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STAR FEATURE

Katsina:
Egyptian
scheme to
the rescue

Pages 20 & 21

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Fresh confusion arose yesterday over the resignation of the outgoing national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh, as the National Working Committee (NWC), said Ogbeh only resigned his chairmanship yesterday. This is contrary to reports that the outgoing chairman of the ruling party had earlier tendered his resignation allegedly under compulsion and at gunpoint at the presidential villa in Abuja and another one subsequently to

New twist in Ogbeh's resignation

By Hammeed M. Bello,
Senior Political Reporter (Reps)

the party secretariat in Abuja. The national secretary of the PDP, Chief Vincent Ogbulafor, along with other

NWC members, including the acting national chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Safana and the national publicity secretary, Barrister Venatius Ikem, gave the indication at a press conference yesterday in Abuja to

the effect that Ogbeh's resignation letter submitted to it was dated Monday, January 31, 2005, and not as earlier reported.

But reports have said that Ogbeh was recently for-

ced at gunpoint, to drop his resignation letter at the presidential villa which he confirmed doing, although he denied that it was at gunpoint.

Ogbeh also confirmed shortly after his reported forced resignation that he had already written and sent

Contd. on Pg 2

Reps move to stop confab in court

A coalition of members of the House of Representatives cutting across political parties and sectional affiliations have launched a stout attempt to stop the federal government from convening the proposed national political reforms conference.

By Habeeb I. Pindiga &
Zainab Alimi, Political Reporters

The conglomeration of the lawmakers have already through one of them, Mr. Victor Lar, instituted a legal

action praying that a court declare the confab illegal and unconstitutional. Information available to *Daily Trust* yesterday evening from the attorneys of Lar indicated that the suit would be filed at an Abuja federal high court within 24 hours.

Those behind the court case include members of the North central caucus of the House, who officially resolved to kick against the conference as well as legislators from the two other zones of the North and some of their colleagues from the south, who harbour reservations about the confab.

Confirming the move, minority whip of the House, Alhaji Usman Balkore told *Daily Trust* in Abuja by telephone that the protesting legislators view the conference as an affront to the National Assembly and a usurpation of the powers of the legislature.

He said they decided to go to court to seek the interpretation of some constitutional provisions relating to constitutional amendment and other agenda that are scheduled to be tabled before the confab.

Balkore explained that the North central caucus in the House has resolved against

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Contd. on Pg 2

...ANPP endorses confab

Borno, Kano, Abia & Niger delegates emerge

By Abdu Labaran, in Abuja Musa Umar Kazaure, in Kano, Kashim Sule, in Minna & Isa Umar Gusau, in Maiduguri

The All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), has expressed support for and readiness to participate in the forthcoming National Political Reform Conference believing that it is a God sent opportunity for all stakeholders to get their views across on how to move the nation forward.

The national chairman of the party, Chief Don Etiebet who addressed the press yesterday at the secretariat

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NATIONAL CONFAB: SOME STATE DELEGATES AT A GLANCE

Akwa-Ibom
Mr Etim Inyang
Mrs. Helen Esuene
Dr Asikpo Essien
Dr Ekeng Anam-Ndu
Senator Akaninyene Ukpana
Senator Emmanuel Essien Ibok-Essien

Ja'afaru Makarfi
Emmanuel Toro
Ango Abdullahi
Abdullahi Jibrin

Katsina State
Ibrahim Coomassie
Saidu Barda
Garba Ja Abdulkadir
Kabir Saidu
Ibrahim Shema
Tukur Mani

Benue State
Victor Malu
Geoffrey Ejigah
Steven Okor
Fred Orti
George Korgba
Jack Gyado

Kwara State
Abubakar Baraje
Ayinla Folorunsho
Kola Shittu
Saidu Isa
Mahmud Ibrahim
Albert Ogunshola

Borno
Muhammadu Goni
Baba Ahmed Jidda
Nuru Alkali
Mohammed Aliba
Ibrahim Damgida
Lawal Buba

Niger
Shehu Bida
Dahiru Awaisu Kuta
Abubakar Magaji
Umar Kawu
Isiyaku Jikantoro
Garba Duba

Kano
Magaji Danbatta
Auwalu Yadudu
Sule Yahaya Hamma
Isiaku Umar Tofa
Hamna Saliyu
Musa Tanko Waziri

Taraba State
Tanko Bobbo Anadami
Luka Zanya
Ibrahim Abubakar
Emmanuel Bavoia
Yakubu Agbaizi

Kaduna State
Umar Dikko



ANPP national chairman, Chief Don Etiebet (middle), the party national publicity secretary, Chief Nnamdi Olebera (left) and ANPP deputy national welfare secretary, Alhaji Mohammed Murtala, during the party press conference on nomination for the National Conference participation, held at the party secretariat, Abuja ...yesterday. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Hauwei, GTE, 19 others bid for NITEL

Two renowned Chinese firms, Hauwei Technologies and GTE are among 21 companies in the race to acquire 51 percent equity and management stake in the Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL).

The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), which announced the official closing of submission of expressions of interest for acquisition of

By Ahmed I. Shekarau,
Group Business Editor

statement issued yesterday, also disclosed that it will open financial bids from firms shortlisted for advisory services on the NITEL sale, at its conference room in Abuja on Thursday, February 3, 2005.

The statement signed by

ting of the BPE, said 21 investors have expressed interest to acquire 51 percent of the federal government's shares in NITEL as deadline for the submission of expressions of interest closes Friday, 28 January, 2005.

Four consortia of advisers out of the eight that applied to advise BPE on NITEL transaction were shortlisted

sortium, PricewaterhouseCoopers Consortium, Springboard Consortium and NBP Paribas/MBC International Consortium.

It said further that the emergence of an adviser "is expected to fast-track the privatisation of the enterprise given the number of EOIs that have been harvested by the bureau."

News

Reps *Contd. from Pg 1*

the confab, while many legislators from the Northeast, Northwest and Southwest have expressed scepticism against the forum, thus the resolve to resort to the court.

"We are concerned about the unity of this country and we feel there is need to interpret certain provisions of the constitution, whether a group outside the National Assembly has powers to do what the National Assembly is empowered to do. We are also concerned that Mr. President (Olusegun Obasanjo), is convening a parallel National Assembly," the minority whip said.

The lawmakers, according to Balkore, were also worried that during the confab, issues that may be impossible to address may crop up and as such, portend grave danger to the survival of the country. "For example, the question of representation in the National Assembly may arise.... They will ask for 60 per cent derivation; they will insist on breaking this country. What will you do in the event this happens?," he queried.

Lar, while addressing National Assembly correspondents yesterday, said though there are problems bedeviling the nation, a conference was an unconstitutional approach to the solution. "I want to say that section four of the constitution is clear. The legislative powers of the Federal Republic shall reside in the National Assembly. For him (the president) to begin to call people to discuss problems of this country, that would take decisions that would lead to constitutional amendments is an indictment of the National Assembly," he said.

He warned that any conference now may plunge the nation into war, as similar gatherings in the past had gone beyond control of the organisers. "My views are borne out of the fact that conferences of such historically have served like ill winds that have not brought anybody any good. Delegates attend such dialogue or conferences in their capacity as bonafide representatives of their ethnic nationalities. So they have derived a semblance of sovereignty. What they would be stating would be irreducible sovereign conditionality for their ethnic groups as a pre-condition for their ethnic participation in Nigeria. That was what happened in the Aburi (Ghana) talks of 1966 and when we couldn't manage it, we went to war. When Abacha invited the Constitutional Conference in 1995, he couldn't control the direction of discourse and, that conference was on the verge of making a very volatile and revolutionary resolution as to terminate the life span of the military dictatorship."

Lar said also that "I have looked at (Kaduna governor), Ahmed Makarfi's reports on political reforms and I want to say that all these issues, they said they

would want the confab addressed have been captured by the 1999 constitution. Talk about economic reforms, Obasanjo has been globe-trotting talking about economy, talking about debt, talking about reforms, talking about loans. Is he now admitting that he is a failure?"

He added that there were suspicious motives in the confab. "There is a presidential system entrenched in the 1999 constitution that has brought him (Obasanjo). And he is saying the dialogue should propose a hybridization of parliamentary system and presidential system or discarding the presidential system and taking on a parliamentary system. That is a coded form of advocating confederation... I want to say that the balloon of the national unity that has been flying, Obasanjo is taking a pin to puncture it. What is likely to happen is the collapse of the states in Nigeria. I doubt Mr. President's sincerity in what he is doing. There are possibly one out of three reasons. One, he wants to be the last president of a united Nigeria because we understand several ethnic nationalities have drawn constitutions of their republic. There is every indication that we are heading towards secession. Two, it is possible that Obasanjo is scared of another Northern president taking over from him. Or Mr. President wants to create confusion to justify the necessity for him to continue."

But deputy leader of the Senate minority caucus, Prof. Daniel Saror said there was nothing wrong with the confab and that Obasanjo had consulted and sought the suggestions of the leadership of both chambers of the National Assembly on the conference.

He contended that the president has executive powers to convene such a confab, but that it was the prerogative of the lawmakers to consider proposals that may be tabled before them concerning the forum.

"The National Assembly has nothing to do with the conference (now). The National Assembly will come in when the president makes suggestions to us, then we consider them," he said.

Saror said also that contrary to reports, the N932 million confab budget is likely to be approved by the two chambers this week. "I don't see anything wrong with the conference," he added.

NITEL *Contd. from Pg 1*

adviser who will emerge beginning Thursday is expected to prepare the information memorandum, develop sale strategy and engage in other advisory works that would enable the effective sale of the enterprise by the second quarter of this year.

Although the BPE did not disclose names of the 21 bidders for NITEL, *Daily Trust* reliably gathered that Hauwei and GTE are among the firms in the race.

Gastroenteritis claims two in Gwagwalada

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin,
Health Reporter

An outbreak of gastroenteritis has been reported in Gwagwalada area of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The disease which is associated with lack of clean drinking water and poor hygiene has so far claimed two lives since it started few weeks ago in the area.

The medical director and the head of clinical services at St. Mary's Catholic hospital, Dr Mokwue Chukwueke, told *Daily Trust* that the hospital has so far treated about 30 patients suffering from the disease.

The hospital, he said has lost two patients to the disease since it became prevalent in the area, adding that there is no evidence to show that the disease is cholera.

"Laboratory evidence has not shown that it is cholera and it will be bad for any body to assume that it is cholera and begin to talk about it on the air," Dr Chukwueke explained.

He called on Nigerians, especially the people in

Gwagwalada to learn basic hygiene and to also ensure that they consume safe and clean water at all times. This, he said will make them avoid contracting the disease.

Dr Chukwueke identified vomiting, dehydration, diarrhea and weakness of the body as some symptoms of gastroenteritis pointing out that the hospital has forwarded a report about the disease to the health unit of the Gwagwalada area council.

Meanwhile, the medical director and chief executive officer of the Gwagwalada Specialist Hospital, Dr Nandul Durfa, told *Daily Trust* that he is yet to be briefed on the outbreak of the disease in the area.



Governor Kalu (middle) illustrating a point while the Senate President Chief Wabara (left) his brother Chief Mark Wabara listen with interest.

ANPP *Contd. from Pg 1*

Parties (CNPP), not to boycott the national political reform conference saying that such course of action will not serve their supporters any positive purposes.

The ANPP chairman therefore called on the parties to nominate the two representatives allotted them and "go to the conference and fight within rather than boycott it," noting that a boycott by the parties will not serve any useful purpose whatsoever.

Don Etiebet announced that he would start a nationwide tour of ANPP chapters and formations on February 3, so as to get the aggregate views of party supporters on the forthcoming conference and the 2007 general elect-

ions as well as far as ANPP presidential candidacy is concerned. "We are still waiting for the judgment of the Supreme Court on the issue," he stated, adding that the party is leaving its options open until the final verdict on its suit.

The ANPP chairman therefore urged all those eyeing its presidential ticket in 2007 to wait until the Supreme Courts decides on its petition against the election of President Obasanjo.

Meanwhile, Borno state government yesterday appointed six people to represent the state in the proposed national political reform conference, with each of the state's three senatorial zones represented by two people.

According to a statement signed by the senior special assistant on media to governor Ali Modu Sheriff, Mr Stanley Mshelia, the statement listed onetime governor of Borno state, Alhaji Mohammed Goni and Ambassador Baba Ahmed Jidda, as representatives of Borno north.

Also on the list are Professor Nura Alkali and Alhaji Mohammed Kagu Alibe from Borno central, while the southern part of the state has Alhaji Ibrahim Dacida and Alhaji Lawan Buba as representatives, bringing the total of those nominated to six.

The statement quoted the Borno state government as having appointed the representative based on their qualities and their stewardship to the state in different capacities.

"The secretary to the state government had in a statement disclosed that all the appointees were chosen on merit, wealth of experience, dedication and honest service to Borno state and the nation in general," the statement said.

Kano state has also nominated six man delegation led by Alhaji Magaji Dambatta (OFR), has been named to represent the state at the proposed national conference

scheduled for mid-February.

A statement signed by Kabiru Salisu for secretary to the state government gave the names of the other members as Professor Auwalu Yadudu, Alhaji Sule Yahaya Hamma, Alhaji Isiaqu Umar Tofa, Dr Haruna Salihu and Alhaji Musa Tanko Waziri.

Similarly a local committee to articulate the position of Kano state on the conference has also been formed comprising 23 members who are expected to work with the selected six delegation to achieve the desired objectives.

A former veterinary medicine lecturer at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, is among Niger state's delegates to the forth coming national dialogue in Abuja.

Presenting the delegates to Nigerlites at the UK Bello hall, the state governor, Engineer Abdulkadiri Kure, said the nomination of the delegates was done in the interest of the people and based on their credentials and track records.

He said his administration has demonstrated that there is benefit in politics of inclusiveness that is why the nomination was spread across all the ethnic groups. He said it is expected that those nominated on behalf of the people should therefore be effective in the forthcoming exercises.

Governor Kure said that the nomination was done going by the federal government's guidelines, saying that if the federal government had directed that elections be conducted as a condition to determine the appointment, he would have done so.

The delegates which included the former SSG, Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu Kuta, also has the vice chairman of the PDP in the north central, Alhaji Abubakar Magaji, the Attorney General of the state, Barrister Umar Kawu, former General Garba Duba and former commissioner of lands, Alhaji Isiyaku Jikantor.

Ogbeh *Contd. from Pg 1*

his resignation letter to the national secretariat of the party, adding however that the national secretary, whose office was to acknowledge receipt of the letter, was out of town. The letter was however delivered to the party headquarters, he suggested.

Also, the NWC had on January 31, risen from its first meeting after the resignation of Ogbeh, with the announcement that Ogbeh, that day, formerly handed over affairs of the party to the deputy national chairman (north), Alhaji Ibrahim Safana, with the understanding that resignation should precede the handing over.

A statement by the PDP national publicity secretary, Barrister Venatius Ikem, said Ogbeh handed over to Safana at the NWC meeting.

A statement issued at the end of yesterday's briefing signed by Prince Vincent Ogbulafor, the PDP national secretary, however said he had received, on behalf of the national executive committee of the PDP, the resignation letter by Ogbeh, dated January 31, 2005.

"The letter gave one month's notice expiring on

February 28, 2005, in accordance with Article 18(3) of the PDP constitution. Article 18(3) states that "any officer elected into the executive committee at any level may resign his office by giving 30 days notice in writing to the appropriate committee," the statement said.

It added that the national executive committee (NEC), will soon be summoned to appoint another national chairman from the North central zone where Ogbeh comes from, in accordance with the party's constitution. Ogbulafor, while responding to questions, said the NEC can appoint from any state in the zone, not necessarily from Benue state where Ogbeh comes from.

It was doubtful if the period between January 31 and February 28 will make up the minimum 30 days notice required by the party's constitution for the resignation of an officer in the cadre of the national chairman.

Ogbulafor also said in his statement that the PDP is intact, focused and vibrant and that some of the happenings in the party are expected in a democracy.

News

Obasanjo withdraws policemen from govt officials

President Olusegun Obasanjo has ordered the withdrawal of mobile policemen attached to government functionaries, the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and many public officers among others.

A statement signed by the secretary to the government of the federation stated that all members of the mobile police force hitherto attached to government functionaries be withdrawn for re-training.

It added that the utilisation of mobile policemen for duties other than for which they are trained is affecting their professional competence.

The statement however, indicated that those with-

By Kemi Ogedengbe,
Judicial Editor

drawn should be replaced by conventional policemen. "This is with a view to beefing up the police force, rescue, strengthen and retraining the men so withdrawn for improved skills and professionalism.

Those affected by the circular from the SSG's office include the chief of staff to the president and his vice, ministers, head of the civil service of the federation, special assistants, service chiefs, inspector general of police, governor of the CBN and chairman of the federal civil

service commission and the police service commission.

Others are, chairman, Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission, Chairman, Code of Conduct Bureau, Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission, Chairman of Population Commission, ICPC, EFCC, all permanent secretaries, clerk of the National Assembly, secretary, National Judicial Council, accountant general of the federation, auditor general, directors general/chief executives of parastatals, agencies and government owned companies.

The federal government has awarded the concession of the Nigeria Iron Ore Mining Company (NIOMCO) to Global Infrastructure, the new managers of Ajaokuta Steel Company Ltd (ASCL), to ensure that there is uninterrupted supply of iron ore to the steel plant.

According to a press statement from the ministry of power and steel, Global Infrastructure will operate the mines, maintain the equipment and plants and pay royalties to the federal government.

The operation concession will be supervised by the ministry and the monitoring committee. The Itakpe Iron Ore Mines have been identified since inception of Ajaokuta Steel as the primary source of raw materials - Iron Ore for the Steel company.

FG concessions NOIMCO to global infrastructure

By Anas A. Galadima,
Reporter (Business)

The statement added that "the federal government's move stems from the basic belief that not only should iron be manufactured locally, but even the raw materials used in its production is locally produced."

It would be recalled that Global Infrastructure took over the management of ASCL sometimes last year. Since then, work has been completed at the wire rod mill and the light section mill.

The furnace is scheduled to be commissioned this year.

Ambassador rescues stranded

Nigerian pilgrims in Sudan

From Yusuf Ozi-Uzman

About 180 Nigerian pilgrims returning home after the 2005 Hajj in Saudi Arabia were left stranded in an aircraft at Khartoum international airport, Sudan, yesterday after being airlifted from King Abdul-Azeez international airport, Jeddah by Sudan airline.

It took the intervention of Nigeria's ambassador to that country before the stranded pilgrims were fully airlifted back home.

Our correspondent who was aboard the Airbus with registration number TC-SGB reports that the Nigerian pilgrims embarked on hunger strike to demonstrate their disgust over the way the airline treated them and to press the pilot and the crew to airlift them to Nigeria.

Among those aboard the aircraft were a director of the State Security Services (SSS), a deputy commissioner of police, a Major in the Nigerian Army, top immigration and customs officers, senior staff of the Saudi Arabian embassy and attaché in Nigeria as well as journalists.

The aircraft had taken off from Jeddah airport at about 2.53 am local time (12.55 Nigerian time), carrying about 180 Nigerians and over 100 Sudanese pilgrims with a promise, as reflected on the boarding pass, to take off for Nigeria after dropping the Sudanese pilgrims.

However, after the

Sudanese pilgrims had disembarked, the pilot, Captain Zakari, advised Nigerians on board the flight to remain seated because the aircraft would take off soon.

But few minutes later, another announcement came urging those on board to disembark "for necessary papers to be processed."

There were exchanges of angry words between Nigerian pilgrims and the pilots, including members of the cabin crew, who in the confusion that followed, disappeared into thin air, leaving the confused pilgrims inside the aircraft for over ten hours without food, place to urinate and perform ablution.

One of the senior security officers got through to the Nigerian ambassador in Sudan, Alhaji Aliyu Isa Sokoto, who quickly swung into action.

The ambassador who later visited the stranded pilgrims, expressed worry over the way the Sudanese airline had been treating Nigerians travelling elsewhere enroute Khartoum.

"We are fully aware of the constant ill-treatment meted out on Nigerian passengers by the airline and we will find a permanent solution to it," Ambassador Aliyu remarked. The aircraft finally took off for Nigeria (Monday) at about 13.20 hours local time (11.20 am Nigerian time).

Iraq: Ten British soldiers die in plane crash

By Elkanah Chawai
Foreign Dest Reporter

Ten British servicemen are missing and presumed dead following the crash of a C-130 Hercules transport plane in Iraq, officials said.

It is the largest single loss of British lives since the start of the Iraq war. The previous highest total was eight, in March 2003.

British officials investigating the crash of a military transport plane in Iraq that killed nine airmen and one soldier said it was too early to comment on claims it was shot down by Islamic militants.

Ansar al-Islam, an Al-Qaeda linked extremist group, posted a statement on an Islamist website claiming it downed the Hercules plane northwest of Baghdad on Sunday, causing Britain's biggest single loss since the invasion of Iraq.

Islam managed to detect a C-130 Hercules flying at low altitude from Baghdad to Balad and downed it with a guided rocket," it said.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told the BBC yesterday that the crash resulted in "the largest single loss of British service lives" since Britain joined the US-led invasion of Iraq nearly two years ago.

"Our hearts go out to the family and comrades of those who were killed and injured," Straw said. "These were very brave men as all those who have been killed or injured over the last two years."

British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon said in a statement "we are aware of reports that the aircraft may have been shot down, but we are not in a position to come to

SGF asks CNPP, NCF to nominate delegates

By Habeeb Pandiga,
Political Reporter

The Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) and the National Consensus Forum (NCF) have said that the secretary to the government of the federation, Chief Ufot Ekaette has asked them to nominate two delegates to the national political reforms conference.

The nominees are to represent 27 of the 30 registered political parties. This followed an alarm raised by both groups on Sunday that the government was planning to exclude them from the confab.

They had said through their scribes that at the expected close of nominations yesterday; they were yet to be asked to send in their representatives.

But CNPP and NCF's secretaries-general, Maxi Okwu and Joseph Boko told Daily Trust by telephone yesterday that they had received separate letters from the SGF inviting for two delegates from the political parties.

Okwu said he was called to go and collect the letter from the SGF's office.

On his part, Boko said he had already collected the communication, addressed to the NCF asking the group to field in one representative.

The group were given until February 7 to send in their nominees. The People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD) had been asked to nominate 13, four and two delegates respec-



PDP National Secretary, Chief Vincent Ogbulafor (r) and the Party's Acting Chairman, Alh. Ibrahim Safana during the party's press conference on the resignation of the National Chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh at the party secretariat Abuja...yesterday.

PDP crisis: Atiku will not decamp -Lawal Abba

From Musa Umar Kazaure,
Regional Editor, Kano

The planned decamping of Vice President Atiku Abubakar to Alliance for Democracy, AD or All Nigeria Peoples Party, ANPP has been described as mere rumours and speculations by opponents of the Vice President who wished him no good.

A Close-Associate of the Vice President in Kano Alhaji Lawal Abba said Atiku Abubakar has always been a strong man of the PDP and will remain so despite the political wrangling in the party which he said is normal in a democratic dispensation. Alhaji Abba said it is wishful thinking for people to insinuate that Vice President Atiku Abubakar will decamp to ANPP when the Vice President is included in the suit before the Supreme Court filed by ANPP Presidential candidate Muhamadu Buhari on the outcome of the 2003 Presidential election. "How can he decamp to a party that is pursuing or challenging the legality of his being the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" he asked.

On the issue of PDP national party Chairman Audu Ogbe's resignation and its

Presidential ambition, Alhaji Lawal Abba said Audu Ogbe's resignation from the leadership of PDP has no relevance to Atiku's role in the PDP nor will it affect Atiku's relationship with the President. "It is the tradition that the President will always want the right person to be the Chairman of the party, and if he chooses who he sees as competent, the Vice President as one of the heads of the Party will assist to market him to other members of the party. People should stop insinuating that Ogbe's resignation has caused a rift between the President and Vice President Atiku Abubakar." He insisted.

Alhaji Lawal Abba said it is normal for people in the same party to have differences over issues and disagree over approach to some issues, but once it is resolved that that is the position of the party everybody join in to ensure success of the party. He also threw more light on the Vice President's presidential campaign going on presently, saying "The Vice President has not declared

the 2007 presidential election yet. What you are seeing is just his supporters and admirers asking to come out and contest in 2007 just as it is being done to other candidates. Turaki did not join politics or PDP to become President of the country by hook or by crook, he joined to serve the people of Nigeria. If however at the end of the day, like they did to Mr. President, persuaded him to contest, then perhaps he will consider that. But for now he has not told us that he want to be President of Nigeria." He maintained.

On the Vice President's relationship with former President Ibrahim Babangida, the Atiku's right hand man said Atiku and IBB are still best of friends. They visit each others weeding and naming ceremonies, the call each other often to wish each other well and the sympathize with each other in times of mourning, he said, adding that IBB himself has not come out in the open to say when will contest 2007. He also stated that IBB's relationship with the President will not in any way interfere with the political ambitions of Vice President Atiku Abubakar because both have different aspira-

NEWS

COCIN embraces national confab

Jibril Daudu, Regional Editor (Jos)

Irrespective of widespread controversy and criticisms against the national dialogue initiated by president Olusegun Obasanjo, the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN), has embraced the programme but called for fair representation of all Nigerians to the dialogue.

The new national president of the church, ranked one of the top in the country, Rev. Dr. Pandang Yamsat, who was inaugurated in Jos yesterday, said the dialogue was the right step taken by the federal government to bring about national discourse.

Rev. Yamsat hailed the decision of president Obasanjo to hold the conference saying it is "one step away from rigidity" and the right step towards unity.

He however, called for transparency in the dialogue so as to render any ulterior motives impotent.

The cleric who was vice-president and would preside over the church for the next four years called for fair representation of all sections of the country at the dialogue, so that according to him, "the minorities, the weak, the exploited and the aggrieved will have the opportunity to be heard."

Reading his inaugural address to a tumultuous crowd that comprised the who-is-who in Plateau State and Nigeria, Rev. Yamsat specifically called on President Obasanjo to involve the Church in the dialogue.

Rev. Yamsat also endorsed the 2005 national census and called on Christians nationwide to come and be counted even as he called on the government to restore its credibility.

President Obasanjo who was represented by his adviser on political matters, Professor Jerry Gana, hailed the Plateau people for the return of peace after the ethno-religious crises and urged Christians in the state to be living sacrifices for God.



A tanker lorry with Registration No. XU 908 ABJ fully loaded with fuel for discharge in a filling station at Wuse II, Abuja gutted by fire along the Express Way, near the Ministers Hill... yesterday

Kano police urged to prosecute notorious criminal

From Musa Umar Kazoure, Regional Editor Kano

Pressure continues to mount on the police command in Kano to prosecute a suspected ring leader of criminals in Kano, Alhaji Muhammad Baba popularly known as "Knight" who was arrested recently on charges of murder and illegal possession of firearms.

In a petition to the Kano state commissioner of police made available to *Daily Trust*, a former commissioner of police in Lagos and Sokoto states, Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, commended the uncompromising stand of the Kano state police boss against corruption and other injustices in the command, but that some superior officers in the command are trying hard to subvert the good job by the police to prosecute the suspect.

Giving a background of the case, the former police commissioner said on the midnight of January 6th, 2005 at a night club located at 9B Church road, Sabon Gari, Kano, two armed youths shot one Adamu Ibrahim popularly known as "Boy One" with intent to kill or harm him. But the bullet missed him and hit one Alhassan Ali who later died at a clinic in Sabon Gari where he was rushed.

Alhaji Abubakar Tsav said

initial police investigations, led to the arrest of one Musa Musa Daura, the son of a comptroller of customs who later confessed to the commissioner the crime in company of two others who are currently being hunted by the police. The arrested suspect, according to Tsav, also confessed that they were commissioned to kill Alhaji Adamu Ibrahim alias "Boy One" by a Chadian national resident in Kano, Alhaji Muhammad Baba a.k.a Knight.

Following police search at Muhammad Baba's residence along Zoo road, three AK 47 rifles, one sub-machine gun, three revolvers, three barretta pistols, one pump action gun and several rounds of ammunitions were recovered which were all illegally acquired.

The former police boss added that, "the prime suspect offered bribes to the police team with a promise of more, but they declined this clandestine attempt to corrupt them." Despite this patriotism, he said, some senior police officers in the command were trying to subvert the law and destroy the case which involves the loss of the life of an innocent man in

his prime.

Corroborating the former police commissioner's petition, a statement signed by the police public relations officer, zone one headquarters, Kano, Muhammad Gambo, confirmed the arrest of Mohammed Baba alias "Knight" and Musa Musa Daura in connection with the murder of Hassan Ali of Hausawa Quarters of Kano by men of the Kano state police command. He also confirmed the arrest of Musa Musa Daura who confessed being hired by Muhammad Knight to kill Adamu Ibrahim.

ASP Muhammad Gambo stated that the officer in charge of zone one, Sir K. Z. Dudari (AIG), has even directed the arraignment of the suspects on holding charges pending the advise of the Attorney-General. He however commended the state police commissioner, Alhaji Ganiyu Dawodu and the detectives handling the case for their steadfastness.

FG urges farmers to produce cassava for wealth creation

By Hassan Idris Senior Reporter (Agriculture)

The federal government has called on farmers on the need for aggressive production of cassava to create wealth and employment in rural areas.

The Special Assistant to the president on food security, Mrs Oluwatoyin Adetunji, made the call in Calabar at a one-day workshop on production and packaging of high quality cassava flour by local farmers.

Adetunji explained that the federal government has directed that 10 per cent cassava flour be included in bread and other confectioneries.

She stated that the policy, which took effect from Jan. 1, would require two million tonnes of cassava per annum.

She said "This informs the wisdom of my office to form a broad coalition of stakeholders to organise this sensitisation and training workshop with the principal objective of training the trainers in the production and packaging of high quality cassava flour."

Agriculture is the prime focus of the present administration aimed at creating employment and wealth, and attaining household and national food security, she said.

Similarly, gov. Donald Duke of Cross River state, called on the federal government to enforce the 10 per cent cassava flour inclusion in bread through proper legislation.

Governor Duke, who was represented by the secretary to the state government, Mr Johnson Ebokpo, pointed out that cassava

production was widely practised in Cross River by 90 per cent of the farmers.

In his remarks, the state's commissioner for agriculture, Mr John Odey, said that the diversification of cassava usage would expand its market and stabilize prices for the farmers.

He said "It is, therefore a welcome development that the federal government has put in

place a policy of 10 per cent wheat flour substitute with cassava flour."

First batch of Kwara pilgrims arrive

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent Ilorin

About 475 pilgrims comprising the first batch of pilgrims who performed the holy pilgrimage arrived the Ilorin international airport yesterday.

The pilgrim's plane landed at about 7:30 am with their luggage.

Some of the pilgrims who spoke with *Daily Trust* suggested the need for government and concerned authorities to ease the problem of weighting their luggage at Jeddah and minimize the hardships encountered while returning home.

They complained that the condition under which they weighed their luggage was not ideal.

Over 1,760 pilgrims from Kwara, Ondo and Ekiti states performed this year's hajj from the Ilorin zone.

Borno Senatorial Seat: "We await judiciary to stop Daggash"

From Isah Umar Gusau, Correspondent, Maiduguri

Following the controversy that surrounded the Borno north senatorial seat, the state's All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), has said that it relies on the judiciary to stop the PDP occupying the senatorial position in the National Assembly.

This was according to the spokesman of the Borno ANPP, Alh. Yusuf Adamu, the states ANPP secretary at an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust*, yesterday in Maiduguri, Borno state Capital.

The ANPP secretary said, the party had already gone to the same Abuja high court which had ordered the senate to call back Daggash for Borno north senatorial position, during which the ANPP is also seeking the court to stop Daggash from occupying the seat.

"We have confidence in the judiciary, and we await fair judgement over the Borno north senatorial seat. The case was adjourned because demands are that INEC should be allowed to conduct

fresh elections as ruled by the court of Appeal Jos, while Daggash should vacate the senatorial seat since the election has been cancelled by the court." Yusuf Adamu said.

The ANPP secretary maintained that the party was determined more than ever before to fight for what he referred to as "the right of Borno north people and the ANPP to ensure that the candidates they desire was elected through popular votes and nor through the back door."

He recalled that the Borno North senatorial seat was won by the ANPP at the elections tribunal in Borno, after the party, litigated against the declaration of Sanusi Daggash as the PDP, before the appeal court further annulled the elections for a fresh by-elections.

It should be recalled that the PDP on its part had challenged that the ANPP "cannot contest the by-election, even if they would

be able "because" the ANPP fielded an unqualified candidate in 2003, while an electoral law prohibits a party that fields a disqualified candidate from taking part in subsequent elections over the same position.

Trade Union Act Bill threatens unionism in Nigeria -NLC

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma, labour reporter

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), said yesterday that the vibrancy of trade union movement in Nigeria is threatened by president Olusegun Obasanjo's Trade Unions Act Amendment Bill, currently before the National Assembly.

Speaking at the opening session of a three-day meeting of affiliates of public services international (PSI), general secretary of the NLC, Comrade John Odah said the bill seeks to remove the financial strength of trade unions and balkanise the NLC.

He said there was need for

strengthen their respective trade unions in order to counter what he referred to as "onslaught against labour movement."

Comrade Odah also called on trade unions to devise strategies on how to halt government's plans to downsize workers in the public service.

He also appealed to trade unions across Africa to unite and protect the interest of the working class.

Earlier in his remarks, the chairperson of the National Coordinating Committee, of the PSI, Comrade

Abdulkadir A. Salam (Baraden Paiko), said that Nigerian workers are in the midst of legislations and policies that seek to constrain their social, economic and political rights.

"The present crusade of neo-liberal values, strategies and programmes of the government poses a threat to the livelihood of public servants and in fact seeks to create a new season of 'survival of the fittest' which does not take into cognisance the awesome socio-economic advantages and political leverage which some persons and group of persons already possess," he said

WANTED



MR. IWUEGBU UCHECHUKWU CHRISTIAN

whose picture appears above is wanted in connection with the destruction of NDDC projects. Any one with useful information of his way about should report to the nearest police station or NDDC office in River State Port-Harcourt.

News

Ekiti gives N16m loan to farmers

In a bid to boost food production and improve agriculture, Ekiti state government has earmarked N16 million as soft loan to farmers in anticipation of the next planting season.

The deputy governor, Mr. Abiodun Aluko, who disclosed this during a meeting with the Farmers Congress in Ekiti state, said government will give top priority to the development of agriculture, saying substantial effort is being directed towards expanding the economic base of the state through the sector.

He also informed farmers that 520,000 cocoa seedlings were being raised by the government at the nursery of the state's agricultural ministry which would be distributed to farmers free of charge at the appropriate time.

He reminded them that the

From Femi Oladipo, Stringer (Ado Ekiti)

tractors earlier purchased by the government was basically to encourage farmers to go into extensive mechanised farming and urged them to avail themselves of the services of the tractors to enable them have maximum yield with less toil.

Mr. Aluko stated that adequate funds has also been allocated to the agricultural sector and rural development in the 2005 budget to enable it complete the rehabilitation of the existing farm settlements and open up new ones for youth employment and empowerment to reduce the rural-urban migration of able-bodied youths in the state.

Speaking earlier, president of the farmers congress in the state, Chief Abiodun Akomolafe, had applauded

farmers

the various assistance of the government to farmers and for making the occupation more attractive and lucrative through the provision of tractors and other inputs to farmers.

The government of Yobe state has banned praise singing and pre-wedding ceremonies.

In a statement issued by the Special Assistant to the governor on media, Alhaji Ibrahim Jirgi, at the weekend, the Yobe State Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim said that such activities were forbidden in Islam.

The statement added that all social gatherings and

Yobe state govt bans pre-wedding ceremonies

From Hassan Idris, Senior Reporter (Agric)

dancing by the opposite sex, as well as mingling together is very un-Islamic and against the Shari'a law, saying that it is prohibited.

He said the governor gave

the directives after he had attended a pre-wedding ceremony of the Commissioner of Water Resources, Alhaji Aji Bularafa at Damaturu over the weekend.

The statement mentioned Governor Ibrahim as the *Garkuwan Shari'a* in the whole of the North-Eastern states, stressed there is no reason why at all the pre-wedding social activities can take place before any wedding (fatiha), which is the most important.

Therefore, the state government will henceforth ensure full Shari'a implementation especially at wedding and similar activities, the statement said.

The statement called on all the people of Yobe State especially youth to cooperate and support the governor's efforts aimed at eliminating out social ills that have negative effects on the citizens.

Legislators frown at tax defaulters in Plateau

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

Chairman, Plateau State House of Assembly Committee on Appropriation, Mr. Benschak Dalop, has decried the rate at which individuals and institutions in the state default in the payment of tax, noting that N600 million is being owed the board of internal revenue.

Honourable Dalop who said they got to know of the situation in the course of budget defence by ministries and parastatals in the state, described it as worrisome and of serious concern.

The Appropriation Committee chairman said the House of Assembly was set to back up relevant government agencies to ensure that those defaulting were made to pay.

"We believe that in as much as we are going to put pressure on government to ensure judicious use of funds, we expect that the tax paying public should rise up to their responsibilities," Honourable Dalop said.

He added that they do not want a situation where people take laws into their hands by defaulting in tax payment, noting, "just as government has responsibilities, citizens too have."

Speaking on observations made by the committee, the council of employment reform, Honourable Dalop said they realised that the current areas needed more attention.

He, however, pledged that adequate attention would be given to all areas. "Let me assure you that each committee in the House has signed a bond of responsibility with the House Committee on Appropriation to strengthen the oversight functions. No area will suffer this time. They are going to make a difference as we are strengthening them to make a difference," he promised.

NGO distributes equipment to women

A non-governmental organisation (NGO), Women Advancement for Economic and Leadership Empowerment (WAELE), has presented equipment worth N1.8 million to six local governments in Akwa Ibom State in August, 2004.

This was disclosed at a press conference by the president of the association, Bashirat Nahibi, in Abuja yesterday.

She explained that the equipment consisted of a cassava processing machine to the women of Eket local government area, where they could only produce ten bags of garri in a week manually, but could now produce thirty bags

From Safiya I. Dantiye, Woman Editor

with the equipment.

Palm oil processing machine was also given to the women of Ini local government area and Mkpata Enin local government area, where Hajija Bashirat noted that they could only produce twenty litres of palm oil daily, but they could now produce four hundred litres with the equipment.

WAELE which is a non-religious and non-partisan organisation according to its president, has as its main objectives, the raising of the consciousness of women about their rights and votes in order to appreciate their economic and political responsibilities.

The board of trustees of the organisation has Dr. Joseph Wayas as chairman, Mrs. Aisha Aliyu and Comrade Paschal Bafyau, as members, among others.

Corpers now to undergo 3 days registration exercise

From Edet Ekanem, Stringer (Uyo)

Beginning from March this year, youth corps nationwide will have to undergo three days registration exercise against the present one day registration exercise.

The Akwa Ibom State Co-ordinator of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Chief Ebenezer Akinola, who made the announcement over the weekend in Uyo, said as part of the reforms of the scheme, the additional days will afford corpsers opportunity to familiarise themselves with the scheme before the actual posting to their primary assignment.

Chief Akinola further told newsmen that within the period of orientation, much efforts would be directed at leadership training of corpsers than what it was previously.

He said approach to community development service will be more vigorous than presently because according to him, the scheme has achieved more detailed but scientific considerations to community/rural development than what it was formerly formed.



From left: Alhaji Isyaku Ibrahim, the Director Nigerian-American Bank, Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, Chairman NEPAD Nigeria, the Nigerian Permanent Rep in UN, Prof. Ibrahim Gambari and Chief Mrs. Erelu Abiola, during NEPAD special forum held at the State House, Abuja ... recently. Pix: Joe Oroye.

Don't use SOKAPU as pressure body

- Makarfi advises southern Kaduna

From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent (Kaduna)

Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna State has called on the people of southern Kaduna not to use the Southern Kaduna Peoples Congress (SOKAPU) as a pressure group to attain their ambition.

Governor Makarfi stated this over the weekend at a one-day conference of the southern Kaduna leadership forum held at command guest house in Kaduna.

He urged the Southern Kaduna People to use SOKAPU for the purpose of attaining economic goals in the uplifting of the wellbeing of citizens of the area rather than for religious and political purposes.

Governor Makarfi stressed the need for the people to be careful in resolving their problems, saying that the people of southern Kaduna have competent people to lead them.

He expressed his interest on the need for peace, unity and that in the last few months, he has developed the impression that things are not really easy.

Earlier in his address, the chairman of the occasion, Mr. Ishaya Dere Akawu, had said that their vision for creating unity of purpose for southern Kaduna is to articulate the position of SOKAPU on current issues of national and regional importance.

Mr. Akawu, who is also the chairman of the National Assembly Service Commission, expressed the determination of SOKAPU to achieve a unity of purpose for all southern Kaduna leaders and people in continuation of the consultations by SOKAPU's special think tank committees fashion out a developmental agenda for southern Kaduna.

Patigi community offers govt 10,000 hectares of land for agric

From Abdul-Razaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

The Patigi community in the Patigi local government area of Kwara State, has offered 10,000 hectares of land to the state government along the river Niger bank to facilitate its agricultural programme.

Etsu Patigi. Alhaji Ibrahim Chatta Umar, made the offer at the weekend while receiving the state governor, Dr. Bukola Saraki, who paid him a visit in his palace.

Work has already commenced in Tsonga, Edu local government council, where government has already earmarked 15,000 hectares for cultivation this year in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Farmers Union.

Alhaji Umar who praised the initiative of Dr. Saraki to revive the Duku-Lade irrigation scheme abandoned for over 40 years, said the community

already has about 1,200 hectares of arable land in the area which could be expanded for rice production.

Etsu Patigi also expressed appreciation for the on-going rehabilitation of roads in Patigi and the award of contracts for the rehabilitation of the seven water works in the area.

The monarch appealed for the upgrading of the Patigi general hospital to a specialist hospital and the revival of the famous Patigi Regatta to a tourist attraction centre.

Responding, Governor Saraki assured the Etsu and his people of continuous government support in the development of their agricultural potentials for accelerated growth in the state, adding that more road

rehabilitation would be done in Patigi.

Governor Saraki who told the Etsu he was in the area to monitor the stage of work at the Duku-Lade irrigation rice farm and assess the on-going township road project in Patigi, thanked the people for their support and commitment to the scheme, assuring that government would address their request.



Governor Saraki

MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY
temphist@yahoo.com

Opinion

Reforming the Nigeria police

With its origins in 1836, the police is obviously the oldest profession in the country. But since it became known as the Nigerian Police Force in 1914, it has oscillated from one controversy to another with its image taking a severe battering along the way especially over the past two decades. Going by public sentiments they are, almost without question on top of the heap on the long list of ignominy. They harass you on the highways and also extort money, which is nothing new really; they arrive at crime scenes only after the criminals have long absconded only to inundate you with what most perceive as ridiculous questions; they are comrades in arms with armed robber — remember Anenih saga? They also, in the words of our president and chief security officer, loan out their weapons to the same bandits!

Recent events in the polity also exposed their adeptness at arson and kidnapping, not to mention expertise at election rigging as we discovered to our great cost in 2003. But beyond their stinking barracks, which must be the worst in the entire paramilitary service, and the reoccurring allegations of corruption against its leadership, what can be done to revive the force to be alive to its civic responsibilities? Have we, in truth, also been fair in our criticism of the force? It is easy to castigate the police for instance for the widespread corruption in its ranks, but are we sure we are sure their antecedents are not a throw-up from the society we live in? How do we for example reconcile their poor image with the fact that they always perform with distinction on international duties?

Still, even before the recent scandals and public disaffection over their dubious role in the last elections, there have always been suggestions for the reform of the Nigerian police including the call for the creation of state police from certain sections of the country as if that alone, is the solution to the myriad of problems afflicting the force. But to me, the call like, the clamour for a sovereign national conference, is not only insincere and diversionary, but actually a certificate for anarchy and even secession. The problems of the force are indeed legion, but there is nothing that is wrong with it today that could not be fixed by the right legislation or appropriate amendment and enforcement of our existing police laws, some of which are as old as the force itself.

First, we need a second look at the way and manner the IGP is appointed along with the Police Service Commission which supervises the force. Presently, the IGP is nominated after by the president after due consideration with the National Council of States, subject to confirmation by the National Assembly, but for all practical purposes our experience has shown that he

arm. Similarly, while there are constitutional provisions for the Police Services Commission, its bureaucratic structure is such that it is also a mere rubber stamp while appointments into the body, is equally the purview of the president. In countries with solid and tested democratic structures, that would ordinarily, raise few alarms. But the events of 2003 more than anything else, clearly show that the system is defective and inimical to the emergence of an effective and virile police force, which we all desire. Significantly, it was clear that the police under Tafa Balogun were in a precarious situation during the last elections when it was confronted with a clear choice between the government and party, which appointed him and loyalty to the Nigerian people and constitution. Most Nigerians will swear that he chose the former and who can argue with them. In 1983, the same complaints were made about the force under Sunday Adewusi.

To avoid such problems therefore, the police must be strengthened to resist political pressure at all times. The National Assembly must as a matter of great urgency, enact or amend appropriate laws some of which are as old as the force itself, to ensure that the police along with the supervisory body are made accountable to the National Assembly.

The intricate synergy between the leadership of the police and an improved Commission should produce the type of police system that is responsive to our yearnings and aspirations in a presumed democracy. But such a scenario is only possible if the issue of funding is adequately addressed to ensure their fiscal independence. That said, in a nation of over a hundred million inhabitants, and more than forty years after our independence, I see absolutely no reason why the police cannot generate sufficient revenue internally to fund some of its activities. It is common knowledge that what the police extort from motorists annually is almost at par with government's subvention within the same period. This perhaps explains why the practice has become difficult to discard in its entirety.

Sadly, most of the powers of the force and its ability to generate revenue in this regard have been whittled by the creation of Vehicle Inspection Office and the Federal Roads Safety Commission. In that regard, if the government is unwilling to increase funding to the force, it is imperative that we repeal some of the laws that inhibit internal revenue generation to enable the force stand on its own. In a nation literally crawling with felons, all that the police need is an improved and efficient system of fines and revenue collection. If the enabling laws are provided, all the various commands could be made self-accounting and given revenue

depending on the result, bonuses in excess of set revenue targets could be shared on a graduated basis to the rank and file in each location.

That way, we can all emerge winners. The police would not need to detain people over minor offences where a hefty fine will suffice. Our cells and prisons would be decongested. The reduced workload for judges would in turn precipitate enhanced speed and quality in the discharge of other pending cases. But more importantly, the police would be motivated towards crime prevention, while our streets would also be sanitized as a result. Quite naturally, improved revenues could be used to provide enhanced welfare programs and healthcare for the rank and file while government spending for the force needn't go beyond the provision of equipment and logistics. I have absolutely no doubt that with dedicated leadership and less corruption, coupled with sincerity of propose these objectives could be easily achieved.

But these also are only possible under certain conditions. The perennial image problem of the police remains a major inhibiting burden, which it needs to shed before anything else. Here, it is important that the force improves on its literacy level by hiking its minimum entry qualification. Either out of ignorance or lack of education or both, they often seem oblivious of the time worn doctrine of the presumption of innocence before trial and conviction in the way they relate with suspects.

Many are known to have died in police custody, while several like the late athlete Dele Udoh, were fatally shot at several checkpoints across the country. Their image problem is not helped by the spate of political assassinations and other unsolved murders nationwide. An ignorant person can be of little harm to anybody, but not so when he is also armed with an AK-47 assault rifle. The police mobile squadrons are obviously an imitation of SWAT teams in other parts of the world. But we all know that in Nigeria given their antecedents, what we have presently falls far short of our expectations.

What we need is a compact and highly trained outfit, whose members could be attached to different formations nationwide. In the process we don't need silly or comical slogans of the type employed by different police commands across the country, which are clearly superficial and ineffective. Effective policing of the polity goes beyond mere slogans.

To earn the confidence or even the respect of Nigerians, it must as a matter of great urgency, improve on its operational efficiency without playing to the gallery. But above all the force also needs to change its uniform because it is not people friendly. At the moment it is black, but if the intention was to intimidate it has clearly fallen far short of the desired expectations. But black also happens to be the preferred clothing for robbers and burglars

A matter of will and priorities

By Crispin Oduobuk

Without claiming a n y inventiveness in the matter, let me reiterate that getting our priorities wrong is one reason why our nation lingers in the league of ne'er-do-wells, despite our democratic protestations. Take for example the National Assembly's current debate on a dress code. With all due respect to the honourables, what's that all about? Are we going to have a bill on air intake or walking modes next? Meanwhile, what about getting tough on the shameless graft in government? Even if more legislation in that regard would do little good, does that justify a debate on the length of women's dresses?

Along with wrong priorities, another major reason why we remain underdeveloped is that we simply lack the collective will to elevate this nation. Basically, while corruption and all her unhelpful cousins may have contributed in no small way to our backwardness, the crux of our underdevelopment lies in our inability to muster the resolve to leap ahead.

This failure of determination continues to haunt us even now as we haggle over humdrum considerations such as which village potential leaders come from, what dialect they speak, what name they call God and what we stand to gain personally once they are in office. In other words, despite the well-recorded fact that these parameters have no bearing whatsoever on ability to deliver stated goals, we continue to mortgage our collective growth through our tendency to 'agendarise' everything in tribal, regional, religious and personal fiscal shades. And yet, we are living witnesses to the fact that where these considerations were discounted or at least downplayed, and the necessary will to act was duly mustered, significant progress has been recorded. Thankfully, we do not have to go far to see a clear example.

I love Abuja

Some years back, the montage "I love New York" used to adorn t-shirts that were rather popular. We should rip that off and make the "I love Abuja" variant to celebrate the fact that Abuja is the biggest city built in the 20th century. Whatever anyone is going to make of that, the 'unagendarised' truth is that that is a tremendous Nigerian achievement. The import for me therein is that we have the capacity and wherewithal to do remarkable things.

Incidentally, we all get

the nation. However, the Abuja we have today, as flawed as it may be, is largely a rendition of the military's will, which, despite its pre-eminently deceitful disposition, did enthrone some pockets of improvement amidst its general unwholesomeness. Today, we're all crying because billions get appropriated and then the stupendous sums are blatantly looted. When the 'armed robbers' disagree on how to share their loot, they merely let us in on snippets of their misdeeds which the government invariably covers up as 'family affairs.' Let's keep crying, perhaps heaven will hear us. As we cry, let's not forget that the military that began the large scale looting of the public treasury did muster the will to forge ahead with Abuja.

Hisses and snickers

Meanwhile, as inconsolable as many of us are over the near-stagnation that seems to characterise the Nigerian Project at this time, there is still hope for us. For even as we add retiring Inspector General of Police

an understandable case of self-protection than anything else. Indeed, perhaps we should applaud the snake for its determination to preserve itself, a trait possibly more admirable than the spuriousness displayed by the honourable men and women of the National Assembly who, it would appear, have nothing better to do but to debate dress codes.

The National Assembly and spurious issues

If that's the tack they're inclined to follow, here are a few heavyweights they may consider taking up as soon as they're done with a law that stands as much chance of being obeyed as the extant laws on abuse of office and graft. How many police-issued passes should a citizen have to move from Area One to Berger Junction here in Abuja? Perhaps four? And if a citizen dares to move from Abuja to Kaduna? The National Assembly should pass a law requiring such a troublesome citizen to obtain no less than 200 police-issued passes, possibly one for each kilometre.

"To ask the government to do anything other than pay lip service to the concept of fighting corruption is akin to asking a snake to swallow its head. That, you must agree, is not only an unfair proposition but one that is most unlikely to happen."

Tafa Balogun to an agonizingly long list of untouchables, we are nonetheless very familiar with the dance steps of the masquerade he wears. So while we may never see him prosecuted in a court of law, we will nevertheless hiss and snicker in our homes when he starts collecting chieftaincy titles all over the country, as we already do with others of his ilk. Of what use are the hisses and snickers? Well, that's the only tool of reprove available to us for now.

A snake and its head

Our seemingly ineffectual form of reprimand for traitorous misdeeds will have to serve until such a time when a leader with the will to carry out appropriate penalty according to the law happens on the scene. For to ask the present government to do anything other than pay lip service to the concept will be akin to asking a snake to swallow its head. That, you must agree, is not only an unfair proposition but one that is most unlikely to happen. The snake may swallow an errant rat here, a pesky frog there; it might even nibble at its own tail if the component itches unbearably, but to swallow its own head is out of the question. After all, for a snake to love its own head is not necessarily a

When they're done with that, they may just consider that bill on a walking code. Should we begin walking by placing the left foot in front of the right foot or vice versa? More importantly, what should be the measurement between steps? Next, the men and women in the National Assembly should mull over legislation that regulates the amount of air and sunlight each citizen is allowed in a day. This is imperative as it may end up having a bearing on their all-important dress code.

The last thing the National Assembly should do is insist that the relevant bodies enforce existing laws regarding abuse of office and graft. But I guess that is asking for too much. After all, if the executive has never shown the will to do so on its own, why shouldn't the National Assembly go to sleep or lark about?

Our politicians' lack of will to build this nation seemingly encourages others to give the matter a shot. But we already know about those others, don't we? We'll keep crying to heaven because, regardless of its seeming helplessness on these shores, on democracy we need to stand. And if we fall thereon, at least we'll know exactly who to blame: ourselves for pursuing priorities of



YOUR LETTERS

Adamu Adamu, do not be distracted

Please allow me a space in your popular paper to express solidarity with Mallam Adamu Adamu and also identify with most of what he said in his *Daily Trust* column of Friday 31 2004.

Despite what Abdullahi Jibir Zwall said about age catching up with him or the caustic diatribe Prof. Suleiman Elias Bogoro poured on him, Mallam has never been flippant, though he takes pains to inject humour in his write-ups. He has always been on a crusade to have truth triumph over falsehood, frank and honest dealing over deceitful window dressing etc. And these, surely, are noble attitudes that all politicians must imbibe to uplift their societies, both when in office and even while aspiring for it.

Adamu Adamu only strives with his pen to guide, admonish and exhort all to do good. For this, he deserves attentive ear whenever he opens up. It is clear he harbours no malice against anyone.

Therefore, it is my belief that Mallam needs not 'agonise' as he said he did, both when and after discharging his duty, which the Almighty and the society thrust on his powerful shoulders. Mallam, yours is

glad tidings to those who pay heed. It is our ardent hope they will listen attentively and take heed in earnest even if it is for the tangible benefits accruable to them as a consequence.

But Mallam, there is even one vital issue you did not include in your "manual of guidance to our Chief Executive"- that is: the students' scholarship allowance. First, it is paltry, probably the smallest paid to students throughout the federation. Secondly, it hardly comes on time.

It has been the fervent hope of Bauchi State students, that with educationists and scholars such as Mallam A. U Misau and Dr. Tilde manning government departments

charged with education in the state, the proverbial 'human face' of government would be our constant companion. Alas, that has not been our lot.

We have not despaired or lost hope yet. In other words, we are still hopeful that our governor's humane face would soon turn in our direction to comfort us, wiping our tears by compensating us for the long neglect we have passed through. It is often said that the youths of today will be the leaders of tomorrow.

But what kind of leadership do we envisage from half-baked literates in a knowledge driven world?

So his the governor must do something about students' allowances in

Bauchi State urgently to avert the catastrophe ticking to happen. If nothing is done now, either of two things may happen. Our generation would either drop out of school, or manage to pass out and become spineless or tyrannical future leaders. This would be either because of their stark ignorance - they might hardly distinguish their left hand from their right or because of vengeance.

They will feel no obligation to cater for the society that handled their affairs recklessly. We must work hard to avoid both these obviously bitter but avoidable choices. And now is the time to act.

Aminu Yusuf Ibrahim, University of Maiduguri, Mass Comm. Dept.

Decentralise Hajj operation

The issue of Hajj operation, especially the lifting of our pilgrims to holy land has been fraught with numerous problems. Hence the bad image the operation is causing to the country.

One needs to call on the Federal government to decentralize the operation of Nigeria pilgrim boards, and transfer some function to state government to coordinate.

The inability of Hajj

to handle the airlift of our pilgrims to holy land left a lot of our pilgrims not performing one of the pillars of Islam.

Some of this would - be - pilgrims have toiled and suffer for sometime inspite of harsh economic condition prevailing in the country, to save enough money only to be disappointed at eleven hour is unacceptable and ungodly.

The efforts of some states governments to take measure

pilgrims has cast doubt on the ability on some allowing our pilgrim on whim and caprices interest of this country at heart.

With the decentralisation of Hajj operation some States could airlift their pilgrims or workout modalities with other states, to ensure smooth Hajj operation.

The Federal Government should provide other needs and assistance in handling of Hajj operation.

Bala Nayashi No. 1 Yashi

Mr. Salawu's award and history

Kogi state deputy governor, Mr. Phillips Salawu has been conferred with the most supportive deputy governor award for the year 2004.

Representative of mandate communications outfit, Mr. Wilson Tolufashe, which organised the formal bestowal of the laurel on Mr. Salawu said the award was in recognition of the deputy governor's deep knowledge of his constitutional responsibilities as the Chief Adviser to the Governor, Mr. Salawu was praised for his good conduct which is the strong point that is absent in those deputy governors that see themselves as a better future governor than their bosses.

The award was obviously intended to spur the deputy governor to perform better in the years ahead.

After the conferment of the award, the deputy governor said inter alia: "I have a very strong concept on awards and honours. I

believe anything that is cheap is not well-deserved. Anybody that knows me will let you know that I do not go in for any cheap things or arrange awards. I have never seen or talked to any of you about this award."

Though the award came as a surprise, the deputy governor was highly appreciative of the effort of the researchers. Salawu said: "I am really thrilled that his humble and quiet contribution has been noticed by somebody else. That he thank God for the peaceful relationship that exists between his boss, Governor Ibrahim Idris.

In the end Mr. Phillips Salawu said he dedicated the award to the good people of Kogi state for their support, understanding and good will the Alhaji Ibrahim Idris-led administration has been enjoying from them.

He promised that the people will never regret giving their mandate to the governor to steer the ship of the state.

Y. J Itopa, Chief Press Secretary to the Deputy Governor of Kogi state.

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

editor@dailytrust.com

Opinion

Breaking Nigeria's ethnic barriers

By Emeka Eneje

In pre-independence and post independence periods in our journey to nationhood, a constant and common refrain has always been the belief in the unity of the country across generations of Nigerians. However, 44 years after political independence, Nigeria is not yet a melting pot. It is faced with a substantial problem of national unity.

What is good about the resurgence and recent alienation of ethnicity, exemplified by the rise of ethnic militias is that they represent essentially cries for justice and cries against marginalization and unfulfilled expectation. Because of lack of national unity, our country is yet to witness its period of glory. If Nigeria's potentialities in human, material and natural endowments can be actualized, it will be big, powerful and respected. A big, powerful, respected Nigeria is one in which all citizens shall enjoy and find fulfillment. In addition, a Nigeria whose potentialities are actualized will be forerunner of African renaissance as well as a guarantor of the upliftment and dignity of the Black race.

This much has been confirmed to me on numerous occasions in my life. First, by my students, academic colleagues and very distinguished African-Americans and Africans in the Diaspora during my sojourn in America between 1972-1980.

Secondly, in 1989 at Dares-Salam when Omafume Onoge, Jonathan Zwingina and myself, as members of a MAMSER Study Team on Comparative Mobilization Strategies in Africa, met with representatives of TANU - the ruling political party in Tanzania. Thirdly, in 1991-92 when Baba Gana Kingibe, Tom Ikimi and myself met with Nelson Mandela in Durban as members of a Federal Government of Nigeria and Political Parties Delegation to South Africa to observe the first ANC (South Africa) Party Convention following Mandela's release from prison. Finally, in 1994 at Arusha/Dodoma, when Bamanga Tukur and myself met with Mwalimu Julius Nyerere in his very humble residence during an Afican Business Roundtable (ABR) Conference in Tanzania.

In the lecture we referred to earlier given by the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, he had observed that "in respect of the British, the Swiss, Americans and Russians, they were to discard their individual chauvinistic ideas and practices in order to develop a common nationality". Dr. Azikiwe went on to proffer that "in the light of the experiences of other nations the Nigerian nationalities would soon

nation of their own creation".

Of course, we cannot fail to take cognizance of the fact that by the early 1990s, the Soviet Union was no more and that since the late 1990s, the United Kingdom also has been becoming less united. Yet some societies confronted with serious challenges to their existence are able to "postpone" their demise and halt disintegration.

As a multiculturalism composed of many different ethnic groups, Nigeria cannot be a society with a single pervasive national culture. Resentment is bound to exist in such an environment against perceived hegemony. As a Political Scientist, I cannot fail to remind all of us that periods of gestations are fraught with troubles and tribulations of the type we have been experiencing. The ailment has been diagnosed. We only need to apply the therapy and the correct dosage of the medicine. To become a "we", a visionary, dynamic, goal-oriented leadership will help in getting things right. Nigeria can be put on sound footing, but first, a conscious and determined effort must be made by the people and their governments.

In the immediate period following our attainment of political independence, those we elected to public offices were fairly and relatively accountable. The political parties were based on ideas and principles; opposition was respected and functioned positively, corruption had not become pervasive. Looting of the treasuries at most tiers of government was not the order of the day. There was competition among the regional governments over which government would do better in the provision of amenities for citizens.

Today, if you are doing fine in this respect, you are "a loner" among your colleague administrators who develop "bad belle" towards you. Service to the people, good governance have become endangered species replaced by blind ambition while public power has become both an aphrodisiac and a business for private, primitive accumulation. Nigeria's problems are therefore beyond quota system, federal character and rotational presidency which are temporary palliatives through which we seek to create a sense of participation and belonging in the short term. As transient phenomena, they are not to last for ever. It follows that people who want to get into public office have to be thoroughly "x-rayed".

Not whether the President is from North-West, South-West, North-

section of the territory of a given tier of government.

Therefore, we must be clear about the complexity of the causal chain of our problem, or else we shall forever be chasing shadows while leaving out the substance unattended to. Appreciation of the complexity of the causal chain of our problem, will permit us to determine critical ones from less critical ones.

In this regard, given the extent of the decay we have to contend with, anything less than a holistic approach to our problems will only be scratching and postponing inevitable hard choices that confront us, while delaying our steady march towards national integration.

"Nigeria's problems are therefore beyond quota system, federal character and rotational presidency which are temporary palliatives through which we seek to create a sense of participation and belonging in the short term. As transient phenomena, they are not to last for ever. It follows that people who want to get into public office have to be thoroughly "x-rayed"

The problem of ethnicity can be reduced to a lack of sense of community. In the Nigerian context, ethnicity derives from two main causes. The first is the rabid feeling of superiority-complex that allows a group or groups of citizens to arrogate to themselves the right to subjugate other groups of Nigerian citizens simply on the basis of perceived relative geopolitical advantages. The second is the rejection by the subjugated groups of this false premise and their subsequent reaction against what they perceive as crass injustice. The resultant effect of these two tendencies lead to a "us" versus "them" dichotomy and a lack of a collective "we" feeling. The danger ethnicity poses to national unity (a sense of higher loyalty) is its underlying moral, which is: "whatever is good for me, I, my group is all that matters".

Generally, cultural differences become problematic where accompanied by diverse and conflicting notions of justice, principles, morality and ethics. Fortunately for us, this is not the case. For, in spite of our diversity, our notions of "good" and "bad"

are similar, if not identical. That surely makes for ease of co-operation and cohabitation in a Federal Nigeria. We must always remember that a return to a state of nature is not a choice available to us today. To paraphrase Thomas Hobbes: the escape from the insecurity of the state of nature where life is short, brutish and nasty means giving up our insecure freedom to an order-and-justice based system, that is the Leviathan (i.e. a nation state, Nigeria) for our protection and self-actualization.

After 44 years, there are signs that Nigerians are tired and are saying loud and clear, "enough is enough".

the Accountant General of the Federal Government. The office of the secretary to the Government of the Federation should become office of Secretary to the Federal Government. These seemingly minute changes touch on the 'heart' and 'spirit' of true Federalism.

We need a proper Federal Constitution in which is enshrined the principle of fiscal federalism. In a federation, unity is needed not uniformity. We need to quickly correct the disjunction between order and justice, and ensure that culprits are punished. We need creative solutions and a willingness and favourable disposition towards making the necessary effort for bringing about the desired changes. In my view, this in itself is a far-reaching change and that is where to begin. We must aggressively embark on the following actions viz:

Strengthen our weak infrastructure and our political, economic and legal institutions. Make justice able citizenship, as well as the fundamental human, social, political and economic rights of our people. Vigorously fight corruption.

We need to sanitize the nature of political competition. Encourage issues-based and inclusive politics. Promote skill acquisition and training.

We also should encourage popular participation, i.e. the active involvement of citizens in candidate selection, representation, electoral processes as well as in policy-design and formation; implementation-execution and the evaluation of public programmes.

Tackle timidity, ignorance, illiteracy, poverty which conspire to relegate popular participation to the backburner and lead to a lack of meaningful involvement of citizens in governance. This ugly situation gives rise to a very frightful and negative culture characterized by relatively unresponsive and irresponsible government which in turn gives rise to apathy and autocracy - by which government is seen as 'all powerful' and always right and having the final authority to do whatever it pleases; the people feel their views do not count and cannot make a difference which in turn murders civil society's role in bringing about a virile democracy.

The true human rights and constitutional position is that sovereign political power and authority reside with the people from whom the government of the day derives its power and authority.

We must as citizens move away from merely sitting down and wishing good governance and begin to participate actively in deciding our fate by

good governance, transparency and accountability.

Since, Federal allocations form the bulk-share of income for various tiers of government, knowing how they are disbursed and utilized is imperative. Operators of government and the public sector must be above suspicion.

Political apprenticeship and seasoning, credibility and track-record that would have allowed one to stand for subsequent higher offices, have gone with the wind. The production and implementation of legislation that might improve the lives of citizens and enhance their life chances is a scarce commodity because some of our law makers are not interested in the nuts-and-bolts of representation and the problem-solving function of service to their constituencies. In addition, there are those who are duly elected but have become increasingly incorporated into the State's apparatus of control and management and are thus more accountable to those powers than to those from whom they derive their legitimacy, i.e. the voters. Their co-option politically has reduced them to functional irrelevance. The cumulative impact of all this, is that our politics is programmatically and structurally weak and without real accountability. We need to change the current forms of politicking, effect changes within the political system, make more demands on those we send to look after our interests; so.

They don't get used to thinking that symbolic politics is all there is to governance. This has left us effectively with rhetoric as action in place of real action. The brokerage politics they practise is for themselves without being held responsible for the deals they use their elected position to make. Some, indeed represent ineffectiveness to an embarrassing degree of perfect absurdity.

As a result, our politics has morphed into a politics of symbolism in which some politicians replace the improvement of the lives of the people they claim to speak for, with making News and people are unable to understand who is acting in or against their interests, due to ethnicity. Since the certification of leaders, to a certain degree, takes place through the media, the media can hardly extricate itself from vicarious responsibility in the creation of some of these 'characters'. If such dangerous trend has to discontinue, the media needs to exercise some restraint in their certification of newsworthiness of individuals.

Being text of address at a lecture on state of the nation, organised by the Nigeria Union of

Trust International

Iraq elections and US occupation

By Patrick Martin

The election January 30 in Iraq marks a further intensification of the contradictions confronting American imperialism, both in Iraq and at home. It will neither resolve the crisis of the American stooge regime in Baghdad, hated and despised by the vast majority of the Iraqi people, nor legitimize the US occupation in the eyes of world and among large sections of the American public.

George W. Bush emerged from the White House briefly to make a triumphal statement hailing the vote. The US media carried wall-to-wall, gushing coverage all day Sunday. But even the combined propaganda powers of the US government and the corporate-controlled media machine cannot transform an election held at gunpoint and under military occupation into a genuinely democratic event.

Initial reports on voter turnout were driven by the political imperative to put the best possible face on the election and influence public opinion in the United States, which is increasingly turning against the war. The turnout figure began at 90 percent plus—numbers reported, naturally enough, on *Fox News*. Then an Iraqi election official put the figure at 72 percent nationwide. This was subsequently lowered to 60 percent nationwide, then to 60 percent “in some areas.”

The compliant US media dutifully swallowed all these numbers in succession, never challenging their accuracy or questioning how each figure could be so quickly supplanted by a lower one as the day wore on.

The 72 percent figure, for instance, issued just before the polls closed, was inherently improbable, given that most polling places did not even open in the Sunni Triangle. With the vast majority of Sunnis, some 20-25 percent of Iraq's people, boycotting the election, turnout among the rest of the population would have to be near-unanimous to bring the total up to 72 percent.

The reports on turnout were supplemented by television news footage of happy Iraqis celebrating their new-found freedom to vote, praising the American military, and thanking President Bush. There is ample reason to believe that these scenes were largely staged for the benefit of the media—like the scenes of Iraqis tearing down the statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square after the US invasion nearly two years ago. (Similar scenes were a hallmark of the Baathist dict-

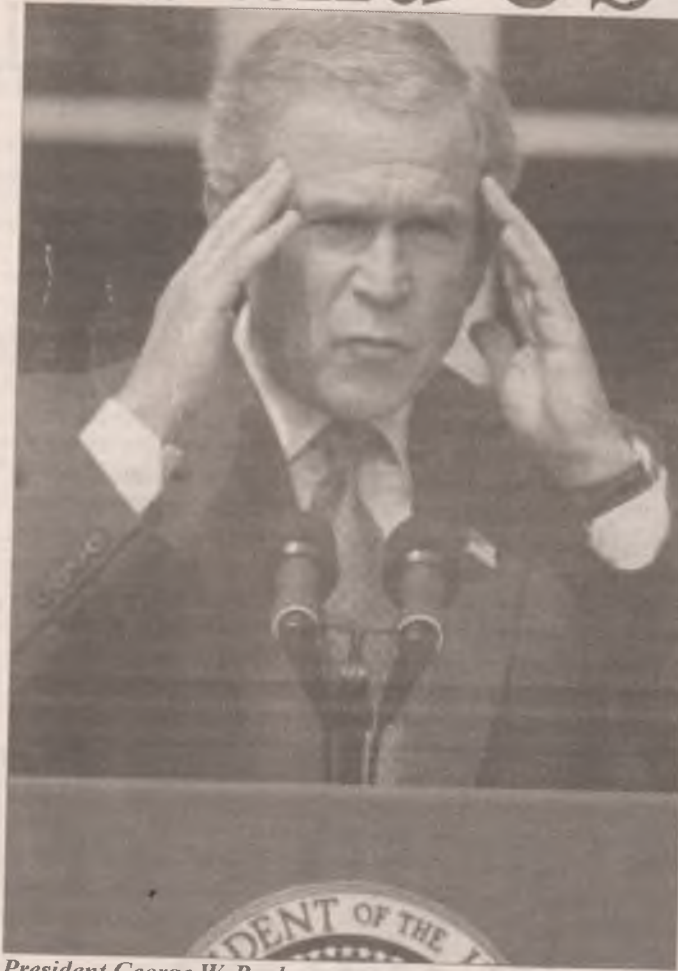
atorship as well, with cheering crowds vowing to sacrifice their lives for Saddam.)

According to Robert Fisk of the *Independent*, a major British daily newspaper, “The big television networks have been given a list of five polling stations where they will be ‘allowed’ to film. Close inspection of the list shows that four of the five are in Shiite Muslim areas—where the polling will probably be high—and one in an up-market Sunni area, where it will be moderate.” Sunni working class areas were entirely off limits, he noted.

In some cases, the media reports were literally military propaganda handouts. ABC News, for instance, reported thousands of voters in Fallujah, the city virtually destroyed by the US military onslaught last November. The source for this report of surprisingly high turnout was the US military command in the shattered city. Meanwhile, other news outlets put the turnout in Fallujah as minuscule, on a par with the other predominantly Sunni cities where few polls opened and few voters turned out.

The major theme of the media blitz was that the Iraqi people had thronged to the polls in defiance of threats of violence from the insurgent groups opposed to the US occupation. Such coverage ignores the largest purveyor of fear and violence in Iraq by far: the American military occupation, which leveled Fallujah and has blitzed many other Iraqi cities, including Ramadi, Samarra and Mosul, all centres of the Sunni population.

According to Fisk, one of the few ‘credible’ reporters working in the region, the incessant raids by US ground forces have been supplemented by a new air war: “American air strikes on Iraq have been increasing exponentially. There are no ‘embedded’ reporters on the giant American air base at Qatar or aboard the US carriers in the Gulf from which these ever increasing and ever more lethal sorties are being flown. They go unrecorded, unreported, part of the ‘fantasy’ war which is all too real to the victims but hidden from us journalists. The reality is that much of Iraq has become a free-fire zone (for reference, see under ‘Vietnam’) and the Americans are conducting this secret war as efficiently



President George W. Bush

and as ruthlessly as they conducted their earlier bombing campaign against Iraq between 1991 and 2003, an air raid a day, or two raids, or three.”

The cumulative weight of this violence and destruction is far greater than that of the terror bombs planted by Islamic groups like that allegedly headed by Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian supporter of Osama bin Laden. The US military has killed an estimated 100,000 Iraqis since Bush ordered the invasion in March 2003, a total which dwarfs the casualties caused by terrorist attacks on civilians.

Moreover, the US government and media routinely label all acts of armed resistance against the US invaders, and their stooges in the puppet regime, as “terrorist”—a verbal device designed to criminalize all Iraqi opposition to foreign occupation. In truly Orwellian fashion, the US military occupation, notwithstanding its tactics of torture and mass killing, is identified with “democracy,” while those Iraqis who fight against it are, by definition, enemies of democracy, “anti-Iraqi” elements, and even fascists.

There is evidence of direct intimidation of Iraqis by the US military in the course of election day. American soldiers were reported going through the city of Mosul, largely Sunni-populated and a center of insurgent resistance, and seeking out Iraqi non-voters, who could easily be identified by the absence of a semi-permanent ink stain on the thumb. Any Iraqi without such proof of voting was subjected to questioning as to why he had not voted—and no doubt, had

troops were out in force, backed by hundreds of armored vehicles, and supplemented by another 150,000 US-trained Iraqi police and soldiers. Even the American media could not disguise the spectacle of Iraqis filing in to the polls through rolls of barbed wire, being frisked three separate times under the eyes of US snipers, while US helicopters and war planes roared overhead.

It was not a scene of freedom, but one of occupation and brutal subordination.

Within Iraq, the January 30 vote sets the stage for greater political conflicts and growing opposition to the US occupation regime. No official results are expected for at least a week, a delay which gives the US-backed regime plenty of time to manipulate the totals.

In the Shiite and Kurdish areas of the south and north, where a large voter turnout was reported, religious and tribal leaders are collaborating with the American occupation in return for promises of political power and financial concessions in a new US-backed regime. Their devil's bargain may produce a regime headed by the United Iraqi Alliance, the main Shiite coalition, with Kurdish support—or they may be defrauded by their American overlords.

The week before the vote saw a rash of reports in the American press that Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's party was gaining. Given the absence of reliable polls or forecasts of voter turnout, such speculation reveals the hopes of the Bush administration, and its effort, in league with the media, to condition public opinion to accept a manipulated outcome engineered by Washington. Allawi's Iraqi National Accord was supported

and financed by the CIA for more than a decade, and the former Baathist enforcer is still the favorite of the White House—perhaps as the middleman in a coalition regime embracing both the Shiite and Kurdish parties.

Even should such a coalition emerge, facilitated by the Sunni boycott, Kurdish separatism could quickly break it up. The National Assembly elected Sunday is to draft a constitution in which Shiite demands for majority control will run up against demands for quasi-independence in the Kurdish provinces. An early flashpoint will be the status of Kirkuk, at the center of the rich northern oilfields, with its population evenly divided among Arabs, Turkomen and Kurds, but claimed by the Kurdish parties as part of the future region of Kurdistan.

Within the United States, the government-backed media blitz on the triumph of democracy in Iraq is aimed at intimidating opponents of the war and US occupation. But this propaganda campaign only intensifies the contradictions in the Bush administration's political position. If the Iraqi people have “taken control of their country,” as the White House claims, why must 150,000 US troops remain there? Why can't 25 million Iraqis defend themselves from the small bands of foreign terrorists and Saddam Hussein loyalists who supposedly make up the resistance?

“Democratization” is merely the latest pretext for the US occupation, following the now discredited claims that the US invaded Iraq to destroy Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction or because of Saddam's alleged connections with the terrorists who perpetrated the attacks of September 11, 2001. The democracy pretext, too, will be exploded by events.

WSWS

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5 die in Sudan riots

A representative of tribesmen who clashed with police in Red Sea coastal city of Sudan said Sunday at least 25 people had died and 100 were injured, significantly exceeding earlier casualty tolls given by the tribe.

The United Nations expressed concern that if violence in eastern Sudan was not contained, it could escalate tensions across a country fractured by separate wars.

After Saturday's riots, Red Sea governor General Hatim Wasilah said 14 people had died and 16 were injured when police tried to stop widespread looting and vandalism.

But a representative of the Beja tribe said 23 tribesmen were killed and about 100 others were injured.

The United Nations said police fired on peaceful demonstrators in the poor, underdeveloped city 425 miles northeast of the capital Khartoum. The rioting appeared to be economically motivated.

Amina Dhirar, head of the Beja Congress movement in Khartoum, told The Associated Press on Sunday that at least 25 demonstrators had been killed, adding that the figure could be higher since "some parents buried their dead, preferring not to bring them to the morgue."

Dhirar said eight of the injured were in critical condition and police have detained 101 Beja tribesmen in Port Sudan.

The ruling party in Khartoum said it sent a high-level delegation representing Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir to Port Sudan to "express (his) condolences" and to assess the situation.

"The U.N. would be very keen to see all violence stop and this situation contained and resolved in a way that would see the area stabilized so tensions don't escalate across the country," said Radhia Achouri, a U.N.

spokeswoman in Sudan. Achouri warned Saturday that the clash could open a new front in Sudan, where a nearly 2-year-old conflict is raging in the western Darfur region and a peace treaty was reached this month ending the 21-year southern civil war.

Members of the Beja tribe have complained of neglect in eastern Sudan, a poor region where a low-intensity conflict has persisted for 16 years. Poverty-related illnesses, including tuberculosis, are common in the Beja area of Port Sudan, and illiteracy is a major problem.

The Beja Congress, an exiled group representing numerous eastern Sudan tribes, rejected a Jan. 17 accord between the government and opposition groups to end the conflict.

"We as a party think that this peace agreement and the division of wealth and power has ignored us altogether," Dhirar said.



Kofi Annan, UN Scribe

UN 'rules out' genocide in Darfur

Genocide has not been committed in Darfur, a keenly awaited United Nations report said, according to Sudan's foreign minister.

If genocide was found to have taken place, signatories to a UN convention are legally obliged to act to end it.

The report has been given to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who said it would be published shortly.

More than 70,000 people have been killed and two million forced to flee their homes in Darfur.

"We have a copy of that report and they didn't say there is a genocide," said Mustafa Osman Ismail.

The United States said that government-backed militias have committed a genocide against Darfur's non-Arab

groups. The government denied arming the Janjaweed militias and blames Darfur's rebel groups for starting the conflict.

Asked whether the report concluded that genocide had been committed, Mr Annan said:

"Regardless of how the commission describes what is going on in Darfur, there is no doubt that serious crimes have been committed."

"Action will have to be taken," to end the Darfur conflict, he said, adding that he believed sanctions should be threatened.

A five-man panel led by Italian judge Antonio Cassese was set up in October to investigate reports that a genocide had been committed in Darfur.

There is a precise UN definition of genocide. The team had to assess whether there was intent by the Sudanese government to destroy a national, ethnical, racial or religious group in Darfur.

Last week, a government plane reportedly bombed a village killing some 100 people, mostly women and children.

Sudanese Interior Minister Abdel Rahim Mohamed Hussein told Reuters news agency that the incident was being investigated.

"Armies all over the world have committed mistakes and it is possible that an isolated bombing took place. If this is so, we will punish the offenders," he said.

Mr Ismail was speaking at a two-day African Union summit in the Nigerian capital, Abuja.

The United States has pushed for sanctions to be imposed on Sudan if the violence in Darfur does not end, but this has been opposed by China and Russia, which have economic

ties to the Sudan government. "The UN Security Council had considered sanctions and had not been able to move forward because of some divisions in the Council. But I believe that sanctions should still be on the table," Mr Annan said.

The Darfur rebels have appealed for a peacekeeping force strong enough to disarm the Arab militias, accused of systematic killings and mass rape.

Zimbabwe denies food shortages

The Zimbabwe government has angrily denied reports that half the population will need food aid this year.

Agriculture Minister Joseph Made said the report was part of western plans to destabilise Zimbabwe ahead of elections due in March, state media reported.

A US-funded food monitoring body said last week that almost six million Zimbabweans would need food aid before the next harvest.

The opposition accuses the government of using food as a political tool.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) said its supporters are denied state hand-outs.

They said the government refuses international food aid in order to retain control of its distribution.

These claims were rejected by the government.

Last year, Mr Made said that, after three years of shortages, Zimbabwe had grown more than enough food to feed the population and even had a

US, Britain have not rewarded Libya — Gaddafi

Libyan leader Moamer Gaddafi has complained that he has not been sufficiently rewarded by the United States and Britain for agreeing to dismantle his weapons of mass destruction program.

"They promised, but we haven't seen anything yet," Gaddafi said in an interview with Time magazine, excerpts of which were released on Sunday.

"Libya and the whole world expected a positive response, not just words, although they were nice words, from America and Europe," he said. "British Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President George W. Bush expressed their satisfaction."

"But there must be at least a declaration of a program like the Marshall Plan, to show the world that those who wish to abandon the nuclear-weapon program will be helped," he added.

In the interview conducted in Tripoli, Gaddafi also denied allegations that Libya had been involved in a plot to assassinate Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz.

"We have a good relationship with Saudi Arabia," he told Time. "My personal relationship with Prince Abdullah is a good one."

"This is a fabricated case, an intentionally destructive thing. We see America paying so much attention to (Abdullah), as if he were its citizen."

"They have not learned from the past," he said. "The list of accusations against

Libya is very long. They all proved false. We are still in a vicious circle.

"Accusing Libya of being a country that sponsors terrorism is a very dangerous thing," the Libyan leader added. "That has psychological repercussions. Libya could argue, 'Since I am still on the terrorist list, why not commit terrorism, which I am accused of anyway. Why should I pay the price without getting something in return?'"

Gaddafi said Libya had agreed to renounce weapons of mass destruction because "we started to ask ourselves, 'By manufacturing nuclear weapons, against whom are we going to use them?'"

"World alliances have changed. We had no target," he said. "And then we started thinking about the cost. If someone attacks you and you use a nuclear bomb, you are in effect using it against yourself."

Asked whether the 1988 bombing of a Pan American jumbo jet over Lockerbie, Scotland, for which Libya has accepted legal responsibility, had been a Libyan "mistake," the Libyan leader replied: "Until now the perpetrators are unknown."

Gaddafi was also asked about the possibility of holding Western-style elections in his country. "What for?" he replied. "Libyans are in paradise."

Gaddafi was also asked about the possibility of holding Western-style elections in his country. "What for?" he replied. "Libyans are in paradise."

Moroccans protest over tsunami row

Thousands of people have demonstrated in support of a Moroccan newspaper which claimed that the tsunami was an act of divine retribution.

The newspaper of Morocco's Islamic party, PJD, said the disaster showed God's displeasure with South-East Asia's sex tourism industry.

The comments have provoked outrage among human rights groups and rival political parties.

But the protesters defended the newspaper's right to express its views.

The *Attajdid* newspaper said that Morocco could face a similar disaster to the devastating tidal wave if it did not stamp out immorality.

The articles have been condemned on Moroccan television and have prompted calls for censorship of the press.

The PJD said that 5,000 people took to the streets of the capital, Rabat, in support of the party.

Several demonstrations against the newspaper article have been held.

The Indian Ocean earthquake on 26 December which sparked a massive tidal wave has left at least 280,000 people dead or missing across 13 countries from Malaysia to Tanzania.

The United Nations says \$5.3bn has been pledged by foreign governments in aid to deal with the devastation.

French PM urges Tunisia reforms

French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin has called for democratic reform in Tunisia.

Mr Raffarin made the comment on Sunday evening in Tunis on the first leg of his tour of three former French colonies in north Africa.

Mr Raffarin's visit to Tunis was expected to focus on French investment in Tunisian industry.

It is the first trip to Tunisia by a French head of government for more than 20 years.

The BBC's correspondent said the remarks came as some surprise.

"We encourage Tunisia to progress on the path of political and democratic modernisation," Mr Raffarin told the French community at the beginning of his visit.

"We will resolutely support Tunisia's economic and social modernisation," he added, saying France wanted to see Tunisia more firmly anchored to

the European Union.

Awkward questions about Tunisia's human rights abuses raised by France's former left-wing government had previously made for tense relations.

And in Tunisia democracy is almost as prickly a subject as human rights, BBC correspondent said.

It is a country where activists often go on hunger strike to protest against alleged arbitrary imprisonment by the authorities.

President Zine ElAbidine Ben Ali, who maintains that he has implemented significant democratic reforms, is likely to ignore Mr Raffarin's comments.

Following similar encouragement from US President George W Bush, Mr Ben Ali went on to extend his 17-year rule last October in elections international observers described as better than last time but seriously flawed.

Trust International

Russia backs Abbas on peace process

Russia pledged its "active" support for the Palestinians amid growing signs of a revival in the long-dormant Middle East peace process as visiting Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas voiced "high hopes" Moscow would advance the initiative to restart peace talks.

"You are the recognized leader of the Palestinian people and we will actively support you," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Abbas in front of reporters after the two held talks.

Speaking afterwards at the Kremlin where he held a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Abbas said there was now a "historic" opportunity to rekindle the Middle East peace process and said Russia had a decisive role to play in doing so.

"There is a historic chance to bring about peace in the region," Abbas said.

"Russia's support in bilateral relations and in the framework of the quartet will be of decisive importance in establishing a universal and stable peace in the Middle East," the Palestinian leader said in remarks spoken in Arabic and translated into Russian by an interpreter.

Putin said he hoped Abbas would succeed in implementing measures needed to improve the Palestinian-Israeli relationship and bolster the Palestinian economy.

"We are ready to cooperate with you and the international community in an active way to resolve these issues," Putin said.

Abbas underscored that his decision to travel to Moscow before visiting the United States or the European Union was deliberate and said the Palestinians "have placed high hopes in Russia advancing the peace process."

Abbas' trip to Moscow came as Israeli media reported that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's top advisors were to meet Monday in Washington with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to discuss prospects for an Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire.

Rice was scheduled to travel to the region February 6 and 7 and an Israeli official said a summit between Sharon and Abbas could take place the week beginning February 6, coinciding with Rice's trip.

Moscow, a member of the Middle East "quartet," enjoyed close relations in Soviet times with the Palestinians and other Arab states but its influence in the region has dwindled since the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Analysts said Russia, which has also developed

warm relations with Israel since then, was examining various ways to reassert its interests in the Middle East and elsewhere, and Abbas' visit marked Putin's first direct engagement in the peace process in four years.

"The main goal of the Palestinian visitor is to obtain Russia's support in anticipation of difficult negotiations with the Israelis," the respected centrist daily Izvestia said Monday.

"But the question remains open: Is Moscow ready at this time to support the representative of the late Arafat — not just with words but with concrete deeds?" the paper added, referring to the former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Both the Palestinians and Israelis have taken several critical steps towards resuming peace talks since Arafat's death.



Iyad Allawi, Iraq Interim Prime Minister

Iraq poll a victory over terror — Allawi

Iraq's interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi has hailed Sunday's election as a "victory over terrorism."

He spoke as the UN's senior election official said turnout in Sunni areas — where the insurgency has been strongest — was higher than expected.

However he stressed that voting among Sunnis, whose participation in the poll is seen as key to the success of the new government, was nonetheless low.

But regardless of whether they voted, Mr Allawi said, Iraqis must now unite.

"We are entering a new era of our history and all Iraqis — whether they voted or not — should stand side by side to build their future," he said in his first remarks since Sunday's elections for a transitional national assembly.

The overall election turnout has been estimated at about 60%, with some eight million Iraqis voting. It remains unclear how many Iraqis were registered to vote.

The UN's senior election official in Iraq, Carlos Valenzuela, told BBC News he was pleased that more people than expected "defied the threat of violence to go and vote".

He said a precise turnout figure would not be known for several weeks, but it appeared higher numbers of Sunnis than expected turned out to vote.

He said some areas reported a better turnout than others.

Queues, for example, were seen forming outside polling stations in the former rebel stronghold of Falluja.

But voting figures were thought to be very low in Ramadi and Samarra. Four polling booths in the Sunni

Azamiyah district of Baghdad never even opened, according to reports.

Leading Sunni politician Adnan Pachachi, who had called for the elections to be postponed, said he was glad his expectations about low turnout were not borne out.

He said he wanted Sunni parties that had not taken part in the elections to be involved in the writing of the Iraqi constitution.

"This is the most important task before the national

assembly," said the former Iraqi foreign minister. "If that can be done I think we would have paved the way for a much more inclusive election before the end of the year."

The BBC's correspondent, in Baghdad, said defeating the insurgency may depend on being able to form a broad-based government which Sunnis feel represents their interests, as well as the Shias who voted in such large numbers.

Shootout in Kuwait claims four

Four suspected Islamist militants and a civilian were killed in a nine-hour gunfight with security forces south of Kuwait City which resulted in the arrest of the extremists' spiritual leader.

The battle, the fourth such clash between militants and the authorities within the space of the month, also left three policemen injured, one seriously, interior ministry spokesman Adel al-Hashash said.

Three suspects were wounded and three, including their alleged spiritual leader, were arrested during the gunbattle in Al-Qurain region, about 25 kilometres south of the capital, Hashash said.

The clash came one day after a gunbattle involving suspected Islamist extremists that left three people dead and five injured near Kuwait City.

According to state television, one of the four militants killed was a Saudi citizen, the second time in a fortnight one of the kingdom's nationals has been killed in a gunbattle.

A Kuwaiti civilian was killed after being caught in the crossfire.

Among those detained was Amer Khlaif al-Enezi, a former

mosque preacher who is the alleged spiritual leader of militants involved in a series of clashes with security forces this month. His brother Nasser was killed in a gunfight with police on Sunday, Hashash said.

Police had laid siege to a house suspected of sheltering armed men but the suspects refused to give themselves up and an exchange of automatic gunfire erupted.

Security forces had been chasing "10 suspects," and pursued them in several parts of Al-Qurain, Hashash said.

The gunbattle, which started at dawn and during which security forces raided several houses, ended after more than nine hours.

One of the stormed houses was attached to a mosque, an AFP correspondent said.

Security forces there pursued the suspects in several parts of Al-Qurain, Hashash said.

It was the fourth deadly gunbattle between security forces and suspected militants in the oil-rich emirate this month, and the government has vowed to crush terror.

"The government reaffirms its determination to crush this deviant group and deter all those who attempt to disrupt the security and stability of our beloved homeland," a cabinet statement said after Sunday's unrest.

The American, British and French embassies in Kuwait have advised their nationals to avoid certain areas in the country and warned of the danger of more unrest.

Kuwaiti authorities have seized arms and explosives in a series of raids around the Gulf emirate and arrested about 15 suspected Islamist militants, including Saudis.

The emirate's national guard chief Sheikh Salem al-Ali al-

Hillary Clinton suffers collapse

US Senator and former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton has collapsed during a public appearance in Buffalo, US media reports.

She was reported to have been taken to hospital after collapsing.

She had been due to give a lecture at Canisius College

on the government's role in caring for the sick.

ABC News said the New York senator collapsed during an address to a chamber of commerce luncheon in Buffalo.

Last September her husband, former US President Bill Clinton, underwent a heart operation.

Odd World

Man wants phone pole out of Kitchen

Piotr Kardys is a Pole with a problem — a pole; in fact, a telephone pole in his kitchen. It was erected without his permission by telephone operator TPSA and when he built a home on his property in 2001 he had to build around the offending object, which is how the pole ended up in his kitchen.

Local authorities said since no one objected when the pole went up, it was legal. Kardys, a businessman from Kolbuszowa, disputed this view and Poland's Supreme Administrative Court has now agreed with him.

But his problems aren't over. Local authorities rescinded the building permit for the pole and told TPSA to move it, but TPSA spokeswoman Izabella Szum said the company would appeal.

"We have to have a binding decision — we could do it on our own, but you have to realize this is a big investment," she said.

Live crocodile found in Swimming Pool

The skills of Crocodile Dundee were not needed. The reptile was placid and sick, but in the wrong place. A three-foot saltwater crocodile ended up in a public swimming pool in the tropical Australian city of Darwin.

Swimmers were evacuated after lifeguards were alerted. A government spokesman couldn't say whether it had crawled to the pool from the wild overnight or had been dumped there by humans as a Saturday night prank.

The young reptile has been taken to a Darwin farm, where its future will be determined: Join breeding stock or be slaughtered for leather.

Mobile phones to turn into golf clubs and toy guns

Subway commuters could get more energetic in Japan through a new motion-sensitive mobile telephone equipped with games that will let people on the move practise their golf swings or shoot up monsters.

The local branch of British mobile giant Vodafone on Monday unveiled the V603SH, billed as the first phone in Japan to respond to movements, which will let users perform basic mobile functions through programmed shakes and jerks.

The 142-gram telephone, developed with Sharp and the Aichi Steel Corporation, can be used as a golf club. Users look back at the screen to see how well they putted.

The phone can also be moved like a gun for the shoot-'em-up game "House of the Dead," raising the possibility of more adventurous times on the Tokyo subway where rows of commuters hunched over mobile phone screens are a common sight.

The V603SH also lets users watch television on a liquid crystal display screen that can rotate 180 degrees.

The telephone is due to go on sale in Japan in mid-February, with Vodafone not setting a market price.

On January 18 Pantech Co., South Korea's third largest mobile phone maker, began selling what was advertised as the world's first motion-recognition mobile phone, which can be used to simulate a fishing rod or racecar controls.

The South Korean "sports-leisure" PH-S6500 phone can also be attached to a jogger's body to chart speed, calories consumption or distance.

Mexican pedestrian hit by car held responsible for damage

A Mexican man in hospital with a possible skull fracture and other injuries after being struck by a car is being held responsible for damages to the vehicle.

Sergio Segundo Ruiz, 60, was hit Monday about 10:30 p.m. local time when he crossed an avenue, apparently without taking any precautions, said Jose Adan Reyes, an official from the city's traffic department.

Under local law, crossing the street with disregard for safety and approaching traffic is an infraction, Reyes said.

A city police officer was posted outside Segundo's hospital room. The owner of the 1986 Ford Taurus involved in the

Hamas blasts Gaza settlement

The Islamic militant group Hamas said it launched five mortar bombs at a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip Monday, after Israeli army gunfire killed a Palestinian girl.

Witnesses said the shelling damaged a home in Neve Dekalim settlement. At least one ambulance was summoned to the scene but there was no immediate word of casualties.

Mahmoud Abbas in a bid to prevent a chaotic power vacuum in Gaza when Israel quits the occupied territory this year.

Earlier Monday, Israeli troops shot dead a 10-year-old girl in a schoolyard in the southern Gaza town of Rafah, witnesses said. The army said it was not aware of its soldiers having been involved in any shooting and was investigating.

"Zionist attacks did not

stop, then firing of mortar bombs will continue."

Sworn to the Jewish state's destruction, Hamas had vowed to bloody Israeli troops and settlers when they withdraw under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon plan to "disengage" from more than four years of fighting with the Palestinians.

But the Islamic group also seeks political reconciliation

Trust International

FOURTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION ASSEMBLY HELD IN ABUJA



Prof. Ibrahim Gambari (middle) discussing with the United Nation's Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan (R) during the commissioning ceremony of the UN House in Abuja weekend. (left) is the FCT minister Mallam Nasir Ahmed el-Rufaij



Vice president Atiku Abubakar of Nigeria and other member of the African Union during the session



President Olusegun Obasanjo poses with his African counterparts during the fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union held at the International Conference Abuja...yesterday



A cross section of the African leaders during the closing ceremony...yesterday



Another cross section of the African leaders during the closing ceremony...yesterday



African Union chairman president Olusegun Obasanjo in a warm handshake with AU secretary General, Alpha Oumar Konare after declaring the fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of the AU

OBAJANA CEMENT PLC. PUBLIC NOTICE

Obajana Cement Plc. (OCP), a subsidiary of Dangote Industries Limited is developing a cement factory and associated facilities which includes a 135MW Power Plant, a 90 kilometer gas pipeline from Ajaokuta to Obajana, a limestone quarry, 8 kilometer conveyor belt, a water reservoir and a housing estate at Obajana village in Kogi State of Nigeria. In pursuance of the Company's Corporate Social and Environmental Policy, OCP wishes to disclose the underlisted documents to interested members of the public, especially the project-affected communities:

1. Summary of Social and Environmental Assessment Studies.
2. Environmental Action Plan.
3. Resettlement Audit
4. Environmental Impact Assessments.

These documents will be available on our website (www.dangote-group.com), and the website of the International Finance Corporation (<http://www.ifc.org>). These documents would be available for public review starting, from January 31, 2005, at the following places.

Obajana Cement Plc
Obajana Village, Kogi State

Corporate Finance Department
Dangote Group
1 Alfred Rewane, Falomo
Ikoyi, Lagos

In addition, public meetings will be held in the project-affected communities as follows:

Venue	Date
Obajana	3rd February 2005
Akpata	4th February 2005
Iwa	5th February 2005
Oyo	6th February 2005

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Kaduna	4, Yakubu Gowon Way, Kaduna.
Abuja	Plot 785, Ademola Adetokunbo Crescent, Wuse 11, Abuja
Kano	7, Yolawa Road, Opp. Mullani Kano Sq, Kano
P/Harcourt	26/28 Orna Rd, GRA Phase II P/Harcourt
Ibadan	National Bank Building, Agedi Secretariat, Ibadan
Enugu	Plot 6, Ebeano Housing Estate, Independence Layout, Enugu.

*Hurry! Offer valid while stock lasts



It's all about you.

Congratulations to an Achiever

The entire Abba's family heartily congratulate and rejoice with our Dear father and husband, ALHAJI IBRAHIM M. ABBA on your conferment of the

National Honours Award of the Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON), by the President Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR.

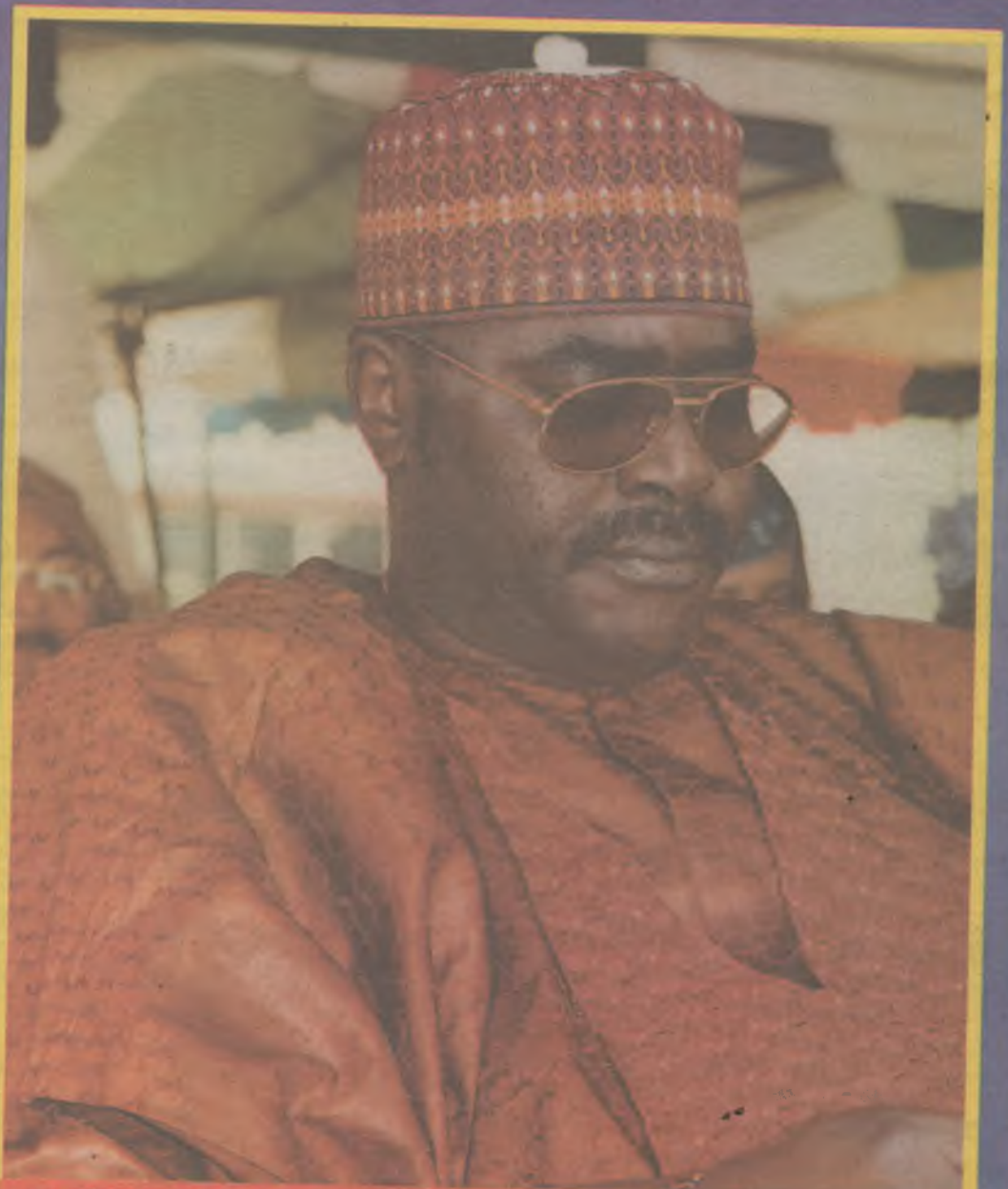
This Honour is in recognition of your acclaimed sterling qualities evident in your successful Management abilities over the years, and a testimony of your committed service to your great nation.

This is a well-deserved honour for a distinguished personality, articulate Administrator, and courageous Nigerian, for future generation to emulate.

May Almighty Allah guide and protect you in your future endeavour.

Once again congratulations!

SIGNED
HAJIYA YAGANA IBRAHIM M. ABBA
For the entire Abba Family



ALHAJI IBRAHIM M. ABBA (OON)

Business Trust

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air
Lagos - Abuja 07:20
10:30
15:15
13:00
Abuja - Lagos 8:45a.m.

11:00
13:15
17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja 06:50
Abuja - Maid. 17:00
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.
P/H - 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 8:30 a.m.
Lagos - PHC 10:30 a.m.
PHC - Lagos 12:30 a.m.
Lagos - Kano 2:30 p.m.
Kano - Lagos 4:30 p.m.
Lagos - Abuja 6:30p.m.

ADC Airline
Lagos - Abuja 7:15 a.m.,
12:45 p.m.
Abuja - Lagos 8:55 a.m.
Lagos - Calabar 11:15 a.m.
Calabar - Lagos 7:20 a.m.
P/H - Lagos 9:45 a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule

Chamber prepares for Kaduna Trade Fair

The Kaduna Chambers of Commerce Industry, Mines and Agriculture (KADCCIMA) said it is prepared to host the 26th edition of the Kaduna International Trade Fair which will hold from Friday to Saturday, February 18-27, 2005.

Speaking at a press briefing in Lagos, the first deputy president of KADCCIMA, Hajiya Saratu I. Aliyu said the Trade Fair will be formally opened by the president and Commander-In-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR.

The conference was graced by members of KADCCIMA including, Alhaji Usman Sanawa Chairman

From Bukola Oladiji
Intern (Lagos)

KADCCIMA, Alhaji Mohammed Abdussalam and Fedelis Ndubusi of Data Corp.

The theme of this year, 26th fair is "PRIVATE-PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIP FOR

ACCELERATED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN COMMENCE INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE".

The theme according to Hajiya Aliyu was chosen by the chamber to compliment the Government policies and organised Private sector important roles as a vital

partner in the formulation and execution, of sound economic policies that will bring economic growth and development.

According to her considerable contacts has been made by the chamber with industrialist, manufacturers producers, fabricators, distributors, and

marketers, both within and outside the country participation at the fair.

Hajiya said the fair is going to be a successful one as many things are in good position, she said in term of security Kaduna is state where every body could sleep with their eyes closed without any fair.

AGOA: Nigeria-US trade increases

The volume of trade between Nigeria and the USA increased in the year 2003, partly as a result of benefits offered by the African growth and opportunity Act (AGOA), a trade policy of the US government.

According to a press

By Anas A. Galadima,
Reporter (Business)

statement from the public affairs section of US embassy, this represents a rise in US imports of energy related products from Nigeria.

The US trade with other

Sub-Saharan countries also increased by 36.3 percent or \$1.4 billion in 2003.

According to the statement, which quoted the US international Trade Commission (ITC) report, sub-Saharan US merchandise trade grew from \$24.1 billion on 2002 to \$32.1 billion in 2003, while US imports from sub-Saharan African grew by 39.9 percent to \$25.5 billion in the same year, mostly as a result of increase trade in energy related products from Nigeria.

On the other hand, non energy related products imports, the USA increased by 20 percent to \$7.8 billion

in 2003.

The statement added that in 2003, "sub-Saharan Africa received \$8.5 billion in new foreign direct investment (FDI) which is 6.3 percent of global foreign investment flows to developing countries.

Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea were said to have attracted the largest amounts of US FDI flows, with \$340 million and \$823 million respectively.

Of the non petroleum exporting countries, South Africa and Cameroun, "attracted the largest amounts of US FDI, with \$89 million and \$73 million respectively."

It would be recalled that Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was signed into law by the US government on May 18, 2000.

It is a trade policy which to help African countries build free markets and open their economies to the world by allowing duty-free and quota-free imports of certain products into the United States.

Accountants need good remuneration, says Naiyeju

By Hamisu Muhammad
Reporter (Business)

Adequate and attractive remuneration packages are the element in attracting professionals accountants to the public service. The accountant-general of the federation Mr. J.K. Naiyeju has said.

Naiyeju made this observation, Wednesday in Abuja while addressing the

participants at the first accountants-general and auditors-general forum in West Africa, stressing that the enormous work and responsibility in the public finance sector calls for the right quantity and quality of hands to be on deck.

"It is our hope that member-countries will carefully set out adequate and

attractive remuneration packages that will attract professionals to join the public service" he said.

According to him, this requires systematic and contentions effort to achieve the desired objective of uplifting the accounting profession in the public sector.

He said "the development of accountancy professions particularly in the public sector requires coordinating efforts which will help in promoting standards and best practices all the times."

He said effort have been made by federal government especially in its reform to uplift the accounting profession in the public sector.

"This reforms are creating the appropriate environment, reorientation and focus to enable us perform our duties as required."

Naiyeju said the forum which aim at developing and enhancing accountancy profession in west Africa will also affords them the opportunity to collaborate on ways of tackling the common professional problems and needs.

The Minister of finance, Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, represented by the Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) ms. Heko Omoigui said the forum ought to be used as an avenue for interaction to examine government accounting practices in West Africa and comparing some with international practices.

She said the policy thrust of the federal government is to achieve well coordinated reform programmes, including accounting and

NAPEP inaugurates LG monitoring committee

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), has inaugurated a Local Government Monitoring Committee (LGMC) that will monitor the fight against the poverty in the Bwari Area Council.

The National coordinator of NAPEP, Dr. Magnus L. Kpakol who was represented by NAPEP FCT committee will liaise with the people within its locality and bring out ideas and useful suggestions to the needs of the people at the grassroots.

Mrs. Wukoma who said the success or otherwise of the programme of NAPEP is judged on its impact on the rural populace once the committee is deemed very necessary as described by president Obasanjo said "we shall always be parties in progress for the realisation of Mr. President's dream on poverty eradication," FCT coordinator said.

She said the committee which headed by the chairman of Bwari Area Council Hon. Isah Dara

By Abdulwahab Deji
Ajikobi Stringer (Abuja)

Bwari, is expected to monitor the implementation of the poverty eradication programmes within their locality and prepare briefs for the state coordination committee.

According to her, the members of the committee should ensure that the scope, implementation strategies and objectives identified by National poverty Eradication Council (NAPEP) are strictly adhered to within these localities.



President George Bush

NIPC tasks media on foreign investment

The executive secretary, Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) Engineer Mustapha Bello has called on Nigerian media to partake in the recent quest of wooing foreign direct investment into the country.

Engr. Bello made the call while addressing press on the preparation towards the hosting of the Nigeria Investment Forum being organised by the federal government in collaboration with Commonwealth Business Council (CBC) in Abuja.

He said the conference which will be held in Abuja from Wednesday, 2nd - Friday, 5th, February, 2005, theme "Trade and Investment opportunities; Growth through Global Partnership"

By Hamisu Muhammad,
Reporter (Business)

for Nigerian Media to demonstrated commitment in showcasing the good images of Nigeria to the foreign participants.

"In this regard, our secretariat will welcome participants and some presentations by the Nigerian Media during the forum" he said.

Nigerians chequered political and economic history and negative reporting in the international media have tended to obscure the positive changes."

According to him, the role of media in facilitating foreign direct investment can never be overemphasis, stressing that government is investing high in promoting the image of the country.

Business Trust

Motoring

AVEO



CHEVROLET

Prototypes of the Peugeot 107, Toyota Aygo and Citroen C1 that will be manufactured at the TPCA factory in the Czech Republic.

Toyota, Peugeot-Citroen to begin production at Czech plant

Toyota of Japan and French carmakers, PSA Peugeot Citroen are to begin production at a joint-venture plant in the Czech Republic on Feb 28, the head of the operation Masatake Enomoto revealed. The plant, called TPCA, will be able eventually to produce 300,000 cars a year 200,000 for

the Peugeot and Citroen brands and 100,000 for Toyota. Costing 1.3 billion euros (1.69 billion dollars), the factory near Kolin, 60 kilometres (40 miles) east of Prague, is one of the biggest foreign investments in central Europe so far.

"We expect to reach full capacity within one year of

the launch of commercial production. Compared to other car plants, ramping up production in one year is a very aggressive and challenging task," Enomoto said during a press conference at the plant.

"I can imagine that the first cars will be on sale across Europe in May," he said.

The cars are destined for the western European market. The price of the vehicles has not yet been announced.

Earlier this month the two carmakers unveiled pictures of the three new models to be manufactured at the plant. The separately-badged Peugeot 107, Toyota Aygo and Citroën C1 are to be manufactured on a single production line and are destined for the European

market.

The three models will be between 3.405 and 3.429 metres long, between 1.615 and 1.63 metres wide and between 1.465 and 1.470 metres high. Jean Pierre Chantossel, TPCA vice president, told AFP that the two companies had managed to save 200,000 to 300,000 euros on the original 1.5-billion euro planned cost owing to a favourable euro-yen exchange rate since the investment was first announced in 2001.

"Eighty percent of all parts in terms of volume and value will be sourced in the Czech Republic, which was surprising for us," Chantossel told journalists.

While salaries were lower in the Czech Republic Chantossel said the main cost was parts.

"It is a big advantage that we are sourcing so many parts locally," he added.

PAN takes stage at AU summit

By Hamisu Muhammad
Reporter (Business)

Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Limited (PAN), said it has supplied up to 250 units of different brands of Peugeot vehicles to african union secretariat, Abuja, for the just concluded African Union summit held in Abuja.

A statement from the PAN signed by the public relations manager, Baba Yahaya Mohammed said the logistic support which the Company has offered is part of its desire to demonstrate the Industrial Culture of Nigeria.

Business Trust reported the chairman of PAN as saying 160 vehicles were supplied, but the company's PRO insists 250 were supplied.

Muhammed added that "Towards this end, a good number of the vehicles earmarked for the Summit have successfully made the event

possible. Some of the Vehicles consist of Peugeot 307, 406, 607 and Peugeot Expert."

"The Peugeot 607 which formed part of the fleet for the Summit, was used by Visiting African Heads of States and Governments" the statement added.

PAN said the provision of the Vehicles is in support of President Obasanjo's call for Private Sector Initiative in the promotion of indigenous technology. With this arrangement Peugeot cars will serve as the official Vehicles for the Africa Summit.

constituency and with Abuja playing host to this important event, PAN Ltd was the obvious choice to ensure the necessary arrangement for a successful African Summit.

Ford recalls 800,000 pickups, SUVs

Ford Motor Company is recalling nearly 800,000 pickups and sport utility vehicles because the cruise control switch could short circuit and cause a fire under the hood, the automaker said, he recall, which was announced Thursday, affects approximately 792,000 Ford F-150 pickups, Ford Expeditions and Lincoln Navigators from the 2000 model year. Also affected are 2001 F-Series Super crew trucks that were made at the same time.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration opened an investigation into the defect in November after receiving 36 reports of fires. All of the incidents occurred when the vehicle was parked and the ignition was turned

off. No injuries were reported.

In an interview Friday from Deltona, Fla., broadcast on NBC's "Today" show, F-150 owner Bob Garcia described how flames engulfed his truck at his home while the ignition was turned off. The intense fire also damaged his garage.

"It caught on fire inside the garage all by itself," Garcia said. "No key in it."

During the interview, NBC showed a videotape dated last month that showed the damage from the blaze. Ford will notify owners of the recall in February, and dealers will deactivate the cruise control switch for free. Once the company has an adequate supply of replacement switches, it will send another letter notifying owners that they can get their switches replaced. Ford said cruise control will be disabled once the switch is eactivated.

Hybrid cars make no sense- Nissan Chief

The head of Nissan Motor Company, breaking ranks with some of his leading rivals, said on Saturday that building fuel-sipping hybrid vehicles makes little sense in today's world because of their high costs.

"They make a nice story, but they're not a good business story yet because the value is lower than their costs," said Nissan Chief Executive Carlos Ghosn. Nissan will, in fact, start manufacturing a gas-electric hybrid version of its Altima sedan for the U.S. market in 2006.

But Ghosn said the model was only intended to help Japan's second-largest automaker comply with strict fuel economy and emissions standards in states like Cali-fornia, not because he expects it to be a money-maker.

Nissan will license some technology for the hybrid Altima from Toyota Motor Corporation, which is the world leader in hybrid production along with Honda Motor Co. Ltd..

The hybrids made by Toyota and Honda are in high demand, but production levels are still relatively small. Toyota plans to nearly double production of its hybrid Prius car for the US market this year,

with production totaling some 100,000 vehicles.

Ford Motor Co. is alone among U.S. automakers in producing mass-market hybrid models; Ford recently announced plans to introduce four new models between this year and 2008. Ghosn's comments, which are likely to draw criticism from environmental groups, came in an address to the National Automobile Dealers Association, which opened its annual convention in New Orleans on Saturday.

In his speech, he noted that only about 88,000 of the 16.9 million light vehicles sold in the United States last year were hybrids, adding that they are still considered "niche" products and something way outside the automotive mainstream.

He also poured cold water on hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, which many automakers see as the industry's next big technological breakthrough.

"The cost to build one fuel cell car is about \$800,000. Do the math and you figure out that we will have to reduce the cost of that car by more than 95 percent in order to gain widespread marketplace acceptance."



Chevrolet Aveo

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES	TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY
CUTIX PLC	2	1.30	102,000	132,600.00	SYMBOL
JULI PLC	1	0.52	400	208.00	NB
Sector Totals	3		102,400	132,808.00	VITAFOAM
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				13,034.98	FSB
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	2	2.83	4,606	1,217,641.44	FIRSTBANK
THE OKOMO OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	22	17.05	71,632	400,818.30	NAL
PRESKO PLC	12	10.69	37,570	1,631,494.72	GULFBANK
Sector Totals	36		113,808	1,177,616.52	INLANDBANK
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				120,935.00	UBN
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	31	2.00	592,105	1,298,551.52	GUARANTY
R. T. BRISCOE PLC.	5	7.22	16,750	220,894.38	IMB
Sector Totals	36		608,855	276,895.32	
BANKING				8,900.10	
ACCESS BANK PLC	7	3.42	64,589	19,500.00	
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	13	6.63	41,764	36,500.00	
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	3	3.41	2,610	50,000.00	
CHARTERED BANK PLC	2	3.90	5,000	340,963.94	
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.	1	0.73	50,000	48,357,035.28	
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	2	2.26	150,869	2,403,915.01	
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	487	23.42	2,056,711	32,696,454.59	
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	34	1.54	1,603,317	1,716,433.24	
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	347	12.00	2,728,827	29,250.00	
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	20	0.70	2,445,157	7,717,598.05	
HALLMARK BANK PLC	1	1.95	15,000	3,327,268.75	
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	46	0.66	11,177,895	39,050.00	
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	24	1.40	2,591,500	18,199.08	
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	4	7.81	5,000	789,345.66	
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	10	0.82	22,194	6,643,266.00	
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	23	1.18	668,937	1,208,415.60	
NAL BANK PLC.	42	2.80	2,372,595	112,845.33	
OCEANIC BANK PLC	12	6.30	191,812	3,553,495.14	
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	8	1.17	96,449	348.00	
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	38	7.41	479,554	11,988,230.00	
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	2	1.74	200	54,037,426.63	
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	56	10.00	1,198,823	147,000.00	
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	330	20.34	2,727,008	275,135.37	
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	2	0.98	150,000	6,672,219.57	
WEMA BANK PLC.	6	3.93	70,009	182,636,585.04	
ZENITH BANK PLC	108	15.69	425,253	11,711,564.93	
Sector Totals	1,628		31,341,073	52,171,733.93	
BREWERIES				63,883,298.86	
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	125	106.00	113,022	3,585,247.84	
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	449	35.00	1,477,172	1,204,815.00	
Sector Totals	574		1,590,194	1,315,840.90	
BUILDING MATERIALS				6,105,903.74	
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	54	23.90	149,824	38,409.58	
CEMENT CO OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	42	7.04	170,000	184,218.75	
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	29	11.55	111,605	97,003.84	
Sector Totals	125		431,429	1,000.00	
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				365,000.00	
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	6	5.56	6,952	685,632.17	
CAP PLC.	5	6.75	27,217	13,700.00	
D. N. MEYER PLC.	10	5.00	19,520	570.00	
IPWA PLC.	4	0.50	2,000	14,270.00	
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	6	3.70	100,000	509,410.92	
Sector Totals	31		155,689	33,453.08	
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				91,720.00	
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	1.37	10,000	14,755,388.69	
THOMAS WYATT NIGERIA PLC.	1	0.38	1,500	4,061,521.74	
Sector Totals	2		11,500	2,717.96	
CONGLOMERATES				1,066,490.88	
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	19	1.15	445,378	55,603.30	
C.F.A.O NIGERIA PLC.	3	5.86	5,678	20,576,306.57	
JOHN HOLT PLC.	9	1.00	91,720	4,550.00	
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	178	17.00	874,768	96,542.88	
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	84	13.75	296,762	101,092.88	
S.C.O.A NIGERIA PLC.	2	1.19	2,284	15,754.50	
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC.	42	14.17	75,264	2,645,413.50	
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	10	1.18	49,308	17,016,357.11	
Sector Totals	347		1,841,162	1,053,356.37	
CONSTRUCTION				12,535,281.66	
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	1	0.91	5,000	12,261,653.95	
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	5	14.61	6,608	120,400.00	
Sector Totals	6		11,608	45,632,462.59	
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				565,824.90	
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	5	0.81	19,450	86,178.00	
Sector Totals	5		19,450	303,908.85	
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				2,044.50	
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	32	24.95	106,525	3,002,940.77	
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	171	59.00	290,796	3,960,897.02	
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	31	16.61	63,417	113,924.00	
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	77	53.99	232,216	139,310.00	
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	57	147.00	83,392	5,073,022.36	
UNION DICON SALT PLC.	1	6.02	20,000	77.90	
Sector Totals	369		796,346	5,326,334.26	
HEALTHCARE				209,242.00	
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	19	3.39	166,910	21,320.12	
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	10	5.42	15,900	150,650.00	
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	10	3.15	96,479	61,717.58	
PHARMA-DEKO PLC.	1	4.70	435	185,350.00	
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	40	8.68	352,948	25,599.36	
Sector Totals	80		632,672	140,800.00	
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				68,160.00	
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	7	1.02	109,700	234,960.87	
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	7	2.90	47,500	568,566.25	
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	98	3.26	1,555,786	1,666,366.18	
VONO PRODUCTS PLC.	1	1.90	41	101,831.04	
Sector Totals	113		1,713,027	101,831.04	
INSURANCE				112,178.20	
AICO INSURANCE PLC.	8	2.06	100,600	16,770.00	
BAICO INSURANCE PLC.	5	0.89	25,000	70,857.20	
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	4	1.31	115,000	30,256.20	
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	4	0.94	65,657	230,061.60	
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	3	1.45	130,000	4,450.00	
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	2	1.92	13,333	14,690,871.57	
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	10	3.46	40,000	145,493.70	
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	5	3.84	17,750	12,943,682.46	
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	7	1.03	227,000	9,275,335.44	
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	10	2.73	209,177	2,386,848.71	
Sector Totals	58		943,517	10,650,157.51	
MANAGED FUNDS				23,956,549.02	
C & I LEASING PLC.	3	1.66	61,344	74,053,388.41	
Sector Totals	3		61,344	2,220.00	
PACKAGING				3,780.00	
AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC.	13	1.06	110,820	6,000.00	
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	2	1.29	13,000	2,156,515.08	
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC.	2	4.70	15,076	2,156,515.08	
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC.	6	0.71	42,780	112,178.20	
Sector Totals	23		181,676	16,770.00	
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				70,857.20	
AFROIL PLC.	1	0.89	5,000	30,256.20	
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	127	67.25	218,325	230,061.60	
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	7	1.95	74,270	4,450.00	
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	58	180.00	70,270	14,690,871.57	
CONOIL PLC.	88	124.50	74,419	145,493.70	
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	25	167.00	14,358	12,943,682.46	
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	35	183.00	58,320	9,275,335.44	
OANDO PLC.	186	96.50	248,577	2,386,848.71	
Sector Totals	527		763,539	10,650,157.51	
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				23,956,549.02	
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC.	2	2.22	1,000	74,053,388.41	
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC.	1	1.89	2,000	2,220.00	
Sector Totals	3		3,000	3,780.00	
REAL ESTATE				6,000.00	
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	43	8.85	242,289	2,156,515.08	
Sector Totals	43		242,289	2,156,515.08	
TEXTILES				2,156,515.08	
AFRINT NIGERIA PLC.	3	0.47	15,150	112,178.20	
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	1	2.71	142,840	16,770.00	

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	178.00	183.00	+5.00
GUINNESS	101.51	106.00	+4.49
CADBURY	58.44	59.00	+0.56
SKBEECHAM	8.27	8.68	+0.41
7UP	24.60	24.95	+0.35
PRESKO	10.37	10.69	+0.32
DNMEYER	4.77	5.00	+0.23
DELTA GLAS	4.48	4.70	+0.22
ROYALEX	3.66	3.84	+0.18
EVANSMED	3.23	3.39	+0.16

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
NB	35.78	35.00	-0.78
NOLCHEM	125.00	124.50	-0.50
CCNO	7.40	7.04	-0.36
CFAO	6.16	5.86	-0.30
UAC-PROP	9.04	8.85	-0.19
NIGERINS	3.64	3.46	-0.18
FIRSTBANK	23.60	23.42	-0.18
VITAFOAM	3.43	3.26	-0.17
WAPCO	11.70	11.55	-0.15
HALLBANK	2.05	1.95	-0.10

'Non-oil export, road to economic recovery'

From Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent, Kano

Non-oil export has been described as the surest option to a resounding economic recovery for Nigeria as the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), is being repositioned to promote the export strategy and increase contribution of non-oil export to the national gross domestic product.

The special adviser to the president on export programmes and chief executive officer of the NEPC, Mrs Gladys Modupe Sasore said this at the occasion of stakeholders consultative seminar on national export strategy held in Kano.

Mrs Sasore charged the stakeholders at the meeting to formulate a viable and sustainable export strategy to resuscitate the non-oil export sector to its dominant role as a major foreign exchange earner.

She expressed optimism that the outcome of deliberations would generate a practicable export strategy document that would triumph over recurrent obstacles of high level of unrecorded trained manpower and insufficient statistics.

Shell explains crisis in Abia community

Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC) has said that grievances in Owaza community of Abia state, over the choice of a representative on the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Board, led to the blockade, and subsequent closure of the Imo River, one of the three flow-stations last week.

Shell in a statement signed by its external affairs manager, Mr Don Boham said a group of about 300 people from the community, who were armed with machetes and other weapons had barricaded all vehicular access to the flow-station, as well as associated gas facilities.

It added that they also enforced the shut down of the generator supplying electricity to the Imo River Field Logistics Base (FLB).

According to the statement, following this development, about 35,000 barrels per day of crude oil production has been shut in, and the 10MMscf/day gas supply to the Nigerian Gas Company (NGC), and industries in Abia stopped.

It said that the corporation has notified appropriate regulatory bodies about the incident. The acting governor of the state, Chief Chima Nwafor had also paid a visit to the community and advised them to channel their grievances to the presidency through the state government. He was however unable to persuade them to allow

Business Trust



(L-R) Mr. Samuel Olatunji, managing director of Gateway Bank, Mr. Ayo Ajayi, director and chief Samuel Adegbite, chairman of the Bank during its extra-ordinary general meeting (EGM) held in Lagos... recently

N25bn re-capitalisation: FIB

considers merger

As the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) December deadline for banks to raise their capital base to N25 billion draws closer, First Interstate Bank (FIB) Plc says it is considering merging with some other banks.

Chairman, board of FIB, Prof. Akin Mabogunje, said this during a chat with Business Trust correspondent at the end of the Bank's completion board meeting last week in Lagos.

Mabogunje who lauded the reform by the CBN, stressed that it would strengthen commercial banks into becoming mega banks with big ticket financial transaction.

The chairman disclosed that the FIB is discussing with some other banks to see the possibility of a merger before the year runs out. He however did not disclose the names of the banks.

"Discussions are going on with quite a number of like minded banks because in banking you do worry about the culture of your bank because banks have different culture" Prof. Akin Mabogunje said.

He allayed fear of massive retrenchment by the affected banks saying the merger would create more jobs through cross border transactions and other local demands by the customers due to the reform.

He said that the Rights issue and private placement of FIB will result in total estimated proceeds of N16,082,911,696.00 which will enable the bank increase its shareholders, funds to ensure capitalisation requirements for Nigerian Banks as directed by the CBN.

Specifically, the completion Board meeting was held to approach FIB

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

Rights issue of 4,021,360,380. ordinary shares of 50k. each on the basis of two ordinary share

held as at 30th November last year, at 70k per share. As well as the approach for private placement of 13,967,959,430 ordinary shares of 50k each at N1.00 per share.

Prof. Mabogunje explained that the money raised would be used in areas where the bank already has sufficient strength such as housing and oil and gas sector.

Market Indicators

Nigerian Inter Bank Foreign Exchange (NIFEX)

Rates Quotes as of: 28/01/2005

Bid(\$/N=)	Offer(\$/N=)	Swap Points	Forward Fixing
Spot Fixing	133.008	133.3	
Tenor (Days)			
30	1.3602 / 1.3632		134.3685 / 134.6632
60	2.7148 / 2.7207		135.7231 / 136.0207
90	4.0636 / 4.0725		137.0719 / 137.3725
180	8.0764 / 8.0941		141.0847 / 141.3941

Naira official exchange rates as of: 26/01/2005

Currency	Buying	Selling	Central
US DOLLAR	131.86	132.8	132.36
POUND STER.	247.5144	249.3915	248.45295
EURO	171.6026	172.904	172.2533
SWISS FRANCS	0	0	0
JAPANESE YEN	1.2743	1.2839	1.2791
CFA FRANCS	0.2551	0.2651	0.2601
WAUA	200.2043	201.7226	200.96345
SAUDI RIYAL	35.157	35.4237	35.29035

Open Market Operations (OMO Auction) held on 31/01/2005

Rates	Security
NTB	
Tenor	28 DAYS
Maturity Date	28/02/2005
Total Amount of Bids received	N 11457.2 Million
Total Amount Sold	N 11457 Million
Range of bid Rates	12.5000%
Stop Rate	12.5000%
True Yield	12.6207 %
Weighted Average Rate	Nil

Minimum Rediscount Rate and Export Proceeds Rates

Minimum Rediscount Rate	Change
Minimum Rediscount Rate	15 0.00
Export Proceeds Per \$	1 0.00

Rates as of 19/01/2005

Source: MMAN

Market associations pledge N10bn investments in ACB

The bid by the ACB International Bank Plc to meet the N25 billion minimum capital base received a boost at the weekend from market associations, businessmen, professionals and traditional rulers in Enugu and Ebonyi states with the Ogbete Market Traders Association (OMATA) pledging to raise from among members, a minimum of N10 billion for investment in the bank.

According to a press statement signed by the bank's information officer, Igwe U. Igwe, the deputy vice president of OMATA, Chief Polycarp Ezogo said that the bank is a symbol representing a variety of things for different people.

He recalled the vital roles played by the bank from the colonial days through the post independent days, during and after the Nigeria civil war and the present, saying that a legacy of such huge proportion must be sustained to continue to meet the vision of the founding father, Rt. Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe.

Consequently, Ezogo declared that OMATA, Enugu, will do all in its ability to ensure that the name of the bank remains prominent in the banking and financial industry now and in the future.

Speaking in a similar vein, the representative of the chairman, caretaker committee, Kenyatta Amalgamated Traders

Associations, Enugu, Hon. Chris Ohagwu, said that ahead of the opening of the bank's initial public offer (IPO), the association will ensure that its members open account with ACB International Bank Plc.

He said the association will leave no stone unturned during the public offering to ensure that the bank is subscribed, adding that ACB will not die.

The President of Enugu Chamber of Commerce,

Industry, Mines and Agriculture (ECCIMA) Chief Gabriel Akachukwu, who was chairman of the interactive session of the stakeholders forum, called on all patriotic Nigerians, particularly those of the former eastern Nigeria and the Enugu and Ebonyi business communities to pick up the challenge of capitalisation by massively supporting the bank.

Chartered Bank loses N5.7m to fraudsters

Chartered Bank of Nigeria PLC Bologun Market Trade Fair Ojo branch has lost about N5.7 million to a gang of fraudsters who specialise in duping banks.

According to police detectives from the Lagos State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) Panti, Yaba, five suspects, two males and three females, have been dragged before the Ebute Mette Chief Magistrate court over the incident.

The suspects are Christopher John (32), Bulus Godfrey (19), Gloria Diagboye (25), Joy Ukarakpo (25) and 25 years old Omeyi John.

As at the time of filing in this report, it could not be confirmed whether or not all the accused persons were

employees of the bank.

The accused persons and others still at large were alleged to have conspired together on the 5th November last year at about 11:55 hours at Chattered Bank of Nigeria plc Bologun Market Trade Fair Ojo, to commit the crime punishable under section 516 of the criminal Code of Lagos State Vol. II of 2003.

It was further alleged that the accused persons stole N5.7 million belonging to Chattered Bank plc thereby committing an offence punishable under section 390 (a) of the criminal Code.

All the accused persons pledged not guilty to the five court charge.

While adjourning further hearing till Friday 28 January 2005, the accused persons were admitted to a bail of N200,000 each with two sureties.

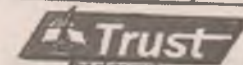


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3 Months	=N=5,200.00	15%	=N=4,420.00	=N=780.00



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Business Trust

Telecoms

UBA leads 8 other banks in N15bn M-tel facility agreement

The signing ceremony of the N15 billion M-Tel Syndicated notes insurance facility agreement in which United Bank for Africa Plc is the lead bank, is scheduled to take place today at the Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

According to a statement signed by its Head, brand management and corporate affairs Mr. Ogie Eboigbe, UBA, as the lead arranger and facility agent in the syndicate, is at the head of 6 other banks issuing the note to M-tel, a wholly owned subsidiary of NITEL.

About three years ago, UBA, in recognition of the importance of the telecommunications industry to the growth of the Nigerian economy, set up a Technology & Telecommunications (TT) Group, which is focused on providing a broad range of banking services to TT companies in Nigeria and other firms intending to operate in

the country.

The statement informed that UBA's participation in this syndication is therefore an affirmation of its belief in the deregulation policy of the present administration and acceptance of the need for a dynamic Public Private Partnership (PPP) to propel the growth of the Nigerian economy, especially with regards to Telecommunications.

Apart from UBA, other banks in the syndicate are: Union Bank of Nigeria Plc (co-arranger), Standard Trust Bank Plc (arranger). While other participating banks include Guaranty Trust Bank, Prudent Bank Ltd, Zenith Bank Plc, Ecobank Plc, Chartered Bank Plc and Diamond Bank.

According to the statement made available to *Business Trust* the first tranche of N5 billion was signed in June 2004.

It would be recalled that UBA arranged a US\$113 million Payment Guarantee Facility for NITEL/M-Tel to finance network expansion programme, which significantly added to the operator's capacity.

The bank also acted as the Facility Agent/Lead Bank for Nigerian commercial banks tranche of the \$1.275 billion NGL11 project finance for NNPC/Mobil Producing Nigeria joint venture project.



Policing: RelTel's Managing director, Sir Tomy Okonkwo (r) presenting a souvenir to the representative of Area C command of the Nigeria Police at the declaration of RelTel's CB project. Middle is RelTel's spokesman, Barr. K. C. Enechi with Miss Nneka Onochia, another RelTel staff.

V-mobile commercial call operators urged to shun exploitation

V-mobile, commercial call operators have been urged to shun greed and other selfish tendencies capable of depriving the people of Akwa Ibom state from getting value for their money.

The proprietor of Time and Partner, V-mobile's principal partner in charge of Uyo zone in Akwa Ibom state, Mr. Jude Haruna, who spoke with *Business Trust* soon after his empowerment campaign in Uyo, said Akwa Ibom state government invested in the company so as to enable its

From Edet Ekanem,
Correspondent (Uyo)

citizens enjoy GSM services at a very affordable cost but that the commercial operators have exploited the low tariff cost of the company to the disadvantage of the people.

He argued that since the operators enjoy the "shave off" of call cost with Bumpa Card offered by the V-mobile company recently aimed at helping pre-paid customers to reduce call tariff, a minute call should be between N15-

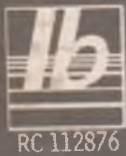
N20 while 0.20k is for per second costs in the state.

He decried a situation where operators even though have received free V-mobile lines, umbrellas and chairs for their successful operations in the state, insist on charging N30.00 per minute call and 50k per second calls respectively stressing that wealth comes not from exorbitant call costs but the number of calls made.

Mr. Haruna, who is also the managing director of the

Time and Chance Co. Ltd also announced that his company has set up monitoring teams that will visit shops of all registered members in the state to ensure compliance.

He further disclosed that the V-mobile company has given monthly incentive to operators across the country in addition to low tariff. These operators should avail themselves of this opportunity to enrich themselves but not to the disadvantage of the people.



RC 112876

Inland Bank (Nig.) Plc.

NOTICE OF EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an Extra Ordinary General Meeting of the members of Inland bank (Nigeria) Plc will be held at Arcade Club Suites, Shehu Shagari Way, Central Business Area, Abuja on Thursday, 24th February, 2005 at 11.00 a.m. to transact the following business:

SPECIAL BUSINESS

To consider and if thought fit to pass the following resolutions as ordinary and special resolutions as may be required:

ORDINARY RESOLUTION

1) That the Authorized Share Capital of the company be increased from N2,000,000,000.00 divided into 4,000,000,000 ordinary shares of 50 Kobo each to N8,000,000,000.00 divided into 16,000,000,000 ordinary shares of 50 Kobo each by the creation of 12,000,000,000 ordinary shares of 50 Kobo each; such shares to rank parri passu in all respects with the existing ordinary shares in the capital of the Company

NOTES

A Member of the company entitled to attend and vote at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy in his/her stead. A proxy need not be a member of the Company. All proxy forms must be returned to the Registered Office of the Company at Plot 19/23 Jos Road, Bauchi or to the Registrars, IBN Securities Limited of 5 Idowu Taylor Street, Victoria Island, Lagos not later than 48 hours before holding of the meeting.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION

2) That Clause 6 and Article 3 of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company respectively be altered and amended as follows:

"That the Authorized Share Capital of the Company is N8,000,000,000.00 (Eight Billion Naira) divided into 16,000,000,000 (Sixteen Billion) Ordinary Shares of 50 Kobo each"

Dated this 27th day of January, 2005

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

YAKUBU BELLO KIRFI
COMPANY SECRETARY/LEGAL ADVISER
CORPORATE HEAD OFFICE
PLOT 19/23 JOS ROAD, BAUCHI



RC 112876

Inland Bank (Nig.) Plc.

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Business Trust

Maritime



A 30-man Oron cadets during a sea training on board Malaysian vessels, in a group photograph with the minister of transport, Dr. Abiye Sekabo, sixth right from front row. Others are Malaysian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr. Abdallah, to the minister's right, and Mr. Ferdinand Agu, director-general of the National Maritime Authority (NMA) among other dignitaries.

Customs probes warehouse fire

The controller-general of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Mr. Jacob Gyang Buba has ordered an investigation to unravel the possible causes of the recent fire at the NCS warehouse/mechanic workshop in Lagos which destroyed 148 vehicles.

Briefing newsmen in Lagos, the CG foreclosed any foul play in the incident.

A breakdown of the burnt vehicles shows that only about 13 were smuggled second hand cars called 'Tokunbo' while 135 were those used as means of conveying prohibited goods seized over three years ago

by the disbanded C-G's special anti-smuggling squad.

These category of vehicles were confiscated along with the contra bound goods which they carried hence the 135 vehicles were already condemned, although in few cases, there are court cases still pending over them.

According to the CG, records of court cases still pending on some of the affected vehicles should be put straight so as to ensure that car cases of the burnt vehicles would be presented in court.

Mr. Buba stressed that the incident would not dampen the efforts of the Nigeria Customs Services. "We will continue to seize as long as there is smuggling," the CG said.

The CG also disclosed that there was no insurance in place for the NCS mechanic workshop where the incident occurred nor for the affected vehicles, hence the NCS would have taken it up with the insurance brokers, adding that in whatever situation, there was no room for such disaster.

Why NPA could not remit taxes — Spokesman

Spokesman of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Mr. C.A. Borha said that the authority could not remit

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor
some of the taxes it collected to the Federal Inland Service Revenue (FIRS) due to past

oversight on its management.

The FIRS recently alerted that the NPA has not been remitting taxes it collects on behalf of the federal government to the tax authority.

However, reacting to the allegation in a statement issued in Lagos, Borha who is assistant general manager, public affairs said, the management of the NPA was committed to meeting its financial obligations at all times.

Specifically, the NPA spokesman said that "the non-remittance was as a result of past management oversight."

According to the statement, "all current payments due to the FIRS and the Lagos State Board of Internal Revenue are regularly paid as and when due."

It added that in order to rectify the mistakes of the past on the non remittance of the taxes, the present management appointed a

consultant to reconcile the account of the NPA and the FIRS.

It stressed that while the reconciliation is in progress, NPA agreed with the FIRS to be paying N50,000,000.00 and \$200,000.00 monthly to the local and foreign accounts of the FIRS.

Consequently, the sum of N150 million and

\$1,000,000.00 has so far been paid to the service at December 2004, it said, adding that the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has now made it a policy that all deductions effected through value added tax and withholding taxes are now regularly remitted to the tax collection bodies.

NAGAFF assesses Customs commands

The umbrella body of freight forwarders in the country, the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF) said it is reviewing the performance of the area commands of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

This according to NAGAFF's national publicity secretary Chidiebere Enelamah is to ascertain the level of impact so far made with respect to the ongoing customs reforms and trade facilitation.

A statement issued by the association stated that indices to be used in the assessment will include service delivery and documentation; anti-smuggling functions; trade statistics and records;

From Adelanwa Bamgbaye, Correspondent (Lagos)
relationship with government ministries and departments, private concerns and recognised institutions/associations and revenue function.

The latest move by NAGAFF may not be unconnected with the sporadic interactions by the Federal Operations Unit (FOU) of the NCS over cleared containers and general cargo through the sea ports and approved border stations.

Containers already cleared from the sea ports by customs are regularly being intercepted outside the ports and upon examination, they were usually discovered to be carrying prohibited items and contravened goods.



Mr. Jacob Gyang Buba, Comptroller-General of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) stressing some points at an exclusive interview with Daily Trust shortly after he took over mantle of leadership of the service last year.

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Katsina: Egyptian scheme

By Uthman Abubakar
Senior Reporter (Feature)

It is already platitudinous to say that overdependence on the mainly oil-produced statutory earnings from the federation account has constituted a matter for grave concern to many of the states, especially the non-oil producing states, of the Nigerian federation. Apparently, some of them are exploring every available avenue to earn substantial revenue elsewhere to rescue them out of that overdependence.

For instance, after a long furore over the hitherto unheard of and, therefore, initially regarded as obnoxious economic policy, some states have already invited Zimbabwean farmers to develop large farm estates for the extensive agricultural programmes that hold high promise for substantial revenue generation. Kwara State seems the arrow head of this venture, having already allocated lands to the Zimbabwean farmers who have arrived and have subsequently erected some of the necessary structures. Jigawa State has settled for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as its own future bulk internal revenue earner, and it seems the pace-setter in the field.

Some southwest and south south states and, at a substantial level, the entire country itself have invested tremendous hope in cassava export as principal revenue earner. Practically many states are investing heavily and diversely in the future of agriculture to rescue them from their individual economic morass and propel them into future sustainable prosperity as resourceful components of the Nigerian federation.

Dams-rich Katsina state is adopting the Egyptian scheme of irrigation to mould a durable agrarian economy as the instrument for its own rescue.

The state is home to three federal dams- the Jibiya dam with a 142 million cubic meter capacity reservoir, which has a storage capacity at maximum flood of 266 million cubic meters of water and a gross irrigable area of 3450 hectares; Zobe dam having a 177 million cubic meter gross storage capacity reservoir with a mean annual runoff of 172 million cubic meters, a dead storage capacity of 7 million cubic meters and an initial design for the irrigation of 8,400 hectares subsequently reduced to 5,200 hectares; and the younger Sabke dam with a reservoir designed to collect 31.6 million cubic meters of water and a gross irrigable area of 1400 hectares.

The three dams, constructed between 1980 and 1999, were provided for multi-purpose projects with facilities installed for land water resources and the development of irrigated agriculture in a grand aim to enhance agricultural production in their state of location and the country at large.

The state has its own 13 medium-scale dams- Ajiwa, Mairuwa, Kwana Are, Ruwan Sanyi, Mashigi, Gangara, Tafoki, Bakori, Kusada, Makega, Daberan, Nasarawa, Mahuta and Yar tsaku. There are all together 15 irrigation schemes, with the addition of two more projects, one each in Makera and Daberan, attached to the 13 dams apart from the comparatively larger Ajiwa

project.

Over the years the state has become very confused and concerned with the state of inactivity of especially the irrigation projects of the three federal dams, which sharply contrasts with the zeal their construction has instilled among its agrarian communities. This has blended with the more serious concern and efforts to do whatever it could to boost its economy in an effort to minimise its dependence on statutory collections from the federation account to a possible and acceptable levels a monumental problem it believes it must begin to think of tackling now.

Propelled by this situation, the state government has consequently resolved to harness the communities agrarian zeal and the vast potentials it has realised for successful and sustainable irrigation agriculture in order to orchestrate the achievement of that goal, using the Egyptian fashion of irrigation scheme.

Already, the state has been utilising those dams to solve a substantial part of its drinking water problems through the water works located in its major towns. Ajiwa dam, which has a 20 million cubic meter capacity reservoir and, perhaps, the biggest and most reliable of them all, has a 2-phase treatment plant with an installed capacity for 50,000 cubic meters, which means 50 million litres, per day, 25,000 cubic meters for each phase. It is the only dam supplying Katsina and its environs including Kaita and Batagarawa with drinking water. However, it only now supplies 43.9 million litres, which translates into 87 percent capacity utilization.

This is due to the increase in population to the current demand of 63 million litres per day by the coverage area, which means even if the plant operates at 100 percent capacity it can not meet the demand. Katsina metropolis alone now requires 53 million litres out of the 63 million. Only the completion of the installation and implementation of the federal government own Zobe water supply project can satisfy Katsina's requirement.

The Funtua water supply scheme has two plants. The old plant has the installed capacity of 4.5 million litres per day and the new plant, 13.5 million litres, totaling, 18 million litres per day. However, the actual production of the two plants combined is now 9.6 million litres per day, which translates to just 53 percent. The Funtua scheme's problem is irregular electricity supply and the old plant has not been rehabilitated since the early 1970s.

The Malumfashi scheme has a 4.5 million litre per day installed capacity but now pro-

duces only 1.5 million litres per day, just one-third of the capacity attributable to the inadequacy of funds and electricity supply. Presently, Malumfashi requires 4.4 million litres per day. The Dutsin-ma scheme has a designed capacity of 3.75 million litres per day but now produces only 2.0 million litres per day while the demand of Dutsin-ma town is 2.9 million litres per day. This scheme is attached to the Zobe dam. The Jibiya scheme, attached to the Jibiya dam, has a designed capacity for 6 million litres per day but produces only 1.6 million litres per day due to the breakdown of the pumping equipment while the yet-to-be-completed Sabke scheme has a 6 million litres per day treatment plant.

As the state prepares to upgrade its utilisation of these dams for a more sophisticated programme of irrigation agriculture the entire water supply systems may have to be overhauled with a more efficient system of power supply, not only for the irrigation and wa-

ter supply schemes to operate simultaneously but for the required success of the to-be-implemented irrigation scheme to enable it yield the required amount of revenue.

The decision to borrow a leaf from the cradle of civilisation's scheme, adjudged the best in Africa because its economy largely hinges on irrigation farming, arose from the proceedings of a retreat for top government officials of the state in August 2003, shortly after the swearing in of the second tenure government of Governor Umaru Musa 'Yar'Adua.

"At the retreat every facet of government activity was dissected and ever ministry, extra-ministerial department or parastatal was asked to make its submissions on the development of the state in its own aspect, and those submissions were discussed extensively," the state's Commissioner of Agriculture, Alhaji Ali Hussaini Dutsin-ma, recalled, "and roadmap for that devel-

Some southwest and south south states and, at a substantial level, the entire country itself have invested tremendous hope in cassava export as principal revenue earner. Practically many states are investing heavily and diversely in the future of agriculture to rescue them from their individual economic morass and propel them into future sustainable prosperity as resourceful components of the Nigerian federation.



The Ajiwa dam governs flows pumping drinking water to Katsina. It may also pump water to irrigable fields.



Annual vegetable cultivated by gravity irrigation beside Ajiwa dam.

to the rescue

opment—short, medium or long was drawn.”
According to him, it was of the conclusions of that retreat that the irrigation potentials of the state would have to be fully exploited. Benefits of irrigation agriculture were clearly spelt out and examined, relevant data gathered and proposals made on how to undertake various irrigation projects in the state successfully.

“We have already realised 12,000 hectares of irrigable land all over the state, half of which we are determined to cultivate between now and 2007,” the commissioner, just back from a study trip of the Indian and Egyptian irrigation schemes with some of his ministry’s top officials, announced. The state has settled for the Egyptian system, which it will modify according to its environmental setting, sociological orientation of its agrarian communities and the availability of all the required resources.

The state government, according to the commissioner, is highly committed to the development and sustenance of irrigation agriculture to shift the economy of the state from overdependence on statutory allocations from the federation account a well as solve the problem of poverty and unemployment among the youth.

Presently the state operates a 460 hectare irrigation scheme in the 16 projects attached to the 14 dams, raised from the pre-1999 200 hectares. More than 500 hectares were hitherto identified for the present scheme all of which, however, can not be cultivated due to the water limitation in some of the dams. The 460 hectares were made cultivable in

2004 after the establishment of 6 new dams and irrigation schemes, raising the number of irrigable hectares by 137.

“We have financially provided for all the schemes we have in the state, including the new ones we are going to establish, and we ensured that the novel irrigation project is properly planned, taking into cognisance community participation, upholding public trust, commitment to execute as planned and sustainability, especially with regard to proper input supply, efficient extension service and market for the produce,” said Hussaini. The state government, the commissioner said, has also introduced a N2 billion agricultural credit guarantee scheme to provide the farmers with sufficient funds for the schemes.

“Our main concern now is the sustainability of the programme we are building because it is necessary for people to take charge of what the government has put in place for sustainability and success,” he reasoned, saying, “but even at the planning stage we are involving the community in a bottom-top approach to development of the irrigation project.”

The Director of Irrigation and Extension Service of the state Ministry of Agriculture, Alhaji Bashir Garba Kaita, was more extensive and explicit on how the scheme would be operated.

“The state has realized that it has a tremendous capacity for the management of irrigation system, river engineering system and water management, and so we visited Egypt and India to acquire the skills of improving rural income through irrigation as well as

expedite rural economic growth,” he offered.

“This is how we are going about it,” according to the director. “We first asked 100 irrigation questions which necessitated search for answers through research and data collection and, for the success of this, we have installed three weather stations, one in each of the three senatorial districts because of the difference in climate necessitated by the fact that the northern part of the state is arid while the southern part is humid.”

Kaita said the state government has planned to replace old irrigation water pumps with new ones, recalling that six were bought in 2003, two in 2004 as it planned to buy 40 in 2005.

The establishment of the existing four irrigation schemes in the state cost N48 million. In 2003 two of them were expanded at N40 million. N60 million was spent on their operation in the last five years. The 40 new pumps to be purchased this year will cost N150 million and the expansion of the entire irrigation scheme will consume N350 million for the new project.

“The project development has a short and long term plan,” the director said, explaining, “in 20 years we target the cultivation of at least 20,000 hectares of well developed irrigable land all over the state, but by 2007 this government should have ensured the cultivation of at least 6000 hectares out of the 12,000 hectares of the potential irrigation land already identified in the state.”

The dilapidated irrigation structures of the dams would be rehabilitated at N30.6 million, he said, announcing that



A long concrete parabolic canal meant to distribute water to the fields at Jibiya dam.

the Federal Ministry of Water Resources had already given permission to the state to drain water from the Zobe dam for the irrigation of 172 hectares upstream the dam, which have already been surveyed along a stretch of 45km of stream

of the Water Resources Ministry to irrigate 300 hectares upstream the dam. All the announced numbers of hectares for the project exclude the 25,000 hectares planned for cultivation under the Fadama project.

of the schemes, while the state government retains the other half up to a sufficient distance in future when it decides whether to transfer them to the communities or still retain them.

The director announced

Egypt perfected its scheme over a period of five thousand years, securing it as the mainstay of its national economy. When and how can Katsina perfect its own to reap the benefits it yearns for in a society too mesmerized by the availability of oil?

length, although the Commissioner of Agriculture announced that the state had already secured the permission

“When we develop the land and provide all the required facilities we will then transfer the ownership and management of some of the schemes to the benefiting communities for continuity and sustainability, this means we will educate them to secure the infrastructure because we believe for the sustainability and success of the schemes the benefiting communities should own and manage them as co-operative groups as we observed in the Egyptian scheme,” Kaita explained further, stating, “this is how we will wean the farmers for the utilisation and management of the scheme and gradually transfer their ownership to them.”

He said the gradual process of withdrawal would begin with two of the schemes, Daberan and Bakori, in 2005, two in 2006 and three in 2007, totaling seven, just about half

that the state had been divided into three ecological zones for the project, and each of the zones had been allocated the type of crops it would cultivate. The northern zone is to cultivate assorted vegetables, tomato and other related food items, the central zone, wheat, rice and other cereals and the southern zone, cotton, groundnut sugar beat and other related crops.

In due course, according to him, the state would establish agro-allied industries for tomato and sugarcane processing and tannery, “but we intend to encourage private sector participation on this.”

Egypt perfected its scheme over a period of five thousand years, securing it as the mainstay of its national economy. When and how can Katsina perfect its own to reap the benefits it yearns for in a society too mesmerized by the availability of oil?



Irrigated plots at Daberan dam.

LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

Association wants IRO in civil service

The Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) called on the federal government to create the post of Industrial Relations Officer (IRO) in the civil service.

The ASCSN in a statement signed by its secretary-general, Barrister Solomon Onaghorua, noted that over the years, sufficient attention has not been given to the development of industrial or labour relations in the public service as has been the case in the private sector.

The ASCSN scribe said that the government had not deemed it fit to create the post of industrial relations officer in the civil service because many public officers believe that no legal action can be instituted by any civil servant or the unions in the civil service against the government.

Barrister Obaghorua argued that the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 empowers any

From Samson Oju, Correspondent, (Lagos)

Nigerian to take legal action to protect his or her rights.

Said he; "on the contrary, section 48 of the trade disputes Act CAP 432 LFN 1990 provides that the Act shall apply to workers employed by or under the federal government or a state as it applies to persons employed by a private person."

According to him, the post of industrial relations officer in the civil service should be placed under the Head of the Civil Service of the federation and at state levels.

"Like information officers, legal officers, account officers, the industrial relations officer should be posted to ministries/extra ministerial departments to handle purely industrial relations matters in the various ministries," he said.



NLC president, Adams Oshiomhole (l), NLC deputy president, Joseph Akinlaja (c), and NLC vice president, Henry Adekwe (second right), and others during a press conference in Abuja ...recently. Pix: Felix Onigbinde

NULGE commends KNSG over salaries

From Aliyu Saleh Machika, Correspondent, (Kano)

The Gwarzo branch of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) in Kano state has commended the State government over its effort in paying workers' salaries for the month of January and 50 percent of their gross salary as ram bonus.

Making the commendation in Kano, the chairman of the union, Comrade Tukur Datti, said this was a thing that had never happened in the state, adding that it would motivate the staff to do more in their working places.

He further pledged that local government employees especially in Gwarzo would always continue to be loyal and law abiding in their commitments towards enhancing the living standard of the general populace in the state, in view of the administration's concerns for their welfare.

"This is a clear manifestation of the cardinal principles of Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau's human development," he said.

NLC donates N1m to lawmaker's family

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has presented the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Bello Masari a cheque of N1,000,000 for the family of the late Hon. Altine Idikwu, a legislator who chaired the House Committee on labour for two terms.

A letter signed by NLC president, Adams Oshiomhole addressed to the Speaker said, "this modest sum is primarily our contribution to the welfare of the family."

The congress which described Hon. Idikwu as a

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi, Stringer, (Abuja)

comrade, friend and benefactor, who virtually adopted Nigerian workers as his pre-eminent constituency as a parliamentarian said; "his family has become our family as well, and the concern for the Idikwus is only natural following the intensity of affinity between our movement and their departed patriarch."

According to the congress, Hon. Idikwu, as two-term chairman of the labour committee, showed great depth in his appreciation of

labour issues, industrial relations, social dialogue and the whole essence of the value and contribution of Nigerian trade unions to national development.

The congress revealed that Idikwu championed the welfare and concerns of workers and the masses with an intensity of passion and commitment that demon-

strated deep passion and also understood that governance is a means of improving the lives of citizens and generally advancing society.

The congress which said his voice was always loud on issues of public welfare and good governance on the floor said he exemplified the legislator as the real representative of the people and custodian of public interests.

"As a workers' organization, we can do very little materially for the family and therefore use this opportunity to call on Mr. Speaker and honourable members to ensure that the members of Idikwu's family are not allowed to suffer," the congress said.

2005 census: NPC promotes officers

As part of efforts to reposition itself for the 2005 census, the National Population Commission (NPC) has promoted three senior officers.

One of the officers, Hajia Fati Kadiri, who was elevated from deputy director to director of public affairs, said that she had been challenged.

She said that the challenge was to ensure that all parts of the country was properly and sufficiently informed and enlightened about the process of the 2005 population and housing census.

Kadiri who had acted as the head of public affairs for many years, said she would be more motivated to work hard and live up to the expectations of the commission.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that other officers promoted include Mr Bala Inuwa, who was elevated from the position of deputy director in Information Technology department to Director in the same office.

Malam Yusuf Mairnga, who was deputy director in the Administration depart-

ment was appointed Secretary to the Commission.

He replaced Rufus Akinlamilo, who has retired from service, having clocked 60 years.

NAN gathered that the promotions were to give the officers, especially those in acting capacity the confidence and zeal to do their jobs.

TUCN opposes privatization of varsity hostels

The Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN) has opposed the proposed privatization of varsity hostels, especially those owned by the federal government.

TUCN in a statement signed by its secretary general, Chief John Kolawole, called on the federal government to exercise restraint on the proposed privatization of the nation's university hostels.

"The TUCN advises the federal government to stop the exercise because of the negative consequences that may rise from the action.

"TUCN sees the new move to privatize university hostels as another ploy to sell public properties through the

From Samson Oju, Correspondent, (Lagos)

back door to some favoured individuals," the statement said.

Comrade Kolawole reiterated that the university hostel edifices were built with tax payers' money over the years and should be one of the social services of the government to children of the tax payers.

The TUCN scribe urged the federal government to pay more attention to renovating some of the dilapidated hostels named after eminent sons and daughters of the land and even build new ones to accommodate the thousands of students in the tertiary institutions.

Rivers LG clerks for training

The chairman of the local government service commission in Rivers State, Chief Emmanuel Ibodeh-Njah has said the commission has set up a training programme for clerks from the 23 councils in the state.

Ibodeh-Njah announced this after a meeting with the clerks in Port Harcourt.

He said the programme, billed to hold next month, would also cover leaders of the 23 legislative assemblies and the heads of personnel management of the councils.

Ibodeh-Njah said the training had become necessary "to enable the officers to get a full understanding of the demands of their jobs."

"This is simply because a lot is currently going wrong in the third tier of government, as most people do not have a full knowledge of the demands of their jobs," the chairman said.

He said that clerks needed to be diligent and committed in the discharge of their duties to enable the third tier of government deliver on its mandate of improving the living conditions at the grass roots.

Earlier, the spokesman for the clerks, Mr Aaron Odum, asked the commission to provide office accommodation and appoint them as members of the junior staff management committees in the council areas.

LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

Labour flays FG policy on varsity accommodation

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has criticised the federal government's new policy on university hostel privatization and students accommodation fees which led to demonstrations and closure of the universities of Lagos and Ibadan recently.

A statement signed by the NLC general secretary, John E. Odah said if the new policy of government stay, it would lead to a far more expensive tertiary education and a further destruction of institutions of higher learning in favour of the mushrooming of private ones.

"This is why the reaction of the students did not come as a surprise; it is natural for human beings to resist oppressive policies," it said.

According to the statement, the NLC condemns the policy of imposing N10,000 per bed space in students' hostels and if this policy stands, it means that where officially eight students occupy a room the students will be forced to pay N80,000. That will be one of the costliest hostel rooms in our continent," the congress said.

"This insensitive policy is further complicated by another controversial and exploitative decision by government; that student hostels be handed over to the private sector whose

motive is profit at any cost," the congress said.

Questioning the wisdom in government privatizing or "outsourcing" hostels that were built three or four decades ago and handing them to shylock estate agents the congress said, will amount to opening our youths to naked exploitation.

The congress also stressed that it was this same government mindset that destroyed the cafeteria system that had hitherto guaranteed cheap food for students.

The NLC which called on government to withdraw the policy on hostel accommodation said; "we are concerned that this administration is branding democracy as a calamity rather than a system of

government that delivers dividend."

The congress also advised the authorities of the universities of Lagos and Ibadan to resist the usual temptation of setting up pre-determined kangaroo

tribunals to investigate students demonstrations and use them as pretext to punish or expel student activists and leaders.

Viewing the press statement by the education minister, Professor Fabian

Osuji while defending the so called policy of privatizing students hostels, the congress described the statement as insensitive, unhelpful and provocative.



Teachers prepare for a parade to mark the 2004 World Teachers Day in Abuja

NUPENG expels erring members

The Kaduna State branch of the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, Petroleum Tanker Drivers unit, has expelled some of its members for alleged anti-

From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent (Kaduna)

union activities.

The state chairman of NUPENG/PTD, Comrade Nuhu Mohammed told newsmen in Kaduna that

some members of the union were expelled for allegedly trying to burn the union's office.

He said that most of those involved in the incident had been accused of involvement in pipeline vandalism, pointing out that any member that violates the constitution of the association would not go unpunished even as their suspension was carried out by the national body.

Comrade Nuhu said that the crisis started on the day of election, when the erring members realized that they would not win the election, as they tried to embark on wanton crises at the venue of the elections.

The chairman disclosed that his re-election with the members of his cabinet was based on their performance in their last tenure, with the wishes of Allah.

He extended his hand of fellowship to those that regretted their action and want to identify with his administration and must have been pardoned by the national body of the association.

On the welfare package for members in his second tenure as chairman, Comrade Nuhu Muhammad said that his administration had concluded plans to open new offices in Kaduna.

Unionisation: NLC to picket 25 Abuja hotels

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has concluded plans to embark on massive picketing of about 25 hotels in Abuja, for their failure to allow workers to join unions of their choice.

Disclosing this in an exclusive interview with *Labour Trust*, the deputy general secretary of National Union of Hotels and Personal Service Worker (NUHPSW), Comrade William Chukwu explained that already the congress has instructed all its affiliates not to patronize the 25 affected hotels until they comply with the labour laws on right of workers to unionized.

According to him, the hotels marked for the picketing exercise which will commence from February 8,

From Samson Ojo, Correspondent (Lagos)

2005 are; Chelsea International, Savannah Suites, Bannex, Royalton, Chida International, Sharon, Afro Amena, Top Rank, comfort Royal, Day Spring, Rioneer, Park View, Princess and Confluence hotel.

Said he, "we have already written a letter of notice to all the affected hotels of the picketing exercise, as we have already given them enough time to comply with the labour laws."

The NUHPSW scribe told *Labour Trust* that the union had instructed its state councils to compile and forward names of all the hotels that violate labour laws concerning unionization of workers.

Association seeks support for cassava growers

The federal government has been urged to support cassava growers to beef up demand for local consumption and export of cassava.

The chairman of Nigerian cassava growers association, Mr. Tola Adepomola, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Thursday in Lagos that to increase the capacity of the sector, there was an urgent need for government at all levels to give financial and technical supports to the association.

"Farmers need high yielding cassava that is disease and drought resistant to boost production and surpass the federal government's N6 billion target of cassava for

export in 2005," he said.

He also tasked the organised private sector to collaborate with the government by investing in manufacturing of cassava processing machine, such as chippers, graters, pelleter and flash driers.

Adepomola also emphasised the need for regular training for farmers, especially the rural dwellers on standard, pricing and packaging.

He commended the federal government for its policy on 10 per cent cassava composite flour in bread production and advised that it should be extended to other sectors that uses products, such as ethanol, starch and livestock feeds. Adepomola,

however, complained against the high cost of production, noting that the development had continued to make it difficult for Nigeria to compete favourably in the international market. He also decried the prevailing interest rate on loans from and other bureaucratic bottlenecks in obtaining such loans and urged the government to make micro credit loans available to farmers in the rural areas as part of efforts to attain self sufficiency in food production.

He further urged the government to provide necessary infrastructure, such as good road network, for easy evacuation of farm produce.

Gov tasks NDE on job creation efforts

Governor James Ibori of Delta has called on the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to double efforts towards job creation across the nation.

Governor Ibori made the call in Saba, while declaring open a two-day workshop, organized by NDE for its

South and South-West geopolitical zones.

Delta state governor, who was represented by his deputy, Chief Benjamin Elue, said the unemployment situation in the country had necessitated serious re-engineering of all employment generating

impact on society.

He also urged the NDE to monitor, very closely, all beneficiaries of its facilities to ensure high success rate in their endeavours.

Ibori further charged the organization to champion private entrepreneurial re-awakening, especially at the

levels.

Earlier, the director-general of NDE, Mr. Sunday Adelodun, said that for the directorate to remain relevant, it should engage its self in capacity building.

Adelodun, who was represented by Malam Abu Ari, a director in NDE, said

would equip the officers to train the unemployed to be gainfully employed.

He enumerated the objectives of the workshop to include development of new attitude to work to ensure organisational efficiency in job generation, wealth creation and poverty



YOUR HEALTH

Health interactive

With Dr Aminu Magashi

Polio eradication: 2004 under review

The avalanche of letters and requests from readers of this column on the need to write features on our 2005 resolution as many writers did in the past never cease to amaze me. I could not fathom the rationale and the justification to dedicate a whole discourse talking about a resolution, but nevertheless, let me say that I will continue to write weekly, God's willing, and discussing objectively diverse areas of public health and development with the aim of advocating for reforms and drawing the attention of various stakeholders towards effective collaboration and partnership to make the world safer for all.

However, while I was thinking of such request, what came to my mind was that it would be far better to review the event of last year, at least for the sake of lessons learned and moving ahead, and the reader would agree with me that last year (2004), what dominated the public health arena was the polio eradication vis-à-vis the controversy attached to it and, of course, the media, both locally and internationally, then were washed with all forms of comments and critiques on the controversies, particularly in Nigeria and the need to eradicate the Wild Polio Virus (WPV) by the year 2004.

Well, the year has come and gone, and the World Health Organisation has not yet declared the world polio free; maybe 2005 will be the golden year to put an end to the WPV. As we are aware that the problems started by mere speculation that the vaccine had among its contents Estradiol (contraceptive agent) and HIV virus, the speculation later on became a suspicion and finally a boycott of the national immunisation exercise by some states in northern Nigeria, notable among them: Kano, Kaduna and Zamfara and, on the other part, Jamaatul Nasrul Islam. That boycott led to a lot of meetings by the major stakeholders (WHO, UNICEF, Rotary International, Federal Government through the Ministry of Health and the National Programme on Immunisation) and another part, the boycotters.

A lot of investigations were done. First, Jamaatul Nasrul Islam (JNI) engaged a renowned pharmacist from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Dr Haruna Abdu Kaita, to conduct an independent investigation to ascertain the veracity of the alleged contamination. On the other hand, Kano State established its own committee to investigate the same vaccine. Both Dr Kaita and Kano's investigation discovered the presence of Estradiol, a synthetic hormone that is capable of stimulating antibodies which may lead to infertility or sub-fertility later in life. Upon such investigation, the federal government, in collaboration with JNI, established another committee (all inclusive final verification committee) which went to Indonesia, South Africa, and India to verify previous investigations. Although Estradiol was still discovered, the experts believed that it was a trace element and would not cause any harm. That action led to the acceptance of the vaccine and declared it safe by the JNI, Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokoto and other boycotters resumed polio immunisation.

Kano was left on its own, and at a certain time within 2004, the state was declared the major reservoir of wild polio virus in Africa, and unless the state allowed immunisation, the achievement of polio free world would remain a mirage and at the same time, the countries that were initially not being recording polio cases, the virus stated to rear its head there, and of course, the development partners linked such viruses to Nigeria, and particularly Kano that refused immunisation. As time goes on, Kano and the development partners had to meet again and agreed to import vaccine from Indonesia. That was done and still traces of Estradiol were discovered, but another committee that was set up by the Kano State government went further to investigate the traces of the Estradiol, whether it is harmful or not. They went to the extent of engaging the services of an indigene, an immunologist who is based in the United State. At the end of that investigation, it was revealed that although there were traces of Estradiol, it is not capable of leading to harm or infertility.

That was how Kano came on board and resumed immunisation and put an end to the almost one year controversy. My aim today is not only to review the controversy, but to look at

some salient issues and lessons for a better tomorrow. One issue which I maintain a stand on with regard to the controversy, and I still believe in it up to now is the fact that what led to the imbroglio is not suspicion or speculation; all the two are effects and manifestation of a bigger problem. The main issue is the apparent neglect of the plight of children in terms of investing on other childhood illnesses and diseases, and selective massive and aggressive campaign and programme towards polio eradication.

It was that problem that culminated into speculation, suspicion and the entire controversy, and with respect to future programmes and initiatives by development partners, it will be wise on their part to appreciate the genesis of the controversy so that it can be addressed, instead of addressing the effects. On another part, one would have expected the Kano state government, while the controversy lasted, to have raised the issue before the partners on the fact that while we are chasing polio, we can equally address other needs of children which are within the scope and mandate of many United Nations' agencies. Even though one does not expect the same approach like the one of polio, however, something concrete needs to be done about those needs. Why did I say that? Kano would have negotiated on behalf on the vulnerable groups. This is because, at that time, it was a darling state having many visitors from almost all development partners, including the financiers of the polio eradication. That the state did not deem it fit to do that says a lot of their understanding of the entire saga.

However, at least a lot of writers and advocates within and outside the country have voiced the need to invest on the need for the development partners to also focus on measles, meningitis, malaria, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis, which for now are receiving a window dressing approach. A very good omen which may not be unconnected with such criticism of the approach by the development partners is the palpable rumour I heard. Although very reliable that the Geneva based World Health Organisation has agreed to initiate a project that will look at many problems through integrated project, diseases such as polio, HIV, tuberculosis and malaria will be jointly addressed. I want to believe that the approach is part of the lessons learned over the controversy, and of course, people like us, if that approach becomes implementable, will be exonerated on the fact that, if by the year 2005, there is no remnant of Wild Polio Virus on the surface of the earth, that achievement is not going to contribute in the reduction of under five and infant mortality rates by even five percent (5%). Nevertheless, there is nothing wrong in pushing the programme to achieve polio free environment, no matter how small that action will be.

Groin pain and body movement

Please provide me with information - for the past three months, I have been suffering from groin pain and sensation of movement as if I am about to urinate, especially during sleep

A karaye

The likely problem you are experiencing is inguinal hernia, which is a protrusion of some of the contents of the abdomen through a weak aperture called an inguinal canal, and at times, the protrusion is evidenced by swelling in the groin which goes back on its own or by pushing it, and it is associated with pain.

Inguinal hernia could be due to increase in abdominal pressure which could be as a result of chronic cough, difficulty in urination and also constipation, and at times, weight lifting and carrying heavy objects on the head could also result in such.

If you are having that condition, from your description, it is very mild and I will advise you to visit a urologist.

Breast discharge and abortion

I will like to know if abortion committed three years ago will result in having whitish milk like discharge from one's breast.

W W

Your condition, from the brief description, is likely to be a condition called Hyper Prolactinaemia (raised level of Prolactin, a hormone responsible for the production of milk, and it is being produced from a gland called Pituitary Gland situated just below the brain. During pregnancy, the hormone is produced in large quantity, and when a pregnancy is terminated as in your own case, the factors during pregnancy that inhibit the action of prolactin will be abolished; as such, the hormone will lead to production of milk and the discharge. Termination of pregnancy could result in your condition, but it will not be responsible for milk discharge up to three years.

High level of prolactin not only causes milk discharge (Galactorrea), but also leads to absence of menses or makes it very scanty (are you experiencing that?).

Among other causes of high level of prolactin are as follows:

1. Prolonged stress
2. Ingestion of drugs such as Dopamine Antagonists, like Antipsychotics (Phenothiazine), Antidepressants and Antiemetic (anti-vomiting).
3. Other drugs like Methyl dopa and oral contraceptive pills.
4. Some diseased condition like low level of thyroid hormones (Primary Hypothyroidism), abnormal growth of the cells that produce prolactin (Prolactinoma), and very rare, renal failure and post herpes Zoster (infection with herpes simplex virus) can also cause high prolactin.

To confirm the condition, assess the level of serum prolactin and other hormones and good history taken; and examination and treatment depend on the cause.

Please visit a physician.

Wet dream

I am an ardent reader of your column and thanks for the counselling. For a long time now, I am discharging semen like fluid whenever I go to toilet in the morning. I am 21 years and never indulge in intercourse

W. Abuja

What you are experiencing is among the process and stages of becoming mature. It is a wet dream which leads to releasing of semen, and some of the substances which remain within the urethra are flushed away in the morning during urination.

Pains all over my breast

Good day, I am a young lady who always experiences pains all over my breast during ovulation period, and I don't have any lump. Is it normal?

A C

Ovulation, which is a release of a mature egg from the ovary normally, occurs at the 14th day of the menstrual cycle, but at times, 1 to 2 days before or after the 14th day as the case may be. The ovulation process leads to release of certain hormones like Progesterone and Estrogen. These two hormones contribute to the alveolar and ducts growth of the breast. At times, during that period, because of the effect of the hormones on the breast, it becomes tense, firm and engorged due to an increased blood supply. Among some women, that causes discomfort and pain.

I believe that is what you are experiencing since you mentioned that there is no lump; if you are in doubt, please visit a gynecologist.

Still on dysnoea on exertion

Please can you explain more on Dysnoea on exertion?

Thanks.
Q.R

Dysnoea can be described as breathlessness or difficulty in breathing. It is one of the symptoms of heart failure or respiratory problems. Some one with heart failure, if he or she does some work, such as climbing or running, the person experiences difficulty in breathing, because that exercise has added work load to a failed heart. That is why it is called Dysnoea on exertion. If the condition becomes worse, the person experiences dysnoea, not only on exertion but even at rest. If you are experiencing this condition, please visit a physician.

Write in confidence to healthinteractive@hotmail.com or send text message to 08023810589 or P.O. Box 14807, Kano, Nigeria

YOUR HEALTH

Chinese govt donates insecticides treated nets, drugs to Nigeria

The fight against malaria got a boost in the country as the Chinese government donates insecticide treated nets and anti-malaria drugs worth several thousands of naira to the government and people of Nigeria.

Making the donation recently in Abuja the Chinese ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Wang Yonggin, said, though the nets and drugs donated are limited, they will go along way in reducing the prevalence of malaria in the country just as he noted that the gesture was a demonstration of goodwill and friendship of Chinese government and the people of Nigeria.

Mr. Yonggin further announced his country's plan to help in the implementation of the bore-holes drilling water supply which includes the drilling of 598 bore-holes in the federal capital territory (FCT) and 18 states of the federation to enable people in the areas to have access to clean and hygienic water.

According to the Chinese ambassador in Nigeria, China's assistance to other developing countries is to help in developing their economy, protect their sovereignty, safeguard their independence and promote friendly relation, as well as economic and trade cooperation between China and the recipient countries.

"China never attaches any

political conditions or demands any political privilege in providing aids to developing countries", Mr. Yonggin noted, saying that Nigeria and his country have enjoyed a stable and healthy development since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1971.

In the year 2004, he said the trade volume between the two countries exceeded two billion dollars and Nigerian export to China has increased sharply. He also pointed that more than 100 Chinese enterprises invested in the country by the end of last year.

Receiving the items on behalf of the government and people of Nigeria, the minister of health, Professor Eytayo Lambo, while commending the Chinese government for its donation, noted that malaria parasites and vectors have remained very uncooperative despite what the government is doing to sustain the momentum of its control.

Malaria, Prof. Lambo said has continued to be a foremost public health problem in Nigeria, ravaging communities, killing under five children and pregnant women and sending families poorer, and however, added that there are cost effective intervention tools to address the problem.

He identified the use of insecticides treated nets, intermittent preventive treat-

ment for pregnant women and efficacious anti-malaria drugs for case management as veritable tools in the fight against malaria parasites in the country.

According to him, batches of anti-malaria drugs and insecticides treated nets earlier donated by the Chinese government to support the malaria control efforts in the country are being distributed to the beneficiaries through-

out the length and breath of all states in Nigeria.

He commended the bilateral and multi-lateral agen-

cies and other partners who have contributed to the roll back malaria (RBM) programme in Nigeria and as-

sured of the judicious use of the items donated in the fight against the scourge of malaria in Nigeria.

FG reviews malaria treatment policy

The minister of health Prof. Eytayo Lambo has said that malaria treatment policy in the country will be reviewed in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) recom-

mendation.

"Lambo, according to a statement by his chief press secretary, Mr. Ayo Osinlu, said the review of the malaria drug policy in the country has become necessary, following

a drug efficacy test conducted in the six geo-political zones of the country which showed that chloroquine, the first line drug for malaria treatment has lost its efficacy due to the emergence of chloroquine resistant strains of Plasmodium falciparum.

According to him, the situation is worsened by the incidence of fake, adulterated and sub-standard drugs, as well as poor malaria treatment compliance, which he regretted has led to rising treatment of typhoid cases as a result of misdiagnosis and failed malaria treatment.

The country, the minister noted will, by the drugs policy change adopt the use of WHO recommendation of the "Artemisinin Based Combination Therapy (ACT)" which he described as highly efficacious, through more expensive than chloroquine.

He said malaria is a major cause of death and illnesses of young children, accounting for 30 per cent of infant deaths, besides contributing to anemia in children thereby undermining their growth and development.

Prof. Lambo said the decision to review the anti-malaria policy and its subsequent implementation will pose some challenges to stakeholders, including manufacturers and private health providers and added that the process of the change will follow an articulated fashion of collaborating with relevant organisation.



Vice President Atiku Abubakar inspecting laboratory instrument after commissioning the school of Basic and Remedial Studies in Funtua, Katsina state...recently.

Group donates blood banks to Nigeria

An American outfit, the Safe Blood Africa Project of Rotary International has donated 20 blood banks to Nigeria.

Making the donation weekend in Abuja, the group's director, Mr Warren Kaufmann also used the opportunity to initiate the establishment of what he called a fruitful collaboration between the leadership of the federal ministry of health and the safe blood Africa project.

Mr. Kaufmann also called on the government to waive duty charges on facilities required for the installation of the blood banks, pointing out that the waiver will assist the Rotary International to subsequently increase the number of the blood banks.

He said the idea of donating the blood banks to Nigerian government and people was borne out of the dire need the country has for it. This, he said he gathered when he led a rotary group on tour of some hospitals in the country some in 2002.

Besides equipping the blood banks, Mr. Kaufmann said the Rotary International will ensure adequate supply of blood and will also be engaged in counselling to guarantee the safety of donors and assurance of quality.

Receiving the donation, the minister of health, Prof.

Eytayo Lambo applauded the Rotary International for its human gesture as well as the support it gave the country in its efforts to eradicate polio, which he said will be achieved by the end of this year.

Describing the blood bank project as ambitious and strategic, Prof Lambo

thanked the group for choosing Nigeria as the first country in Africa to benefit from the continent-wide project. He pointed out that blood transfusion is a major factor in the worrisome transmission of the HIV virus, adding that, it was to stem this that the national blood transfusion service was initiated.

155,000 access ARV through Bush initiative

President W. Bush of America's emergency plan for AIDS relief has so far delivered anti retroviral (ARV) drugs to 155,000 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHs) in 15 of the most endemic nations of the world, the USAID director, Ms Dawn Liberi has said.

Ms Liberi who stated this recently in Abuja while addressing journalists also noted that the programme was extended to 22 states in Nigeria just as he pointed out that 350,000 PLWHs have been slated to be treated in Nigeria by USAID.

The emergency plan for AIDS relief which President Bush announced in 2003 is currently providing \$15 billion dollars to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic over five years, with special focus on 15 of the hardest hit countries.

According to Liberi, the relief is targeted at three spe-

By Shu'aib Abubakar
Rabi Othman, Interns

cific areas related to HIV/AIDS, they are, the prevention of HIV transmission, treatment of AIDS and associated conditions and palliative care for HIV infected individuals and care for orphans and vulnerable children.

The USAID director attributed the rampant cases of HIV/AIDS in the country to economic, social, cultural and environmental problems and added that development partners are poised to provide what she called back-up services in both the secondary and tertiary health institutions with a view to reducing the prevalence of the disease.

Also commenting, Dr. Joseph Nnorom of the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) said laboratory facilities will be provided to moni-

tor the programme, adding that Nigeria has consistently contributed in addressing the global burden in HIV/AIDS.

He pointed out that, medically for now, there is no cure for HIV/AIDS but the anti-retroviral drugs reduces the perfectional operation of the disease in the body and does not destroy white blood cell, as some people perceived, but noted that, "it is the disease that ruins the while blood cells in the body of victims.

According to him, 80 percent of the virus in transmitted sexually, 10 percent, from mother to child transmission during birth while 10 percent is transmitted through contaminated instruments like razor blades, clippers, and other sharp objects.

Dr. Nnorom warned against stigmatisation of victims pointing out that it is because of the stigma that people have refused to go for test to know their health status.

FG honours winners of malaria day essay competition

The federal government, Thursday in Abuja honoured junior and secondary school students who participated and won the Africa malaria day essay competition, as part of the activities to mark the 2005 Africa malaria day celebration.

The students, three each from the junior and senior secondary school wrote on the topic, "If I were to be the minister of health, what I would do to control malaria," and while Aneuc Prema of Dorothy International School, Aba, Abia State took first position in the junior category, Monica Michaels of Government Secondary School, Abukpanike, Enugu State led in the senior category.

Presenting prizes to the winning students, the minister of health, Prof. Eytayo Lambo said the competition was meant to sensitise children on the danger of malaria and to increase their awareness on different ways of combating the problem of malaria.

He pointed out that the use of insecticide treated nets (ITNs), improved sanitation, better environmental management and adequate and prompt treatment are some

Stories by Sunday Ejike
Benjamin Health Reporter

possible ways of combating malaria scourge in the country.

Malaria, Lambo said is responsible for the death of one in every four infants and is associated with the death of one in every ten deaths of pregnant women in the country adding that, at least half the population of Nigeria adults suffer from at least one episode of malaria annually while under fives have up to 3-4 episode every year.

According to him, the roll back programme of the government was initiated to reverse the trend, pointing out that the ministry of health has fostered formidable partnerships with bilateral and multi-lateral agencies, NGOs, organised private sectors, community groups and the media to ensure that intersectional and multidisciplinary actions are put in place to combat malaria scourge.

Government, he said has put in place appropriate policies and interventions to meet both the Abuja targets and millennium development goals in combating the scourge of malaria in the country as a whole.



INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY P.M.B. 1013, ZARIA - NIGERIA



APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION INTO DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE COURSES

The general public and especially prospective candidates are hereby informed that the Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria has re-introduced a variety of Diploma and Certificate Courses with effect from this 2004/2005 session. It is hoped that lectures will commence in the first quarter of 2005. The details are as follows:

1. DIPLOMA IN ACCOUNTING

- a. Duration Two years
b. Entry Qualifications Five credits including Mathematics and at least a Pass in English Language
c. Tuition Fees N25,000.00 Per Session

2. ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

- a. Duration One year (Part Time)
b. Entry Qualifications Diploma in Accounting from a recognized Institution
c. Tuition Fees N30,000.00 Per Session

3. DIPLOMA IN BANKING

- a. Duration Two Years
b. Entry Qualifications Five Credits including Mathematics and at least a Pass in English Language
c. Tuition Fees N25,000.00 Per Session

4. DIPLOMA IN INSURANCE

- a. Duration Two years
b. Entry Qualifications Four Credits including English Language and at least a Pass in Mathematics
c. Tuition Fees N25,000.00 Per Session

5. DIPLOMA IN LAW

- a. Duration Two years
b. Entry Qualifications Four Credits including English Language
c. Tuition Fees N25,000.00 Per Session

6. DIPLOMA IN SHARIA & CIVIL LAW

- a. Duration Two Years
b. Entry Qualifications Four Credits including English Language or Grade Two Teacher's Certificate
c. Tuition Fees N25,000.00 Per Session

7. BASIC JUDICIAL COURSE

- a. Duration Eight Weeks
b. Entry Qualifications Candidates must be Area Court Judges or Registrars, Bailiffs or Court Assistants from Area Courts, Magistrate Courts, Sharia Court of Appeal or High Courts. Also qualified are Personnel of Ministries of Justice, Law Reform Commission or Private Candidates who hold SSCE or equivalent qualifications.
c. Tuition Fees N15,000.00

8. ADVANCED JUDICIAL COURSE

- a. Duration Twelve Weeks
b. Entry Qualifications Holders of Basic Judicial Course Certificates; Officers of Law related Institutions such as Ministries of Justice, Law Reform Commission or Area/ Sharia Court Judges and Personnel of Magistrate/ High Courts.
c. Tuition Fees N17,000.00

9. HIGHER DIPLOMA IN SHARIA

- a. Duration One year (Full Time), Two years (Part Time)
b. Entry Qualifications Diploma in Law or Diploma in Sharia and Civil Law from Ahmadu Bello University, or other recognized Universities or other Institutions; Diploma in Hausa, Arabic or Islamic Studies from Bayero University; Judicial Officers from the rank of Principal Judge or Principal Inspector of Sharia/Area Courts or Principal Registrar of Magistrate, Sharia/Area Courts or High Courts.
c. Tuition Fees N30,000.00 Per Session

10. DIPLOMA IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- a. Duration Two Years
b. Entry Qualifications A minimum of Four Credits in the SSCE or NECO one of which must be in Government/History or Economics. Candidates must have scored at least a Pass in English Language. Preference will be given to employees of Local Government.
c. Tuition Fees N25,000.00 Per Session

11. HIGHER DIPLOMA IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- a. Duration Two Years
b. Entry Qualifications Candidates must possess the basic requirements for admission into the Diploma Programme. They must also hold a Diploma in Local Government with at least a Merit Pass and a two years working experience. Candidates with a pass in Diploma from Ahmadu Bello University may also be considered for admission provided that they have four years working experience. Also qualified are holders of Diplomas in Local Government or Public Administration from recognized Universities or Polytechnics.
c. Tuition and other Fees N40,000.00 Per Session

12. ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- a. Duration One Year
b. Entry Qualifications Candidates must have the basic entry requirements for admission into the Diploma Programme. They must have obtained at least a Merit Pass at Higher Diploma in Local Government from recognized Universities or Polytechnics and must have had two years working experience after their Higher Diplomas. However, candidates with a Pass at the Higher Diploma in Local Government from Ahmadu Bello University who have three years working experience may be eligible for admission. In either case candidates must not be below grade level 09 in the Public Service.
c. Tuition Fees N40,000.00

13. ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

- a. Duration Two years (Part Time)
b. Entry Qualifications Non graduate serving officers not lower than Senior Secretary (GL 10) in the Public Sector and Managerial Officers of equivalent status in the Private Sector. Also eligible for consideration are Professionals in both Public and Private organisations who have reached levels equivalent to the above. In either case candidates must have attained academic qualifications not lower than an Ordinary Diploma or equivalent. All candidates may be required to take a written test or subject themselves to an interview.
c. Tuition Fees N30,000.00 Per Session

14. ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSE

- a. Duration Six months
b. Entry Qualifications Candidates should be officers of executive supervisory cadre in the state government or Public Corporations. They are normally sponsored by their respective organisations taking into account their learning capacity and their potential for promotion to higher administrative levels.
c. Tuition Fees N20,000.00

15. MODERN MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSE

- a. Duration Three months
b. Entry qualifications Candidates who are normally nominees of their state Governments should be senior administrative/professional or technical officers. However, those from the Private Sector or other institutions on self-sponsorship may also be considered for admission.
c. Tuition Fees N20,000.00

METHOD OF APPLICATION

Candidates who wish to enrol into any of the Diploma or Certificate Programmes should purchase application forms at the Finance Office, Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, Kongo Campus P.M.B. 1013 Zaria at the cost of N1,500.00 each.

All completed Forms must be returned to the Secretary of the Institute to reach her on or before February, 28th 2005. Photocopies of official receipts of purchase must be attached to the completed application forms as evidence of payment.

Signed:
Secretary



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LAGOS OFFICE:
Plot 94, Younis Bashorun Street, Off Ajose Adeogun Street, Victoria Island Annex, P.M.B. 12544, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel: (01) 2611262, 2612000, 2610682. Fax: (01) 2612945



IN MEMORIAM

In loving and affectionate memory of our beloved Father, Brother, Grand-Father and Dear Friend.

Grief cannot take away the happiness we shared for 31 years, sorrow will fade in time, but love remains forever.

He lived so that others could find a way. His values, cause and achievements remains testimonies to a legacy of Sacrifice.

May Almighty Allah (SWT) continue to shower you with His Mercy and May He grant you Al-Janna Firdausi-Amin.

**Inna Lillahi Wa Inna
Ilaihir Raji'un**



**LATE ALHAJI IBRAHIM SHEHU (mni)
Matawallen Lafia**

- | | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Rita R. Ibrahim (Mrs) | - Wife |
| Hajiya Hadiza Mohammed | - Daughter |
| Mohammed Ibrahim | - Son |
| Bala Ibrahim | - Son |
| Shehu Ibrahim | - Son |

Appreciation

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ABUJA TRUST



Members of the fire service putting out the fire that gutted the Agip filling station along Olusegun Obasanjo way, Wuse zone 1 Abuja...recently.

Group advocates Tiv peace confab in Abuja

A leader of the Tiv community (*Orhemen* Tiv) in Abuja, Peter I. Akawe, has recommended a peace confab for Tiv indigenes in the FCT as the only panacea to the lingering leadership tussle among factions.

Akawe told newsmen that if notable Tiv sons in the FCT, like Chief Ignatius Nomhwange (*Ivaan Ayange I Tiv*), who was the first administrator in the FCT, and the likes of Gen. Stephen Ikya (*Jimenor I Tiv*), can intervene by calling on all contending parties to a roundtable discussion, the tussle would be laid to rest.

It could be recalled that since the demise of Dr. Uza, who was the *Orhemen* Tiv in Abuja, efforts to find his successor have been trailed by controversies. Featuring prominently in the tussle is Chief Jacob Azongo, who until the leadership crisis, was re-

By Godwin Tynonogo
(Reporter, Abuja)

garded as *Muse Orhemen* Tiv in charge of Gwagwalada.

Chief Azongo's contention is that the Ipusus extraction of the Tiv nation had produced Dr. Uza as the leader, and since he died, the position automatically should shift to the Ichongo extraction, where he hails from.

Chief Azongo had displayed letters of his confirmation as *Orhemen* in Abuja, all endorsed by those the documents referred to as kingmakers.

But this is one aspect that Akawe has picked holes in, arguing that Tiv community in the FCT have no kingmakers. He said that even the late Uza, who was then regarded as the *Orhemen*, had no official document making him a traditional leader, and was not turbaned by any superior authority in the FCT.

Rather, he said, in the 90's, five elders of Tiv were selected from each of the then four area councils in the FCT (Abaji, Kuje, Gwagwalada and Abuja Municipal). The selected people, according to him, represented the Tiv community at that time; hence, on December 18, 1996, the then Chief of Karshi, who was the head of the FCT traditional council, Alh. Adulkardeen Mamman, confirmed his position.

Chief Azongo however is still claiming that he remains the *Orhemen* Tiv in the FCT, and is only waiting for those who confirmed him to present him to the *Onah* of Abaji for turbaning.

AU summit: Abuja wears new look

The cosmetic effect with which the Nigerian government pays attention to its citizenry once again has reared its beautiful face as Abuja, the seat of the government, is wearing a new look apart from the functioning of essential amenities amidst tight security.

By Benjamin Auta
(Reporter, Abuja)

Abuja Trust took a cursory look at the hype in which the present African Union Summit has brought to the FCT. Some residents spoken to said that the government is playing its normal

'lip service' to the provision of social amenities to the people, more especially in satellite towns.

Mr. Jonathan Abu, residing at Chika, told *Abuja Trust* that electric power supply in the area has become more stable, unlike before when the order of the usage was

by rationing. Where this change has become more prominent is along airport road, precisely Lugbe, where the Department of Development Control of the FCDA has evacuated the market formerly close to the highway to about 150 metres, while car wreckages along the road have been evacuated.

Another observer of events in the FCT, Jibril Abdullahi, spoke about security situation in various parts of Abuja. He said security always seems to work well when world attention is focused on the country, or

when there are international conferences to be held in the capital city. He called on the authorities to always remember that the ordinary Nigerian also needs to be secured socially and economically.

Speaking further on the matter, Samaila Iro, a farmer, said that government had always neglected the plight of the ordinary man, more especially those living in satellite towns. He said the issue of security and social amenities to the poor is continuously neglected, stating that most indigenes of the FCT live in rural areas where no amenity is provided.

Jabi indigenes allege demolition by defence ministry

About 300 indigenes of Jabi I, a suburb of Abuja, are living in fear following an alleged notice of demolition of their village by the Minister of Defence, Alhaji Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, on the 17th of January 2005.

By Aminu Yusuf Ibrahim
(Intern)

would be relocated to Jibi settlement, a place the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory initially built for them, which had now been allocated to the Mobile Police Force, asking "where do we go when our lives are at stake with the demolition of our houses, farm lands, and cemetery?" the *Esu* of Jabi I asked.

Alhaji Yakubu Auta mentioned that he had tried several times to have discussions with the minister of the Federal Capital Territory to forward his people's complaints over the matter, but

to no avail. "I am using this medium to call on Minister Nasiru Ahmed el-Rufai to kindly and promptly come to our aid and relocate us before the Defence Ministry's bulldozers embark on the exercise."

The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps has joined the International Civil Defence Organisation in Switzerland.

Mr. Biola Aturamu, the Commandant-General of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, made this known recently while answering questions from newsmen. According to Mr. Aturamu, all logistics that will make Nigeria full member of the organisation have been fulfilled, saying "the government has provided the money and the honourable minister has signed it and a certificate was issued."

He explained further that the act establishing the civil defence corps made it mandatory for it to be affiliated with the international body.

Quoting him: "The purpose of our trip, apart from being a full member, was to see what goes on in other

By Maimuna Yusuf (Reporter, Abuja)

However, concerning the activities and welfare of the corps staff, Mr. Aturamu said that there will be an improvement so that they will join the

mainstream of the security outfit of the nation.

He disclosed that salaries of the staff have already been paid since last three months, and new uniforms have been introduced to improve the personality and outlook of the

organisation.

The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps bill was signed in June 2004, and before now, the organisation was an observer member of the International Defence Civil Organisations.

Abuja Trust's investigation revealed that the notice was issued at a meeting the minister had with the village representatives at the office of the commandant of the War College, Abuja.

At the meeting, the *Esu* of Jabi I, Alhaji Yakubu Auta, was ordered by the minister to inform his people to remove their valuables and vacate the area or an impending demolition. The area was now the property of the War College," the minister had said to them. "We are even generous to you for not demanding rent," he added when they requested compensation.

In an interview with *Abuja Trust*, the *Esu* of Jabi I said, "We have no intention of confronting the authorities, but let them consider that we are original indigenes of the area, and we were not paid compensation for our property yet."



Civil defence corps joins international body

Court arraigns woman for intimidation

Mrs. Franca Paul of old Customs quarters, Mararaba, Nasarawa State, has been arraigned before an Abuja Chief Magistrates' Court sitting in Jabi for threatening to deal with the family of one Mrs. Agnes Bekeboh living in Apo quarters.

According to the prosecution, the complainant, who reported the matter to the state's Crime Investigation Department (CID), Abuja, said on January 19, 2005, at about 4:00pm, the accused person accused her that she was the one who killed her

complainant attempts to wage fight against her.

The prosecution revealed that the accused person also repeated the same words when she met the complainant at Nyanya Police Station.

The prosecution informed the court that the accused is charged with defamation of character and criminal intimidation contrary to sections 391 and 397 of the penal code law.

The accused, who told the court that she is a teacher by profession, pleaded not guilty to the two count charges.

accused bail, stating that the two parties abused themselves following misunderstanding between them.

The presiding Chief Magistrate, Othman Musa, said following the quarrel the two parties had in the court, he ordered that the two parties should take bond of peace before living the court's premises, and the bond will last until the court makes final decision on the matter. He therefore admitted the accused to bail in the sum of N100,000, with one surety in like sum, saying that the surety must be the husband

KANO TRUST

KNSG donates *Sallah* gift to prisoners

Happiness came the way of the inmates of Kano Central and Goron Dutse Prisons when they received bags of rice, cows and other food items from the state government as *Sallah* gift.

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru,
Correspondent Kano

Presenting the materials to the inmates, the Special Assistant on Political Affairs to the governor, Alhaji Kabiru Abdullahi Riruwai,

said the gesture was not unconnected with government's zeal to improve the welfare of prison inmates.

He noted that it will be unwise if government failed to initiate actions that will make the inmates have a sense of belonging, and celebrate the *Sallah* festival like any other individual. Alhaji Kabiru stated that the measure will convince the inmates that they are part and parcel of governmental policies aimed at the uplift of general welfare.

He told the inmates that they were brought to the prisons for reformation which will enable them to contribute positively to nation building after their jail term.

Some of the policies underway, according to the special assistant, include the provision of skill acquisition facilities where they will be trained in various trades which will equip them with basic techniques for self-reliance when they are released from prisons.

Receiving the materials, the Deputy Comptroller of the state's Central Prison, Alhaji Abubakar Kyari, applauded government for its timely intervention in the welfare of the inmates, assuring that the items will be used judiciously.



Kano State Governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau (L) listens to inmates when he visited old peoples home, Shahuci, Kano...recently.

Blind people send SOS to Shekarau

Blind people in Kano have called on the Governor of the state, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, to fulfil his earlier promise of employing 300 blind people in the state.

The Sarkin Makafi of Dawakin Kudu local council, Alhaji Abdulkadir Usman, made the call while speaking to newsmen in Kano. Alhaji Abdulkadir Usman explained that Shekarau had earlier promised that his government will employ 300 blind people in the state.

The Sarkin Makafi said the gesture will enable blind people in the state to contribute their quota in developing the state. He revealed that among the blind people, there are talented people who can contribute a lot toward building the state.

Alhaji Usman advised the state governor to direct

the state's head of civil service to expedite action on the issue so as to fulfil the



Gov. Shekarau pledge.

"I am sure blind people will not disappoint Shekarau if they are given the opportunity to serve, therefore the governor should assist them in that respect," Sarki said.

Flood victims get relief materials in Dala LG

Flood victims in Dala local government council have received a boost when the council doled out relief materials valued at thousands of naira for onward distribution to the affected people.

Disclosing this to newsmen, the Vice-Chairman of the council, Alhaji Durajo Ibrahim Usman, said the gesture was to assist in alleviating the sufferings which the victims are passing through as a result of the incident.

He pointed out that as a result of the disaster, the

council set-up a committee mandated to identify eligible victims as well as to ascertain the level of the devastation with a view to unveiling appropriate assistant strategies.

According to him, the items to be distributed include building materials, foodstuff, among others, adding however that the local government will not hesitate to offer additional assistance until it is satisfied that the victims have fully recuperated from their losses.

The vice-chairman im-

plored wealthy individuals to emulate government's gesture so that the victims' difficulties will be minimised, just as he enjoined the latter to make optimum utilisation of the materials.

The distribution committee Chairman, Alhaji Salisu Bala, in his response, told the chairman that series of problems had befallen the victims since the outbreak of the flood. He observed that although no single life was lost, property worth thousands of naira was destroyed.

NGOs, wealthy persons, urged to assist destitute

Non-governmental organisations and wealthy individuals in Kano have been urged to generously assist destitute and homeless children in the state. The wife of the state's deputy governor, Hajia Binta Magaji Abdullahi, made the call when she visited the Shahuchi Destitute Home in the state metropolis.

Hajia Binta Magaji said their contributions in that respect will complement the state government's efforts towards alleviating the sufferings of destitute in the state.

She said taking care of the destitute is not only the state government's responsibilities, and called on wealthy individuals and NGOs in the state to finan-

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim,
Correspondent (Kano)

She then called on the officials of Shahuchi Torrey Home to adopt the spirit of patience in dealing with the destitute and the homeless children.

Hajia Binta disclosed that interaction with such class of people needs patience, and urged the officials to consider their duties as services to humanity.

The deputy governor's wife donated materials worth thousands of naira to the home, and called for their judicious use.

The official in charge of the house, Malam Shu'ajbu Abdu who received the deputy governor's wife during the visit, thanked her for the donation and pledged to share the mate-



EKO TRUST

Agbeyegbe's murder case adjourned to March 3

The trial of the two suspects who allegedly killed aviation activist and pilot, Captain Jerry Agbeyegbe was Wednesday stalled at the Chief Magistrates' Court 6, Botanical Gardens Oyingbo Lagos, where the accused persons are being tried.

The suspects, Messrs Tunde Esinwojumi and Adewale Oloko Ikuputti were alleged to have conspired together to murder Captain Jerry Agbeyegbe on 12th November 2004, at about 0305 hours at Oando Petrol Filling Station, Alepere area of Lagos in the Lagos magisterial district.

The alleged offence according to the prosecutor is punishable under Sections 324 and 319(1) of the Criminal Code Cap 17 Vol. II, Laws of Lagos 2003.

The two accused persons were at the time of the incident on guard duty at the Oando Petrol Station, Alepere, Lagos State.

The duo were jointly arraigned before the court on 2nd December last year and were ordered to be remanded in prison custody, while awaiting the report of the Lagos State Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) on the matter.

No plea was taken from the accused persons. However, a cousin of one of the accused persons, Mr. Omotayo Ojajuni, in a chat with *Daily Trust* inside the court room said that he wanted justice to be done because he was very sure

By Adelanwa Bamgboye,
(Correspondent Lagos)

that the accused persons were innocent.

Specifically, the accused persons were alleged to have murdered Jerry Agbeyegbe by shooting him on the chest with a dane gun.

Also facing a separate charge in the same court was the self acclaimed prostitute, Miss Juliet Okonkwo.

The charge against her read: "Juliet Okonkwo (female) on 12th November

2004, at about 0245am at Salami Fatunwa street Victoria Island, Lagos, in Lagos magisterial district did loiter and persistently solicited persons passing through the said street for the purpose of prostitution and thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 249 (a) (i) of the Criminal Code."

Having pleaded not guilty to the one court charge, she was admitted to N50,000 bail with one surety. Both cases have been adjourned till 3rd March 2005.

Police drag NURTW to court over leadership tussle

Police in Lagos State have dragged four members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Epe branch before an Ebute Meta Chief Magistrates' Court over an alleged unlawful removal of Alhaji Musibau Odofin as Chairman.

The four (4) accused persons were Seun Idowu (21), Muri Akibu (20), Bode Oladimeji (26), and 18 year old Isiaka Oluwatoyin.

They were alleged to have conspired together with others now on the run on 23 December 2004, at about 3:30am at Epe to affect an unlawful purpose.

According to the prosecution, the accused persons assembled in a manner to cause persons in the neighbourhood to fear,

contrary to section 69 and punishable under section 70 of the criminal code.

The accused persons were also alleged to have bugled the dwelling house of one Racheal Adewale, carting away Samsung handset with Econet sim card, wrist-watch and cash after an assault on their victim.

It was further alleged that the accused persons wilfully and unlawfully damaged parts of a Toyota Corolla panel van Reg. No. BM 11 EKU, property of one Ayinla Adetona.

Specifically, an eighteen count criminal charge was slammed on the accused persons by the prosecution. The accused persons pleaded not guilty to all the charges.



Sympathisers looking at a battered body of a suspected armed robber at Fagbem filling station, near mile two...recently.



Lagos State urban and regional planning board, demolition squad pulling down shops and containers at the toll gate end of the Lagos-Ibadan expressway...recently

Former gov faults LG funds deposit with CBN

Former governor of Abia State, Dr. Ogonnaya Onu, has said that the recent decision by the federal government to deposit funds meant for the local government councils in Lagos State with the Central Bank of Nigeria raises many questions than answer.

Dr. Ogonnaya Onu, in a press statement made available to *Eko Trust*, said that this becomes especially when the Supreme Court had earlier ruled that no tier of government had the right to withhold funds meant for each other.

The former Abia State governor wondered whether government's decision to deposit such funds with the CBN has now become a part of the Lagos State government or ceased to be a part of the presidency.

"If the federal government is apprehensive that the Lagos State government would disburse such monies to the new local government councils, does it now mean that the federal executive has arrogated to itself the functions of both the executive and the judiciary?" queried Chief Onu.

He said that it would have been better for the FG to first obey the orders of the Supreme Court on the matter and release the funds directly to the Lagos State government.

He said it is unfair and a rape of justice for the federal executive to condone acts of constitutional abuses in states controlled by the same political party to which it belongs, "yet turn around to apply different standards to handle a similar situation in another state controlled by a

different political party, the Alliance for Democracy (AD)."

The former chief executive of Abia State said no strong nation is built on the foundation of unfairness, double standard and injustice. "The federal executive should either allow sleeping dogs to lie or apply the same standard to everybody, irrespective of political party affiliations."

Dr. Onu said that it may be Lagos State government today, it could be others tomorrow, and that this becomes even more instructive as we begin processes pursuant to the fashioning of a new constitution, and further queried: "Of what use will a new constitution be when the old one is brazenly undermined and violated with reckless abandon?"



A stranded family at Ilubirin after the Lagos State government demolished the area.

News

Plateau condemns extortionists

The Plateau State government has disassociated itself from the activities of some people who are touring various communities and extorting money from the people under the guise of raising funds for development areas. The government has described such people as "disgruntled" and their activities as "rigorous acts", and pointed out that the creation of development area which will soon be announced has nothing to do with collecting money from the people.

Ezekiel Dalyop, the Permanent Secretary, Press and Public Affairs, said that the perpetrators of such

From Jibril Daudu, Regional Editor (Jos)

unwholesome acts are noit only fraudulent but enemies of the administration. He emphasised that the creation of village, ward, district and development areas is a part of democracy dividend and urged the victims of the fraudsters to lodge their complaints with the appropriate authorities.

Meanwhile, the government has approved the construction of the first phase of two-bedroom housing units for junior workers in the state. The state's Commissioner for Information, Yakubu Dati, said the decision of the government is to promote

house ownership among civil servants in the state.

He said that the project would be handled by the state's Ministry of Housing and Transport.

These, Dati explained, were decisions taken by the state executive council at its meeting during the week. Dati also announced that the bill for the establishment of Plateau State University had been sent to the state's House of Assembly to be passed into law.

The decision included approval for the purchase of 750 motorcycles for secondary school principals, and other civil servants in rural areas under a revolving interest free loan scheme.

Approximately, 21.3 kilograms of various quantities of hard drugs were peddled, and the drug carriers arrested by the agents of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 2004. This was disclosed by the Assistant Comptroller of Narcotics (ACN), Abdullahi Y. Bayawo, at a press briefing at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja over the weekend.

ACN Bayawo stated that all the peddlers arrested have been taken to court for trial and conviction, adding that some were sentenced to various prison terms.

He mentioned the drug pushers as Mrs. Lawson Oluyemisi Muinat, from Ogun State; Mr. Obaka Michael, from Anambra State and Jessedeem Liadi

NDLEA arrests 5 drug pushers, promotes 6 staff

By Hassan Idris Senior Reporter (Agriculture)

Abidemi, from Lagos State. He added that Jeyesemi Abdullzeez Olusegun and Miss Larai Takum, both peddlers, were referred to the Directorate of Drug Demand and Reduction for proper counseling, because they were all smokers arrested with small quantities of hard drug.

He enjoined Nigerians to join hands so as to fight the menace of drug trafficking, saying that his men were working diligently without discrimination. He reiterated that the NDLEA, under the leadership of Dr. Bello

Lafiagi, is determined to leave no stone unturned in the war against drug trafficking, warning parents, children and the drug barons to desist from sending young people to peddle drugs abroad.

He added that only the sum of \$10,000 dollars or its equivalent in other currencies is allowed to be taken out of the country, stressing that 'you will be requested to go through banks and obtain foreign exchange if you intend to carry more than the stipulated amount'.

He added that in recognition of a job well done, the NDLEA recently promoted its staff.

Fight for women rights will continue - Minister

By Safiya I. Dantiye, (Woman Editor)

The question on the protection of the rights of women had gained prominence in the past decade, and would become an even more pressing issue in this decade. This was disclosed by the Minister of Women Affairs, Obong Rita Akpan, at the public forum on the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa held in Abuja over the weekend.

The minister further admonished: "Given the current advancement of human rights standards, it is simply unacceptable to subject women to

subordinate treatment that enslaves them to men. Human rights are about the regulated civilised behaviour and conduct towards all human beings. It is not a benefit to be mobilised by men."

The minister further maintained that when a state ratifies a treaty, it should ensure that its national laws will reflect the human rights and provisions written in the treaty, and that this was African women's expectation from their countries.

Obong Rita Akpan called on African women, gender institutions, NGOs Lokoja and other stakeholders to be involved in public awareness, which was crucial to secure full implementation of the protocol, and also to ensure that the text of protocol was translated into national and local languages and widely distributed.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Secretary-General of Women's Right



Gov. Boni Haruna of Adamawa State (Left) and Gov. Danjuma Goje of Gombe State at a grand reception for Gov. James Ibori of Delta State by the Delta State indigenes in Lagos ... recently.

Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu.

Governor warns contractors over shoddy jobs

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe Correspondent, (Lokoja)

The Kogi State Governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, has warned contractors handling various projects in the state against shoddy jobs.

Governor Idris gave the warning while monitoring the progress of work on the Amkpa-Abejukolo-Bagana road in the eastern senatorial district of the state at the weekend.

Governor Idris said the aim of awarding such contracts at huge sums would be defeated if the jobs were poorly executed by contractors.

He directed the contractors handling the project, Messrs Rockbridge Constructions Limited, to provide drainages on both sides of the road to ensure durability.

The governor, who decried the shoddy work on the shoulders. Mallam, yours is

GOC advocates continuous training in Army

From Rakiya A. Mohammad Correspondent (Jos)

The outgoing General Officer Commanding (GOC) 3 Armoured Division of the Nigerian Army, Major-General Danmadami Dyaji, has said that the desire to achieve

high standard of professionalism in the Army can only be achieved through continuous training of personnel, efficient management of resources and equipment maintenance. Dyaji, who stated this in a farewell message before handing over to the new GOC, Major-General Ishiaku Ahmed Dikko, stressed the need to place emphasis on individual training, weapon handlings and first aid, adding that once some levels of proficiency are achieved, they can concentrate on other areas.

He expressed delight that during his service as the GOC 3 Armoured Division, improved standard of security, discipline, and general welfare was

expressed optimism that the Army heads would continue to address their welfare requirements with available resources.

The outgoing GOC, who is going to take over as the Chief of Logistics, Army Headquarters, Abuja, assured officers and men of the 3 Armoured Division that having been fully acquainted with problems and needs of the Maxwell Klobe Cantonment, he would not hesitate to do what is necessary to improve on their condition.

He saluted the dedication, resilience and loyalty of the officers and men, urging them to make deliberate efforts to build on the successes so far achieved. Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA), Saudatu Mahdi, said there was a need for the

Chieftaincy title seekers to be screened in Anambra

From Beatrice Onuchukwu, Stranger (Awka)

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Chieftaincy and Local Government Affairs, Dr. Peter Ogbuka, has warned that prospective title-seekers in Anambra State would henceforth be screened and give approval by the government to curb proliferation of chieftaincy titles. Disclosing this to newsmen in his office at the Government House in Awka, Dr. Ogbuka lamented the situation where some indigenes obtained such titles with money, saying that aspirants' contributions to the development of their communities should form the bases for giving them such titles.

He also criticised the rising incidence of anarchy in some communities where two different camps lay claim to the traditional rulers' stool (Igwe or Eze), which according to him, is bedevilling many towns and communities, not only in Anambra State but in Igboland in general.

"Government has now put in place the practice to screen traditional rulers' certificate of recognition, and the credentials of those seeking for that stool and titles in our communities to ascertain those authentic 'Igwes' and those worthy to take chieftaincy titles."

Ogbuka, who is the Chairman, Nigeria Medical Association, Anambra branch, blamed the immediate past government for such proliferation, saying that some of the traditional rulers' certificates were

Emir decries water scarcity in Daura

From Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent Katsina

The Emir of Daura, Alhaji Mohammad Bashar, has decried the perennial water scarcity facing the entire Daura Community and has urged the state governor to promptly come to the aid of the people.

The emir of Daura, who made the appeal to the state governor at the Government House during Sallah homage, said the people in the area are now forced to drill their own boreholes in order to solve their problems.

assisting people affected by draught during the last Ed-il-fitr celebration, pledged his support towards the forthcoming national headcount in the country, and urged the governor to strive harder in the provision of more basic and social infrastructure to people across the state.

In a response, the state Governor, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yaradua, pledged to

Inside Politics

2007: Youth group dumps IBB for Marwa in Kano

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent Kano

Members of the Kano State Youth Awareness and Solidarity Movement (KSYASM) have switched their support from the 2007 presidential campaign team of the former head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida, to that of General Muhammad Buba Marwa.

Announcing the movement's withdrawal at a ceremony held at Daula Hotel, Kano, over the weekend, the movement's Chairman Habeeb M. Ahmad said members of the group decided to sever their association with IBB's presidential campaign because artificial barrier had been created between them and General Ibrahim Babangida.

Alhaji Ahmad further disclosed that "this barrier was created by a clique purported to be working and canvassing support for General Babangida's presidential ambition in come 2007."

He alleged that an attempt by the youth to see the former military leader in Minna to find out more about his speculated presidential aspiration was blocked by some people who are working at

cross purposes with the IBB 2007 aspiration.

According to him the movement has it on good authorities that despite the efforts being put on him to contest in 2007, the former president has not yielded to the pressure yet, saying that the youths are the reform only being used for a non-existing presidential aspirant.

"Youths in Kano State which form almost 80% of the total voting class have been used in the past to elect leaders that did not have the interest of the nation at heart," he asserted, vowing that youths will resist any attempt to use them for selfish

reasons in future.

"In view of the suspicious activities of those canvassing support for the aspiration of IBB, I want to announce on behalf of the entire members of the movement, the immediate withdrawal of our movement and its members from the IBB's campaign team and consequently adopt and support Dr. Muhammed Buba Marwa as our candidate for the 2007 presidential election," he stated.

Accepting the decampers who number about 3,000, the President, Amalgamated Youths Forum, Alhaji Alhassan Yusuf, said the decision reached by members of the KSYASM to adopt and support Marwa will usher in a new dawn of hope in the forum's determination to make Nigeria better country come 2007 general election.

Ebira Youths of Kogi State, under the auspices of concerned professionals, have condemned the Kogi State Deputy Governor, Mr. Philips Salawu, over his verbal attacks on Senator A. T Ahmed.

In a press statement signed by Abubakar Ismail, Abubakar Kent Mohammed, Kabiru Yusuf, Habib Abubakar and Abdul Haqq Ozigis, the president, secretary, publicity secretary, Assistant secretary and treasurer respectively, the Ebira youths took exception to the persistent media attack visited on Senator Ahmed by the deputy governor.

According to them, the "series of provocative and irresponsible attacks on the person of our revered leader, Senator A. T Ahmed, in the pages of newspapers by Mr. Philips Salawu, the Deputy Governor of Kogi State, is as

Ebira youths berate Kogi Dep Gov. over Senator Ahmed

By Abdu Labaran, Group Political Editor

unfortunate as it is condemnable."

They said it was the high of ingratitude for the Kogi deputy governor to be attacking Senator A. T Ahmed on whose favour he rose to his present position of the number two citizen of Kogi State.

Challenging him to name a "single thing that you could honestly record as your personal contribution to the affairs of the PDP in Kogi State," the Ebiraland concerned professionals alleged that but for Senator Ahmed's insistence and nomination, Mr. Salawu would not have been the deputy governor of Kogi State, because of the almost unanimous opposition to his nomination.

"Have you forgotten so

soon the opposition that greeted the mention of your name by Senator A. T Ahmed as his choice of candidate for the position of deputy governor? Almost everyone in the senator's camp condemned this investiture, and upon his insistence, he nearly destroyed his camp," declared the statement, adding that those who opposed your nomination "then knew that you were a square peg in a round hole, and they now stand vindicated."

Calling on the deputy governor to spare Senator A. T Ahmed further verbal attacks, the concerned professionals warned that "should you feel pressed to continue on your ill-advised course of denigration of the elders of our land, we shall educate you on good manners."

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Inside Politics

The unending political crises in Kontagora local government

By Kashim Sule, Stringer
(Minna)



Governor Abdulkadir Kure

Political power is the stuff that makes an average politician ticks, especially if such politician is in saddle of power or close to the corridor of power where major decisions are taken. To make himself relevant, he would not spare anything in the effort to remain in power or enjoy attention, depending what status such politician occupies in a political kingdom. The recent reconciliatory over-ture spear-headed by Alhaji Bawa Rijau, a PDP chieftain and one of the dramatis personae in the Kontagora Council political crises, may be seen in this light.

When in November last year, a motorcade of 13 buses containing youths that called themselves "the G-20" led by Alhaji Bawa Rijau stormed the government house to apologize over the episode that broke-out a year ago shortly after the conduct of council election in the State, another paragraph was being added to Niger State political history.

The G-20 was formed to seek unity amongst the people of Kontagora council and re-launch itself into the mainstream of government after that crisis. The G-20 spokesman, Mallam Madawaki said the mission of G-20 to government house was to commiserate with the governor over what they called the errant attitude of Kontagora youths in the last council polls.

The meeting which took place in the office of the governor attested to the desire of the chief executive of the State to genuinely resolve the outstanding political issue as it affects the beleaguered council.

Indeed, the account of the meeting would be incomplete without recalling the main event that led to the diplomatic trip by the G-20.

As a matter of fact, after the Councils poll held all over the State in January 2004, some councils had alleged foul play by the SIEC that conducted the polls. But no where was the result contested more rancorously than in Kontagora LG when its people and the government engaged in battle of wits regarding the legality of the results, whether it should be nullified or not.

As should be expected, the government, convinced that it must have the last say on all issues burning stonewalled and before you know it there was mayhem with the Kontagora youths every object they could lay their hands on, as a way of compelling the government to reverse the election result. Before the Nigerian policemen could bring the situation under control a lot of damage had been done. Many people lost their lives and property worth millions of Naira destroyed.

A conservative estimate put the number of deaths at over 500 and burnt vehicles at 30. The Emir's Palace was also damaged to underscore the level of pent-up fury exhibited by the youths wing of the People's Redemption Party (PRP), alleging that Peoples Democratic Party rigged the election.

As a consequence of the crises, for a long time, the council was shut down as its secretariat was razed to ashes and prominent citizens of the town who are mostly retired generals relocated with their families to either Kaduna, Abuja or Minna, as the youths allegedly hunted for their heads.

Government in retaliation relocated the council secretariat to a remote village called Mutum Daya and sacked 165 of its staff

alleged to have had hands in fueling the crises.

But wise counsel however, prevailed when the State government nullified the election and appointed a sole-Administrator for the council for six months. This is after the aggrieved party sought redress in the court, and which invalidated the election. The court ordered for re-election, and directed also that a sole-administration be appointed.

During this period, some key members of PRP who cross-carpeted from the PDP found themselves at the receiving end of the crises. People like the former secretary to the State government, Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu, Abdullahi Dogo, and the rest of them, were arrested and detained.

The allegation that they were indirectly fueling the crises in Kontagora was not proven after all and the court issued nolle prosequere order after several postponements.

The extent of Kontagora crises was so deep that, when the PRP youths led by Alhaji

Bawa Rijau, a PDP chieftain, initiated the move for reconciliation, some meanings were read in the overture. What however, is not clear is whether the PRP chieftains in the State, which included Mustapha Bello, a former minister of commerce, Dahiru Awaisu, a former SSG, Abdullahi Dogo, one time Director of sports and the rest of them were aware of the olive branch visit paid by the G-20.

Explaining their mission at the Government house, the spokesman, who read a prepared text said; "Our visit to the government house is to come to you (governor) as father of all since you are the governor by the grace of God. By your position, we are your children and we are here to tell you that we have realized our mistakes over what happened in Kontagora. We the youths and members of PRP were initially PDP. But we joined the PRP due to unpalatable happenings and now we have come back to

the PDP because we believe that our welfare will be properly taken care of there. Moreover, we regard Alhaji Bawa Rijau as our political father in Kontagora and would continue to respect him."

The remorse expressed by the spokesman on behalf of the youths run contrary to the earlier behaviour exhibited by them; taking into account that even Alhaji Rijau, who they have now agreed to work with, was not spared from the orchestrated mayhem, since he is a staunch member of PDP in the state.

Responding, the governor asked the youths where they came from before they settled in Kontagora. They were dumbstruck by the question before one of them answered: "Sokoto". And who planted the flag of Islam in Nigeria, he asked again, to which they said "Usman Danfodio from Sokoto."

"You people are great grand children of Usman Danfodio, the man who heralded the era of Islam in Nigeria. But unfortunately you people have refused to take after your ancestors," he said and added: "I am saying this because what happened in Kontagora cannot be imagined in the human subconsciousness. Especially looking the level of destruction and the total opposition you showed against your Emir, whose appeal to desist from your vandalistic behaviour was discountenanced, but rather besieged his palace.

"Again I am appalled by your stance during the crises, because I can recall a similar row between the commercial cyclists and the police in Bida sometimes ago, but an elder of the town single handedly quenched that row. At that time I was away from Minna and the Emir of Bida himself had traveled as well; but I was informed of the incidence on the phone. But when you people were asked to stop the militant attitude, it was the more you were gingered.

"But now that you people are asking for forgiveness, let me say that I did not loose anything from the political debacle but you whose collective action drew the hand of the clock back for your community".

And the youth in their plea for forgiveness, demanded for reinstatement of those who lost their jobs during the crises, as they have family to cater for, and in addition appealed to the government to create job opportunities as majority of the youths are now mere loafers in the area.

Governor Kure however, consented to this request, but on the conditions that first they all organize a rally to Alhaji Bawa Rijau residence and tour the town of Kontagora and renounce violence.

Secondly, they should also be led by Alhaji Bawa Rijau himself to the Emir's palace and pay homage to also renounce the desecration visited on the royalty.

"If you have done this, all your request would be granted instantly", he concluded.

However, in a press conference later addressed by the Chairman of PRP in the State, Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu Kuta, denied the purported fence-mending business undertaken by the so-called youths, vowing that the party will continue to be in opposition in the State and therefore urged political neophytes to cease dragging the name of PRP in the mud.

He said that the stage-managed truce mission to the government house was the hand-work of Alhaji Bawa Rijau who wanted to remain the most favoured beneficiary of government; and who thought that the best way to do it was to lead a handful of PRP turn-coats and some disgruntled PDP members to deceive Governor Kure in order to extract political favours.

In his words, "PRP will feature strongly in 2007 elections because we have plans to present a credible presidential and gubernatorial candidate".

He said he was still in active politics and dismissed his purported association with the Talba of Minna as a trash.

Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu also dismissed the speculation of his coming back to the PDP again, saying that it would be an insult to his person, if he took such step, predicting that PDP will die before 2007, even as he claimed to have brought PDP to the State along with other personalities a fact forgotten by those in government.

He likened his experience to a landlord who built a house, and suddenly when the tenants became strong they now eject the landlord and took-over the house.

Three days after the PRP's Press Conference, its chairman Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu was attacked by gunmen in his house at about 2.00am.

The gun-men numbering eight scaled the chairman's residence fence and started shooting sporadically when Dahiru himself emerged from his room.

According to the chairman, the assailants demanded for money from him, but they could only part away from him 30 thousand Naira, while trinkets worth one million Naira was taken away from his wife and seventeen thousand Naira collected from his children. With this development, tongues have started wagging whether the attack was banditry or it was the continuation of the Kontagora local government election crisis in other form.

"The extent of Kontagora crises was so deep that, when the PRP youths led by Alhaji Bawa Rijau, a PDP chieftain, initiated the move for reconciliation, some meanings were read in the overture. What however, is not clear is whether the PRP chieftains in the State, which included Mustapha Bello, a former minister of commerce, Dahiru Awaisu, a former SSG, Abdullahi Dogo, one time Director of sports and the rest of them were aware of the olive branch visit paid by the G-20."

Sports

Swedish coach key to Safin win

Marat Safin's Swedish coach Peter

Lundgren deserves huge credit for the temperamental Russian's Australian Open triumph, Russia's tennis chief said on Monday.

"Without question, Peter Lundgren has been able to get the best out of Safin, which is by no means an easy thing to do," Shamil Tarpishchev, president of the Russian Tennis Federation and the country's Davis Cup coach, told Reuters.

"You have to give full credit to Lundgren for the way he has handled Marat's temper and channelled it in a positive way."

Pictures of a victorious Safin covered the front pages of all major Russian newspapers on Monday following his four-set victory over Australian Lleyton Hewitt on Sunday.

"Safin conquered Melbourne," declared leading sports daily Sport-Express.

"Marat warms up (cold and snowy) Russia," echoed rival newspaper Soviety Sport after Safin overcame a nervous start to tame local hope Hewitt 1-6 6-3 6-4 6-4 in a tense final and claim his first Australian Open title.

Tarpishchev once said that no foreign coach would ever get the most out of Safin because they could not fully understand the secrets of the Russian soul. But Lundgren has made him eat his words.

"Well, he proved me wrong, but I'm not bitter. I'm happy, very happy for both Marat and Peter," Tarpishchev said.

"It seems like they have found a common bond and you can see how much Marat respects his coach."

Over the last four years Safin has employed a number of different mentors, including another Swede and former world number one Mats Wilander and Britain's Tony Pickard, once the coach of former Wimbledon champion Stefan Edberg.

But none could get the best out of the often moody

Russian. Then he hooked up with Lundgren shortly after losing to Roger Federer in last year's Australian Open final.

Lundgren, who has also coached temperamental Chilean Marcelo Rios, guided Federer to Wimbledon glory in 2003 but was soon dropped by the Swiss.

Safin also praised Lundgren for turning his career around. "He made me believe that I can be a good player and I don't

have so much doubt about myself," the Russian said after his win.

"He understood who I am and I understood what he wants from me. It took us four or five months before the results came. But then once they came, they have continued to come."

Tarpishchev, however, was quick to point out that no coach could succeed unless the player himself wants to work hard.

"Clearly, you see a different Safin now than we

knew him just a couple of years ago," said Tarpishchev.

"Then, he was simply wasting his talent, his huge potential. Now, with the help of Lundgren, he finally realised talent alone is not enough. There's also hard work, dedication and so on.

"But Marat is a different, mature person now. He knows what he wants in life and how to achieve it. I think only the sky is the limit for him now."



Safin

-Russian tennis chief

Gebrselassie signs three-year London contract

Haile Gebrselassie, the finest distance runner in history, has signed a three-year contract with London marathon organisers prior to a possible attempt at the 2008 Beijing Olympic gold.

The 31-year-old Ethiopian said on Monday he would compete in the 25th edition of the world's best big city marathon on April 17 after completing a half-marathon in Spain on Sunday.

Gebrselassie retired from the track last year when an Achilles tendon injury thwarted his attempt to win a third consecutive Olympic

10,000 metres gold at the Athens Games.

"It is quite a coup for us to secure Haile's presence for the next three years," said race director David Bedford. "It guarantees a quality race no matter what."

During a glittering career, starting with the first of four consecutive world 10,000 titles in 1993, Gebrselassie has set 18 world records.

Troubled by an injured left Achilles tendon, sustained while training on a 15-year-old track in Addis Ababa, he finished fifth in Athens behind team mates Kenenisa Bekele and Sileshi Sihine, the gold

and silver medallists respectively.

After an operation last September, Gebrselassie confirmed his fitness for London by clocking one hour one minute 46 seconds for a half-marathon in Almeria on Sunday.

He will run further half-marathons in Spain on February 6 and in Lisbon seven days later.

London organisers believe they have assembled the best marathon field ever anywhere in the world, including the last five winners.

Kenya's world record holder Paul Tergat, who finished second to Gebrselassie in two Olympic and two world 10,000 finals, will also compete along with

Olympic gold medallist Stefano Baldini of Italy and world champion Jaouad Gharib of Morocco.

"This is the Olympic final we should have had," said Bedford.

Gebrselassie also equated the London event to the Olympics.

"To win London means to win the Olympic Games," he said. "If I didn't think I could win I would not be here."

Gebrselassie made his marathon debut in the 2002 London race, where he clocked two hours six minutes 35 seconds, still the sixth fastest time ever.

He said on Monday he thought he could reduce Tergat's record of 2:04:55 to 2:03.

"It's not a big deal," he said. "Maybe soon."

The men's and women's world records have fallen in London and this year the course has been made quicker by avoiding the cobble stones near Tower Hill.

Ultimately, Gebrselassie would like to follow in the footsteps of compatriots Abebe Bikila, Mamo Wolde and Gezahgne Abera and win the Olympic title in the ultimate distance race.

He has not yet decided whether he will run in this year's world championship event in Helsinki but said he was thinking seriously about the Beijing Olympics race.

"I've got three years here and then we shall see," he said.

FIFA may pay dearly for early release of tickets

The first tickets for next summer's World Cup in Germany go on sale on Tuesday, but there are big concerns over payment methods and the strategy adopted by FIFA, which many believe will create a thriving black market. Eighteen months before the tournament starts and nearly a year before the qualifiers are known, fans are being encouraged to buy tickets for matches whose teams and venues are yet to be decided, making it difficult to plan travel and accommodation.

Supporters who want to follow their team would then be forced to buy from ticket touts or, in the cases where they have bought Team Specific Tickets (TSTs) to follow their country through the tournament, are faced with a non-refundable charge of up to £50 (about £35) if their team do not qualify. "This happened in Japan [at the 2002 World Cup] and at France 98. They are not learning from their mistakes," said Kevin Miles, international

co-ordinator of the Football Supporters' Federation. "It inevitably means people are buying blind. It's presumably because FIFA wish to sell tickets for matches that are less popular."

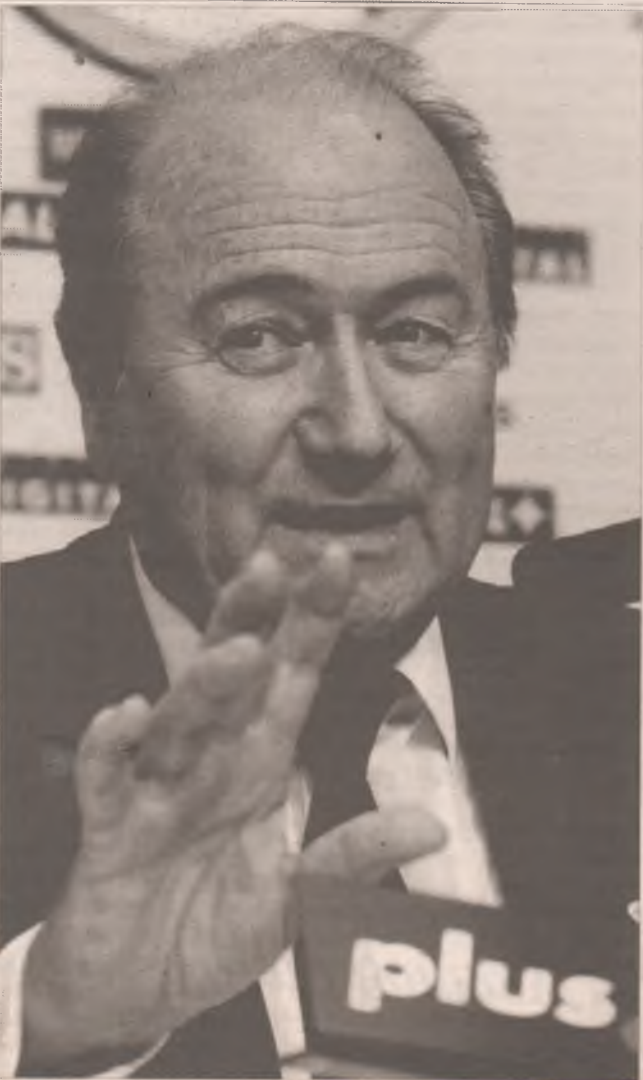
"They are selling tickets on false pretence, putting their own financial and organisational needs ahead of the fans, who ultimately make the tournament what it is. The least FIFA can do is set up a system where fans can exchange tickets at face value so they can watch their team. At Euro 2004, it was a criminal offence to do that."

Once the allocations for VIP, media, security and restricted views have been deducted from the 3.37million overall capacity, there will be 2.93m tickets available. In the first of the five sale periods, which runs until 31 March, 812,000 tickets can be bought online, by fax or post. There are four categories, ranging in price from £35 to £600 for

the final. However, unless fans have a German bank account or are willing to pay a surcharge of about £20 for a bank transfer plus £5-10 to the receiving bank in Germany, then only those with a Mastercard will be able to buy tickets.

According to credit-card industry body Apecs, there are 24m Mastercards in the United Kingdom and 42.5m Visa cards. "It's outrageous, and an extraordinarily bad marketing decision," said Mark Perryman, head of the London England Fans group.

"For anyone who's got one of the other cards, this will create antipathy towards Mastercard." But Chris Monteiro, of Mastercard, disagrees. "Because of the other payment options, we don't really see this as creating opposition," he says. "This has been done to further establish the link between our brand and the Fifa World Cup."



Sepp Blatter, FIFA President

Sports

NFL Registration: 15 teams yet to collect forms

Kwara United and 14 other premier and professional league teams are yet to get forms for registration for the new season beginning on February 12. They rise being

By Patrick Andrew,
Senior Sports Reporter

exchange from the league after tomorrow if they fail to register. Kwara United, which only

secured premiership ticket last weekend lead the group of elite clubs get to begin the process of registration

The other teams, who have until tomorrow to collect forms.

fill and submit same, are Plateau United that could not secure a place in the premier class in the recurrent play-offs introduced to raise up the top flight action in the new 20-teams format.

Wikki Tourist, Mighty Jets, Ebonyi Angels, Adamawa all except the latter who had participated in the play-off are yet to show up to begin registration procedures.

Similarly three Abuja-based clubs SEC FC, VON FC, NEPA FC are equally among the teams at risk of being technically ruled out from the league.

Executive Secretary of the NFL, Mallam Salihu Abubakar confirmed yesterday that teams were expected to come forward to collect their forms failure which they risk expulsion from the league.

Teams are expected to pay N50, 000 registration fees well as at least half of their debts from card offences for last season.

The 52 clubs are said to be indebted to the NFL to the tune of N7m.

Meanwhile the NFL board will face its major test today when take decision on Saturday in conclusion play-off match between Wikki Tourists and Mighty Jets. The match was abruptly terminated following fans encroachment on the pitch.

The match was barren when the incident occurred.

Real get their skates on

Real Madrid shed their inhibitions and win a row of 6.0s for artistic impression; Gigi Buffon takes his cues from Colchester while Jens Lehmann provides the ammunition for another woeful pun; and Harry Redknapp shows the motivational skills that have made him a favourite with players everywhere.

Not many people know that Real Madrid coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo never dreamt of a career in football. While growing up in the favela of Rio de Janeiro, he never idolised Pele, Garrincha or Didi.

Instead, the magnificently-named Manfred Schnelldorfer captured the young Luxemburgo's imagination, dancing his way to figure skating gold at the 1964 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck.

While the Brazilian slums stayed depressingly free of ice rinks, Luxemburgo's obsession with the world of Salchows, toe-loops and camel spins remains, so much so that he last week swapped tactical videos for recordings of the European figure skating championships.

And indeed, there was something for everyone. Ronaldo looked admiringly at Brian Joubert's power and agility, Zinedine Zidane feasted his eyes on the balletic grace of Irina Slutskaya (as Jonathan Woodgate sniggered childishly), while David Beckham and Guti took fashion and hairdressing notes from the defiantly dandyish Evgeny Plushenko.

As luck (or perhaps contrivance) would have it, Real's stars were get their skates on to beat Numancia 2-1 on a frozen pitch in Soria.

Frequently decried as a fairy, Beckham donned his tutu and rose to the occasion, netting a superb free-kick, while Iker "twinkletoes" Casillas went to ground as fast as any Spanish ice dancer to save a Tevenet penalty.

No childhood experience is as painful as the dreadful realisation that special moments once taken for granted are in fact cynical inventions.

In other words, nothing wrecks Christmas like catching a boozed-up dad clumsily plonking a stocking at the foot of your bed, before returning to the lounge to guzzle Santa's brandy.

A tearful Inside Europe made another addition to the wall of myths this weekend, as Father Christmas and the Tooth Fairy were joined by The Magic Of The FA Cup after a drab, shock-free weekend.

The giantkilling spirit was particularly absent from Ewood Park, where the visit of plucky Colchester to Premiership strugglers Blackburn would once have stirred the soul. Instead, it had all the romance of a Stephen King novel.

The Colchester horror show began on 21 minutes when a reanimated corpse in the Ewood Park pet cemetery caused a Kevin Watson backpass to bounce ghoulishly over Aidan Davidson's swinging foot and trickle mockingly over the line. And with that, the minnows' Cup hopes were deader than the zombies about to visit Davidson's imminent nightmares.

What's the difference between a good goalkeeper and a great one? As Gianluigi Buffon - widely acknowledged as the world's best - will tell you, it's an eagerness to improve through observing your peers.

As a cultured observer of the world game, Gigi had his eye trained on that Blackburn/Colchester clash and put the lessons to good effect on Sunday, helping Lilian Thuram get his name on the scoresheet as he waved the Frenchman's weak backpass through in injury-time.

An honourable mention also to Roma 'keeper Carlo Zotti, drafted in to replace gaffe-prone

Ivan Pelizzoli. Zotti weighed in with an awful display, gifting Alessandro Parisi a goal by taking up a position so unconventional the Kama Sutra are reportedly interested in signing him up.

The Arsenal goalkeeper also failed to control a simple ball against Wolves, although rumour has it he was contractually obliged to commit the error - such blunders are written, apparently, in Lehmann's terms.

Southampton manager Harry Redknapp is a renowned motivator. One of the most respected managers in the game, he has built his reputation on knowing how to get the best out of players.

This unstinting faith in his players' ability was displayed on Saturday after Peter Crouch stepped up to slot a last-minute penalty to sink arch-rivals Portsmouth in the Cup.

"When Crouchy picked the ball up, I'd be a liar to say I was full of confidence," said Redknapp, who inherited the 1.98m striker both at Portsmouth (where he promptly sold him) and Southampton.

"I thought what's he going to do with this? In fact, I thought he was going to head it!" he continued, before drawing breath to rub it in still further.

"I turned to someone and said: 'I don't fancy Crouch!' [Assistant manager] Jim Smith was even worse than me."

With his manager's endorsement ringing in his ears, Crouch - 11 Premiership goals in three and a half seasons - stepped up and buried the decisive spot-kick.

Last chance before window closes

It is transfer deadline day and uefa.com will bring you the latest news as it happens as top-flight clubs across the continent take this final chance to strengthen their squads this season.

The European deadline is

midnight tonight while players must be registered before 12.00 noon today (February 1) to be eligible for European football. The 16 teams remaining in the UEFA Champions League may register a maximum of three new players for use in the competition, provided they are eligible.

At any point in the tournament, a team's A squad list may contain 25 players, while a B list is used to register players who were born on or after 1 January 1983 and who have been eligible to play for the club for at least two years since their 15th birthday. If the registration of new players causes the maximum squad limit to be exceeded, the necessary number of other registered players must be removed.

The same deadlines and restrictions apply to the 32 teams in the UEFA Cup. During the course of a season, a player is only eligible to play for one club in UEFA club competitions, excluding the first three rounds of the UEFA Intertoto Cup.

Gov. Saraki hails Kwara United

Kwara state governor, Dr. Bukola Saraki, has congratulated Kwara United Football Club of Ilorin for winning the Benin zone of the premier league play-offs.

The team achieved the feat at the weekend by defeating Ebonyi Angels of Abakaliki 1-0, after beating Plateau United of Jos by the same margin two days earlier.

By the feat, the Kwara darling team has retained its place in the premier division.

Governor Saraki congratulated the management, players and fans of the club and all lovers

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo,
Correspondent (Ilorin)

of soccer in the state on the victory of the club, which he said has justified the investment of government on the club.

Having qualified from the play-offs, Dr. Saraki challenged the club to win the premier league so that it can bid for continental honours next season.

He said his administration would continue to support the team as part of its commitments to sports development in the state.



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Forms are available on line, at the centres or at MBC International Bank, Garki Area 3 and FSB Bank, Central Area, Area 8, Abuja.



Danish midfielder Thomas Gravesen, right, celebrates with Raul

Sports

Milan's Shevchenko ruled out for fortnight

Milan's Shevchenko ruled out for fortnight

AC Milan's European Footballer of the Year Andriy Shevchenko has been ruled out for two weeks with an ankle problem and will miss Ukraine's next World Cup qualifier.

Shevchenko picked up the injury during Sunday's 1-0 home defeat to Bologna, which left the Italian champions trailing leaders Juventus by eight points.

Milan said Shevchenko had suffered a gash and a trauma to his right ankle and "should return to play in around two weeks".

The striker will miss Ukraine's next World Cup qualifier in Albania on February 9 plus Serie A matches versus Messina and Lazio. Ukraine are five points clear at the top of Group Three.

Milan, who trail leaders Juventus by eight points, face Manchester United in the Champions League last 16 with the first leg at Old Trafford on February 23.

Al Ahli win Egyptian title for 30th time

Cairo giants Al Ahli have won the Egyptian premier league title for a record 30th time without kicking a ball.

Their arch-rivals Zamalek handed them the championship by beating Ismailia the only side that still had a mathematical chance of catching them.

Zamalek deposed Ismailia from second place with a 1-0 win in Cairo to ensure the title for the unbeaten Al Ahli, who have won 18 of their 19 league matches so far this season.

Al Ahli, coached by the Portuguese Manuel Jose, take the title for the first time since 2000 after a runaway start to the season.

Their 2-1 win over Baladia Al Mehalla on Friday pushed them up to 55 points and defeat for Ismailia on Sunday meant they moved out of the range of the chasing teams.

Zamalek are now second on 33 points but can only amass a total of 54 points if they win all their remaining seven matches, including the February 12 derby with Al Ahli in Cairo.

Highbury winners can still topple Chelsea

— Neville

The winners of Tuesday's match between Arsenal and Manchester United can still challenge runaway leaders Chelsea for the Premier League title, according to United defender Gary Neville.

Chelsea are 10 points

clear of Arsenal and 11 ahead of United but Neville believes they could still be overhauled if there is a positive result at Highbury.

"People keep talking about Arsenal and Manchester United but at the moment we should be talking about trying to

catch Chelsea," Neville told reporters on Monday.

"That is our most important objective towards the end of the season and that starts with

our league game against Arsenal, as it does for Arsenal, because they still believe they can win the league, and so do we.

"Arsenal are one of the best teams in Europe so we have a very difficult game, but we are in a good run of form and the confidence couldn't be higher," Neville added.

"We are aware of what we need to do and I just have a sneaky feeling that if either team were to win on Tuesday, and hopefully it will be us, then they could still put a lot of pressure on Chelsea.

"I think the losers are going to find it very difficult. It will be very difficult anyway, but I think if a team were to win the match I think that team would have the confidence to still think they could go and challenge Chelsea for the championship.

"I still think there is a twist and a turn left in the championship race."

Arsenal looked on course to retain their title until they lost a bad-tempered game at Old Trafford in October to taste defeat for the first time in 50 league games.

United's 2-0 victory sparked further ill-feeling between the two clubs but United manager Alex Ferguson believes his players will handle the occasion in a game his side cannot afford to lose.

"It's a great one for Chelsea because either way one of us is going to lose ground, or the two of us could lose ground," he said. "If it's a draw then Chelsea are in a great position.

"If one wins, then the other one suffers badly. But I trust my players. I've got great players. It will be a hostile atmosphere, we know what to expect.

"But we've played in far more hostile atmospheres than the one we're going to face on Tuesday. With players like Scholes, Keane and Giggs I've got that experience, so therefore I'm trusting these players and I will be all right.

"When sides of this quality play it can be decided any which way. Hopefully, on the night our players are ready for it and they win it."

Captain Roy Keane returns for United following a one-match ban, and Paul Scholes will also be back in central midfield after being rested for Saturday's FA Cup win over Middlesbrough.

Ferguson could also have midfielder Darren Fletcher and striker Alan Smith back in his squad as the pair are close to full fitness after straggling off ankle injuries.



Ibadan Challenge players in the tick of action against their Lagos Ikoyi opponents at the just-concluded Ibadan Polo Tournament.

United hero Rooney faces FA Cup return to Everton

FA Cup holders Manchester United face a tricky tie at Everton following the draw for the fifth round of the FA Cup made on Monday.

United sealed their place in the last 16 with a 3-0 win over Middlesbrough on Saturday highlighted by two outstanding goals from

Wayne Rooney who will return to Goodison Park for the first time since leaving Everton for United for 30.0 million pounds (\$56.46 million) in August.

Their last two FA Cup meetings were in the finals of 1985 which Manchester United won 1-0 and 1995 which Everton won 1-0.

Premier League leaders Chelsea, already through to the League Cup final, visit Newcastle United, while Arsenal were drawn at home against second division opposition for the third successive time and will meet either West Ham or Sheffield United who drew 1-1 on Saturday.

Tottenham Hotspur will meet second division strugglers Nottingham Forest in a repeat of the 1991 Cup final if they overcome West Bromwich Albion in their replayed fourth round tie. New Forest boss Gary Megson will face his old club if West Brom win the replay at White Hart Lane on February 12.

Southampton were handed an easy looking home tie against third division promotion hopefuls Brentford or Hartlepool United who also have to replay following their 0-0 draw on Saturday.

Second division Burnley will meet local Premier League rivals Blackburn Rovers at Turf Moor in their first FA Cup meeting since 1960 — the last time Blackburn reached the final.

Bolton Wanderers will meet either Derby County or Fulham while Charlton Athletic will face Leicester City.

The ties will be played on the weekend of February 19 and 20.

Anelka completes Fenerbahce switch

French striker Nicolas Anelka completed a 7 million-pound (\$13.17 million) move to Fenerbahce from Premier League club Manchester City on Monday.

The 25-year-old international has agreed a three-and-a-half year contract with an option for an extra year.

The temperamental Anelka, recently sidelined by back and groin injuries, arrived in Istanbul by private plane in the early hours of Monday morning and was greeted by several hundred fans.

"Today I am a player from Fenerbahce and I am glad to sign with one of the biggest clubs in the world," Anelka

told a news conference.

"I hope we have a lot of success in the league and in the Champions League also," he said before making a tour of the club and signing team shirts for fans.

Fenerbahce are four points clear at the top of the Turkish first division and play Spanish side Real Zaragoza in the UEFA Cup first knockout round next month.

They are to annul the contract of Brazilian Fabiano Lima Rodriguez so that they do not exceed their quota of foreign players.

"I believe today we have opened another important page in the history of Fenerbahce sports club... We

will continue to sign world stars on our path to becoming a global club," Fenerbahce vice president Murat Ozaydinli said.

Anelka joined City for 10 million pounds from Paris St Germain in 2002, scoring 46 goals in 103 matches.

After starting his career at PSG he made his name in two years with Arsenal before completing a 23 million-pound move to Real Madrid in 1999.

He failed to settle during his one season in the Spanish capital, however, and returned to PSG before a six-month loan spell with Liverpool.

Anelka has played 28 times for France and scored six international goals.

Sports

Siasia eyes Martins

Victorious Flying Eagles coach, Samson Siasia has showered praises on Inter Milan striker Obafemi Martins and expressed his desire to have him in his Flying Eagles squad anytime there is need for his inclusion in the Holland-bound team.

The former Super Eagles attacker opened up to KICK OFF in Cotonou.

"I don't think Martins is going to give me problems if I call him to join the Flying Eagles. Last time I met him, he was so respectful and I really admire him. This is a little kid that is doing very well. If I decide to invite him and he comes, then it is good," he said.

The coach also hinted that he would need to go to

the World Cup with the best players Nigeria could offer, but they have to be very good.

"If the players come and they are really good of course, I will keep them. If they could strengthen the areas where I am having problems and as well fit in well into the team, I will definitely include them in the

team.

"I want to go to the World Cup with the best team." Despite having a quality strike force, and averaging 2.2 goals a game, Siasia has been worried by the plethora of opportunities spurned by his charges and is on the look-out for fortification ahead of the World Youth Championships in Holland later in the year.



Martins

Jets battle Wikki in Benin

The battle for the only remaining spot in the Premier League will now be determined by a rematch between Wikki Tourists of Bauchi and Mighty Jets of Jos in Benin after the teams' second play-off game in Kaduna ended in a stalemate after crowd trouble. According to the Professional League Board chairman, Oyuiki Obaseki, the match has been rescheduled for Benin City next Sunday to determine the other team that will join Kwara United to Premier League.

"Jets and Wikki will have to come and replay in Benin on Sunday to determine which team qualifies. The

news from Kaduna on the supporters' behaviour is not encouraging and as such, no supporters of the two teams will be allowed into the stadium for security reasons," the chairman told KICK OFF.

It would be recalled that the two games between Jets

and Wikki ended scoreless with associated crowd trouble on each occasion, while the second match could not be concluded as aggrieved Jets fans invaded the pitch to protest referee Francis Kieki's handling of the match.

The referees had earlier

accused Jets supporters of bothering one of the officials in the first game, Ibrahim Umar from Kano, at a restaurant after the game, but the supporters denied the allegation, claiming it was blackmail against them

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP

Nigeria picks relay tickets

Nigeria will present four teams for the relay races of the 2005 World Athletics Championship billed for Helsinki, Finland in August.

The 400m male and female relay teams and the 1600m male and female quartets were among the teams confirmed by the athletics world

By Abdulraheem Aodu, Sport Reporter

governing body, International Association Athletics Federation (IAAF) for the biennial event.

The 4 x 100m men relay team, which won the 100m bronze medal at the Athens

Olympics last year, made the entry standard of 39.00 sec to earn a ticket for the championship. The female 4 x 100m team that also participated in the final of the Athens Games quashed the 44.00 sec standard for the event.

The Saul Wagopwa-

inspired 4 x 400m male team, which struggled to qualify for the Athens Olympics, were reward with easy qualification by virtue of their feat at the summer Olympic, which beat the 3.04.00 sec standard set by the IAAF.

The women 4 x 400m

relay team, which performed woefully in Athens, also made the qualification for the group event.

Meanwhile, two of the athletes who propelled Nigeria to its first medal at the 2004 Games, Deji Aliu and Olusoji Fasuba opened their indoor season last weekend in Stuttgart, Germany.

The spinting duo participated in the 60m event of the Speakassen Cup, an IAAF indoor permit meeting. The meeting in its nineteenth year was won by Freddy Mayola, with a world leading time of 6.56 seconds.

The Cuban was trailed by Collio Simme of Italy 59 sec Fasuba placed third with an African leaving time of 6.60 sec, just as Deji Aliu finished fifth in 6.63 seconds.

Dolphin maul Renacimiento in continental debut

Dolphin Football club of Nigeria on Sunday boosted their chances of qualifying for the first round of the CAF Champions league following

a 3-0 win over Renacimiento of Equatorial Guinea at the Port Harcourt Liberation Stadium.

Ochuko Ojobo opened scoring for Dolphin in the

11th minute after he blasted home a pull-out from Jacob Aikhionbare from the left.

Victor Ezeji increased the tally in the 43rd minute when he calmly turned around in the box to slot home behind the Guinean Keeper.

A minute later, Ezeji hit the cross bar off a pullout from Ochuko Ojobo.

Midway into the second half, Ezeji missed a penalty after he was pulled down in the box.

His lame kick was cuddled by keeper Joseph De-pespuidenx who had come in about five minutes earlier.

Senegalese import, Hadji Mbaye-ngiaya, in number fifteen shirt was a torn in the flesh of the Dolphin defence turning central defender, Yakubu Attah around each time he had the bal but his only short at goal was saved by Keeper Austin Brown.

Central Defender, Diop Birama, another Senegalese playing for Renacimiento had a great game, giving Ezeji and Jacob Aikhionbare a lot of work to do.

The game was coming to a close when Kelechi Osunwa who was clearly the man of the match headed home from close range, a goal that was protested by the Renacimiento players

who argued Osunwa was off-side.

Dolphin Technical Adviser, Musa Abdulahi told nigeriasports.com after the match that his players were relaxed in the match.

"We were also match rusty as this is our first competitive game since the FA cup final in October last

year."

Musa also said the new balls affected the game.

Cameroonian born coach of Renacimiento was optimistic his players have what it takes to beat Dolphin.

"Their defence was suspect and my players would take advantage of it to score."

Tornadoes sack 20 players

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sport Reporter

The new management of Niger Tornadoes FC has sacked 20 of the 46 players in its pay roll.

The Vice Chairman of the club, Alhaji Yusuf Dauda, said the management decided to lay them off to make way for some fresh legs as well as fill certain departments where obvious gaps were observed.

"We lost Wuraola Rasaq to Kwara United, Kamoru Jimoh to Insurance and few others. But we have equally recruited some players to add to 24 that survived our rigorous screening exercise.

"We were careful to recruit players into positions where we observed a need last season. Besides Tornadoes only recruited players we believe can work with us to achieve our objective of winning the league this year."

Dauda boasted that the Niger Tornadoes do not only have potentials but the motivation and assurance of government financial support to repeat the feat

they achieve few years ago in the Challenge Cup.

Though, he admitted that there were inadequacies in the immediate past league season, Dauda said with the present Nigeria Football League being run by club owners, who know where the shoes pinches, there would be vast improvement in the organization and management this season.

"True, the league was not properly managed last season, but I don't believe any individual or group should be blamed. We were all culprits and I believe with proper organisation Niger Tornadoes will win."

"We (club owners) have spoken very frankly to ourselves and resolved to support the NFL to ensure that the league is properly organized to meet international standard and improve the quality of our football.

Now that we have our

destiny in our hands, we are determined to make not match the league and we will not allow anything to distract or foil the quest to achieve our objectives."

The vice chairman said clubs were working hard to meet basic requirements for a successful league including ownership of match venues.

"Tornadoes have the Bako Kontagora Stadium and happy to say that the government has made provision for the expansion of the stadium."



Gov. Kure of Niger State



Col. Musa Abdullahi, Sports Minister

**This Space is
for Sale**

DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

The poverty of global justice

By Tunde Asaju

lesser humans have been contending with what is generally referred to as despots. Tony Blair, his alter ego, is primed to win a re-election to offer the same support. The world has continued to be unsafe for the average mind; travellers are strip-searched and psychoanalysed to know if the blood of terrorism flows in their veins. An article like this one could earn one a place on America or Britain's watch-list or a ban from visas. Justice is not always just. For if it were just, Blair's son or Bush's would have been sent to the hottest part of the battle so that their parents could taste what it means for the average British or American family to lose a loved one. But who advocates such would be treated worse than God treated King David when he forcefully took the wife of one of his soldiers and sent Uriah, the husband to the hottest part of battle to be killed in order to cover his act. The other day, I heard George Bush chastising Iraqi Security Forces for not being brave. But when the BBC or CNN reports on casualties in Iraq, what I hear is the number of Americans killed, nobody is counting or has counted the casualty among

constitution and other global treaties for upwards of one year now. That is not the poverty of global justice. The poverty of global justice is the fact that US citizens are now being told that they cannot be held in Guantanamo like other "less humans." And it did not end there; British citizens who were massed along with these lesser mortals have just currently received a reprieve. They are to be released to their own country and be tried there under their own laws. For most of them, it is instant freedom, as there are no laws in their country to support the injustice their country is meting out on other lesser mortals from other less privileged countries.

If the other prisoners felt that they were also citizens of the global world, this single action would have convinced them of veracity of the dicta of Animal Farm, to wit, that *all animals are equal but some are more equal than the others*. For since coming to this nascent reality, I have stopped blaming my Nigerian and indeed other African brothers and sisters who are ready to kill even their fellow men in their quest to acquire foreign visas or citizenships either for themselves or their children. For if the so-called globe rotates around the



President Bush

the Iraqi. In such cases, why should lesser humans pay with their miserable and valueless life for a war that they did not cause in the first instance? To paraphrase Professor Sam Aluko, its like the life of one American equals the death of 130 Americans or of one Briton.

Yet, who are the advocates of global justice if not Blair and Bush? Who reminds us that the war was to free the Iraqi from the inhumane regime of the despot, Saddam Hussein. But even in the streets of Fallujah who has sang the song that was sung for David after he won the battle against Goliath - *Saddam has killed his thousands, but Bush/Blair have killed their tens of thousands*. See how unjust justice can be? Even with its eyes covered, the symbolic lady of justice still gropes through the scales of evidence adduced and finds a way to pick on whom the sword should fall. Wherefore, we would paraphrase the great Shakespeare - that this justice though blinded would find pathways to its will!

The United States has refused to sign several protocols aimed at getting global justice. It is yet, the only country with a statue erected for liberty! There can be no liberty where justice is hamstrung. But not that alone, the US has drafted and made nations to sign pacts which guarantees freedom for its soldiers even when they commit atrocious acts in other countries. Global policing requires such guarantees to work effectively. It is evident in the selective criminal justice system being meted out to so-called prisoners of war being held at the Guantanamo Bay. Having mass-arrested citizens of several countries whom it branded terrorists, the warmongers have shipped them to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and kept them there without trial, against the US



Prime Minister Sharon

so-called developed world, and citizenship matters only when they come with links to these countries, then, why would anybody want to be a perpetual serf? Or better put, why should a serf not seek to free his offspring from servitude by ensuring that he got a citizenship that would ease their offspring's transformation from servitude into true global citizenship and the western concept of justice? Here is a quest that is noble... here is a new reality, that all men are born equal but that some are more equal than others and that citizenship is no citizenship except you come from Europe or America.

Perhaps this is another poverty of global justice, but do not say I told you, for I, like most of my peers would at one time or another seek to travel to the real globe, and lest your confession denies me of that useful piece of paper for which travelling is made legal... or indeed this write-up be taken against my children, grandchildren, cousins, nephews and nieces when they apply for visas. For life is horrible in these under-developed places, there is a better world in Europe and America and every aspiring normal human being in search of transformation and a better life must get there. Too bad, I have vowed not to have more babies and I was not lucky enough to have had a better citizenship for my children - they are all Nigerians, a citizenship that means nothing, guarantees nothing and gives nothing in return when I had a chance to have emigrated when it mattered most! I mean, before it became easier for the elephant to pass through the seam of a garment than for a Nigerian to get a visa to London and America! Pity! And my enlightenment, strengthened with western training compels me to cathartically let this out of my system and jeopardise the future of a better life in the real world. Pity!

As the French say, *le monde est fou*. In other words, the world indeed is mad. Mark Thatcher, the son of former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher is, as you read this piece in the United States of America enjoying his freedom. Thatcher, who received a hereditary knighthood, which belonged to his father, is a felon writ large. He pleaded guilty to a charge of hiring a helicopter with which a coup would have been carried out against a legitimate government in Equatorial Guinea. He is half a million US dollars poorer (if that is the word) for his negotiated freedom. Others are not as lucky; they would be tried for complicity and perhaps jailed. They would, even at that, be lucky. In Nigeria, since the days of General Olusegun Obasanjo, treason or attempted treason has always been punished with death. There are indications that some of those despatched by military tribunals to high heavens were actually innocent of the charges against them. But for Thatcher, money and connection has bought him freedom. How poor is justice when confronted with cash and political influence.

The American footballer, O.J. Simpson got away of complicity in the gruesome murder of his wife. In a society, which is still steeped in racism, only heaven knows whether indeed the star conspired to kill his wife or he was just circumstantially primed to end a successful career, (as most black stars are) in jail. For if the establishment is irked by your fame in spite of their hatred of the colour of your skin, there is no extent to which they would not hound you if only to soil your reputation. If indeed O.J. killed his wife, it is now left to his conscience and the day of judgement when all hidden horrors and dirty skeletons, (as they say) would be unveiled and revealed. To us mortals, here on earth,

O.J. hired the best lawyers money can buy and got the justice his money could buy *simpliciter*!

About a decade and a half ago, I wrote an article titled *The Poverty of Justice in Nigeria*. It was an expose on the cost of seeking justice in a society where the poor are so poor they do not even know their rights not to talk of how to protect them. It is very apparent that you cannot protect what you do not know that you have.

For me, the Mark Thatcher story is just a tip of the iceberg of the criminality of injustice especially where it concerns people. I recall with trembling, the decision by the United States, Britain and what has now been appropriately termed the coalition of the threatened and the cajoled to institute a war against the regime of Saddam Hussein. I was

in the UK as a student when over 5 million people thronged on the bustling city of

London protesting against the decision to war in Iraq. They followed it up in other cities like Manchester and the resulted global anti-war coalition held virtually in every country of the developed world. If democracy is a game of numbers, to have ignored the protestations of these throng of people is itself an act of treason; it is a coup against democracy. But in this instance, Bush and Blair having made up their mind on what they wanted to do, reversed logic on its head by allowing the majority to have their say, while they, the minority had their way.

Of course, today, the international community is no better for that action. Although Halliburton and Dick Cheney are reaping billions of dollars from the aftermath of the merciless bombardment of Iraq, thousands are dying and for the living, hope is daily murdered. America's best export from that misadventure is the bodybag of human cargo, which are being air freighted to ordinary American families on a daily basis. In Iraq, it is evident in the number of husbands killed, families disorganised and the ever-increasing number of widows and orphans. It is the uncertainty of men waking up not being certain whether their breakfast would be the last, not because they have been ravaged (as we Africans are said to be) by the scourge of AIDS and its benign opportunistic infections, but from the bombs of so-called suicide bombers or as casualties of mendly or enemy fire. It is evident in the troubled Middle East where the Arab, looking at the fate that has befallen his brother in Iraq has decided to vent its spleen on innocent or perhaps guilty Israelis. It is evident in the crisis which has equally reached Africa, pumelled by

poverty, disease and squalor; its citizens have been forced to go even to Iraq in search of the foreign currency much-needed to pull out starving families from the brinks of economic stagnation and social ignominy.

In all these, George Bush, the erudite speaker has won a re-election, an endorsement perhaps to the continuation of the perpetuation of acts of war in Iraq and other places where