developing technical specifications on the laying of External Line Plant and the installation of Telecommunication Towers. A statement signed by Dave Imoke, NCC's spokesman said yesterday that the technical specifications are expected to serve as guidelines to operators who wish to install towers or lay landline cables for telecommunication services in the country.

The document containing the specifications according to the statement, have been published on NCC website www.ncc.gov.ng and operators, stakeholders as well as the general public are requested to go through the document for their information and contribution.

It said further that suggestions and comments on the document are welcome and should be sent to the director, Technical Research and Standards, Dr. S. A. E h i k i o y a (ehikioya@ncc.gov.ng) on or before February 28, 2005.

Why NITEL must be sold -BPE boss

By Anas A. Galadima, Reporter (Business)

sive transaction time table which will ensure that NITEL is brought to the point of sale at the shortest possible time," he added.

According to the timetable, the transaction process will involve two major stages.

The "preparation phase" and the "sale phase." The preparation phase, which has commenced since September 2004, is expected to end by February/March 2005.

On the other hand, the sale phase which is expected to begin by February 2005, will come to an end by June 2005 when the payment of the

"1st tranche of bid price" is expected to be made.

Dr. Bala further disclosed that the timetable may undergo minor changes depending on the outcome of events as they continue to unfold.

According to him, the BPE has received expressions of interests from potential investors from Asia, Europe, America and South Africa and that the proper procedure will be followed to

successfully privatise NITEL which will be sold together with its subsidiary MTNL.

He assured Nigerians that the BPE is ready to undertake the task of privatising NITEL. "We have completely repositioned the BPE; we've brought in two directors and created a project team. This is because this year is going to be a critical year in the privatisation process since NITEL, NPA and NEPA will be privatised," he said.



Picture shows Red Star Express General Manager, Marketing/Corporate Affairs, Mr. Obinna Ajiwodo (L) and Emmanuel Anyagwa at the opening of Red Star stand at Lagos International Trade Fair, Badagry - Lagos.

Insufficient power supply causes high GSM tariffs - MTN boss

The chief executive officer of MTN Nigeria, Mr. Sifiso Dabengwa has said that insufficient power supply is responsible for the high costs of running the GSM networks which in turn leads to high tariffs.

Mr. Dabengwa who disclosed this at the just concluded Economist Conference held in Abuja called on the government to "accelerate power sector reforms in order to enhance telecommunications development in Nigeria."

He further called for the provision of "appropriate concessions and incentives to active operators to sustain the dynamic pace of telecom growth in the form of tax incentives, duty waivers and pioneer status" to encourage and promote private investment in the country and enhance Nigeria's global competitiveness.

He said the Nigerian telecoms sector would thrive in an environment where there are "unambiguous and transparent rule-making procedures, proportionate regulation, withdrawal of unnecessary intrusion on emerging markets."

Also speaking during the conference, David Cowan, Senior Editor of the intelligence unit of The Economist magazine said the cost of running production plants in Nigeria is about 40% higher than in other parts of the world.

This, according to him, is due to high cost of power supply, transport costs, heavy health care costs, delays in the supply chain and the delays in clearing goods at the ports through the customs.

He however disclosed that "the next 18 to 20 months present a window of opportunity for both new and

established businesses in Nigeria."

Also speaking at the Roundtable with the theme: Risk vs Reward: making the business case for Nigeria, Nenad Pacek, Director, Economist Corporate Network and chairman of the conference said the

conference is intended to become an annual event and "the number of the delegates that took a long-haul flight to be here shows the strong interest of international businesses in Nigeria, and we look forward to coming back next year to assess the continuing progress."

NITEL loses union president to robbers

A senior staff of NITEL, Mr. Samuel Adigun, passed on at the weekend following injuries from gun shots from an armed robbery attack.

Adigun, who is the president of the Senior Staff Association of Utility Statutory Corporation and Government Owned Companies, was shot on Friday.

Tuesday at Lokoja. He was travelling from Lagos to Abuja for an official function at the NITEL corporate headquarters.

Sources at the NITEL headquarters told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that Adigun who was to fly Abuja on Tuesday had to come by road after the flight was cancelled over weather complications.

Sources said that Adigun, who was admitted at the Federal Medical Centre, Lokoja, was operated upon, but gave up the ghost on Friday.

NITEL spokesman Tayo Ekundayo, confirmed the death of the senior staff and added that Feb. 2, had been tentatively fixed for the burial.

Business Trust

NNPC, Mobil sign \$7.7bn deal on LNG/IPP projects

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU), on Tuesday signed an MOU for a 7.7 billion dollar LNG/IPP project in Bonny Island.

Mr Funsho Kupolokun signed on behalf of the NNPC while Mr. John Chaplin, managing director, MPN, appended his signature on behalf of his company.

The first phase of the project would produce 4.8 million tons per annum of NG and supply power to the complex while the rest would be channelled to the national grid. Speaking at the ceremony, Kupolokun said the project followed a study

launched by MPN on how best to harness the nation's vast gas resources.

He noted that a number of gas projects in the country were as a result of that study which cost MPN 10 million dollars to carry out.

Kupolokun said that the project was consistent with government objective to earn as much revenue from gas as from crude oil.

"It will advance local content in Nigeria as well as offer significant employment opportunities for qualified Nigerians," he said.

The Final Investment Decision on the project

would be signed in 30-month time after successful completion of Front-End Engineering Design (FEED).

Also speaking, Chaplin said the MOU signified the commitment of both NNPC and MPN to monetize the nation's gas resources.

He gave assurances that MPN would bring to the project its world-leading technology, financial strength and project management expertise.

Chaplin commended the NNPC for the cooperation and support in seeing the discussions on the project up to this stage



The Nigerian Society of Engineers recently honoured some distinguished Nigerians. Pic shows Engineer Charles Mbanefo (left) Engineer Funsho Kupolokun, GMD, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) being decorated as Fellow NSE watching with keen interest, (right), is Mrs. Kupolokun.....

Reforms: Short term costs are inevitable

— The Economist's editor

The senior editor of the Intelligence Unit of The Economist magazine, Mr. David Cowan has said that Nigerians will have to pay a short term price in order for the ongoing reforms by the federal government to be effective and result oriented.

Mr. Cowan made this revelation while fielding questions from journalists at the just concluded Economist Conference held in Abuja.

By Anas A. Galadima, Reporter (Business)

the reforms in the different sectors work, there has to be short term costs."

He however said that in the long run, all these will be overcome as more jobs will be created in the future if the reforms are successful.

According to him, the country may experience some negative short term hardship like loss of jobs as a result of these reforms.

This according to him is because "you can't have something for nothing. In other words you cannot have change or reforms without costs. So to make

He called on the federal government to outline its goals and fix targets for the reforms so that concrete results will be achieved at the end of a specific period.

"To achieve good results in reforms" he said "you have to have at least a 5 to 10 years period of implementation before you can begin to have significant results."

Economics institute releases half-year training programme

The Economics Institute has released its half-year executive training programmes which includes its senior-level executive programme in business administration, business strategy training programmes (which includes management and financial services-strategy and implementation and leading and management people).

According to a press statement signed by Dr. A.B. Ayeni the institute's director, training research, publications and membership, and

made available to Daily Trust, the institute has also released 16 other Functional of Management Training Programmes (FMTP) and the institute's first ever "investiture of fellows" and induction of new members is slated for April 11th to 16th this year.

The statement further disclosed that the institute has relocated from its former Area 11 Garki, office to a new office at Iwande House, at Jere Street Off Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti Street, Garki II, Abuja.

Shut SPDC flow station re-opens

The Odeama creek flow station, property of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), which was shut down by protesting youths from Bayelsa two weeks ago, has been reopened.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Yenagoa reported that protesting youths from Odioma in Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa had forced the company to close down.

The flow station, which produces about 32,000 barrels of crude oil daily, was shut about two weeks ago, following an alleged breach of a

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by shell.

The critics of the company for refusing to provide basic facilities in the town but the company was reopened on Tuesday, following the company's pledge to replace the community's moribund electricity generating set with a new one.

NAN learnt that the agreement was reached at a meeting convened in Port Harcourt at the instance of the company with the

community youths to end the impasse.

Meanwhile, an indigene of the area, who pleaded anonymity, told NAN that a new youth executive body would soon be inaugurated to replace the present one and that the new body would be mandated to fashion out a new MOU with shell.

The youths want the new MOU to include the

provision of pipe-borne water, internal road network and micro credit scheme for indigenes of the place.

They are also demanding employment for two indigenes Odioma as community liaison officers, sand filling of the town and the building of embankment at the community's shoreline to prevent erosion as well as award of scholarship to indigenes.

Pensioners kick against govt neglect

The Nigeria Union of Pensioners (NUP) has accused both the federal and Rivers governments of insensitivity to members' plight in that state.

Mr T.S.D. Sukuye, the state chairman of the NUP, told newsmen in Port Harcourt on Monday that "the case of pensioners in the state is particularly pathetic.

"Even our colleagues in poorer states of the federation receive better treatment," he stressed, noting that "the provisions available for our members are not adequate to take care of current realities."

According to Sukuye: "The monthly earnings of some pensioners still stand at N500 and N1,000.

"How can anyone survive on that, within the economic realities of the moment?" He also noted that, "among other things, the Rivers State Government has failed to pay the 30 per cent and 142 per cent harmonisation arrears, amounting to N1.5 billion".

Sukuye accused the Rivers Government of "operat-

ing double standards, by paying the harmonisation arrears of recently retired permanent secretaries.

"Without hesitation, we call for the scrapping of the Federal Pension Office in the state, as it has not helped the plight of pensioners.

"Rather, it has complicated their case," he stressed.

Estate developers charged on funding

The Nigeria Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) has charged estate developers to source for housing development funds from the capital market to boost housing delivery in the country.



Mobolaji Osomo, Housing Minister

The second vice president of the institution, Mr. Emeka Onuoha, who gave the charge at a press conference in Lagos on Tuesday, remarked that the N5 million loans being given by the federal mortgage bank to developers was grossly inadequate to meet the housing needs of the people.

He said that such loans were only being used to build luxurious apartments by a few individuals who had access to it, to the detriment of the masses.

He called for the consolidation of the real estate sector to complement go-vernment's

efforts at housing delivery, saying that go-vernment was yet to fulfil its promise of delivering 75,000 low cost housing to the people.

"The small real estate developers should liaise with the bigger ones to be dynamic and remain relevant in the sector," he said, adding that the common practice of wanting to do it alone would not help the sector.

He remarked that the development of the housing sector would go a long way to increase business opportunity, particularly in the insurance industry.

Onuoha acknowledged the high cost of land and

other housing transactions in Lagos state which, he blamed, on multiple taxes, but said that such taxes were introduced to enable the state government meet its statutory obligation to the citizens.

He, therefore, urged the federal government to give more funds to the state to enable it maintain the federal structure left behind after the movement of the former federal capital.

Onuoha said that the annual John Ekpeyong memorial lecture, instituted in honour of the first president of the institution, would hold on January 31 at the Metropolitan club in Lagos.

Business Trust



Minister of commerce, Ambassador A.D. Idris Waziri (right) discussing with the special adviser to the President and chief executive of the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Mrs. Modupe Sasore (left) at the opening of a one-day seminar on export development strategies organised by the NEPC in Lagos, recently.

Lawyer slams N1bn suit on UACN

Chief George Opara, a Lagos based legal practitioner has slammed a N1 billion suit against UACN Property Development Company Plc over an alleged trespass and forced ejection for about a month from his chambers.

The lawyer is also seeking an injunction restraining UACN Property Development Company Plc and UPCC Hotels Limited as well as their agents or privies from further acts of trespass pending the determination of the suit.

The plaintiff explained that he was led into possession of the premises by his landlord, FESTAC '77 Hotels Plc but before the anniversary of his tenancy from his landlord, he

From Adelanwa Bamigboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

He said that he received another notice on 28th February 2002 stating that UACN Property Development Co. Plc bought the premises and directed him to vacate the premises.

In a 28-paragraph statement of claim, the plaintiff said that after he and other tenants filled a suit (not the present suit) the defendants brought armed mobile policemen and some private security men who prevented the plaintiff from gaining entrance into the premises from 13 August to 9th

September 2002. Within this period, the plaintiff claimed that he suffered losses and damages. The plaintiff who claimed that many of his clients have deserted him described the section of the defendants as illegal, unlawful and amonny to forcible ejection. He informed the court that during this period he would not gain success to his chambers and conduct legal material to conduct cases of his clients in court and all processes of court were no longer served on him.

The Lawyer lamented that several briefs were taken away from him by his client who felt frustrated thereby depriving him of means of individuals in which he plunge into financial destruction and had to rely on the good will of friends and well wishers which was soon exhausted.

When the matter was called for hearing Wednesday before Justice Adesanya, the lawyer for UACN told the court that they are yet to comply with new rules of court which gives them a maximum of 42 days to file their response further has been fixed for 16th February, this year.

GM posts weaker fourth-quarter profit

General Motors Corporation on Wednesday posted weaker fourth-quarter earnings due to growing U.S. health-care costs and bigger losses from its European automotive operations.

GM, the world's largest automaker, said its net earnings including one-time items fell to \$630 million, or \$1.11 per share, from \$1 billion, or \$2.13 per share, in the fourth quarter of 2003.

Excluding one-time items, GM earned \$569 million, or \$1.01 per share. Analysts had expected GM earnings, before one-time items, of 92 cents per share, according to a survey by Reuters Estimates.

The automaker recorded several one-time items in the fourth quarter of 2004 that resulted in a net gain of \$61 million, or 10 cents per share.

Included in that was a gain on GM's stake in XM Satellite Radio Holdings Incorporation and the write-down of its stake in Italy's Fiat Auto (FIAT) as well as two of GM's U.S. vehicle assembly plants.

Roses rose to \$51.3 billion from \$48.8 billion. GM's automotive

NAPEP, Dangote group offer jobs to 9,250 youths

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), in collaboration with the Dangote Group of Companies, is to offer job opportunities to 9,250 unemployed youths across the country.

The Kaduna State coordinator of NAPEP, Alhaji Musa Zubairu, made this known when officials of the state office of NAPEP paid a courtesy visit to the governor Ahmed Makarfi on Monday in Kaduna.

Zubairu said prospective beneficiaries of the scheme would market products for which they would be paid N5,000 at the end of every month, with Kaduna State

benefiting from the scheme.

He noted that NAPEP had entered into partnership with Globacom, a mobile telecommunications operator, to create employment opportunities for youths in the country.

Zubairu said 437 sewing machines procured by NAPEP in the state would be distributed to some unemployed school leavers at highly subsidised rates.

He stated that NAPEP had so far spent more than N2 million on the vesico vaginal fistula (VVF) centre in Zaria to uplift the quality of life of its inmates.

The coordinator called on the state government to complement the efforts of NAPEP in the provision of social amenities and training of VVF patients.

SMEDAN seeks support of dev partners, NGOs

Director general, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) Mrs. Modupe Adelaja has solicited support from development partners, donor agencies and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the country.

Mrs. Adelaja made the call at a special reception organised in honour of the international donor agencies Tuesday in Abuja.

She said the quest for developing strategies for the success of SMEs in Nigeria is a collective one which needs financial and technical supports especially from developing partners.

According to her, SMEDAN came into being to stimulate the growth and development of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in Nigeria to levels comparable with those of newly industrializing countries, in a market friendly environment.

She said "we can not do it alone. We need your support" adding that MSME are a large part of the private sectors, and a major sources of innovation and job creation as the experience of many countries have shown.

She stressed that, part of the SMEDAN responsibilities is to create a conducive operation

From Hamisu Muhammad, Reporter (Business)

environment for MSME activities, help stimulate/ foster MSME competitiveness globally.

"On the aggregate, help Nigerian MSME achieve improve returns to their efforts"

She also revealed that about seven targets have been set to meet SMEs needs in the country by the agency, which include: skills/capability building, strengthening of existing MSMEs, targeting youth, women and other disadvantaged groups and create databank.

Others include, development of national policy on MSMEs, creating two new business enterprises in every local government as well as total development of the SMEs sub sectors.

Responding, the country representative, United National Development

Project (UNDP) Dr. David Tommy said UNDP is ready to continue participating in activities of the agency to carry out its services successfully.

Dr. Tommy said it is high time for the SMEDAN to change the mindset of Nigerians to start partrnirising "made in Nigeria" products.

According to him, provided that the locally made products are not patronized by the local individuals it is hardly for such commodity to received international recognition.

He commended the agency on its efforts of harmonizing its programs in such a way that ordinary Nigerians can benefit a lot.

On its part, the team leader, pro-poor growth team of the Department for International Development (DFID), British High Commission, Mrs. Mavis Ovwusu-Gyamfi said efforts need to be made in providing legal protection to the SMEs in the country.

NAGAFF advises freight forwarders on Customs duty

The National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF) has advised practicing freight forwarders to continue to make genuine declarations for purpose of custom duty.

This advice is coming on the heels of the interventions by the Federal Operations Unit of the Nigeria Customs Service (NGOs) over cleared containers and general cargo through the seaports and approved border stations.

According to Chidibere Enelamah, NAGAFF'S national publicity secretary, this process can easily be accomplished by freight forwarders if only they can compel the importers to handover the parking list of their imported items to the practitioners.

He advised freight forwarders to ensure that form sale 123/124, are properly filled and endorsed by the importers to the freight forwarders for the purpose of Customs functions.

The importance of this exercise, he said cannot be over emphasized as undeclared cargo formally entered in the form C2010 cannot be said has been self assessed and paid.

He added that by so doing the safety of the Cargo from Customs seizure would have been secured as well as the license of the freight forwarders be protection from undue disciplinary actions including dismissal.

It would be recalled that last year alone, no fewer than 500 Customs Officers were fired even as goods estimated at N7.1 billion were seized including over 720 motor vehicle which are being auctioned by the Nigerian Custom Service.

According to him, practicing freight forwarders must ensure that ledan containers are physically examined to ascertain the actual content.

Sarumi, Agu, Zenith Bank, others bag maritime award

About 14 prominent Nigerians and firms who have distinguished themselves in Nigeria's fledgling maritime industry were recently honoured in Lagos.

The coveted award of chief executive of the year was conferred on Aare Adebayo Sarumi, the managing director of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) while ZeSmith bank Plc clinched the award of best maritime expansion bank (2004). The bank excelled in Import Duty collection as well as its interest in Cabotage implementation.

The award ceremony is the first to be organised by the International Maritime Publications Ltd. Publishers of the International Maritime Digest (IMD).

Chief Sarumi was honoured by the IMD for the great turn-around which he achieved at the 50-year old organisation in just one year of his tenure.

In addition, Chief Sarumi, generally regarded by industry operators as a Technocrat

in the business of shipping and maritime, has dissipated effort aimed at quick-Sening the growth and development of Nigeria's maritime industry.

Other also honoured at the ceremony which took place at the Lagoon Restaurant in Victoria Island include Architect Ferdinand Agu, the director general of the National Maritime Authority (NMA) who got a Special Achievement Award; the executive chairman of the Joint Maritime Labour Industrial Council (JOMALIC) Alhaji Tijani Ramalan who also got a Special Award and Alhaji M.A.L. Ajala who lifted the trophy as the Most Outstanding Port Manager in 2004.

Other's include Oloisa Aghakoba & Associates; Twin Deck Maritime Services and Other Maersk Line Nigeria Ltd while Honourable Tony Jiu Nwabunke won the award of the Freight Forwarder of the year.



2004/2005 COWBELL-JAMB SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



Cowbell Milk in conjunction with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is offering 30 scholarship awards to selected candidates with outstanding performances in JAMB examinations. The best 20 candidates in the Universities Matriculation Exam (UME) will receive N100,000 each while the best 10 candidates in the Monotechnics, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education Exam (MPCE) will also receive N100,000 each.

The following candidates are the beneficiaries of the 2004/2005 Cowbell-JAMB Scholarship Awards.

UNIVERSITIES MATRICULATION EXAMINATION CATEGORY

NAME	SCORE	COURSE/UNIV/FACULTY
1. MICHAEL KOGBE SUNDAY	304	INSURANCE/LAG/ADMIN
2. AHMED ADEDAYO ADEDEJI	301	BANKING/OUU/ADMIN
3. PEACE USANG AGWO	284	FISHERIES/UYO/AGRIC
4. JUBRIL OLAYINKA ANIMASHAUN	281	AGRIC/ILO/AGRIC
5. CELESTINE CHIBONNA EZEAMA	305	ENG./NAU/ARTS/HMN
6. NDUBISI FRANK EZIRIM	295	ENG./BADAN/ARTS/HMN
7. EBIKABOERE B.E.H. QKIDI	298	HEALTH E./BEN/EDUCATION
8. MARYAM KYANA GARBA	295	GEOG./ABU/EDUCATION
9. CHUKWUEMEKA ONYEKERE OKORO	297	E/ELECT/LAG/ENG/TECH/ENV.
10. OLUGBENGA OLUDARE LADEJOBI	295	PETROL/IBD/ENG/TECH/ENV.
11. ETEBOM AKANOTUK AKPAN	307	CIV. LAW/UYO/LAW
12. SISAMITO CLAUDIUS ENEGESI	306	LAW/BEN/LAW
13. ONYEDIKACHI CHIOMA ENEH	296	M.B.B.S./PHC/MEDICINE
14. CHUKWUEBUKA IRENE ENEH	295	M.B.B.S./PHC/MEDICINE
15. SUJO OLUWALOLOLA AKONI	315	ZOOLOGY/IBD/SCIENCES
16. EYELADE OLUDAMILOLA DAVID	306	GEOLOGY/IBD/SCIENCES
17. HELEN IFEOMA DAIKE	297	GEOG/LAG/SOC. SC.
18. OLUWASEUN JOE OLAYINKA	296	ECONS/IBD/SOC. SC.
19. CHIDINMA GRACE ANGELA DIKE	291	PHARM/BEN/PHARMACY
20. MADUEKWE CHINYERE NKEM	287	PHARM/BEN/PHARMACY

MONOTECHNICS, POLYTECHNICS AND COLLEGES OF EDUCATION CATEGORY

NAME	SCORE	COURSE/SCHOOL
1. ABAYOMI OBAFEMI BANJOKO	244	CIVIL. ENG. / MAPA
2. MUNIYETU OMOSHOKE OGWEDA	242	FOOD-TECH. / YABA TECH.
3. AKINDELE MUYIN A. ODUNM	228	COMPUTER/ LASPOTEC.
4. VICTOR OKON OKPO	228	COMPUTER / YABA TECH.
5. OBINNA CHUKWUMA ONUOHA	259	MASS.COM / FEDPOKO
6. UCHE KENNEDY OHAEGBULAM	250	MASS. COM. / FEDPOKO
7. VINCENT CHIBUEZE	228	GEN. AGRIC. / FEDAGRIC-ISH
8. CHIEDU SUNDAY OKEKE	215	AGRIC SCI./ATAPOLY
9. IYAOMIYE OMOJOGUNOLA DENNIS	248	BANK&FIN - OSUNTECH
10. ABIODUN EABIDAPO OGUNDANA	244	BANK.&FIN. FEDPOADO

The awards ceremony will hold on **Tuesday January 25, 2005** at **Lagos Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Ikeja** at 11:00am and admission is strictly by invitation. All scholarship award beneficiaries have been contacted in writing. They are required to arrive **Lagos Airport Hotel, Ikeja** on **Monday January 24, 2005**, as from 11.00am where accommodation has been reserved for them and their escorts (only one parent - either father, mother or guardian is required to escort each candidate). Award beneficiaries should come along with original copies of their JAMB exam notification slip and/or print out of JAMB on-line result. For further enquiries, please contact Joy (08023127628) or Donald (08023696111), or call 01-4979645, 4934628, and 4978003.

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TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' INTEREST IN MATHEMATICS

TO GIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS

AWARDS

CATEGORIES

'A' JSS 3

'B' SSS 2

NATIONAL PRIZES

'A' JUNIOR CATEGORY	'B' SENIOR CATEGORY
1 st ₦100,000	1 st ₦130,000
2 nd ₦75,000	2 nd ₦100,000
3 rd ₦50,000	3 rd ₦75,000

STATE PRIZES

'A' JUNIOR CATEGORY	'B' SENIOR CATEGORY
1 st ₦15,000	1 st ₦15,000
2 nd ₦10,000	2 nd ₦10,000
3 rd ₦5,000	3 rd ₦5,000

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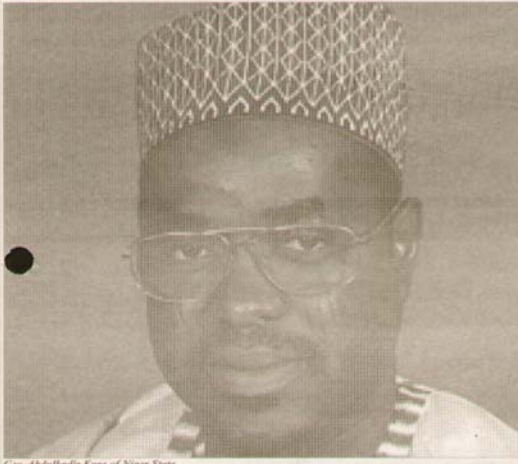


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Science & Education



Gov. Abdulkadir Kure of Niger State

Association commends Kure over IBB varsity

The Alumni Association College of Education, Minna, has commended the administration of governor Abdulkadir Kure in Niger State for re-naming of the state's college of education as the Ibrahim Babangida University in order to open up vast educational opportunities for indigenes of the state and encourage discovery of special talent.

President-general College of Education Minna, who is also the Ajiyan Minna, Dr. with our correspondent recently in Lagos, said that the governor deserved the much desired encomiums.

He said that the university, when fully operational, will not only be of conventional status, it shall equally be programmed in such a way as to directly influence the social, economic and cultural development of the state.

According to the Ajiyan Minna, the governor's action was a rare opportunity as a fallout of the 21st century orientation, which particularly stipulated the involvement of science and technology in human growth and development.

He stressed that the IBB University had not only become a reality, if had equally joined the growing number of state-owned institutions to higher learning springing up in different states of the federation to facilitate development.

The Alumni Association, according to Dhacko, had written to acknowledge the immense intellectual contribution of the committee members that led to the emergence of the state university

From Adelenwa
Bamgboye Correspondent
(Lagos)

as well as the initiative efforts of the dynamic provost of the institution, professor Ibrahim Kolo and his administrator team.

He, however, implored the students to be of good behaviour and exhibit unbridled commitment in the pursuit of their academic career.

Similarly, the Alumni association also commended

the administration's recent re-programming of the Minna International Airport, especially creating the opportunity for direct flight to Saudi Arabia, and the re-packaging of the pilgrims' camp.

"It is expected that pilgrims, unlike in the past, will no longer have to face the uphill task of getting clear assurances on issues of security, effective planning and movement, and coordinated hajj operation; Dr Ilyesu Dhecko said.

Ogun awards scholarship to 50 indigenes

Kayode Ajibola

Ogun State government has awarded post graduate scholarship to 50 indigenes of the state to study in various universities in the United Kingdom.

The chairman, Ogun State Human Capital Development Programme committee, who is also the vice-chancellor of the Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU) Ago-Iwoye, Professor Alalabi Soyode, explained that the beneficiaries were picked on merit out of the 351 applications received.

Prof. Soyode, who presented the first batch of the beneficiaries numbering 19 to the state executive council in Abeokuta recently said the 50 beneficiaries would undergo studies in information technology for management, micro-electronic and communication technology.

He added that some of the beneficiaries would also undergo courses such as sustainable agriculture and business management at Universities of Northumbria, Coventry and Central Lancashire all in United Kingdom.

Responding, the Ogun state governor, Otunba

Gbenga Daniel explained that government was sacrificing to invest in the future despite the meagre resource of the state and expressed the hope that the beneficiaries would come back to join the efforts of building the state.

Otunba Daniel, who commended members of the Ogun State Human Capital Development Programme Committee for job well done and their impartiality in the selection process, described the beneficiaries as highly distinguished citizens of the state.

Earlier, the HIPACT coordinator of Nigeria, Mr Ian Baird expressed satisfaction with the thoroughness and commitment exhibited by the beneficiaries.

He said HIPACT has the philosophy of combining education with development and expressed optimism that the programme would be sustained.

All the 50 beneficiaries were graduates either with first class or second class upper degree holders.

Higher Education This Week

By Dr. Isaac N. Ohasi, zikobasi@yahoo.com

VCs and the maintenance of discipline (II)

In the first part of this article, we underscored the need for moral re-orientation in all our tertiary institutions as a basis for enabling them play the expected vanguard role towards the moral rejuvenation of our society. Also we commended the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja, Prof. Nuhu Ya'qub both for his insistence that staff and students in his institution should adhere strictly to academic regulations, and his warning that "the authorities would not take cases of indiscipline and other negative attitude to learning lightly". Furthermore, we observed that given the dynamic nature of the various forms of campus vices, the need for eternal vigilance was imperative on the part of the authorities. Finally, we then urged the authorities not to be complacent on the erroneous belief that sharp practices on campuses have been eradicated by some measures they implemented.

In today's article, we continue with a discussion on how lack of commitment to learning and scholarship on our campuses can be considerably reduced among staff and students in such a way that their occurrence would be an aberration rather than the norm as it is the case in most of our campuses today. We are limiting our discussion to lack of commitment to learning and scholarship because the issue of campus vices and indiscipline is a wide topic which subsequent articles would always address in their various manifestations like examination malpractices, cultism, sale of handouts, admission racketeering, sexual harassment, professional sycophancy and intrigues etc.

First, we have to acknowledge that there is no "once and for all measure" with respect to dealing with the vices. What is required therefore is a continuous application and implementation of a combination of positive and motivational strategies, alongside with their negative, regulatory and deterrent counterparts in a way that law-abiding staff and students are encouraged to continue being obedient while potential deviants are discouraged and prevented from committing the acts. On the positive and motivational measures, the authorities should strive to improve conditions for teaching and learning as well as the welfare of staff and students. Fortunately, this point was underscored by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja when he promised to "enhance staff and students welfare and development to boost learning culture and strengthen due process mechanisms in all spheres of the university's conduct" (as reported by the *Daily Trust* via <http://www.dailytrust.com/education1.htm>). We only need to emphasize here that the potency of this positive strategy should always be recognized by ensuring that the conditions for its realization are present.

But with respect to the deterrent regulatory measures, when cases of truancy and laxity towards learning and scholarship exist on the part of both staff and students, the members of the University Senate should sit up to their responsibilities. Leadership by example is critical in this respect. While we do not think it is feasible to monitor constantly lecturers and students on class attendance, there is nothing wrong if top members of the academic hierarchy like Coordinators of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes, Heads of Departments, Deans and Deputy Vice-chancellors carry out such monitoring once a while especially at the beginning, middle and ending of the semesters to know how things are going. This is one way to ensure that the academic calendar is strictly adhered to by both staff and students. One has witnessed such high level monitoring at the University of Botswana by a Deputy VC (Academics) himself. This usually sends the right signals to some lecturers who are inclined to play around with students' future.

Again while lecturers are free to carry out their teaching responsibilities in the most flexible and permissible possible ways (such as giving extra lectures before or after traveling for research and conference engagements), it should not be an alibi for turning into day-time contractors thereby jeopardizing the interests of the students in the process. High fliers who are often called "farmac. Lecturers and Professors" exist everywhere and many normally bring honour and prestige to their universities in their extensive travels for research and conference activities within and outside their countries. And many good ones among them have been able to meet the demands of both teaching and research responsibilities through the use of flexible teaching hours. Also many have been able to enhance the desired symbiotic interre-

lations among research, teaching and learning in ways that even benefit their students and the academic community more (such as reflecting their acquired cutting-edge knowledge in their teaching, writings and consultancy). But the crucial point worth emphasizing is that the mere engagement in many research and conference activities is never an alibi for making students' interests to suffer. It is therefore the responsibility of the VCs (mainly through delegated authority) to ensure that students' interests do not suffer in the process. It is even a greater responsibility on their part to ensure that lousy and less committed lecturers do not hide under the pretence of doing "research" to evade classes when in reality they are full time "contractors" elsewhere. Such people add no value to scholarship in comparison to say bad "farmac. lecturers" whose students suffer. Perhaps it may be helpful to look at cases of truancy of lecturers in this direction and find ways to remedy the situation. The role of VCs is critical in this regard because it may involve taking disciplinary measures against high-ranking academics many of whom may be harbouring the false illusion that they are above being called to order.

Related to the issue of lack of seriousness in teaching and learning, is the fact that a lot of precious and unrecoverable time is wasted at the beginning of each semester in the supreme name of registration and non-release of lecture timetable on time, thereby making it impossible for lecturers to begin as scheduled. This is one of the sources of non-completion of the semester's course outlines as well as the frequent rushing of lectures towards the end of the semester. The semester system by itself structures is already too short to allow for such time wastages and luxuries in the name of registration and late release of lecture time-table. The authorities should therefore look into the issue of delays in students' registration as well as in the preparation of lecture time-tables as a way of ensuring that academic calendar is strictly adhered to throughout the session.

On students' attendance to classes, the 75% attendance requirements should continue to be enforced even though its strict enforcement distracts lecturers. Although one may not keep such accurate attendance all the time due to large class sizes, but there are innovative ways to make students take their class attendance seriously. The fact is that non-attendance to classes would always occur due to genuine reasons like taking ill, being bereaved, unforeseen circumstances etc., but innovative lecturers usually make their students report such cases to them in confidence before or after absencing. However, the most important thing is that lecturers should make their classes interesting in such a way that it becomes attractive for students to attend rather than absencing. The challenge and emphasis therefore is for the lecturers to make their lectures attractive and this means preferring and adopting a positive and motivational incentive philosophy rather than the philosophy of negative sanction that non-attendance attracts. At the end, what should be aimed at is to make sure that truancy is a deviation rather than the rule. Experience is helpful in this regard and at the risk of being seen as immodest, I will cite a personal example. At the Ummun Daeoflyo University, Sokoto, and as well as at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, my students knew that I was not one of those who would waste precious lecture time taking attendance at every class (note the emphasis). And yet, the classes were most of the time reasonably full. Many of these students are alive to bear witness to this public testimony if any one thinks that I am being economical with the truth. The point therefore is that a positive motivational approach to class attendance can achieve the same goal with greater harmony which sanctions strive so hard to achieve and yet with acrimony. But like in every social situation and problem, a combination of strategies should be explored depending on what the situation presents.

Dr. Ohasi writes from the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Southern Africa.

Science & Education

NANS accuses Obasanjo over PDP crisis

The National Association of Nigeria Students (NANS) has accused President Olusegun Obasanjo of masterminding the problems currently bedeviling the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

"Starting from the Anambra crisis to the recent face-off between Audu Ogbeh and Obasanjo, it is obvious that there is every need to condemn Obasanjo's coup against democracy," the association maintained in a recent press statement signed by its vice-president (national affairs), Olayemi Success Oguntimhin.

"Perhaps he (Obasanjo) did not know who hard it was for Nigerians to get democracy," according to it, the only thing he could do to Governor Chris Njige and Chris Uba is just to send the two of them out of his office after

By Uthman Abubakar,
Senior Reporter

their confessions.

The association described the current problem rocking the PDP leading to the resignation of Audu Ogbeh as its national chairman as "questionable," believing that the step to probe him raised the bigger question, and querying why the probe waited if Ogbeh had been discovered to be corrupt since.

"The recent drama in PDP has become a matter for concern to Nigerian students because it is a threat to our hard-earned democracy, and there is every need for every stakeholder in Nigeria's democracy to do everything possible to check mate the gladiators at the centre stage, precisely the PDP stalwarts," before they derailed the democracy, the association posited.

Kogi vesity lecturers threaten strike

The Academic Staff Union of Kogi State University at Anyigba has listed a five-point demand, which it says must be addressed by the authorities to save the institution from collapse.

In a statement today in Lokoja, the staff said academic situation in the university was miserable and that courses in the university might not be accredited by the National Universities Commission (NUC), if urgent steps were not taken to address them.

Some of the sorry conditions listed in the statement include poor staffing and poor staff remuneration, excess work load, non-implementation of annual increments, as well as the lack of staff training and research.

Signed by the branch Chairman of the Academic Staff Union, Mr Sanni Momoh, the staff threatened to go on strike in two weeks if the university's senate and other relevant authorities and stakeholders failed to intervene.

Momoh said that with the



Gen. Ibrahim Idah of Kogi State.

NUC accreditation team on the way, the university could boast of only three professors, no single associate professor and just seven staff with Ph.D. in its 27 departments.

He said the NUC had recommended at least one professor in each department, adding that the lecturers also received meager salaries, when compared to what lecturers were paid in other universities.

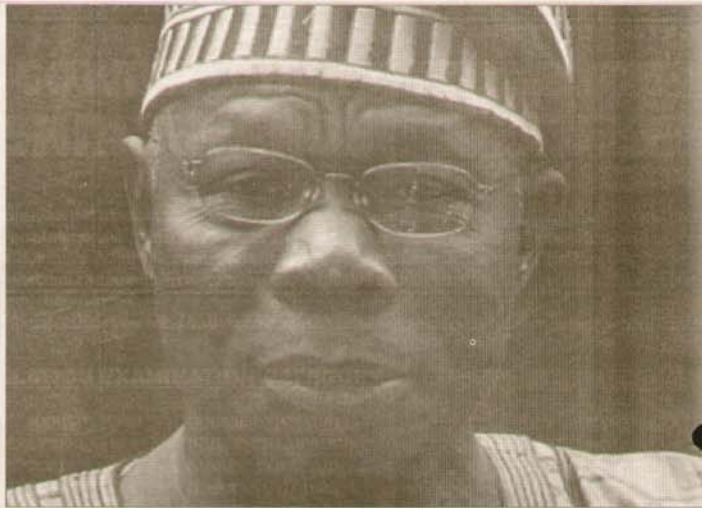
Students plead for release of colleagues

National Association of Osun State Students (NAOSS) has appealed to the government to facilitate the release of 20 detained students. The students were arrested last week during the violent protests at the headquarters of Odo-ofin Local Government Secretariat in Okuku.

In a letter, signed by the national president, Mr Babalola Ayomide and secretary, Mr Ben Oyewunmi the association condemned the unfortunate incident. The association pledged to ensure that such incident did not recur anywhere in the state again.

According to the NAOSS, students have a constitutional and unequivocal right to protest but they must not exceed the limits permitted by law.

It said efforts made by the association to broker peace had failed, hence the appeal



President Olusegun Obasanjo

Primary school system for shake-up

Sokoto State Government has established a 23-man committee, headed by Alhaji Bello Dogon-Daji, a former minister of state for education, to revive primary schooling. Gov.

Attahiru Bafarawa inaugurated the committee in Sokoto on Monday, tasking it to provide dependable statistics on key aspects of primary education. The committee's other

members include education commissioner Usman Junaidu and Alhaji Hamzat Gwadabawa, permanent secretary in the ministry, as well as traditional rulers.

Bafarawa said the committee would provide facts on the number of primary schools, school-age pupils and the cost of repairing primary school structures. It would also determine additional structures required, the volume of instructional materials needed and basic statistics on teachers in the 23 local councils in terms of sex, qualifications and specialisations.

According to the governor: "It is to advise us on how best to move the primary education sub-sector forward and determine the number of unemployed, suitably qualified teachers, appropriate modes of training and re-training."

The committee shall determine the efficacy of the two teacher training institutions in the state, he said. It would assess the modes of school inspection and assess the programmes of the Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto.

"The committee should determine these and any other action that may improve the general education sector of the state," Bafarawa added.

UNN staff get computer ownership scheme

The University of Nigeria, Enugu campus, has flagged off a computer ownership scheme for staff, says Prof. Bede Ibe, the deputy vice-chancellor. Ibe said at the occasion that under the arrangement, beneficiaries at the Enugu and Nsukka campuses would take

delivery of computers and peripherals of their choice. Such members of staff would be required to make instalmental payments, spread over a convenient period, he said.

According to Ibe: "The scheme is the UNN's way of encouraging staff and their families to join the rest of the world in the New Knowledge Economy.

"Computer skill has become indispensable in every sphere of life, so we do not want our staff to be left behind."

He asked members of staff "to avail themselves of this novel opportunity to acquire computers and accessories, and to use them to empower themselves to be more productive".

The scheme was packaged by Computerize Nigeria,

an NGO funded by Zinox Technologies "to encourage PC penetration in the country," he explained. In her comments at the occasion, Mrs Vivian Abii, executive director of Computerize Nigeria, said the programme was Zinox's contribution to the growth of the knowledge base of Nigerians.

It would also help to build a computer literate society, she added, noting that: "The burden of financing the programme in a short-term finance based economy like ours, is a task the firm has to undertake as a social responsibility."

Abii promised that her organisation would train the beneficiaries on computer application at homes and in offices, "to ensure that they derive the full benefits of the scheme".

Oyinlola promises qualitative free education

Osun governor, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola has promised to back up the state's free education programme with adequate teachers and basic infrastructure. Explaining the activities, lined up to mark the 50th anniversary of free education in then Western Nigeria in Ougbo on Monday, Oyinlola said his administration had concluded arrangements to rehabilitate all the dilapidated classrooms.

The governor said the provision of basic facilities, such as comfortable classrooms, would provide a conducive learning and teaching environment.

Oyinlola, who was represented by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Lasin Olagunju, said pupils and teachers should be equipped with the relevant tools, such as books and teaching aids free.

According to him, it is not enough to chorus the slogan of "free education" but it must be backed with the provision of basic infrastructure that would enhance learning.

He said being a product of Awo's free education programme, introduced on Jan. 17, 1955, he believed in Awoism and recognised the inalienable right of every child to education regardless of the socio-economic status of his or her parent.

Oyinlola said when he came on board in 2003, the state of education in the state negated the ideals of Awoism and qualitative education that

Papa Awolowo stood for, which he introduced in 1955.

Oyinlola said his administration decided to recall thousands of teachers, sacked by his predecessor in office, to strengthen staffing position in public schools.

He said he was satisfied with students' performance in public schools in the last one year, saying that a remarkable improvement was recorded in all the external and internal examinations in the state.

Minwara festival: the pride of

For the people of Shani local government area in Borno State, Minwara festival, held annually, is not only a centuries-old tradition, but an opportunity to meet social expectations. The festival, therefore, has multidimensional significance.

Shani, which lies in Southern Borno between Guyuk and Biu local government areas of Adamawa and Borno States respectively, recently played host to numerous people including past military administrators of Borno state, past and present top government functionaries, people from neighbouring local governments areas as well as its sons and daughters from far and near to be part of the Minwara festival.

The festival, according to

From Isa Umar Gusau, who was in Shani

a member of the Shani royal family, who are the custodians of the tradition, Alhaji Zubairu Maina, the Borno state commissioner for local governments and chieftaincy affairs, is about unity and celebration of good agricultural harvest usually done at the end of the year. "The Minwara festival is a unifying event for the people of Shani essentially at the end of every year when proceeds from the farms have been gathered, the Shani people come together in Shani around the emir's palace and commence celebrations after some traditional rituals," Maina said.

In ancient times, when it was celebrated in a more tradi-

tional fashion, the festival had as part of the rituals "teenagers who go to the river and stay for seven days. At the expiration of the period, these children would come out with songs and move in batches, celebrating as they walk into the town. Then there is a ritual which is still being practised today, called the moon sighting. There are some traditional title holders and elders, who are vested with the responsibility of sighting the moon. Usually, the festival commences at the end of a preceding month. So when these custodians of tradition sit down in an arranged manner, the traditional ruler would begin to ask each of them a question as regards the sighting of the moon. Everyone would say no to the sighting of the moon as the tradition demands, until the people presented problems to the dodo for solutions. The dodo was also engaged in the cleansing of the town. It usually revealed those engaged in unlawful dealings such as witchcraft and stealing etc to the people. The culprit then confessed believing that a contrary act would lead to grave consequences such as the infliction of incurable diseases, mental problems or even death.

Within the period of the festival, the dodo, in ancient times, moved within the town. Such movement was regarded as an act of cleansing the town of diseases bad luck, infertility, among other social problems. That aspect had attracted thousands of people outside Shani, who also came for solutions to their problems. All these have now been abolished due to the prevalence of



The Emir of Shani, H.R.H. Alhaji Shettima Mallafyo.



Alhaji Zubairu Maina, member Shani royal family, one of them prefer to come back home and marry." Says Fati, a young lady in Shani.

Islam and Christianity and constitutional laws," the commissioner recalled.

The 2004 Minwara festival, which was attended by the Borno State Governor, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff, traditional rulers across the state, top government officials and politicians, was unique in its sense of purpose.

From its commencement on Friday, 24th to Sunday 26th December, the festival provided the opportunity, not only to the leaders of Shani to present the people's problems to the government inline with the festival demands, but even for the people to explore different opportunities.

"Minwara festival provides an opportunity for us ladies to have suitors, since all our people came from far and near back home. So we dress well to attract the men, we know some

of them prefer to come back home and marry." Says Fati, a young lady in Shani.

For Sa'idu Nasiru, a Fulani, "Minwara is an opportunity for fun. It is an opportunity for social interaction. It is an occasion for recreation after being fatigued by work."

But Bala Danganga, a drummer, holds an economic view.

"As people take stock of their agricultural harvest, we get our money during Minwara festival. We play music or beat drum for people who cut across all the age groups to dance. As they dance we get money from spraying or they pay us for the music. So the festival is a source of income for us" Danganga revealed.

The same opportunities seemed sought by royal drummers and the emir's guards, as one of them was seen lament-



A young woman reflecting some dancing rituals at the festival.



Minwara dancers, matching at the Emir's palace



Young men dancing around the Emir's palace in commemoration of the festival.

of Shani people



While these views are upheld differently among the people, for the Shani emirate, the business is simply the preservation of customs and traditions.

At a grand occasion held at the emir's palace, series of traditional dance thrilled the crowd with choreographical dance steps, traditional songs and drumming.

Popular Adamu Danmaraya Jos was among those who thrilled the crowd with his song on school teachers and other songs of praise for front row politicians. Other stars such as Dankwairon Gwambe, also had their day.

Soon after these singers had performed, the traditional Minwara dancers matched out in a long queue comprising young ladies holding calabash, women with pots on their heads, while elderly men and women were led by a symbolic representative of the emir, who colourfully came out dancing to the excitement of the crowd. Describing the costumed Minwara dancers, Zubairu Maina, said "those ladies carrying ropes and calabash potray ladies without marital vows. Those carrying clay pots on their heads reflect those women married, the young men carrying arrows reflect those not married, and showing heroism of being warriors. Then, the elderly men and women indicate that the society is being guided by elders, while the representative of the emir shows the emir's involvement in the affairs of the community. The whole thing is about unity of purpose."

Like the term, Minwara, implies "let us celebrate," the Minwara dancers thrilled the

crowd. Though the 2004 festival was not attended by international tourists who engage in the study of African culture, which brought them to Shani in the past, it was witnessed by people within Borno State and other parts of the country, most of whom gave cheers to the Minwara dancers. Some sons and daughters of Shani among political leaders joined the dancers who symbolised customs and tradition.

With the dance coming to an end, the Emir of Shani, Alhaji Shettima Mai Lafiya, spoke to the people in line with the rites of the festival. "Please endeavour to keep the society clean, endeavour to accord so much importance to the 2005 census exercise. I urge you to increase your efforts in farming." The emir admonished his people.

While passing a request to the Borno State government, the Emir called on the state government for the construction of roads and the provision of agricultural implements to Shani people. He also complained that his territory was lacking telecommunication facilities.

Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, who was the special guest of honour at the Saturday December 25th event of the Minwara festival, pledged to address the enumerated problems while he called for continuity in the preservation of the festival.

The 2004 Minwara festival, was indeed a celebration of unity and cultural preservation amidst the exploration of different opportunities, thus confirming the position of the festival, a pride to the people of Shani.



Commercial musicians thrilling spectators and dancers who pay for his services.



Young ladies with traditional calabash, reflecting their non-marital status.



A joint team of Emir's guards dancing to royal drum beats at the festival.



Minwara traditional drummers, commencing Minwara dance.



Young girls and boys from the customary Minwara dancers.



Central Bank of Nigeria

Transition to Glory

The Board of Directors, Management and Staff of the
Central Bank of Nigeria share the grief and mourn with our
former Deputy Governor and a former Minister of Finance
Mallam Ismaila Usman
over the loss of his dear wife -
Mrs. Augusta Usman (nee Aleyideino)
who departed this world on January 15th, 2005



MRS. AUGUSTA USMAN

(Nee Aleyideino)
November, 1948 - January, 2005

Management
Central Bank of Nigeria

Funeral Arrangements

Funeral Service

Hekan Church
Katsina Road, Kaduna
Thursday, 20th January 2005
Time: 3.00 pm

Body leaves Airforce Base Mortuary
Kaduna for Numan, Adamawa State
Friday, 21st January 2005
Time: 6.00 am

Wake Keeping

No. 1 Aleyideino Road
Numan
Friday, 21st January 2005
Time: 4pm

Funeral Service

Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria
(LCCN) Cathedral
Numan
Saturday, 22nd January 2005
Time: 9.00 am

Interment

Christian Burial Ground
Numan, Adamawa State

Science & Education

NSU gets fifteen-member Governing Council

The Nasarawa state university (NSU) has constituted a fifteen-member governing council for the smooth running of its affairs.

The council has been approved by the Governor, Alh. Abdullahi Adamu, and is expected to start work after the inauguration soon.

The council has his Royal Highness, Alh. Chindo Yamsa II, Emir of Keffi as chancellor while former adviser to President Olusegun Obasanjo on petroleum resources, Dr. Rilwanu Lukman is to serve as pro-chancellor and chairman of council.

From Benjamin Auta, Crime Reporter (Abuja)

Other members of the council include the Vice Chancellor, Professor Adamu Baike, the Deputy Vice Chancellor as well as four representatives of the university's Senate namely; Professor Zaynab Alkali, Professor (Mrs.) Y.W. Udoh, Dr. Ibrahim Shuaibu and Alh. A.S. Modibo, Professor C.A. Igijola representing the university congregation in the council while government appointees are Alh. Kasimu Idris, Mr. Elias Orume Adolewe, Bishop Matthew Ishaya Audu and Mr. Joseph Envaladu. Also drafted into the council are one representative each from the ministries of Education and Justice.

Meanwhile, the university has formally signed a N112 million agreement with a private firm, Alayo-AMARRC Consortium, for the construction and furnishing of a 1000 seat Auditorium.

Speaking at the occasion, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Adamu Baike, said he was confident of a positive outcome of the agreement in view of the company's

professional pedigree in the execution of projects.

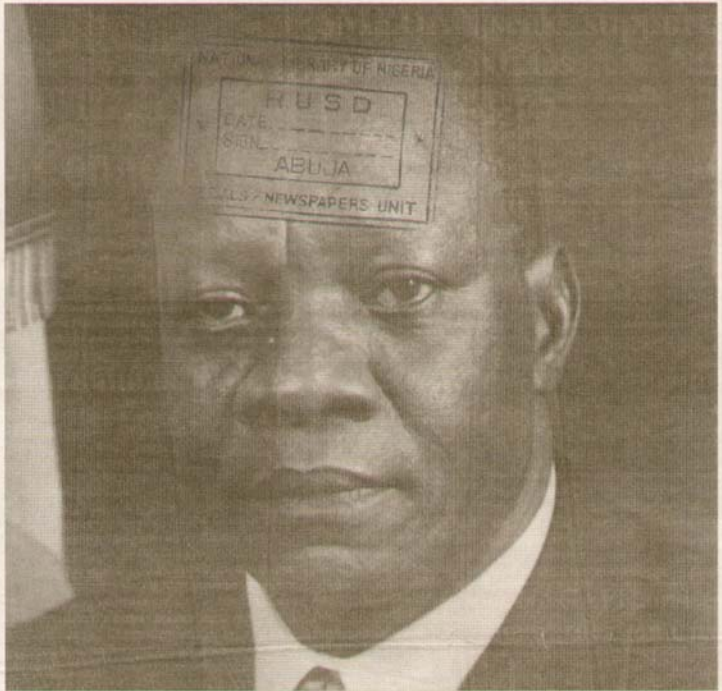
He said the down payment by the university of N10 million first installments as part of an agreement with the Consortium will be effected within 24 months.

Prof. Baike, further said that the arrangement was the first of its kind, saying that the dream of having the auditorium was about to come to fruition.

He also expressed the hope that pledges made by both parties would extend beyond signing of papers.

The university's physical planning unit has already allocated the temporary football pitch at the heart of the main campus as the site for the multi-purpose auditorium complex.

The company has since mobilised to site.



Minister of Education, Professor Fabian Osuji

National Open Polytechnic underway

The federal government has announced plans to establish National Open Polytechnic and National Open School to broaden the scope of the education system in the country.

The Minister of Education, Professor Fabian Osuji, announced in Abuja on Tuesday that the new institutions would be a follow up to the National Open University already in operation in the country.

From Uthman Abubakar, Senior Reporter (Abuja)

Welcoming the new president of the commonwealth of Learning (COL) in an official visit to Nigeria, Sir John Daniel, Professor Osuji requested the COL to, therefore, assist the country in that regard whenever it was to implement its strategic plans for the institutions in order to broaden the scope of open and distance learning.

The minister also requested the COL president to consider the appointment of Nigerians as staff of the organization at various levels to ensure that the country participated actively in its work, lamenting that although the country had invested over \$1 million (about N140 million), on the organization there was currently no Nigerian working there.

"I hope that Nigeria will soon be given the opportunity, within the context of the adoption of the Principle of rotation to serve as a member of the executive of the governing board at COL where it has been excluded for several decades - since the foundation of COL and where it continues to serve in the status of major donor," Professor Osuji expressed expectation.

He also appealed to the organisation to raise the status of the Regional Training and Research Institute for Open and

Distance Learning (RETRIDAL) of West Africa based in Nigeria to regional office of the COL for the sub-region, believing that the decision would strengthen the trust and confidence of West Africans in its

commitment to the realisation of the Millennium Development Goal and Education for all.

Earlier, Sir John Daniel, who acknowledged that Nigeria was instrumental to the establishment of COL,

said the organization had started planning for its triennial programmes and, therefore, he was in the country to collate its requests, especially on science and technical education, for incorporation into the plan.

UBE to feed Primary school pupils

Primary school pupils will from this year be fed in school under a new school feeding programme to facilitate their concentration and sound learning for the success of the Universal Basic Education (UBE).

The Minister of Education, Professor Fabian Osuji, announced at a press briefing in Abuja on Wednesday that the school feeding programme, to be introduced this year by the federal government, would be implemented with the support of the World Bank and the World Food Programme.

According to him, the programme, which is aimed at expediting the eradication of illiteracy by 2015, would be coordinated within the context of the UBE, which would mean that states and local governments would also have responsibilities in

From Uthman Abubakar, Senior Reporter (Abuja)

its implementation after its details had been worked out by the federal and state governments and the World Food Programme.

Professor Osuji said the ministry of Agriculture at the federal and states levels as well as the local communities would also be involved in the feeding because the food items would sourced within the country, explaining that the feeding would be localized which would mean Nigerian food such as garri, rice, beans, plantain and yams, not milk and biscuits, would be served.

Talking on e-education or computer education, the minister said the National Universities Commission had been directed to ensure the incorporation of at least

four course units on computer literacy and education as minimum qualification in its system.

He expressed the federal government's commitment to boosting e-education or computer education this year, stating the need for computer education in all tertiary and secondary schools in the country, stressing, "that is the way the world is going, that is the way we will go!!"

He expressed President Obasanjo's belief that what every Nigerian now needed was nine years of basic education (six for primary and three for junior secondary) to enable him or her stand on his or her own, saying that Nigeria needed basic education, not university education, to eradicate poverty and generate employment.

ICAN visits Nasarawa varsity

As part of its enlightenment campaign to the students of tertiary institutions who aspire to become chartered accountants, the publication of enlighten unit of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) has visited Nasarawa State University.

The campaign team leader, Mr. Zubairu Abdullahi, said their mission at the university was as a result of its growing re-putation and its proximity to the national capital as well as to assess and prepare ground for accreditation of its accountancy courses.

Mr. Zubairu told the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adamu

From Salaudeen Ozigi, Reporter, Abuja.

Baike that the Institute is not an exclusive preserve of accountants as everybody is entitled to enroll and pursue his desire to become a chartered accountant once he meets the requirements of ICAN.

Responding, the Vice-Chancellor said he felt elated to receive the team in his office, underscoring the institute's reputation for standards and quality.

The five-man campaign team later met and interacted with students of the Pyanku Campus of the University.

Barka de Allah



HIS EXCELLENCY
Alhaji Atiku Abubakar
Vice-President, Federal Republic of Nigeria

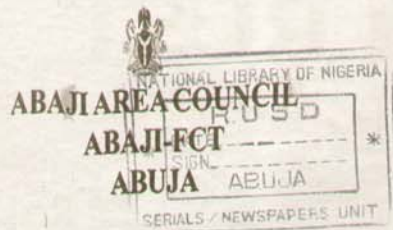
HIS EXCELLENCY
Mr. Bonni Haruna
Executive Governor, Adamawa State

LONG LIVE ADAMAWA STATE!

The youths rejoice with our great leader,
His Excellency, Vice President ATIKU ABUBAKAR, Turakin Adamawa
Vice President Federal Republic of Nigeria and our indefatigable
Executive Governor of Adamawa State, MR. BONNI HARUNA
during this period of EID-EL-KABIR.
We pray for Allah's Blessings and Guidance for all sons and daughters of Adamawa State!

Signed

ADAMAWA YOUTH FORUM



Invitation to Tender

This is to notify the general public that tenders are hereby invited from credible and reputable contractors to register with Abaji Area Council for the underlisted projects:-

1. Construction of phase II Abaji Township Road with a distance of 2.5 kilometres comprising:
 - (i) 1.5km Fresh Road/Surface Dressing
 - (ii) 1.0km Rehabilitation/Asphalt Overlaying, demolition of existing block wall, drainages, construction of re-inforce concrete drainages, construction of 600mm diameter ring culverts and provision of re-inforce concrete access/crossing slab.
 2. Construction of Adagba Health Clinic
 3. Construction of Gawu Health Clinic
 4. Construction of Naharati Health Clinic
2. Interested contractors are required to pick up tender documents on or after Monday January 24, 2005 as from 12 noon in the office of the Secretary, Tenders Board on payment of non-refundable fees of ₦500.00; ₦5,000.00 and ₦30,000.00 respectively as registration fees.
 3. Tenders must be submitted in sealed envelopes marked confidential and addressed to the Secretary, Tenders Board and deposited in the Tender Box not later than 3.30 pm on or before February 15, 2005.
 4. Tenders will not be considered unless they are submitted in full compliance with the conditions contained in this Notice.

The Tenders Board is not bound to accept the lowest tender.

NAOMI S. BIKI (MRS)
 HEAD OF ADMINISTRATION
 ABAJI AREA COUNCIL
 N.S. BIKI (MRS)
 SECRETARY
 Tenders Board, Abaji Area Council.

GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION INTO THE REMEDIAL PROGRAMME OF THE GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY

This is to inform interested candidates that application forms for admission into the Remedial Programme of the Gombe State University are now on sale.

2. The programme is designed to prepare candidates for admission into Degree programmes either through direct absorption or through the University Matriculation Examination.
3. Candidates who wish to join the programme must have a minimum of three (3) credits and two (2) passes in the relevant field of study.
4. Application forms can be obtained from the following:
 - i. Office of the Registrar, Gombe State University.
 - ii. Gombe State Ministry for Special Duties, Higher Education and Students Affairs, Gombe.
 - iii. Standard Trust Bank Plc. Gombe Branch.
 - iv. Zenith Bank Plc. Gombe Branch.
 - v. Guarantee Trust Bank Plc. Gombe Branch.
 - vi. Gombe State Liaison office, Abuja.
 - vii. Gombe State Liaison office, Lagos.
5. Each form is sold at the rate of six hundred naira (N600.00), which includes the cost of the form and Administrative charges.
6. All completed forms should be returned to:
**The Registrar Gombe State University,
 P.M.B. 127, Gombe, Gombe State.**
7. Closing date for submission is 2 weeks from the date of this advert.

Signed:
 Mallam Aliyu Kamara
 Registrar.

ABUJA TRUST

Reasons for sallah festival

Muslim faithfuls rejoice and pray to Allah to make the Sallah a blessed one.

Many children and adults patronise shops and boutique to buy new cloths, shoes, and other wears. The marketers are also happy as their sales boost as a result of increase sales of their commodity. Likewise, a lot of Muslim travel to their home town out of Abuja and all over the states.

Observing the advent of Eid-el-kabir Sallah one will be able to conclude that, the festival is a compensation from Allah to his faithful servants. Sallah day is a day that combines both happiness and soberness. It is a day of fulfillment of promise and a day of submission to the will of the creator.

Sallah day is remembrance day that prophet Ibrahim, (Abraham) fulfilled his promise to make his Son, Ismail a sacrifice for Allah, after he has prayed to Allah (SWT) to give him a child that will inherit him and which will serve him further after he might have passed away.

Allah (SWT) bestowed Prophet Ibrahim (AS) with 9 blessed child named Ismail. Prophet Ibrahim revealed his revelation to his loyal child that he dreamed that he was slaughtering him while lying down and Prophet Ibrahim submissively agreed with his father saying that he should obey what Allah commanded him to do.

Allah (SWT), the merciful one, in His Infinite mercy replaced Prophet Ismail with a white and Prophet Ibrahim slaughtered it.

By virtue of this, "we will see that Allah (SWT) did not need to suck blood nor eat meat before he commanded His capable servant to slaughter a ram on the second day of Arafat (Eid-il-Kabir). "It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, but it is piety from you that reaches him," the Quran tells us.

The sacrifice was commanded by Allah in as much as one is able to buy the ram. The ram received for Eid-il-kabir should be healthier and parts of its body should be healthier as possible. Not one eyed nor 1, 2, or 3, legged animal.

Allah made all this as symbol among his symbols for the mankind wherein one may have much good and reward from him. The meat from the ram are expected to be eaten, to feed the poor among us and neighbours who did not slaughter and the beggars.

Prior to the slaughtering, every faithful Muslims wakes up on Eid-il-Kabir day in a

By Saidat Tella (Intern)

It is not necessary for adult Muslims to eat before they go to the prayer ground as being practised by the Holy Prophet Muhammed (SAW), until, after the prayer.

This sallah is a festival to be overjoyed by engaging in foridding Acts of drinking alcohol, fornication etc. Sallah is a festival of giving glory and thanks to Allah by praising him and seeking for his forgiveness. Subhanawallahi Wallamduillahi, Wala Haula Walakwata, Illabilla Aliyu/Aseem; subhuana Wabiandih, subhana Alhzeem for three days after Sallah and after each sallah it is reported that the prophet used to say Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, walaiala lilla Allah Allahu Akbar.

This festival is also a year of trial for the Holy Prophet Muhammed (SAW) when Allah took away His

son Kazem on the Eid day. This was a painful experience which few will be able to endure except the beloved ones of Allah.

When Kazem died, it seemed unbearable for the Holy Prophet, He was thinking when Allah revealed to him a Suratula Kaotbar translated as "river in paradise." The Surah is meant to compensate, and to make him have good tiding from Allah "verily, we have granted you a river in paradise, therefore turn in prayer to your lord and sacrifice (to Him Only), for he who hates you will be cut off from posterity and every good things in this world and hereafter."

The Muslims should therefore use this opportunity of Eid-il-Kabir celebration to put in more effort to serve Allah and believe in him because unto Him shall everything return.

Some Muslim faithfuls in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have trooped out to celebrate Eid-el-Kabir sallah in their country homes.

Abuja Trust observed that Karu, Zuba and Jabi motor parks accommodated majority of Muslim brothers and sisters who wanted to board their vehicles to various destinations.

Some officials of the Nigerian association of road Transport Owners (NARTO) who spoke to Abuja Trust in Jabi park, said the park's activities had improved following the increased number of passengers that board vehicles under the intent to celebrate sallah with their relations at home.

They revealed that the union had loaded few vehicles prior to the period of sallah but during this sallah time the union loaders records development in the operation system of the park.

Some passengers who described the festival as "time to go home" said it is a tradition every year especially during the sallah period to go home and celebrate sallah with their families.

One of the passengers,

Sallah festival: Residents troops out of FCT

By AbdulWahab Deji Ajikobi, Stringer (Abuja)

Mallam Abdulrahman said it is during the sallah he joins his members of the family to discuss fundamental issues that will bring a positive change to the family.

"My relations normally suspended their travelling to home till sallah period," he said.

Mallam Abdulrahman who said that the sallah festival is good to celebrate at peoples' country homes instead of cities said many people prefer to celebrate sallah with their entire families. This, he said, can be done SWT peoples' country homes.

Some passengers who described the festival as "time to go home" said it is a tradition every year especially during the sallah period to go home and celebrate sallah with their families.

One of the passengers,



As Muslim faithfuls celebrate Sallah today, many rams like these are slaughtered as exemplified when Prophet Abraham sacrificed a ram instead of his son Ismail.

El-Rufai vows to protect MFCT's staff

By Ebenezer John Buono, (Intern)

The minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Mallam Nasir Ahmed el-Rufai had vowed to protect staff of his ministry and its parastatals who were affected by the current ejection exercise being carried out by the office of the Head of Service of the Federation.

Mallam el-Rufai made this known on Tuesday while he was receiving in audience staff of the ministry who were either forcefully thrown out of their officially allocated houses or served with letter of ejection.

Frowning at the development, he said he will not allow any other government agency or parastatals to harass or intimidate his staff. According to the FCT minister the reason given by the office of head of service

charge of service welfare, Ambassador Hart and request him to stop further ejection of the ministry's staff. Mallam Ahmad also promised to get the FCT police commissioner to stop further use of police personnel in the forceful ejection of government workers from the houses.

Assuring his staff of police protection the FCT minister said, "if we are informed of any place they will visit, we will make sure that we deploy policemen to the place to protect our own."

Debunking the reasons given by the office of the head of service, the leader of the delegation, Mr. Morris Archibong cited a case of MFCT level 08 officers that was ejected of his house only to be relocated to a level 07 officer from Nigerian tourism development council.

Develop plot or risk relocation, planning authority warns allottees

The Karu Planning and Development Authority (KAPDA)

has given an ultimatum of between March to May this year to allottees of plots at the peninsula estate to develop their plots or have them revoked.

The warning is coming just as the authority has kick started the installation of streetlights along the border zone with the FCT.

This Abuja Trust learnt, is part of the urban renewal project of the authority which has seen the opening up of New Masaka market to complement the old one and a road from the motor park to link the open market for easy accessibility.

KAPDA spokesman, Daluru Ibrahim who conducted newsmen round the projects explained that every job executed was by the authority and not any foreign body.

The Mararaba market which was initially situated by the road side has been relocated to Aso to avoid road accidents. Over 600 lock up shops are being developed at the new site.

Godwin Tyonongo, Reporter (Abuja)

At the Karu International Market, clearing, landscaping and planting of trees was going on when newsmen visited, while, the first phase of six bus stops along Keffi-Abuja highway has been completed for commissioning.

It will be recalled that the first phase of available land area for development is over 24,000 hectares within a radius of over 300 square kilometres.

Speaking to newsmen further, Daluru hinted that to further improve infrastructural facilities in Masaka market KAPDA has cleared a site to establish a central motor park where commercial and private vehicles either conveying passengers or goods can load and off load, thus, reducing the risk to lives posed by the indiscriminate parking mostly on the market day. The central motor park will be linked to the main and new open market.

KANO TRUST

Reaching out at Eid-el-Kabir

Eid-el-Kabir (Babbar Sallah) is one of the most important periods in our Muslim calendar; it is the period during which the able Muslim Umma perform the obligatory Islamic pilgrimage of Hajj at Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

The rests of Muslims that could not be at Mecca for hajj at this period normally continue to congregationally observe the period with prayers to the Almighty Allah. After which they culturally celebrate and continue showing the love, affection and joy to the rest of the Muslims brothers during this festive moment.

In a typical Nigerian Muslim community group, this period is normally observed with the basic "Layya" coupled with neighbourhood and stranger sharing of the supposedly mandatory "Tuwon Sallah". The traditional Hawan (Sallah-Durbar) that are observed by our emirs and kings usually attract different kinds of visitors from far and beyond that in most cases arrive at our various towns and cities for us all to celebrate and share the happiness and joys usually experienced during such period.

It is for the resultant needs in the request for extension of goodwill in the name of Allah, the most high, that the writer intends to remind those willing and of course able to as a matter of facts try in assisting our teeming majority of needy and less privilege ones in their bid to equally observe such basic "Layya" Islamic function and also to celebrate the Babbar Sallah period not without the proudly acknowledged, nourished-annual Tuwon Sallah to eat and equally distribute to the desired neighbours as usual.

Tuwon sallah
This is one of the most available route through which many abled persons could at will, assist various houses and or households. Tuwon Sallah especially in this part of the country (North) is regarded as almost a necessary affair in which every house is expected to prepare, eat and distribute to their various neighbouring house (Tuwon Sallah).

I Tuwon Masara
Two (2) mudds of Masara added with some fairly

affordable rich soup making ingredients could be of much help to any household of about 5-8 persons. It is expected that the donor could be able to assist at least one (1) House within his/her chosen areas, and where possible 1-4 houses (Gabas, Yamma, Kudu, Arewa) or even more could be willingly so assisted in the name of ALLAH.

Financial implication

Tuwon Masara
S/No
001

Product/type
Tuwo sallah (Masara)

Items Needed (1 House)

2 Mudds
Chefene
Meat/fish
Firewood or
Kerosene
Total
Cost
Unit (1 house)
N100/Mudd
N500
N1,000
N300
Total Cost (1-House)
N2000
N500
N1000
N300
N2000.00

Expected No. of Beneficiaries
8-10 persons

ii. Tuwon Shinkafa

This is the most widely known Tuwon Sallah, it is a little richer than Tuwon Masara, as such it could cost a little higher. Usually 2-3 fairly good sizes of chicken and or assorted meat are marched with delicious soap with the aim of getting about 8-15 persons on Sallah day satisfied.

S/No
002

Product/type
Tuwon Sallah (Shinkafa)

Items Needed

(1-House)
2 mudds
Chefene
Meat/Fish
Chicken
Firewood
Or Kerosene
Total

By A. Lawal Isah Kazaure

Cost Per Unit (1-House)
N250/mudd
N500
N1,000
N500
Total Cost (1-House)
N500
N500
N1,000
N500
N2,500

Expected No. of Beneficiaries
10-5 persons

Abinchin Sallah

This product is a combination of so many dishes having more palatable varieties of food, drinks, snacks, cakes, assorted meat and or even fish. Such dishes are usually obtained in some more stable houses, where Sallah greeting visitors from different locations and other far-away places come to celebrate the Babbar Sallah with such usually higher placed personalities.

Donor willing to assist such houses should be able to understand the nature, patterns and to some extent behaviour of such house holds and so should be ready to spend more money for such type of sadaqat.

S/No
003

Product/type
Abinchin Sallah (taned-tande lasha-lasha)

Items needed (1-House)

2-3 variety of dishes meat/fish
drinks
Total
Cost per Unit (1-House)
N2,500
N3,000
N1,000
Total Cost (1-House)
N7,500
N3,000
N3,000
N13,500

Expected No of Beneficiaries
15-25
Persons

Layya

It is a known fact that every abled Muslim household is of the opinion to obey and make the much desired sacrifice of

slaughtering one of the agreed and available animal in the name of ALLAH on the day of Eid-el-Kabir on yearly basis -- to run throughout the Ones life time.

(i) Rago/Ram

N9,500
Expected No. of Beneficiaries
15-25
Persons
ii. Tinkiya, Akuya etc
Under such types of items,

animals even though more expensive could make no less than 40-50 houses enjoy "Naman Sallah" inform of Sadaqat/Layya.

Financial implications - Cattle/Camels

S/No
006

Product/Type
Layya (Cattle/Camel)

Items needed

25-30 House)
1 cattle
1 Camel
Total
Cost per Unit (1-House)
N45-50,000
N1000,00 (r house)
Total Cost (1-House)
N50,000
N30,000
N80,000.00

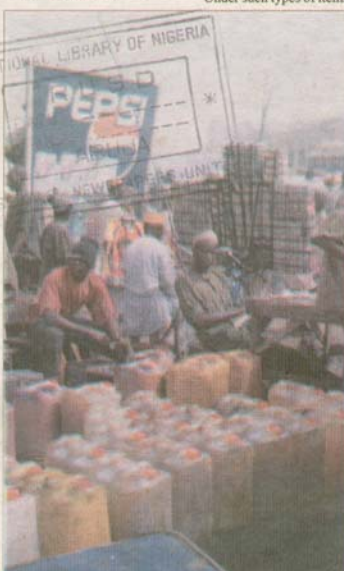
Expected No of Beneficiaries
125-165
Persons

Babbar Sallah Conclusion

The whole idea of this reminder or guideline is to pass across some of these little things to the minds of our people especially those that are able and or willing to extend some goodwill to the majority less privileged living and surviving individuals under *sabala* within our midst.

Times are now very hard and many of these supposedly essential ingredients of sallah are becoming more difficult even though under obligation from the moral and or societal point of view. It is therefore expected that those of us who are able and of course willing will "sabdoda ALLAH" assist and support at least 1-2 houses enjoy any of such product or both within our chosen communities, for such will go along way in reducing the already anticipated Layya and Tuwon sallah Wahala. Islamically, there are 3-days grace period for slaughtering of animal for Layya, so it is still not late to implement the above *sadakatul-Jariy*. - Allah ya bada lada - Amin.

Mohammed Lawal Isah contributed the piece from Kazaure and can be reach at mlisab2004@yahoo.com



Vegetable and palm oils in high demand for frying Sallah meat

A donor of this item will surely earn some more reward if he/she supported a chosen house through which he/she would assist with a "Ram for Layya" such sadaqat will surely go along way in making that chosen household of between 15-20 person observed their Eid-el-Kabir more happily in the name of the most high (Allah).

Financial implication - Ragon Layya

Product/Type
Layya

Rago

Items Needed (1 - House)
1 ram
Other things

Total

Cost per Unit (1-House)
N8,000
N1,000
Total cost (1-House)
N8,500
N1,000

donors could willingly in the name of "ALLAH" purchase any of such animals for distribution to any of his/her chosen houses as sadaqat

Financial implications other Layya making animals

S/No
005

Product/type
Layya (Tinkiy/Akuya Er)

Items needed

(1-house)
1-of them
Thing top match

Total

Cost per Unit (1 house)
N6,000
N2,000
Total Cost (1-House)
N6,000
N2,000
N8,000

Expected No. of Beneficiaries
15-20
Persons

iii. Cattle/Camel

A donor of this type of

EKO TRUST

Bank recapitalisation may delay auto market take off

A Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) directive to commercial banks to raise their capital base to N25 billion by December this year may delay the establishment of an international auto market in Mowo near Badagry.

The Lagos State government proposed the establishment of a world-class auto market for the relocation of all auto markets from the metropolis, especially the Berger auto dealers along the Oshodi-Apapa expressway.

The Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, Prince Lanre Balogun, who dropped the hint in a chat, said the state was approaching the development of the Mowo site from two fronts.

Though he said priority would be given to auto dealers to raise funds for the development and management of the ultra-modern market, Balogun spoke of the possibility of developing the place through Private-Public Partnership (PPP) should the auto dealers spurn the offer.

Balogun said the auto dealers would remain at the present point until the multi-million-naira project is completed, even as he described the response from the auto dealers as encouraging.

He informed that the traders had embraced a government proposal that provision of facilities at the new site be funded through their association before the CBN's directive came.

In his words, "We have given the auto dealers the first choice of building the market. It is when they decline that we will now give it to private concern."

"We are still talking to them. Don't forget that they have their association and they are people of substance who are also talking to their banks. But the banks are in crisis with the N25 billion capital base."

According to him, an architectural design that would put the proposed auto market

By **Ohumide Bajulaiye,**
Correspondent (Lagos)

on the same pedestal with the similar markets in developed countries has been prepared.

His words: "Once that process is completed, we would award the contract and people would move to site to construct as soon as the layout is done."

"And don't forget that we want to match it with any auto market in the world. It is going to have all the facilities, including automatic car wash centre and also drain mechanism for cars that have just been procured and to be tested."

"There is going to be a testing ground and all of that. Aside from that, we are also going to have an auto journal

to showcase new cars".

Balogun explained that the state was more particular about the social benefits than the financial benefit, the commissioner said.

"Our concern is more on the social benefit rather than the financial benefit," the commissioner said.

According to him, harassment of auto dealers by social miscreants, knocking down of pedestrians by vehicles and traffic jams in the Apapa axis would disappear with the relocation. "The incident of armed robberies and all of that would have been taken care of as the congestion that the market is causing would be reduced".

Tinubu accuses PDP of stalling LG funds disbursement

The Lagos State Governor, Ahmed Bola Tinubu, has accused the state chapter of the PDP of stalling the disbursement of the local government funds withheld by the federal government despite a Supreme Court ruling that the federal authorities lacked constitutional authority to do so.

Describing members of the PDP in the state as enemies of Lagosians, Tinubu said that plans by the rival political party to re-colonise the state would fail. Tinubu spoke yesterday at the commissioning ceremony of the N520million water supply and distribution network within Lekki Peninsula Scheme II in the Ajah axis of the state.

According to him, the continued seizure of funds meant for the council areas was hindering their (councils) operations. He warned that entering into the mainstream of Nigerian politics should not be at the expense of the people's welfare.

In his address while commissioning the facility, Tinubu renewed his administration's commitment to the provision and renewal of social infrastructure like schools, health institutions, among others.

Governor Tinubu further said withholding the local governments' funds not only denies the people development but fails to take into consideration the impact of inflation and the increasing cost of undertaking projects.

The governor said that UN-habitat statistics has shown that the Lekki corridor is the fastest growing real estate development corridor in Africa, adding that with investments in various infrastructure, the corridor is significantly changing its face and property values.

He said it is only in the state that a growth rate of 8 to 1 per cent and a 30 per cent return on investment has been recorded, adding that his administration has also demonstrated accountability, prudence and an efficient management of resources that no other government has demonstrated.

Tinubu therefore warned allottees of the scheme to pay up their capital development



Lagos State government laying wreath to commemorate the year 2005 armed forces remembrance day celebration. Picture shows Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu and his deputy Mr. Olufinmi Pedes observing silent prayer during the commemoration. Pw: (Olufinmi Pedes)

levy or lose the allocation. He said he will not sacrifice the well-being of the poor by providing facilities for the rich.

Also speaking, the General Manager, New Town Development Authority, Mrs.

Felicia Awofisayo, said the 10 years history of the estate shows that it was the Bola Tinubu administration that had initiated and completed the infrastructure development required within the estate.

Double taxation may cripple govts business

Businesses in the Lagos State central business district may not thrive for long if the Lagos State government and the leadership of local governments in the state does not review the imposition of double taxation in the state.

Speaking in an interview with our correspondent, the Executive Director, Corporate Affairs, John Hair, Mr. Nostike Ayokole, said the levying of multiple taxes, particularly by local governments in the state is a big problem.

Some of such taxes on manufacturing companies, he said, include name writing on company cars; tenement rates while land use charge has been charged; taxes on the use of generators, among several others.

He said, "I feel the state and local governments should come together to minimise the incidents of multiple taxation on companies because in the long run, the citizens bear the brunt of such levies, because the companies will jerk up sales price to cover."

He said more worrisome was the fact that the receipt for payments in one local government is not accepted in another local government, complicating the issue.

He said it did not make economic sense for companies to be charged twice for the same or similar activity. Citing the example of land use charge and tenement rates, he said companies that

Woman, 32, docked over N5m visa scam

A thirty-two year old woman has been arraigned before an Igbosere Chief Magistrates' Court in Lagos over an allegation on multiple visa scams.

According to charge A/2/2005, the accused, Rosemary Olufinke Taiwo, some time in the month of April 2003 at Ikeja, Lagos, conspired with others at large to commit felony to obtain money by false pretence.

Specifically, the accused was alleged to have some time in the month of April 2003 in Ikeja, Lagos, had the intention to defraud the sum of five million, two hundred thousand (N5,200,000.00) naira (NS,200,000.00) from Godwin Ejiogu under the pretence of processing visas and resident permits for sixty (60) candidates contrary to section 419 of the criminal code.

The prosecution further told the court that the accused on the period in question defrauded and without lawful authority conducted examination and interview for sixty (60) candidates on behalf of Korean Embassy, an offence which contravenes section 473 of the criminal code.

Also, she was alleged to have on the 5th of January 2005 at about 1200 hrs at the United Bank for Africa, Marina, Lagos, conspired to defraud the sum of five million, two hundred thousand (N5,200,000.00) naira (NS,200,000.00) from Godwin Ejiogu under the pretence of processing visas and resident permits for sixty (60) candidates contrary to section 419 of the criminal code.

Similarly, two persons have been dragged before a Tapu Magistrates' Court in Lagos to explain their role in the moneygram scam which rocked the United Bank for Africa Marina branch, Lagos.

According to charge D/4/2005, the accused persons - Odidika Celestine, 24, and Tope Obafisan, 22, were said to have on the 5th of January 2005 at about 1200 hrs at the United Bank for Africa, Marina, Lagos, conspired to defraud the sum of five million, two hundred thousand (N5,200,000.00) naira (NS,200,000.00) from Godwin Ejiogu under the pretence of processing visas and resident permits for sixty (60) candidates contrary to section 419 of the criminal code.

Two docked for stealing 504 cartons of Chemiron capsules

Two suspects have been arraigned before an Igbosere Chief Magistrates' Court over an allegation of theft. The accused - Julius Adeosun, 39, and Sunday Ayagunna, 44, and two others now at large - were alleged to have on November 26 last at about 11000 hrs at Chemiron factory, plot 12, block B, Metal Box road, Ogha, Lagos, conspired to commit felony of stealing. They were alleged to have on the same time, date and place stolen five hundred and four cartons of Chemiron capsules valued at twenty million, eight hundred and four naira belonging to Chemiron International Limited, contrary to section 390, (9) of the criminal code, cap 32, volume II, laws of Lagos State of Nigeria 1994.

The accused persons pleaded not guilty to the charge. In a similar development, 42-year-old Samson Okpara and Stephen Eze have been arraigned before the court on charges of forgery. They were said to have on the 20th of December, 2004 at Zenith Bank premises,

valued at twenty million, eight hundred and four naira belonging to Chemiron International Limited, contrary to section 390, (9) of the criminal code, cap 32, volume II, laws of Lagos State of Nigeria 1994.

The alleged offence is contrary to section 422 of the criminal code, cap 32, Vol II laws of Lagos State 1994.

For the record

Continued from yesterday

Settler/stringer syndrome undermines devt. -Obasanjo

Text of General Olusegun Obasanjo's key note address delivered at a workshop on the state of the nation organised by Arewa House in February 1994.

To me such statements from such quarters do great disservice and harm to our nation. I recall some time ago, a social critic from the West wrote to say that the North has no culture. I was incensed because if culture is the total way of life of a people, it is like saying the North has no way of life. How ridiculous? This gentleman was promptly called to order and he never made such a silly statement again. For as far as now, there is no section of acria that is not endowed with people who can provide good leadership. In most cases it is a matter of opportunity. I have had the fortune of working with distinguished individuals from every corner of our country. Let me single out two of such men from the North for mention here: one worked immediately above me, and the other below me. I am of course referring to my immediate predecessor, the late General Muritala Mohammed and the Secretary to the Federal Military Government and Head of Service for the substantial part of my administration, Mallam Liman Chroma. They are by any standard accomplished leaders. Men and women like them abound everywhere. Let me say here that the argument that if a section of the country is comparatively poorer, that situation should entitle that section of the country to continuous production of political leadership may not be helpful. Unfortunately, it reinforces resource distribution syndrome rather than production mentality. It encourages corruption and injustice. And if you are going to be there to improve the condition of your own poor possibly to the neglect of my own poor, or you cannot trust me to do justice to your own, why should I and my own poor repose confidence in you as our leader?

At this juncture, let me pay tribute to those who stood against the diabolical and destabilising role that Radio Kaduna played during the Babangida-created crisis of June/July/August last year. I do not listen to any Nigerian radio let alone Radio Kaduna. But some of my Northern friends who listened to Radio Kaduna alerted me and urged me to assist in giving hope, confidence and assurance of peace and security to Nigerians wherever they lived. It was that alert that partly made me call a press conference to urge Nigerians to remain calm in their places of abode and to assure them that the crisis would not lead to a civil war. Unfortunately some mass media in the South replied in kind to Radio Kaduna. I say unfortunately because two wrongs don't make a right, but rather than Radio Kaduna which is paid from public funds being brought to order

by the government, the media in the South that replied in kind were either banned or closed down. This was deliberately playing the North against the South for personal interest.

Most of us seem to take recourse to the base instinct of man when we lose out in competition. It is when a Nigerian has lost in a political or economic competition that he invokes the thin spectre of ethnicity. When he wins, no matter by what means, he does so on his own 'merit'. We must all see benefit in the whole rather than in the part, of course with justice, fair play and equity. With equity we must then learn to be sportsmanly in whatever competition we are engaged, be it political, economic or social. A fair defeat in a competition should not call into question the basis of our corporate existence. But that corporate existence, like all human relations, should not be taken for granted.

Assuming that the larger ethnic groups can go it alone, can the smaller ethnic groups do so? If not, what will be their fate? Many Bosnians will be created in many parts of Nigeria if the country breaks up. This is too frightening a possibility to contemplate. The interwovenness and complementarity of the various aspects of our national life make a break up totally undesirable and almost impossible. It may be assumed, therefore, that the recent agitations from some minority sections are not unconnected with the mismanagement of our resources, particularly those resources emanating from the minority areas and the apparent continuous destabilisation by the competition among the majority groups.

The settler/stringer syndrome undermines the sense of belonging and stake in the country. It is pathetic and most lamentable that after forty years of residence in any part of Nigeria, a "non-indigene" is still regarded and still regards himself as an alien in that part of the country. Worse still are the institutional and procedural mechanisms that accentuate, amplify and reinforce such a feeling of alienation. I refer in particular to such instruments as discriminatory school fees, and appointments and promotions in the civil service, etc. It is important that we regard any Nigerian who has lived in a particular area for upwards of twenty years or who has been born into that area as qualified for all rights of an indigene of that area with all its obligations, responsibilities and duties. He should be free to participate fully and without discrimination in all political, economic and social activities of the area.

I have always maintained that I would be more diminished as a citizen of Oadawwa Republic than as a citizen of Nigeria. I believe that those who might seek solace in the Republic of Dan Fodio would be equally diminished. The

same goes for those who sought solace in Republic of Biafra. But more importantly and as experience in other parts of the world would show, we would be further improved if we disintegrate, as we would have to spend an increasing part of whatever resources we have on arms and armament, if only to assuage the consequent feelings of insecurity and suspicion.

There is a grand falsification and misperception going around that the presidential system is expensive and therefore we should opt again for the parliamentary system. The question is: expensive for what and for whom? Of course, corruption is expensive and destructive. And most of the expenses people talk about are expenses on corruption and waste and not the direct expenses on operating and running the presidential system. After all, the late Mallam Aminu Kano contested and ran on the presidential system in 1979, winning two of the nineteen states. No contestant or aspirant could be more financially modest than Mallam Aminu Kano, nor could any political party be more austere than People's Redemption Party (PRP). But by the standard of 1993 elections, Mallam Aminu Kano would not have raised enough money to contest in his ward.

The greatest advantage of the presidential system is that the country is the constituency of the President. He is obliged to know the country and to seek support across the country. Even if he is a tribal baron, his horizon and outlook will be broadened by the end of a nationwide campaign. In 1979 two of the presidential contestants confessed to me that the country-wide campaign tours provided a great education for them. The campaign time may be the only time that a president will visit some parts of the country during the term of his presidency. These are gains that we should not lose on the altar of corruption and waste being regarded as expenses. The system in which one person controls the executive and the legislative bodies concentrates more power in that person than the one that separates the executive from the legislature. What is important is openness, accountability, transparency, freedom of expression and the rule of law as extra check on both the executive and legislative branches.

I have often heard that poverty is our problem and not political administration.



President Olusegun Obasanjo

I beg to disagree. If those who manage our politics and hence our economy impoverish us in the process, we cannot blame our inadequacy on material poverty, but on poverty of leadership. Other nations whose level of material poverty were similar to ours at independence and which are less endowed in resources have made greater strides; because they are better led politically.

Not too long ago, in fact about two weeks ago, I listened to a man who denounced Babangida's political programme as a chemical concoction where the elements could not mix and could only have led to a great explosion. I was distressed, for this was one of the men who were virtually eating from Babangida's palm and supporting him and encouraging everything he did. How hypocritical and how dishonest! That is another cancer of our political life in this country.

Most interesting to watch is the compromise of principles by public office holders in Nigeria and those angling for public office. The situation is so bad that it now seems an aberration for anyone to resign from public office on matters of principle. During my time in government, I recall two specific individuals who offered to resign on principle. I also recall the celebrated resignation of the Editor of the *New Nigerian* at the height of life political crisis last year. There are two or three who refuse to join a particular government on principle. These examples represent our oasis of hope in a desert of unprincipled men and women. I believe there may be more men of honour and integrity whose actions and reactions are unheralded. It will do our national psyche a lot of good if we can uphold the honourable deeds of these men and women as models for our public office holders, while the names of destroyers and aiders and abettors of destroyers should be in the permanent roll of dishonour of this country.

For quite some time now, there has been, sadly, a serious contraction of the focal point of some of our so-called

national leaders. Some have slipped from their high national pedestal to the pedestal of regionalism and regional mentality. Today, we hear of Northern Forum, Western, Elders and Eastern Caucus, Middle Belt Group and so on. Some of the members are known national figures. These responsible leaders are no doubt desirous of making effective contributions to nation building and of being taken seriously. I will want to see them promote only one forum, the Nigerian Forum. If they do otherwise, their conduct is bound to be disorienting and divisive. I am not against state forums, but I am against idea organisation or management that tends to preserve regional hegemony.

In the muddle and insincerity of deciding to probe or not to probe, it appears that some form of selective probes are going on at almost all levels. People are now wondering what is happening. Are there sacred cows or are we allowing camels to pass through the eye of the needle? Is this a case of nepotism, favouritism or is it enlightened self-interest? In a situation where fringe actors are being probed and principal actors are not probed, the public is bound to question the sincerity and the justice of the entire effort.

Although the elections held during Babangida's administration went according to Babangida's design, it is necessary to reflect on the performance or non-performance of civilian elected public officers of the Third Republic. Only in very few states were cases of corruption and obscene malpractice and abuse of office not the order of the day. At the national level, the scale of corruption was monumental. At the federal level, the only significant achievement of the National Assembly for a period of almost eighteen months was the impeachment of the President of the Senate through a procedure which some people regarded as of doubtful legality and an attempt to impeach the Speaker of the House of Representatives. And yet, maintenance of the legislators cost the nation over three million naira per day. Selection of candidates at the local, state and federal levels should take record of performance and integrity into consideration in future elections.

It was the economic costs of non-democratic practices in Nigeria in the past eight years, the group and self-aggrandisement, and the webs of patron-client relations and politics of distribution which led to the clamour for a national conference as a means of redressing the past and preventing a re-occurrence. The government is offering a constitutional conference instead. Some expect to emerge from the National Conference new local governments, while others expect new states, and yet others expect to lift oil for the expected new Ogoni State.

Ogoni is symbolic of most minorities' plight and thinking all over the country. No matter how we perceive their claim, it is an issue that must be put on the table.

There are many Ogonis, and dispensation must allow for the right of minorities including the enjoyment of part of the God-given resources in their area, and there must be a delicate balance between the rights and interests of the minorities and the rights and common interests of all Nigerians. We must listen to them. We must get to know their special problems. We must respond warmly and imaginatively to their special demands. The Constitutional Conference may disappoint many more than it will satisfy because we seem to be expecting the Constitutional Conference to do what such conferences are not designed to do to change our political, economic and social conditions, overnight. I was told that the purpose of the Conference is to satisfy the agitators, but should we address such a basic and vital issue as the constitution of a nation on the premise of satisfying a handful of agitators? The conference might get out of control. And I may ask, "what is wrong with the 1979 Constitution and the 1989 Constitution?"

I do not know much about the 1989 Constitution, but I do know more than a bit of the 1979 Constitution. That Constitution was designed to serve even Nigeria of the 21st Century. Like all human contrivances, it cannot be described as perfect. But it can be amended rather than jettisoned in its entirety. It was designed to give everybody hope and a stake in Nigeria. If this has not been realised, it is not the fault of the constitution but the fault of its operators. If we are greedy, self-centred and inconsiderate enough not to be able to operate the constitution to give everybody a stake in Nigeria, rotation may only be a short-lived palliative because the Presidency cannot realistically be rotated among the over 300 ethnic and linguistic groups in Nigeria. Should the rotation be limited to the major ethnic groups, what happens to the minor ethnic groups, some of whom, it has been said, are "not more than a battalion strength"? I am not against rotation if it will bring us success. But I am saying that the relief will be temporary. A permanent solution lies in the quality, calibre and orientation of our leaders, in the transparent pursuit of justice and fairness, and in giving to each his due, not as a favour, but as of right. For without justice there cannot be unity, and there cannot be enduring peace and stability. The game of brinkmanship which I understand some people are playing with the issue of Nigeria's corporate existence may be dangerous as it may provoke extreme reactions from the other side.

To be continued tomorrow

News

Dariye urges Plateau to embrace spiritual transformation

The Plateau State Governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, has stressed the need for people in the state to go through spiritual transformation so that there would be lasting peace in the land.



Gov. Dariye

From **Rakya Muhammad, Jos** (Reporter)

He stated this while receiving the USA based Rev. Reinhard Bonke who arrived Jos Tuesday ahead of his five-day crusade in the Plateau State capital.

Governor Dariye said it was not a mere coincidence that Reverend Bonke was coming to the state at a time the state had gone through a horrible experience of blood bath.

He urged Christians to avail themselves of the gospel towards the desired transformation.

Also speaking, Reverend Bonke who was in Plateau 16 years ago for evangelical crusade described his second coming to the state as home coming.

Said the evangelist "I still have the memories of my visit here, 16 years ago, such that I have wished to be back." I believe the timing now is arranged by God himself who works in a miraculous or even in a

mysterious ways because he wants to do supernatural things now after the unfortunate crises that took place in the state.

Rev. Bonke who said he had been having sorrows over the human lives that were wasted in state,

expressed joy that he was in Plateau to preach peace.

"I must say this peace will bring reconciliation and restoration in Plateau State.

We therefore bring you that peace because we know God will do it for you," he prayed."

IG's retirement a diversionary tactics

The acting national publicity secretary of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Prince Yemi Afolayan, has described the retirement of the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun, as diversionary and called on President Obasanjo to embark on cleansing of his own house.

Fielding questions from newsmen in Ilorin yesterday, Prince Afolayan who until his appointment was the chairman of the party in Kwara State declared that President Obasanjo had through his actions told Nigerians that he could not be trusted with

From **AbdulRazaq, Adohayo** (Reporter)

the leadership of the country.

He linked the IG's retirement to the Anambra political crisis in which Governor Ngige was abducted, several lives were lost and the AIG involved sanctioned, saying President Obasanjo compounded the issue by not allowing the tribunal to try the election petition and give judgement.

Prince Afolayan described the Oyinola Panel probing the Anambra crisis as a smoke screen and called on those concerned to give the APGA

Drugs worth N11 million were burnt yesterday by the Ministry of Health in Iyo.

The drugs which were supplied by the defunct Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) to the 31 local government areas in the state were burnt at the premises of the Akwa Ibom State central drugs store in the state capital city.

While overseeing the burning of the drugs, the Commissioner of Health, Dr. Edet Attah, said the drugs

PTF drugs destroyed in A/Ibom

From **Edet Ekanem, Reporter** (Iyo)

were burnt in harmony with the provision of the Nigerian Drugs Law, stressing that the ministry could not allow the expired drugs to go into circulation.

Also speaking, the State Director of National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Mr. O.W. Agbator, noted that the drugs were no more useful for human consumption, emphasising that the expired PTF drugs which were withdrawn from the 31 local government areas needed to be put out of use.

He lauded the state government and officials of the Ministry of Health on their vigilance in identifying the expired drugs.

Others who watched the destruction of the drugs include permanent secretary, Akwa Ibom Hospitals Management Board; Mr. Sunny Akpadiabo, the acting permanent secretary Ministry of Health, Dr. Nse Eruk, Akwa Ibom Director of Pharmaceutical Services, Unah and others.

Ogun Muslims told to emulate prophet Muhammad

From **Kayode Ajibola, Reporter** (Abeokuta)

Muslims faithful in Ogun State have been charged to emulate the qualities of prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and let those virtues be their guiding principles in life.

The Ogun State Governor, Orumba Gbenga Daniel, gave the charge in his goodwill message to Muslims in the state on the occasion of the Eid-el-Kabir celebrations.

Orumba Daniel said the "festival should not be seen as an occasion for merry making alone, but as a period of sober reflection and assessment of our performances in all our undertakings since the last celebration."

He said the situation in the country today called for the full cooperation of all with government, for the successful implementation of the various laudable programmes of the present administration.

Otumba Daniel charged the people of the state to guide and protect all the various government projects in their areas against vandalism.

He urged them to allow moderation to be their watchword in all that they will do during the festival.

Makurdi youths introduce bon-fires for ceremonies

Youths in Makurdi, the Benue State capital have introduced the use of bon-fire to mark ceremonial occasions particularly funerals, a development which, according to inquires, has made worst, the already sleazy metropolis.

Daily Trust observation has shown that the bonfires which are lit with the use of large vehicle tyres are set by miscreants at night when residents are deep asleep.

"These days we wake up to find our surroundings littered with remains of large tyres burnt overnight by some unidentified youths," said Mr. Henry Meeme, a resident of clerk quarters located in the Wadata section of Makurdi.

Mr. Meeme, a staff of



Gov. Akpan

From **Iir Joseph, Correspondent** (Makurdi)

the adjoining Federal Medical Centre along Aiku Abubakar Road, told Daily Trust that the surroundings of the federal establishment and the environs are now in a total mess with the dark ashes and remains of burnt tyres.

He said residents of the quarters are making frantic efforts at identifying the miscreants, for the purpose of reporting them to the state urban development board.

"But these boys set the fire and ran away, so is being difficult to identify anybody," said Mr. Meeme, who however challenged the urban environmental law enforcement agency to wake up to its responsibility by keeping vigil to arrest the ugly development.

Daily Trust observed further that the culture of bon-fire which is gradually creeping into Makurdi, has so far consumed residents along Benue Crescent and Old Bank Road all running through Wadata, Kwararafa Quarters and other sections of the metropolis.

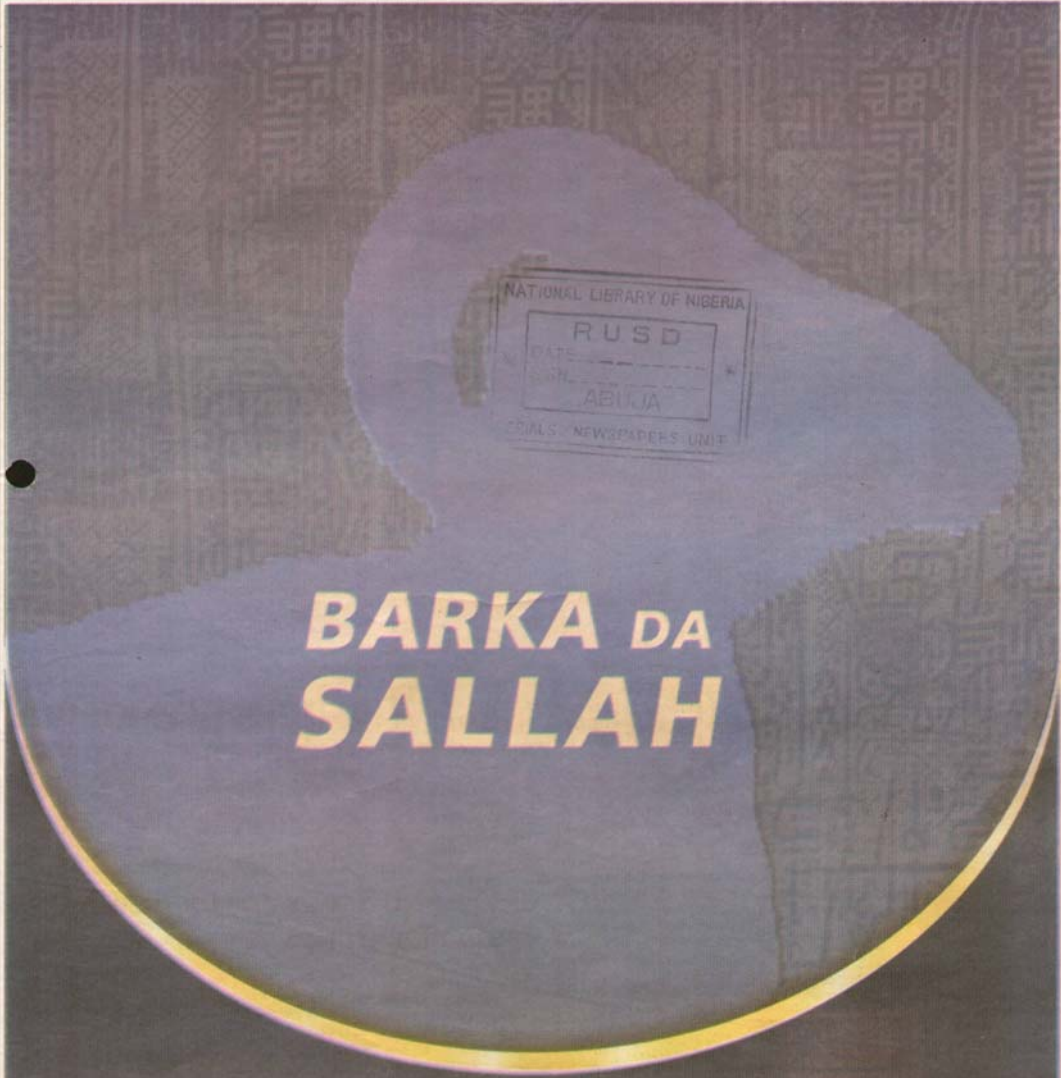
The development which has constituted great nuisance to residents has however, attracted the attention of the police, but Daily Trust gathered that they (police) have not been able to nab any suspect.

PRINTERS OF REPUTE IN NIGERIA

We had earlier scheduled to publish our special supplement on the printers of repute in Nigeria on Monday, January 24, 2005, but due to certain development, the publication has been shifted to Monday, February 14, 2005.

The postponement is also to enable us accommodate all those who have indicated interest in the project but were unable to send their materials on time.

Interested companies/individuals can book their space with the Special Projects Department on any of these Nos: 080370838663, 08042145839, 08023762061, 08028494170 or 09-6720346



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Inside Politics

Kaduna speaker advised to resign honourably

With tension mounting in the Kaduna State House of Assembly as a result of alleged financial misappropriation by the speaker, the member representing Kawo constituency, Honourable Muhammad Sani Iiyasu has advised the speaker of the House, Alhaji Bashir Zubairu to resign honourably.

Speaking to newsmen in his office, Honourable Iiyasu urged the speaker to resign his appointment in order to save him the embarrassment of being impeached by the house.

He charged the speaker to take a cue from the national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Aduko Ogburn, who threw in the towel to avoid the indignation of being unceremoniously thrown out of office as soon as the committee investigating him submits its report.

From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent, Kaduna

He assured that the report of the committee would be made public stressing that no stone is going to be left unturned to unearth the truth.

On the allegation that the move to impeach the speaker of instigated by the state governor, Hon Sani Iiyasu assured that Governor Ahmed Mohammad Makarfi had nothing to do with the problem and that the matter is purely an in-house affair whose solution lies in the change of leadership.

Honourable Iiyasu, who is the chairman of the assembly committee on pension and establishment expressed confidence on the competence of the committee constituted by the house to do a thorough and timely job and present its report within the deadline given to it.

Rep suspects politics for alleged marginalisation of Daura

The epileptic service rendered by NEPA, the equally poor one provided by NITEL and the general neglect of Daura local government have remained a source of discomfort and worry to the people of the area, raising suspicion that crass politics may be at the heart of the area's ordeal that has doggedly persisted since the advent of the current republic.

This view was expressed by House of Representatives member representing Daura/Sandamu/Maiadua Federal Constituency, Hon. Lawal Garba, who asserted that for all the services NEPA and NITEL provide and the attention given by both federal and state government, the area may as well belong to another country.

Hon. Garba alleged that the services of NEPA and NITEL has been consistently denied the area for the better part of the current democratic dispensation despite repeated complaints suggesting that the worrisome development might not be unconnected with the opposition politics of the area which is the home base of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) president

By Abdu Labaran, Political Editor

ential candidate in the 2003 election, General Mohammed Buhari (rtd).

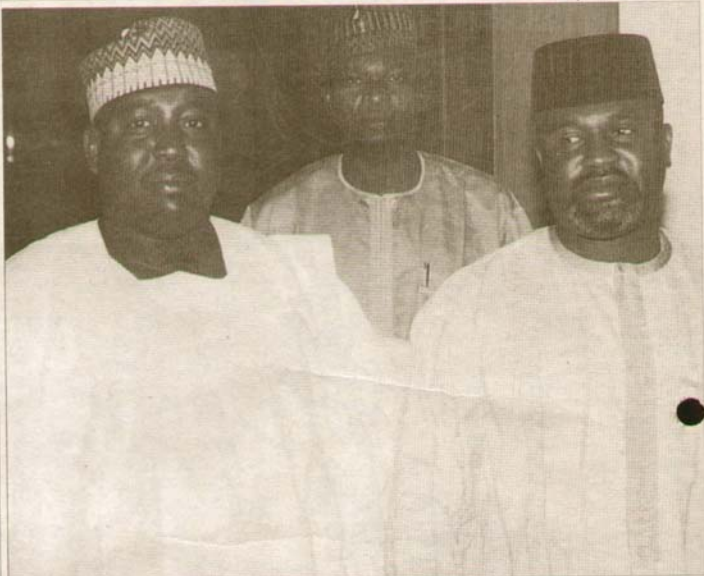
The federal lawmaker said in a chat with *Daily Trust* that Daura had been so thoroughly marginalized by both federal and Katsina state governments such that the area may as well be in another country.

"Without fear of contradiction I make bold to say that we are the victims of our politics in terms of federal and state presence in Daura these past five year" he lamented resignedly challenging the governments to contravert him.

Calling on the Obasanjo Federal administration and Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua state government to temper politics with mercy and come to the rescue of Daura local government area, he stated that the people of the area, irrespective of their party affiliation, had no country other than Nigeria and should therefore enjoy first class status like their fellow countrymen and women in the rest of Nigeria.

Hon. Lawal Garba also appealed to GSM service providers like MTN, Globacom and Vmobile to bring their services to the area alleging that although NITEL-operated MTEL has "made a show of presence" in the area one year ago, it has however refused to commence providing (GSM) service.

He also called on the management of NEPA to expand the network serving the area saying that the one line transmitting power to Daura, even in the best time, is grossly inadequate to serve a bustling and Katsina state's second metropolitan centre.



Chairman Committee on Trade Fair and exhibition, Hon. Babagana Tijani Banki (L) and member, House Committee on Education, Hon. Dahiru Bornoma at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja ...recently. Pix: Felix Onigbide

IG's retirement: Rep hails presidency

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

Adding that it is a plus for the government.

"Due process is one of the best reforms that the Obasanjo administration has initiated. It will certainly

check the rot in the system as well as pave way for a level playing field for all Nigerians."

Also speaking on the national dialogue, the lawmaker argued that it was unfortunate that those opposed to the conference are doing so from

a very narrow and selfish perception.

"How can you call for a sovereign national conference where there is a sitting National Assembly in place?" he queried saying that such calls do not make sense whatsoever.

Former military president and speculated presidential aspirant, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (rtd), has commended groups in the North West zone that harmonized to form the Nigerian project for his support in the 2007 presidential election.

In a statement signed by Colonel Lawal Gwadabe (Rtd), General Babangida lauded "the political maturity, understanding and the wise decision" of the various campaign groups that came to form a united front.

The statement said that the harmonization in the North West zone would be the reference points from which all zones in the country will take a cue as the cooperation exhibited and the enthusiasm demonstrated signal the beginning of political cooperation based on shared vision, decision and aspiration.

According to the statement, the Nigeria project is a visionary proposal which is

2007: IBB lauds harmonization of campaign groups

designed to usher in for this country politics of unity, togetherness and development based on equity and fairness.

The former military leader condemned the recent attempt by some retired military officers and their supporters to form a splinter group

of the campaign group being the move as an attempt to course a friction within his campaign machinery.

The press statement also quoted the former president as urging all his supporters and those working for him to go back to their respective zones and harmonise the various campaign groups there.

Group urges wider consultation on national conference

development is an all-inclusive conference which would be respected by all.

"The Peoples Forum, Abuja, feels strongly that the nation cannot afford to miss this golden opportunity of sorting out our differences as a people, consolidating our unity as a nation and coming out of the talks with a stronger and move prosperous country," the statement also said.

The NGO noted the various criticisms that attended the FG proposed national dialogue, saying however that polarizing the conference would do more harm to the country than good.



Hon Lawal Garba

Inside Politics

Nigerians want the best in life—Marwa

Brigadier General Muhammad Buba Marwa, former Military Administrator of Lagos and Borno state, and Chairman of Board of Directors of both Defense Industrial Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) and Albarka Airline, recently had an interactive session with Bureau Chiefs and Correspondent In Kaduna where he explained why he embarked on a nationwide consultation, his speculated presidential ambitions among others.

Excerpts:

Sir the 2007 presidential elections is getting closer and it seems Muhammadu Buba Foundation of whom you are the president is becoming buster. What is your focusing your attention on presently?

Well in recent months, the activities of Marwa Endowment have seriously increased, due to the fact that we have virtually gone round the country to try for wide consultations. The endowment has provided boreholes and portable water in about 17 states of the federation, and we have also delivered about two hundred and fifty computers from United States of America (USA) in the process of distributing medical equipment to some hospitals nationwide.

The implementation of nine hundred scholarship scheme for students in tertiary institution across the country has also commenced. The endowment Fund has also inaugurated some youth skills acquisition scheme to assist widows.

I am also taking the opportunity of the endowment-funds to engage in large scale consultations on my future political career, which has well reported by the media with exact representations of what the people said. However, in every district and senatorial district we visited across length and breadth of this country, we engage them in an interactive discussion with cross section of the society of between 300 to 500 people for about two to three hours

in order to know the real feelings of Nigerians in the grassroots. The discussion have been very good and on the whole, we are really grateful to Almighty God that people could see good things in me.

You said that you have been engaging in series of consultations with people across the country. What is your impression about the feeling of Nigerians on the state of the nation. Are they happy today or not? And their opinion about politicians.

In the course of my interaction with Nigerians people tend to feel that politicians reach out to them for support and make all kinds of promises to encourage people-give them their support as soon as the politicians get into offices they forget about the feelings of the electorates.

Many people have also been asking me the same question, in fact even today a group of people was telling me that they pushed the car when it started, the politicians just go and forget the people that pushed the car.

All we are trying to do is to make the understand that I am not new in public office. They can go and check the records if we did not do what we were supposed to do when we were in public office.

Thus, I believe from my various interaction with many parts of Nigeria, that Nigerians trust and have confidence in me.

Mind you, when we embarked on the interaction with people the process is

From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent Kaduna

always an open system not a secret one. We discussed with the commercial motorcyclist (Okada), the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Civil Society Group, Women Organisations and so on in Rivers, Adamawa,

Naturally they will want good thing of life, the only thing I have not discovered and I will continue to say is that they should be patience and also pray for their leaders. Ask me another question.

There has been call that you should contest the 2007 presidential election, yet

officers to hold on to power. What do you have to say about this sustained involvement of retired military officers in power issues?

And second, ordinary Nigerians due to protracted military intervention in politics may prefer people

discipline and patriotism.

However, there is no profession throughout history of mankind that has stood out in sacrifice and nobility as much as the military. You will discover that it is the military that has always been the guarantor of state security. All the state and family system in village, hamlets and kingdoms, the safety of your wives, children and their safety to school, to market and to do all the normal thing the military is the arm of the state that has lent itself to protecting those core values of life and preserving the existence of the state.

It is for this reason that in other civilised societies it becomes problem if you are seeking higher political office like the one we are talking about and you did not have a military background. For instance, when you look at the British monarchy, the prince has something to do, going through the military training.

There is no other profession on earth in which human like yourself with one head, two eyes, two limbs will issue a command to you to go and face fire and eventhough you know that you may come back alive, you will turn in that direction and exactly go than the military.

I have also read public administration in what is probably the best place where you can study it; the Kennedy School of Government Harvard University you cannot point at any institution better than that on earth.

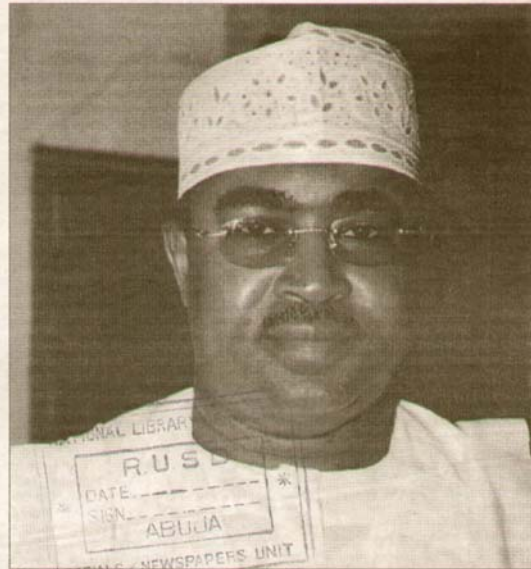
You have so much eulogized retired military officers discipline and patriotism is great qualities which recommended them for continued leadership. Is it governance is it not during military era that some horrendous things happened in Nigeria?

Like what? So many bad things like collapse of the economy, the mysterious Ejigbo Air Crash, Squandering of oil wind fall.

(Cuts in) now, let's be very clear, first of all, about what I said because I did not say that the military must always spear head....

(cuts in) You said that because of their virtues of discipline, leadership...

(cuts in) and I come in? I said that they are qualified, with out question but did not say that they are not human-beings and that based on their training and background they have the courage and quality to rule.



Brigadier General Muhammad Buba Marwa (rtd)

Kogi, Niger, Ondo, Anambra among others.

You have met many Nigerians, are they really happy with economic situation of the country?

Well, I will not really say they are happy because there are Nigerians that are unhappy and I will not also said that they are unhappy because there are Nigerians that are happy.

What impression do you have about Nigerians feeling regarding how they have been governed today?

some sections of the Nigerian populace believes that you are only flying a kite that you are fronting for someone?

Well you have to explain what exactly you mean?

Some Nigerians tend to believe that you are the campaign machinery of the former military president, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida and that he wants use your popularity in enhancing his prospects.

Enhancing which prospects?

That there is arrangement of mutual understanding between you and General Babangida over 2007.

I have said that I have been moving on a wide consultation in order to see and hear for myself, what Nigerians truly feel and what they believe in and I cannot be doing that publicity if I do not believe in what I am doing and pedigree. That issue is completely out of the question to this stage of my life some one has to think and take decisions for me and to be tool for someone else to use.

One major feeling of my Nigerians is the continuity of the Nigerian military

without military background and people who have ideology to take charge in 2007. What is your position on this?

Nigeria belongs to all of us irrespective of what may be your professional background. Therefore in terms of governance of this country we all have stake in it and the constitution does not stop any professional from contesting any political position after retirement.

What ever may be your profession, be it lawyer, journalist, engineer, doctor or a retire military officer. Whoever is in military service is intrinsically a civilian because no one serves for ever, because first you are civilian before you joined the service and after serving you now retired back home.

The most important thing you carry in you out of service is the ingredients or values that you are nurtured with throughout your military service to the nation. In addition to what I have said, you also carry a leadership quality which is part of your training and life as an officer in the military coupled with

"The most important thing you carry in you out of service is the ingredients or values that you are nurtured with throughout your military service to the nation. In addition to what I have said, you also carry a leadership quality which is part of your training and life as an officer in the military coupled with discipline and patriotism."

Sports



Yakubu

Yakubu Toon deal in the balance

Newcastle's hopes of landing Portsmouth striker Aiyegbeni Yakubu remain in the balance despite claims that the deal is already done.

Manager Graeme Souness, who belatedly admitted his interest in the player earlier this week, has insisted the deal is not finalised.

There have been suggestions Yakubu's agent Pini Zahavi has flown out to Israel to tie up a sell-on clause with the 22-year-old's former club Maccabi Haifa.

Souness, who has a long-standing link with Zahavi, said: "The reasons why Pini has gone back home to Israel are very personal and we have not done a deal with Portsmouth for Yakubu."

It is understood Magspies chairman Freddy Shepherd is yet to be convinced Yakubu is the long-term replacement for skipper Alan Shearer should Souness' fail to persuade him not to retire at

the end of the season.

However, one thing in Yakubu's favour is that he is not cup-tied in Europe and therefore could play a part in the club's UEFA Cup campaign if his signature is secured within the next 12 days, something which is looking increasingly unlikely as Pompey try desperately to hang on to their star striker.

Magspies' contract rebel Olivier Bernard is in danger of having the deal he has been offered withdrawn if he does not accept the club's terms soon.

Negotiations have stalled in recent weeks and Newcastle's capture of left-back Celestine Babayaro has pushed the Frenchman so far down the pecking order that he did not even make the bench for Saturday's 2-1 win over Southampton.

There has been no sign of compromise on either side and no comment from the club.

But it is understood their patience is running out and that their £5million-plus offer over five years might not remain on the table for very much longer.

"We were in a difficult situation with Olly Bernard," admitted Souness.

"He turned down a contract so we went out and signed another left-back and he's playing well."

"Celestine Babayaro has got the shirt. What happens will happen. We didn't want to get to May or June and start scratching around for a left-back."

Defence has been the priority for Souness in recent weeks with the acquisition of Babayaro and £8million man Jean-Alain Boutsomong.

Both have now played two games as they feel their way into the side, but it is one of the men whose future looked to be threatened most by the arrival of the French international in particular

who has reacted most promisingly.

Titus Bramble has found himself cast as the villain in the pantomime of Newcastle's defensive problems in recent seasons. But he has turned in a series of excellent individual performances in recent weeks to win fresh praise from Souness as the manager continues his pursuit of Sylvain Distin and Sammy Kuffour.

"I thought Titus played well against Southampton and I think him he can form a good partnership with Jean-Alain," he said.

"However, what I want more of the same from them really. I think Titus is a young man who can be what he wants to be. He can go on and prove it and be a fundamental part of what we're trying to achieve here."

"Or, if he doesn't do that or want it enough, then he'll go back and play for a lesser club than Newcastle United."

"But I've given him the chance and that's all I can do. It's up to him to grasp it. He's a big, powerful man, he's got pace, he's aggressive in the air and good on the ball. It's about concentration and desire for him."

Parallel referees body emerges

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sports Reporter

The crises in the Nigeria Referees Association (NRA) is far from over as a faction of the warring body has successfully registered a parallel body with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

Known as the Football Referees' Association of Nigeria (ERAN), the body is

headed by Barrister Ray Nnanji, the PDP National Auditor, with Mr. Ewa Henshaw as the vice chairman.

Bar. Nnanji, who leads the parallel body, had taken the leadership of the NRA, the NFA, Col. Dogo Yabису, and

the Electoral Committee set up to conduct elections into respective national offices to court.

He had challenged the validity of the electoral committee on the grounds that it was both compromised and partisan and would not allow level playing ground in the contest

which Nnanji was to vie for the presidency of the association.

Besides, Nnanji had sought to obtain an order compelling the NFA to conduct the elections instead of abducting its statutory role as prescribed by Decree 101 to an officiate body.

Even then, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) had equally challenged the NFA at the Federal High Court, over same matter even as the respondents challenged the jurisdiction of the court to entertain the case.

The issue of jurisdiction will be determined on March 6, by the court as a progress on the pending cases

depends on the verdict.

Barr. Nnanji said penultimate day that the processes of seeking FIFA's consent is on and would be effected soon after the NEA has been appropriately briefed on the matter.

Trustsports noted that the CAC gave the new body approval on January 13, while correspondence to FIFA and CAF respectively were to be made yesterday.

Dr. Sam Jaja had been elected as the president of the NRA in Lagos last October.

Before then, the NFA had sought to intervene in the crises calling a truce which was futile. It had earlier suspended the election even though it failed to effect compliance.

Henry, Ronaldinho in UEFA 2004 team

Arsenal and France striker Thierry Henry has been selected in the uefa.com users' team of the year for the fourth time in succession.

Henry has now been selected every year since the award's 2001 inception and was the only ever-present named in the 2004 team chosen by more than 1.2 million votes cast on UEFA's official website and revealed on Wednesday.

There are three players from Portugal - midfielder Maniche and defender Ricardo Carvalho from Porto's Champions League-winning side and Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo.

Portugal's Jose Mourinho, who guided Porto to the European title before moving to Chelsea, is chosen as coach for the second successive year.

Henry is joined in attack by European Player of the Year Andriy Shevchenko. His AC

Milan defensive colleague Alessandro Nesta is selected for the third year running, while Juventus pair Gianluigi Buffon and Pavel Nedved are honoured for the second year in a row.

Among six newcomers to the team are long-serving Brazil and Milan full back Cafu, Arsenal left back Ashley Cole, and Barcelona and Brazil playmaker Ronaldinho, who scooped over half of the votes in the attacking midfield player category.

Despite their success in winning Euro 2004, there were no Greek players in the team.

Goalkeeper: Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus and Italy) Defence: Cafu (AC Milan and Brazil), Ricardo Carvalho (Chelsea and Portugal), Alessandro Nesta (AC Milan and Italy), Ashley Cole (Arsenal and England)

Midfield: Cristiano Ronaldo (Man Utd and Portugal), Maniche (Porto and Portugal), Ronaldinho (Barcelona and Brazil), Pavel

Nedved (Juventus and Czech Republic)

Strikers: Thierry Henry (Arsenal and France), Andriy Shevchenko (AC Milan and Ukraine).

Coach: Jose Mourinho (Chelsea).

Sharapova promotes Moscow 2012 Olympic bid

The Moscow 2012 Bid Committee has announced that Russian tennis star, Maria Sharapova, has agreed to become an Ambassador to promote Moscow as the host city for the 2012 Olympic and Para-lympic Games.

"For Moscow to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games would be a dream for me and millions of other Russians, and I am looking forward to helping explain why Moscow should host the Games," said Maria Sharapova. "Russia has a very strong history of sport and having the Olympic Games in Moscow in 2012 would be a new and brilliant chapter in that history," she added.

Welcoming her as an

Ambassador, the Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, said: "We are delighted that Maria Sharapova, a bright young sports star, has agreed to be an international ambassador



Sharapova

for our bid. She is an example of the finest Russia has to offer the world, and she is the perfect symbol for Moscow's bid to host the 2012 Olympic and Para-lympic Games."

As the year's first Grand Slam event, the Australian Open, began last Monday, the 17-year-old Russian hopes to build on her success of last year - winning Wimbledon in July and the WTA Tour Championships in November.

Sharapova joins a prestigious and growing list of sports stars and other eminent persons to endorse Moscow's bid to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Among the Ambassadors are boxing champion Kostya Tszyu and the entire Russian Olympic team from Athens 2004.

Millions for Flying Eagles

KICK OFF has learned that a budget of 46 million naira has been approved by the Sports Ministry for the Flying Eagles at the 14th African Youth Championship in Cotonou.

This budget includes the team's pre-tournament preparations in Abuja. However, reports from Cotonou suggest the players are still waiting to get their match bonuses.

A top sports official also informed KICK OFF that no provision in this budget was made for embattled Taiwo Ogunjobi at the championship.

He is not in Benin on any official capacity. He is on his own, the official said.

The Flying Eagles have already justified the investment in them as they booked their flight to the FIFA World Youth Championship Tuesday after defeating Mali 3-1.

The team now says they are looking forward to going all the way to win the continental trophy come 29 January.



Samson Siasia U-20 Coach

Sports

Police warn Wenger and Ferguson



Arsene Wenger (l) and Sir Alex Ferguson go head to head.

Sir Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger have been urged to end their feud by the Metropolitan Police.

Manchester United are due to play at Arsenal on February 1 and Barry Norman, the commander of the Islington borough, has

appealed for calm. "Any activity in the build-up to the game which increases the intensity and hostility of the supporters should be stopped," said Norman.

dispute to end but are unwilling to draw further attention to the situation by releasing a joint statement.

Even Sports Minister Richard Caborn has entered the debate, urging the pair to clam down and concentrate on doing their jobs properly. "We have had the pantomime. Let's now have the serious stuff," he said.

"They are two of the best managers in the world and they are a credit to English football.

"Let's get back to them doing what they do best and that's managing damn good football teams."

LMA chief executive John Barnwell reckons both managers need to put an end to the dispute, which has seen Ferguson claim Wenger is "a disgrace" and the Arsenal manager accuse his counterpart of losing "credibility."

"The nearer you get to the end line emotions could get higher, but this one is perhaps a step too far," said Barnwell.

There will be 180 police officers on duty at Highbury, twice as many as normal.

The match is one of three Premiership fixtures classified as high risk, along with the matches against Tottenham and Chelsea.

Clarke ready for return

Darren Clarke will be back in action this week at the South African Open after a two-month break from the game.

The Ryder Cup star has been looking after his wife, Heather, who was seriously ill with cancer.

"It was a tough time for the family but Heather's doing OK and hopefully we can now put all that behind us," he said.

South Africa's top two golfers Ernie Els and Retief

Göosen have opted not to play in Durban, preferring the more lucrative PGA Tour event in San Diego. South African Trevor Immelman will go for a record third successive win at his home event.

The 25-year old first won the title in 2003 in a play-off against Tim Clarke at Erinvale Golf Club and returned there last year to beat Alastair Forsyth and Steve Webster by three shots.

"Obviously it was a fantastic moment for me to defend the title," said Immelman.

"The South African Open title means a lot to me, or to any South African golfer and to have my name on that trophy twice is something I'm very proud of."

Clarke will donate any prize money he wins to the Tsunami appeal. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to be able to put the winner's cheque into the fund," he said.

"Golf has been placed into perspective after what has happened at home and elsewhere."

Benitez defiant after Cup shock

Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez has defended his decision to field a weakened team in the FA Cup after their shock 1-0 defeat at Burnley.

Benitez said: "We do the same in the Carling Cup and win."

"If you are in four competitions you need to use your squad - maybe we don't have the squad for four competitions."

"When you lose it's always bad news but the boys tried until the end."

We have three competitions left and the only thing we can do is work harder."

Liverpool were without regulars such as skipper Steven Gerrard, Jamie Carragher and Luis Garcia, as well as new signing Fernando Morientes.

Instead Benitez gave fringe players at Liverpool an opportunity to impress, with David Raven, Zak Whitbread, Darren Potter and John Welsh all starting.

And Benitez continued: "I was satisfied with my team selection. I say that

perhaps we do not have a squad good enough for four competitions at the top level.

"They tried and worked hard, I cannot ask for more from them. "I used the players I felt we needed, if we had used more senior players then maybe we would have more problems next week and then in the Champions League."

"I cannot say that my players did not try. Burnley played well and worked very hard. But I repeat, we cannot play four competitions with the same players."

"We have a lot of injuries and we have to give people time to recover and be ready for the Premier League, the Champions League and next week in the Carling Cup semi-final."

A clumsy piece of defending from Djimi Traore cost Liverpool dearly but Benitez refused to blame the defender.

"We conceded the goal from a big mistake, in the six yard box you need to clear the ball," he added.

"But we need to learn from these things. It's important to have experience and in the future we need to do the right things."

Khan to make bow at senior ABAs

Amir Khan will return to the ring next month when he makes his senior Amateur Boxing Association Championships debut.

The Olympic silver medalist will take on Salford's Liam Dorian in the Manchester area divisionals at Preston Guild Hall on February 7.

Khan, 18, was too young to compete in the tournament last year despite going on to reach the podium in Athens.

The Bolton fighter hopes to join Dick McTaggart, Jim Watt and Jim McDonnell as an ABA lightweight champion.



Some considered Khan too young for the Olympics

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14.	20cm x 4	8 x 4	48,000	55,000	-	71,000
15.	20cm x 3	8 x 3	36,000	41,000	-	53,000
16.	17cm x 5	7 x 6	63,000	78,000	-	93,000
17.	17cm x 5	7 x 5	42,000	60,000	-	77,000
18.	17cm x 4	7 x 4	42,000	48,000	-	62,000
19.	17cm x 3	7 x 3	32,000	36,000	-	47,000
20.	15cm x 3	6 x 5	45,000	51,000	-	66,000
21.	15cm x 3	6 x 3	27,000	31,000	-	40,000
22.	15cm x 2	6 x 2	18,000	20,000	-	27,000
23.	13cm x 2	5 x 2	15,000	17,000	-	22,000
24.	10cm x 2	4 x 2	12,000	14,000	-	18,000
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Sports

Galadima wins first battle against IMC

Members of the newly inaugurated Interim Management Committee (IMC) avoided the first major confrontation with the NFA board when they shelved the decision to over rule on the scheduled pay-off for the premier league.

The IMC at its maiden meeting after inauguration on Tuesday decided to deliberate issues earlier considered "highly controversial" but resolved amicably not to rough feathers but allow sleeping dogs some breathing space.

Aside from accepting the pay-off now scheduled to kick-off on January 22, at two centres namely Kaduna and Benin City, the IMC confirmed the appointment of Salihu Abubakar as the executive secretary of the Nigeria Football League Management Committee also known as IMC.

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sports Reporter

Before now some members of the club owners had questioned the appointment of Salihu algalading that he presided over the discredited 2004

league season.

They had earlier insisted on being paid their respective dividends from the Globacom sponsorship which was said to have been invested. They had vowed to boycott the league unless they were paid

the proceeds from the 2004 sponsorship fees and dividends from varying amounts in fixed deposit accounts.

The IMC at its inaugural meeting equally resolved to pipe low on some of the

agitations from club owners and would rather urge the NFA board to adopt dialogue and consultation in subsequent issues bordering on the league.

Meanwhile, the IMC has set up 10 committees to handle various issues crucial to the success of the league.

These are organising and disciplinary committee, which has Hon. Lumumba Adeli as chairman, Amanze Uchegbulam, Ade Ojekere as members with Salihu Abubakar the secretary. The finance and technical committees are headed by Elder Bode Oyewole and Alhaji Sani Usman Muhammad while the members are Yusuf Dauda, Ibrahim Abubakar and Chief Kasali Obayahan and Lumumba Adeli.

The security has Abdulazez Mohammed,

Alhaji Sani Lulu Abdullahi and CSP. Gideon Akinsola as chairman and members respectively, marketing has Chief Jude Ezechukwu, chairman, and the members are Emmanuel Zira and M.G. Umar.

The players statutes, arbitration and welfare has Ade Ojeikere as leader with Kasali Obayahan and Jude Ezechukwu as members.

The publicity and media is headed by Aisha Falode with Sani Usman and Yusuf Dauda as members. Referees is headed by Sani Lulu Abdullahi, Aisha Falode and Arthur Kwame, match commissioners Amanze Uchegbulam, M.G. Umar, Ibrahim Abubakar while the venue, facility and youths development is headed by Emmanuel Zira, AbdulAziz Muhammad and Bode Oyewole as members.

Nigeria are champs in West Africa Karate tourney

Nigeria has emerged the overall champion of the maiden International Open Karate Friendship Cup Competition staged between January 11 and 17 in Lomé, Togo.

A statement signed by Patrick Ibeh, spokesman of the Karate Federation of Nigeria (KFN) yesterday in Lagos said that the country won six gold and two silver medals at the event.

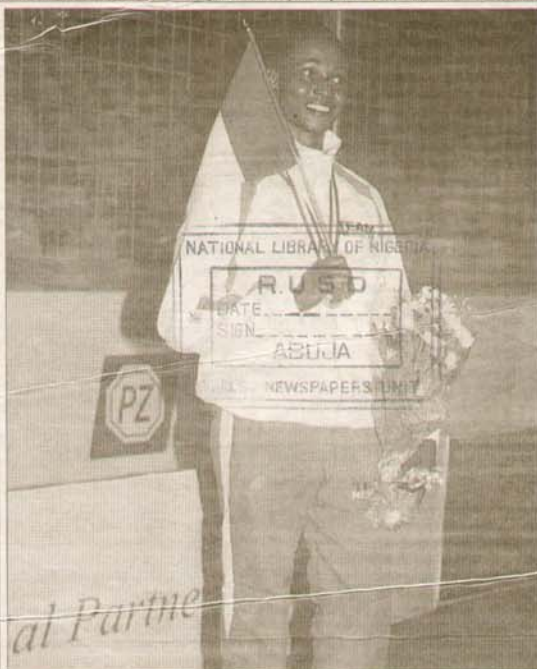
The victorious team took home a giant cup, which was at the expense of Togo national team.

According to the statement, Nigeria paraded Karatekas like Maxwell Nwabueze, Emmanuel Akor, Efedina Akpotu, Justice Akpotu, Segun Olorunrinu, Blessing Onuolu with Aina James as team coach and Metu Emmanuel as technical adviser.

The team also won the men's team kumite event where they picked five gold medals. The sixth gold medal was won a female, Blessing Onuolu in the individual katas.

Meanwhile, president of the federation, Mr. Uche Nwokedi who personally sponsored the team has congratulated them for the impressive performance. "Their victory has shown that Nigerian coaches are really working hard in their various states".

The coach, Sensei Aina James described the championship as a very good beginning for the team as it has helped them to sharpen their reflexes.



Nigeria's Mary Onyiah Omagheni a Gold medalist of the 8th All-Africa Games displaying Nigerian flag. Pic: Joe Oroye.

Minister tasks U-20 to win AYC

Sports minister Musa Mohammed penultimate day congratulated the nation's U-20 soccer over their performance in the ongoing African youth soccer fiesta holding in Benin Republic.

The Nigerian Flying Eagles tutored by former international Samson Siasia defeated the host Benin 3-0 in their first match played Saturday and Tuesday trounced Mali 3-1.

Musa, who described the team as "very compact," urged them to win the trophy for the country.

He said that all funds for

prosecuting the fiesta were already with the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) and promised that there would be no hitches.

Eight nations are participating in the two-week competition that would also produce Africa's representatives in the World youth soccer competition slated for Netherlands later this year.



Musa Mohammed, Sports Minister.

Ex-NFA scribe, Yusuf, slams FIFA

Former NFA scribe, Dr. F. Ahmed Tijani Yusuf has berated world soccer ruling body, FIFA for perpetuating double standards in matters involving Nigeria.

The two-time NFA scribe said FIFA was insincere in its quick intervention in the sacking of the NFA management headed by Chief Taiwo Ogunjobi.

"Where was FIFA in 2001 when similar reforms sacked the management of the NFA then? That management was equally removed through Decree 101 and FIFA neither saw government high handedness mustering nor threatened to ban Nigeria then. Why now?" he queried noting it was obvious display of double standards.

He argued that as it was then several letters of protest were written to FIFA on the matter to no avail. "I don't think it is because FIFA sees anything wrong" with the sacking of a set of people who they did not appoint in the first instance, rather the world soccer ruling body is merely exhibiting double standards."

Yusuf, who is currently

an interdicted, father-commanded Sports Minister, Col. Musa Mohammed for mustering courage to tackle Decree 101, which many say is the albatross of Nigerian football management.

"The present minister should be applauded for initiating reforms aimed at changing the fortunes of football in the country for good instead of being castigated as it is now. Afterall, the same persons who championed the campaigns against Decree 101 are now leading the vanguard against reforms."

The deputy director in the sports ministry's sport



Dr. Yusuf

development department said the practical approach adopted by the minister should be supported because unlike the superficial reforms carried out by late Mark Aku, "this later one is total and much more practical and effective."

He condemned a section of the sporting press for displaying parochial interest in its reportage of events noting that it was embarrassing to see the press publishing falsehood in the face of truth.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that sports fans, who watched the just-concluded Niger Delta Polo tournament in Port Harcourt, were heard complaining that majority of players were mostly from the northern Nigeria.

Malam Musa Yahaya, captain of Port Harcourt Polo Club, told NAN that the game was dominated by players from the northern part of the country because they had a culture of horse riding which was absent in most parts of

V mobile set to break polo cultural barriers in eastern states

the south.

V mobile South South Region, Mr. Henry Onugha, disclosed that the company hoped to popularise polo by bringing world class players to take part in tournaments in the region.

Nig. Vs Mali: match statistics

In spite of the Flying Eagles 3-1 defeat of their Malian counterparts at the ongoing African Youth championship, statistics revealed that the losers exhibited rough tactics in the encounter.

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that while Mali recorded 16 fouls against 9 by the Eagles, both teams, however, ended the match without any red card.

Apart from polo, the company has mapped out a five-year sports development through the sponsorship of football, swimming, handball and basketball at local government, state and zonal levels, Onugha said.

Both sides, however, tied in the number of corner kicks due to amount of pressures mounted in their bid for more goals.

Below is the statistics:

	Nigeria	Mali
Goals for:	3	1
Shots at goal	4	5
Throw in for:	20	16
Foul against	9	2
Yellow card:	0	2
Red card:	0	0
Penalty against:	0	0
Corner Kicks:	8	8
Off-side:	0	4

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My mind has been full of a montage of imageries in the past week. I think it was around September 2002 or so, that President Obasanjo and a host of other African leaders, such as Tharbo Mbeki, Abdoulaye Wade and Hosni Mubarak, had been invited to attend the G8 summit somewhere in Canada. A few days after the summit, I had taken part in the regular Presidential MEDIA CHAT with Obasanjo at the Aso Villa. As is the wont after the program, we had been invited into the inner chambers of the Villa to have dinner with the President. It's usually a very good moment to either continue talking about some of the issues raised at the media chat, or to even get to ask other questions.

On that occasion, President Obasanjo was particularly open and seemed to be on a charm offensive with us, against the backdrop of his perception that the meeting had been a success for Africa. The leading imperialist leaders didn't only give our leaders a photo opportunity, something that our president seems to relish, they also threw some sop at the African leaders.

In all, I think a package of aid totalling about a billion dollars of old promises were raked up to reward the complete surrender to neo-liberal reforms which the African leaders had encapsulated in the programs of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), a program that was enthusiastically endorsed by the Bretton Woods institutions, got the imprimatur of the imperialists at Davos and had not been discussed with African Civil Society up to that moment.

Despite the upbeat mood of President Obasanjo that night, I asked him if he had read the response of Gambian President Yahya Jammeh to the NEPAD initiative. Obasanjo told me that he had not. Then I told him the story. Jammeh had obviously been sceptical about the optimism with which the NEPAD initiative was being touted by its two leading salesmen, Mbeki and Obasanjo. At his cynical best, he advised the two gentlemen, Mbeki and Obasanjo in obvious pun, to purchase KNEEPADS which they would need as they crawl in front of the Americans and other imperialist powers, begging for money for NEPAD (see the pun, KNEEPADS and NEPAD!). Money Jammeh said they will never get. Obasanjo had then replied, "Don't mind that stupid boy. He will soon come on a visit, and I will take him up on that".

I then expressed my own scepticism to President Obasanjo, that the whole NEPAD program seemed to be a mixture of utopian daydreaming and unrealistic expectations. In all fairness to the president, he asked me why I thought so, and I replied that it was unrealistic as the NEPAD program had done, in essence about \$60 billion of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa. I pointed out that before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, FDI peaked around \$17 billion in Africa, and it witnessed a dramatic drop to less than \$13 billion just a year after the end of the cold war.

On the contrary, I had argued, that Africa is not exporter of capital to the imperialist countries, as a result of the repayment of dubious debts incurred by corrupt military regimes and authoritarian rulers, mainly clients of the Western countries during the Cold War years of the 1970s and 1980s. As a matter of fact, Africa had been exporting human and material capital, to the detriment of our peoples, in the last five hundred years of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism, which reached the peak today with the triumph of the neo-liberal paradigm.

I have recalled this particular day, because this week and also last week, as I said at the beginning of this column, I have been wrestling with a montage of disturbing images in my mind. For example, President Obasanjo was at a Business Roundtable organised by THE ECONOMIST magazine this week, where he had assured his audience that his commitment to implementing the neo-liberal project, that is causing so much harm to our country, was "irreversible".

He went further to solicit foreign investment, one of the essential ideological props of the contemporary surrender to imperialism. It was in fact the excessive pandering to this new "ideology" of "foreign investor-ism" that reminded me of the Yahya Jammeh advice about kneepads. In the past five years, our president has traversed the world many times over, begging cap-in-hand, and obviously on his knees, in search of foreign investment, without tangible success. I got the

DAILY TRUST

THURSDAY COLUMN

Thursday, January 26, 2006

Crawling on kneepads

Ishaq Modibbo Kawa
kawanmodibbo@yahoo.com

feeling that his kneepads must be worn now, and pebbles on the pavements of Washington, London, Paris, Bonn, etc must be hurting on his knees very badly.

But the committed man that our president is, he is taking all those pains and the attendant insults thrown in regularly, either by Transparency International, and the little matter of corruption index; the IMF/World Bank Bureaucrats and how Obasanjo's government is not selling our national assets fast enough, despite assurances they have given the West, etc. It is all part of a commitment to an "irreversible" project of economic surrender!

But the question a rational mind would ask is why continue to follow a path that is strewn with pains, loss of sovereignty, the unending pauperisation of your own people and had never been known to bring development to any other country in the world? Why do we think our 'born again' fanatical commitment to the implementation of these programs can make a difference? This is where the other set of imageries have come into focus.

As the reader might know, last week we held the second Media Trust Dialogue, with the theme 'Reforming Nigeria: Which Model? The event provided me the first opportunity of ever meeting with Professor Sam Aluko, the distinguished Economist. At the pre-event dinner, he had given me several reasons why he believed that the neo-liberal reform program of Obasanjo would not lead our country on a path of national development. On the contrary, but without using those exact words, they would deepen our dependence on imperialism.

Prof. Sam Aluko's 55-page paper is particularly rich in statistics, and for me, some of the most instructive are related to the depth of Nigeria's Debt crisis. Aluko's paper says that "Total amount actually borrowed by Nigeria has been estimated to be \$18.60 billion. It was interest penalties and rescheduling and default accumulations that jerked the increased debt (SIC) from time to time. Some of the debts are of doubtful validity".

However, the devil, as the saying goes, is always in the detail. So for a total debt of \$18.60 billion, as at 2003, Nigeria has repaid \$48,165.1 billion and we are still owing, by 2003, a total of \$32,916 billion. These are the statistical underpinnings that help to lay bare the truth about the commitment of Obasanjo's administration to continue to implement those anti-national programs of neo-liberal reforms, and to spend the past few years of our national life, crawling on kneepads.

It is clear that Obasanjo, as indeed the majority of the African regimes, is not a free agent in the choice that has been imposed on our country. This is despite the arrogant huffing and puffing of individual members of Obasanjo's economic inner circle, that the program they are implementing is original, and home grown. These programs which commenced with the Structural Adjustment policies in the mid-1980s, are driven by the desire to ensure that ailing debtor economies like Nigeria's, did everything possible to pay back the debts. Stripped of all subterfuge, this is the reality that drives our country today, and has been the basis of our woes from the mid-1980s.

The logical outcomes of these reforms include the erosion of our nation's sovereignty, the entrenchment of great disparities in wealth, living conditions and life expectancy. These reforms have been at the base of the introduction of higher user fees in public utilities, subsidy cuts and the increase in poverty, unemployment and the consequent erosion of the capacities and legitimacy of the Nigerian state.

It is in fact the crises that these processes have generated, that have fuelled the near-permanent state of anarchy in our country today. The Nigerian state has become progressively weakened as a result of the destruction of its capacities, through the dogmatic adherence to the dictates of the foreign financial institutions. The corruption at the heart of this weak state fuels resentments, anarchy, tendencies towards disintegration, violence and the retreat of vast segments of the population into ethnic and religious cocoons. The sounding of the death knell of the developmental state,

as a result of the implementation of a hopeless program of neo-liberal economic surrender to imperialism, unleashed the demon of ethnic and religious violence on Nigeria.

Unfortunately, a lot of analysis and commentators have not taken as seriously, and with the detached, rigorous analytical frame appropriate to the problem at hand, to understand how the crises of neo-liberal surrender ties up to the debt burden, and both providing a structural basis for the prebendal content of Nigeria's politics. It is the dialectical wholeness of this scenario that needs to be properly apprehended, in order to understand why Obasanjo is taking us on a journey to nowhere, and why we can predict as night follows day, that Nigeria will not know development, nor have its sovereignty re-inforced with the process that our rulers have become so gung-ho about.

There can no development in a neo-colonial society through which the tanks of SAP and neo-liberal economics have been driven. The landscape can only resemble a war front. Who would deny the fact that our dear country resembles a place where a permanent crisis phenomenon is the order of the day? The political elite is locked in fierce battles to loot, the people are at the mercy of a ruthless economic regime and the nation itself lies prostrate at the feet of imperialism.

Nigeria's neo-colonial status today is worse than even in the early years of our national independence. The resolution of the debt crisis facing us through policy choices rooted in SAP and neo-liberal madness have ensured that independent policy-making and national economic management have diminished and narrowed considerably. To confirm this, it would be interesting to compare the patriotic and ambitious visions encapsulated in the Second and Third National Development Plans of the late 1970's to the early 1980s, with the mystification and confusion reigning today.

The truth is that countries like Nigeria that implement SAP and neo-liberal economic policies have become enslaved to operating under an "externa" policy command" which discourages national dialogue on societal reform. This is because the process by its logic destroys the social contract fundamental to ensuring that government policies work effectively. This is why individuals like Nasir el-Rufai would say, they don't debate policies with the Nigerian people! But these so-called technocrats, most of who have been trained in the institutions of the imperialist world, would cringe with trepidation in the presence of their mentors in Washington.

They are in reality alienated from our societies, because despite their technical expertise, they often don't have a necessary grounding in the historical dimensions of existence of our peoples to even appreciate grand issues of national sovereignty and independent development of our national productive forces. They are not autonomous actors, but mere pawns on the chess board of imperialism. Being intellectually dependent, they play a tragic role in the stripping of the Nigerian state and Nigerian people of their autonomous capacities for creativity, development and independence.

Again it must be emphasised that the logic of the "follow-follow", economics of neo-liberal surrender to imperialism implicitly ensures that our country loses the capacity to conquer the space of development. This is the reason why we can argue that the processes of SAP and neo-liberalism are in fact a project of revenge; revenge by the imperialist powers, that Africans, and the most populous African nation of them all, Nigeria, ever fought against colonialism, attained independence and sometimes ago, during the 1970s, even attempted to dismantle neo-colonialism.

That is why the debt trap, SAP and neo-liberalism have been unleashed without mercy. The result is the decay, the pain, the violence, the alienation and the crisis that we harvest each day as a nation. This is why I have been talking about a montage of imageries this week. I see in my mind's eye, Obasanjo crawling on his knees, from one imperialist capital to the other, in search of foreign investment. Unfortunately, the kneepads he is wearing are worn; the pebbles on the pavements of Washington, London, Paris, Berlin and Tokyo are beginning to draw blood from his knees. But the foreign investments he is crawling for are just not coming. The old man deserves our pity.