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NATIONAL CONFAB

Tobi's appointment improper

- NBA chieftain

A Kaduna based legal practitioner, Barrister Aliyu Umar, says that the appointment of Justice Niki Tobi, a serving supreme court judge to chair the ongoing conference on political reforms is a violation of the principle of separation of powers as enshrined in the constitution.

He told the *Daily Trust* in Kaduna yesterday that the appointment is also inauspicious "at this point in time" when there is the 2003 election appeal case before the

From Sani Babadoko,
Bureau Chief (Kaduna)

supreme court between the president and his main challenger, the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), flagbearer retired General Muhamadu Buhari.

To buttress his point, Barrister Aliyu quoted from the speech on the subject delivered by the Chief Justice of the federation, Justice Uwais at the 2001 edition of the All Nigeria Judges Conference

where he said: "Since the inception of the current democracy, the federal judiciary as well as two or so state judi-

ciaries have experienced the appointment of judges at the instances of ministers to chair tribunals of inquiry without due consultations with the head of their courts.

"This is clearly a violation of the principles of 'separation of powers' between the three arms of government as laid down by the constitution. By section 6 (6) of the

constitution, the duty of the judge is to hear and determine disputes arising between fellow Nigerians *inter se* and between the citizens and the government or between the federation and the states and to press binding decisions thereon and so, there is no obligation on any judge to undertake the duties

of a chairman or member of a tribunal or commissions of inquiry.

"However, in 1982 at the All Nigeria Judge's conference held at Ilorin, we decided that it was desirable that we continue to undertake

Contd. on Pg 2

See full text of Uwais' speech on Page 6

Delegates may ask for referendum

Some delegates at the on going National Political Reform Conference yesterday asked the conference to decide on the supremacy of its recommendations as against allowing them to be tabled before the National Assembly.

Speaking on behalf of their states and the delegations they represent at the resumed debate on President Olusegun Obasanjo's inaugural address, a number of participants questioned the competence of the legislature to consider the outcome of the conference.

The federal government had said that recommendations of the confab would be reduced to bills that would be taken to the National Assembly for enactment into law.

Championing the cause for supremacy of the confab's resolutions, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) delegates led by retired General Bagudu Mamman, expressed concern with the fate of their deliberations.

They lamented that government may appoint a small group of officials to first tinker with the confab report

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter

before talking it to the legislature for further scrutiny.

Mamman, who said the FCT delegates were committed to the unity of the country, insisted that the confab must decide on how to actualize its ambition for a better Nigeria.

"We are worried that our work will be reviewed by a small group and in the process, things that we did not discuss will be smuggled in.

"We also know what transpired between the president and the National Assembly. At the end of the day, the rec-

Contd. on Pg 2

British court upholds girl's right to wear hijab

The British Appeal Court judges have ruled that a girl, Shabina Begum, was unlawfully excluded from school for wearing a traditional Muslim gown.

Lord Justice Brooke said Denbigh High School in Luton, Beds, denied the 16 year old, now at another school - the right to manifest her religion.

He called for more guid-



United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Nigeria's representative, Mr. Paul Salay (right) and Attorney-General of the Federation representative, Prof. Yemi Akinseye George during the release of the 2004 International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) report, held in Abuja... yesterday.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Senate moves against Makarfi today

The senate may today take on the governor of Kaduna State, Alhaji Ahmed Muhamed Makarfi, who on Tuesday chided the two chambers of

By Isa Sanusi, Political Reporter

the National Assembly for not living up to public expectations.

technicality.

Miss Begum, whose parents are both dead, had worn a regulation *shalwar kameez* (trousers and tunic), until September 2002 when she informed the school authorities she intended to wear a full-length gown called a *hijab*.

Speaking outside the Court of Appeal, Miss Begum, who now attends a

Contd. on Pg 2

According to the governor, that was the reason why the ongoing National Political Reforms Conference became necessary.

Daily Trust gathered that many lawmakers were angry with Governor Makarfi's statement and some particularly in the senate have resolved to take on the governor for breaching their privilege as provided for by the senate's standing rule 15 which says:

"Any senator may rise at any time to speak upon a matter of privilege suddenly arising and he shall be prepared to move, without notice, a motion declaring that a con-

tempt or breach of privileges has been committed."

Governor Ahmed Makarfi was quoted by a national daily (not *Daily Trust*), as saying that the current National Assembly has been spending a lot of its time on "personal struggles for power and influence," and added that, "You don't have to go out doing certain inspections when you have critical problems before you to address."

The governor who chaired the committee set up by President Olusegun Obasanjo to streamline the national conference was par-

Contd. on Pg 2

News

Tobi *Contd. from Pg 1*

such inquiries. We laid down conditions for such participation in the following resolution.

"A judge may in the interest of the nation or the state, act as chairman or member of such a commission or tribunal of inquiry but only on matters of great national importance which are not politically loaded."

Barrister Aliyu said the chairmanship of the political reform conference is clearly a political assignment more so that the legality of the hastily arranged conference itself is a subject of litigation.

He said apart from the fact that there are several retired supreme court judges from

which the president could chose who to chair the conference, he ought to have waited until the appeal is determined before convening such an important conference.

He said if Justice Tobi's appointment was made in consultation with the chief justice of the federation, then the question remains has the chief justice changed his position from what he declared at the all judges' conference?

Barrister Aliyu said it appears the political leadership in this country is trying hard to do away with the age-old independence of the judiciary and destroy the only institution that has remained the last hope of the masses.

Delegates

Contd. from Pg 1

commendations of this conference will go to the same National assembly. They may make several amendments to what we discuss.

"So we must find a way out of this. Let's ask for a referendum. At the end of the day, there must be a referendum if we are to make any progress," he said.

Apparently in agreement with Mamman, retired General Joshua Dogonyaro, representing retired military personnel, said the confab must take a decision on where to take its report.

He asked a number of rhetorical questions on the fate of the confab's recommendations. "Where is the report going to the National Assembly?"

Other speakers at yesterday's session also insisted that there must be no restriction to the agenda of the conference and canvassed for a strengthened, united Nigeria.

Delegates were also unanimous that the nation's problems did not lie with the system but with its actors.

They said the constitution was good enough but that it was not being implemented the way it should.

Delegates further sought for improved and enforceable electoral system where the vote counts.

Speaking on behalf of Plateau state delegates, Chief Solomon Lar sought the retention of the presidential system, but urged that it should be rid of the current prohibitive running cost.

"We believe there's nothing wrong with the presidential system at all. It depends on the actors at that material time," he said.

Lar also canvassed for a weak central government with improved power base for state and local governments.

In their different submissions, Yahya Abdulakarim (Zamfara), Hamzat Ahmadu (Sokoto), Yakubu Aizogo (Taraba), Albert Horsefall (Rivers) and Bola Babalakin (Osun), also made case for a united Nigeria, with Horsefall demanding that his state be allowed to produce the next president in 2007 in the interest of fairness.

Senate *Contd. from Pg 1*

ticularly unhappy that the National Assembly could not give the nation a new revenue formula up till now and justified the national conference.

A senator who spoke to *Daily Trust* noted that the senate will have to take on the governor for what he said are baseless accusations by the governor adding that; "we have to take on the matter by way of a motion supported

by Orders 15 and 43 of the senate's standing rules. The governor was unfair to us.

Makarfi was quoted as saying that "the current National Assembly - we have had National Assemblies from 1999 - we have to acknowledge that a lot of time was spent on personal struggles for power and influence. Uptill now do we have a new revenue allocation

FG expects N300bn from sale of 30,000 houses

The federal government is to raise an estimated N300 billion from the sale of 30,000 houses built by government ministries, agencies and departments located in different parts of the country.

The federal executive council which decided on outright sale of the houses, says beneficiaries of the scheme would be civil servants, public servants and the Nigerian public.

The federal capital Territory minister, Malam Nasir el-Rufai told State House correspondents yesterday that out of the 30,000 houses, 25,000 built by the federal capital development authority were located in Abuja.

The minister explained that two categories of houses had been identified for sale under the scheme which is to be financed through the floating of a bond on the floor of the Stock Exchange by the federal government.

The two categories he said, include houses occupied by civil servants and those occupied by political appointees.

"Council decided to have two different procedures for the sale of each group. For the houses to be sold to civil servants, the valuation will be based on the current replacement cost of the building as determined by the FCDA or our professional valuers excluding the cost of land and infrastructure." It doesn't matter whether the bill was done 20 years ago, we will price it at today's price at current replacement cost, which is what it will cost government to build the same house today," the minister explained.

On the houses occupied

By Reuben Yunana, Senior Report State House

by political appointees, el-Rufai said such participants will participate in an open bidding and given the right of first refusal.

"When the bids are open, the highest price offered by the bidders would be offered to the occupant of the house. The houses will be sold with

the current occupant having the right first refusal to purchase within 30 days of offer. The right to purchase is neither transferable or assignable," he said.

Already he said, government has commenced discussions with banks to work out the financing structure of the sale.

El-Rufai explained: "The federal Mortgage Bank has

been the primary financier in this kind scheme, but it doesn't have the kind of money needed for this, so they have proposed to government to float a bond at the Stock Exchange that will enable it have money to lend

prospective buyers. The bond that the financial system indicates is one that can be repaid in a period of between six years.

Disagreements delay 2005 budget

The 2005 budget will have to be further delayed because of the disagreement between the Appropriation and Finance Committee of the Senate and the Budget office and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), over the applicable revenue framework to be used in the budget.

The senate insists that the revenue projection provided by the NNPC and the budget office is far less than the 57 percent federal government equity in the joint ventures even though President Olusegun Obasanjo wrote the senate saying: "The continued controversy on the issue has made it difficult for the 2005 budget to be finalised in good time."

However, in an executive session yesterday, the senate referred the president's letter to its committee on Appropriation and Finance with the mandate to look at the president's explanations

By Isa Sanusi, Political Reporter

while still insisting that the revenue projection arrived at by the federal government is far less than what the senate believed the nation will earn this year from the joint ventures.

Briefing newsmen, the chairman, senate committee on information, Senator Tawar Umbi Wada, said the senate is still investigating the actual revenue the country earns, maintaining that the senate firmly believes that what the NNPC and the budget office projected as revenue from joint ventures is not corresponding with the actual revenue expected.

Senator Wada further said that on its part, the senate has completed work on the appropriation bill but will study the president's letter and pass the budget on Tuesday next week.

President Obasanjo's let-

ter dated February 28 reads: "I refer to the delay in the passage of the 2005 budget occasioned by lack of consensus between the appropriation committee, the petroleum committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, the budget office and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), on the applicable revenue framework. I am reliably briefed that the main issue of contention has been the contradiction in the budgeting data available to the National Assembly and that provided by NNPC and DG budget. While the National Assembly has planned to apply 57 percent federal government equity in the joint ventures to all the projected production for 2005, NNPC's position is that the federal government's equity crude lifting from total production is dependent on the commercial terms of the different petroleum arrangements."

Ali emerges PDP chairman

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) yesterday adopted the recommendation of its north central caucus and approved the appointment of Senator Ahmadu Ali as the substantive chairman of the PDP.

At the NEC meeting yesterday attended by President Obasanjo, Vice President Atiku Abubakar, and the leadership of the National Assembly, Senator Ahmadu Ali unanimously emerged chairman following a motion moved and agreed to by the congress.

Also yesterday, Chief Tony Anenih, the acting

By Hammeed Bello, Senior Political Reporter

chairman of the PDP board of trustees (BOT) was confirmed as the substantive BOT chairman while an inside source told our man that the speculated dissolution of the National Working Committee (NWC) had been stood down till the next meeting of NEC, which usually holds once monthly.

At yesterday's NEC meeting which also had all the PDP state governors in attendance, Ali was voted following a motion moved by the PDP national vice chairman, north central, Alhaji A. Magaji and was seconded by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Aminu Bello Masari.

Magaji informed NEC that during the north central NEC meeting which held on Tuesday in Abuja to determine who the zone will recommend to yesterday's NEC meeting, six people contested including two former governors and four former senators from the zone, but that Ali was the preferred candidate.

Among those who contested include former governors of Kwara and Plateau State, Sha'aba Lafiagi and Fidelis Tapgun, and senators Alex Kadiri, A.T. Ahmed, Ahmadu Ali and one other, all from Kogi state.

The acting national chair-

the acceptance or otherwise of the choice of Ali, it unanimously agreed to, and all the governors of the north central states were requested to usher in Ali as the new PDP national chairman.

He formerly took the oaths of office and of allegiance, which was supervised by the PDP national legal adviser, Col. Yohana Madaki.

In his acceptance speech, Ali described his nomination as an extra-ordinary opportunity to serve and pledged his unflinching loyalty to the party.

"We must shame our detractors who are bent on planting seed of discord in our midst, adding that as a trained medical doctor, trained to care and cure, he would adopt the right diagnosis and prognosis in solving the party's problems.

Earlier, Chief Tony Anenih, had in his acceptance speech said the BOT chairmanship was the ultimate position he aspired to in PDP and said he believed in discipline and propriety. "As far as PDP is concerned, there should be no compromise," he said, adding that he will not use his position to wear crown but to help others to wear crown.

In his remark, President Obasanjo gave testimonies to the abilities of Ali to perform and wished him successful tenure as PDP national chairman, a position he will hold until November when the

British *Contd. from Pg 1*

school where the *hijab* is allowed, said Denbigh High School's action could not be viewed merely as a local decision taken in isolation.

"Rather, it was a consequence of an atmosphere that has been created in Western societies post 9/11, an atmosphere in which Islam has been made a target for vilification in the name of the 'war on terror'," she said.

In their ruling, the Appeal Court judges said the school had a right to set a school uniform policy but nobody had considered Miss Begum had a right recognised by English law.

The responsibility lay on the school to justify any in-

judges ruled.

Lord Justice Brooke said: "Instead, it started from the premise that its uniform policy was there to be obeyed, if the claimant did not like it, she could go to a different school."

Although Miss Begum had won her case, she no longer sought an order from the court that the school take her back and no longer sought any damages, he added.

A spokesman for Denbigh High School, where 79% of pupils are Muslims, defended its uniform policy which he said took into account cultural and religious sensitivities.

the governing body following wide consultations with the DFES, pupils, parents, schools and leading Muslim organisations."

The case had been lost due to a "small, technical breach" of the Human Rights Act, the spokesman added.

"The judges accepted that the school is entitled to have a uniform policy and could see nothing wrong with it," he said.

A spokesperson for Lutonborough council said they would be developing guidance on school uniform and advising Luton schools' governing bodies to review their uniform policy to take account of religious and cul-

The ruling, which has major implications for multi-faith schools across the country, has been welcomed by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) as a "common-sense approach".

MCB Secretary-General Iqbal Sacranie said: "This is a very important ruling on the issue of personal freedoms. The British Muslim community is a diverse community in terms of the interpretation and understanding of their faith and its practice.

"Within this broad spectrum those that believe and choose to wear the *hijab* and consider it to be part of their faith equipment should not

News

Illegal airfields, channels for arms importation - Minister

The minister of aviation, Mallam Isa Yuguda, has disclosed that some of the 193 secret airfields recently uncovered by the ministry in operation at various locations in the country were being used among other things for the importations of arms into the country.

"We have cases of illegal arms movement from one place to the other and these airstrips are really fertile

By Mohammed S. Shehu, Aviation Reporter

grounds for movement of such arms and you can keep mentioning so many security breaches that can be as a result of operating illegal airstrips without the knowledge of the government", Yuguda said.

The minister disclosed this in Abuja while inaugurating a high powered ministerial committee that would implement the report of a

monitoring committee that had earlier uncovered the operations of the illegal airstrips, helipads and heli-decks located in the country particularly in the Niger Delta region.

Yuguda who described the report as frightening, said it received a plethora of facilities indicative of significant safety and security lapses in the system.

In his words, "these acts of violation of our airspace, set the stage for the development of appropriate strategies to deal with the emerging and dangerous trend.

Daily Trust gathered that the setting up of the implementation committee was sequel to a directive from the presidency ordering a full scale investigation into the activities of such illegal airfields.

The move may not be unconnected with the recent efforts by the federal government to rid the country particularly the Niger-Delta of illegal weapons as part of a response to the alarming increase in the rate of violent crimes aided by illegal weapons in circulation.

Inaugurating the seven-man committee under the chairmanship of Engr. B. Inyankume, Director (DAAS) of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Mallam Yuguda urged the committee to implement the report to the letter and determine the extent of revenue loss and the attendant national security risks.

Customs impounds nine trucks of fake drugs

Men of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), have seized another set of 10 trailers, nine of which contains pharmaceutical products mostly suspected to be fake, counterfeit and expired drugs, while the tenth one carried textile materials.

Comptroller General of Customs, Mr. Jacob Gyang Buba, accompanied by the Director General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Dr Dora Akunyili, to the Karu Customs Barracks where the vehicles were parked yesterday in Abuja, announced the seizures.

According to Akunyili, the smugglers "are criminals who know the porous areas through the land borders because customs men cannot be everywhere".

She declared that both the Customs and NAFDAC will now collect samples of the assorted drugs and send them to the laboratory to confirm those that are fake.

"We think that they are fake but if we find any of the drugs to still be good for use, then we'll decide on what to do. Then Customs would distribute them to the hospitals. But we agreed that most of them will be destroyed", she said, adding that "Customs caught them in Kogi state, brought them to Abuja and invited NAFDAC

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor

to come and sample the drugs".

Also speaking, Gyang said that the NCS has now adopted the strategy of sending surveillance teams to the borders and even a little beyond into the territories of neighbouring countries to monitor smugglers.

Some of the drugs contained in the trailers include Maloxin (due to expire in March 2005), Omo detergent, lincomycin capsules 500mg, cemetidine vial (a veterinary drug), Cold Tak, Cold Off, Strepsils Pencap 20 mg, Cupro-heptadine caplets, Simadyn, Rimacillin Dry Syrup, Gentamicin Eye Drops, Lidocaine and Adrenaline Injection 50ml, Vitamine B Complex injection, Transglobe Ginseng Slimming Tea, among others.

IBB: EFCC has secret agenda- Bwari

The Chief Whip of the House of Representatives, Hon. Abubakar Bawa Bwari, has accused the chairman of the economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, of pursuing a secret agenda against former military president, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (rt).

By Hameed M. Belo, Senior political Reporter

"Without any petition against the former president, Mal. Ribadu or some private counsel went ahead to use the machinery of the EFCC to settle scores with IBB," Bwari said, adding that his action was partial and he might have been used as a tool against IBB.

Hon. Bawa Bwari who spoke with newsmen in Abuja yesterday, described Ribadu's comments as reckless and baseless because it was not backed by evidence but our ulterior motive.

Hon. Bwari, who represents Gurara, Suleja and Tafa federal constituency of Niger state said while Ribadu admitted that the EFCC had cross checked IBB's financial records internationally without finding any case of money laundering, he still went ahead to make complimentary remarks about him.

"But one really must question his motives when he begins to make such statement like "never, never again in Nigeria will someone like IBB come to rule the country".

By Reuben Yunana, Senior Reporter, State House

displeasure at the slow pace of work on Exxon-Mobil's Independent Power Production (IPP), project in Nigeria.

President Obasanjo urged Exxon-Mobil and other major oil companies to exhibit more social responsibility and commitment to Nigeria through accelerated action on independent power production projects.

"This is one area where Nigerians are crying out and I believe that it should not be so. Oil companies are doing this everywhere and I see no reason why it cannot be done here," the President told Mr. Foster.

FG approves guidelines for 2005 oil licensing round

President Olusegun Obasanjo said yesterday in Abuja that Nigeria's 2005 licensing round for oil blocks will come up in July.

Speaking at an audience with the new President of Exxon-Mobil Production Company, Mr. Morris Foster, president Obasanjo said that he has approved guidelines for the licensing round.

The President told Mr. Foster that he was generally satisfied with the mutually beneficial working relationship Nigeria has had with Exxon-Mobil since the inception of his administration in 1999.

He spoke, however, of his



FCT Minister/Chairman, Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), Mallam Ahmed el-Rufai, (right) briefing newsmen on the FEC meeting held... Wednesday. Others are the information minister chief Chukwumeka Chikelu and Mrs. Oby Ezekwezi. Pix: Joe Oroye

Attack by security agents: Court awards N1m to Islamic scholar

The federal High Court in Jos has awarded one million to a prominent Islamic scholar in Jos, Mallam Ibrahim Maimai as general damages against the Plateau state commissioner of police and the General Officer Commanding 3rd Armored Division of the Nigerian Army, in the case of attack and intrusion brought before the court.

It would be recalled that at about 3.00am on December 18, 2003, the house of Mallam Maimai, a successful businessman and philosopher who runs a Quranic school in Rafindadi village, Jos, was invaded by the state security operative who allegedly shot indiscriminately into the compound thereby killing people.

The state police command under the commissioner, Mr. Innocent Ilozuoke, was reported as saying that it received relevant information that the Quranic school was bringing students from Niger Republic and Cameroon and that the school is also a hideout for terrorists in the state. The police commissioner had also admitted that it was ordered to raid the place led by the army.

Following the attack, Mallam Ibrahim Maimai went

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent Jos

to court seeking a declaration that the attack and intrusion into his home was a violation of his right to private and family life, personal liberty as well as right to dignity of human person.

The applicant through his counsel, A.A Sangei, had also sought five million naira compensation, claiming that it was money removed from his home and also sought ten million (10m) as general damages.

The Judge, Justice Charles Archibong, after hearing the case, gave judgment in favour of the applicants.

Delivering judgment, Justice Archibong asserted that "we find that there was a rude intrusion into the 1st applicant's premises and he suffered some amount of undeterminable loss of property and possible money in the confusion."

The judge added that there was a violation of Mallam Ibrahim Maimai's right to privacy and family life and right to dignity, awarding the applicant one million naira in general damages.

However on the applicant's claim of having lost N5million in cash, the judge said it was difficult to establish the claim even as business transactions were not recorded.

Dariye: Adjourn to 2007, defence counsel prays court

The defence council in the money laundering charges involving governor Joshua Dariye and bank officials has prayed the federal high court to adjourn the case until when the governor can be summoned to stand trial.

Arguing at the resumed hearing yesterday, counsels for the defendant, Dr. Alex Izinyon (SAN), told the court presided over by Justice Abdullahi Liman that it was

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief Kaduna

virtually impossible for the case to continue without the first accused, Mr. Dariye, by virtue of the immunity granted him under section 308 of the constitution.

He said the applications was brought pursuant to section 164 (1) (2) of the criminal procedure Act, Cap C 41 laws of the federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004 and section 36(4) (6)(b)(d) and 11 of the 1999 constitution.

Izinyon also contended that in the fresh charges as presently constituted, Dariye's name featured prominently and by virtue of section 308, no court process can compel him to give evidence in court and be subjected to cross examinations.

He listed some other grounds for the applicants, arguing that the applicants were not ready to be tried on the amended charges filed by the prosecution on February 3, 2005.

The court on December 16, 2004, struck out the said Chief Joshua Dariye in view of section 308 of the constitution and that the witness that have testified in the matter before February 7, 2005, have made mention of the said Joshua Dariye and his involvement in the charges before the court.

Northern speakers meet on oil, confab

Speakers of Northern Houses of Assembly are to meet in Maduguri, Borno state to discuss the state of the nation and the on-going political reform conference as they affect the political, economic and social well being of the people of the region.

Competent source told Daily Trust in Maiduguri yesterday that among the key issues to be discussed at the special meeting which comes up next Tuesday in Maiduguri, is the exploration of oil in the Lake Chad Basin abandoned by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

The speakers are said to be concerned that while oil becomes the most important determinant in the country,

From Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (North East)

the potential presence of commercial viable oil in the Lake Chad Basin is not being given the seriousness it deserves by the federal government.

The speakers are also enamoured according to our sources, by the success of Chad Republic in striking oil in commercial quantities in its own section of the Lake Chad.

Daily Trust also learnt that the Maiduguri meeting of the Northern States Assembly speakers will discuss the on-going national political reform conference to harmonise a position that will be put before various northern representatives now attending the conference.

News

National Confab ... National Confab ... National Confab ...



Air Commodore Emeka Omeruah (rtd), Military personnel delegate from Imo State (l) going through a document with the Secretary of the Confab, Rev. Father Matthew Hassan Kukah (r) during the sitting of National Political Reform Conference in Abuja yesterday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

Igala delegates urged to canvass restoration of LG reform guidelines

Delegate representing the Igala people of Kogi state in the ongoing national political reforms dialogue have been urged to ensure the return to the 1976 guidelines on local government reform which established population and economic viability as the determining factors in the creation of new councils in the country.

The Igala National Solidarity Association (INSA), in a communiqué at the end of the pre-confab meeting held in Ayigba, Kogi state noted with regret what they described as the "marginalization of the Igala" people in the creation of local governments in the past and called on the delegates to press for the return to the 1976 guidelines on local government reforms.

The Igalas, the communiqué noted, is large enough to have their own

Ahmed Tahir Ajobe,
Correspondent (Lokoja)

state going by the population in the last census but have hitherto been at the receiving end in the creation of state and local govts by successive administrations.

The communiqué also mandated the delegates to

canvass a complete review of constituencies at all levels to ensure that every ethnic nationality is represented by parliamentarians in numbers reflecting the population of the group.

It is only by so doing, the communiqué noted, that such absurdity which has the Igalas who constitute more than half the population of

Kogi state being represented by only one senator as well as having only three federal constituencies can be solved.

'The poor are marginalized'

As the national political reform conference gets down to business, the poor in the society are crying of marginalization in the selection of delegates to the conference.

Malam Bappawuro Adamu of Bajoga quarters, Gombe, told *Daily Trust* that there was no way the poor could feel represented in the conference since they were not considered during the selection of the delegates.

From Mohammad
Abubabar, (Gombe)

"I cannot say the poor are represented because they were not consulted. I only hope that the conference will serve our interest. The reality is that they are suffering in this country," he pointed out.

He said he would want the conference to discuss issues that will ensure the continued existence of this nation and cautioned against anything that will dismember it.

Malam Bappawuro also advised the delegates to be in touch with their people at the grassroots while the conference lasts so as to know exactly what exactly they wanted addressed.

He called on the conference delegates to focus on the improvement of agriculture which he described as the backbone of the nation's economy before the discovery of petroleum.

Other areas he would want the conference to beam its searchlight include education and health which he said were beyond the reach of the masses.

On whether the poor were adequately informed of the activities of the conference, Malam Bappawuro said they were, "Nigerians, either rich or poor. By poor, are interested in what goes on around

Malu explains presence at confab

By Godwin Tyonongo,
Stringer

Former Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Victor Malu (rtd), has said that he still has grievances against the federal government and that he will not have attended the national political reform confab. If he had been nominated by the federal government.

Malu who spoke to *Daily Trust* at the venue of the confab, said he was there because his state nominated him. "I came to represent my people Zaki Biam and Benue state to some extent," he said.

The retired general believes that the federal government had a hand in the military invasion of Zaki Biam which massacred his relatives and destroyed properties. He insists that the issue must be addressed.

Although the general maintained that he was not going to discuss issues at the conference along tribal lines, he pointed that "most of what has happened affected Benue very badly than most other states."

Asked whether he will cope at the Confab with limited background in politics, Malu said, "you will believe that a general in the army knows more about the world than most of the people calling themselves politicians."

He words: "Being a politician is not a profession;

any bloody fool can jump up and become a politician. A general is an all rounder. There's no field you take me and I can't work confidently," he said proudly.

Meanwhile, another delegate from the Korgba has said for the fact that oil is found in the Niger-Delta does not mean it belongs to only the Niger-Delta.

He warned that for the nation to continue as one entity, people must open up at the conference but should not try others' sensibilities.



Gen. Victor Malu (rtd),

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FG appoints four youths

Following protests by some youths over their non-inclusion in the ongoing national conference, the federal government has approved the nomination of four youths to the conference.

Similarly, the government was already looking for replacements for those who declined to honour government's invitation to the conference.

The youths include Ukaechi Ekenulo (South East), Segun Olaleye, (South west), Abdul Jalal Dauda (North East), Ben Duntoye (North Central).

"Distinguished delegates, President

Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the nomination of four youths in our midst.

"If you see them you will see that they are really youths. Could the four of you stand up for recognition," Tobi announced on Tuesday.

In an interview with one of the youths, Mr. Segun Olaleye, thanked President Olusegun

Obasanjo for giving them the opportunity to have their representatives in the conference.

He assured youths that their interest would be protected, saying that the four of them would not disappoint the country's teeming youths

Role of the judiciary in a democracy



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News

Role of the judiciary in a democracy - Uwais

Being full text of an address by the Chief Justice of the Federation
Muhammad Lawal Uwais at the 2001 judges conference

It is my privilege and honour to welcome you all to the opening ceremony of the 2001 All Nigeria Judges' Conference. It gives me pleasure to welcome His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, who, inspite of his busy schedule, has graciously consented to open our conference.

The All Nigeria Judges' Conference is a biennial conference of the judges of our superior courts. It is a statutory conference enjoined by the National Judicial Institute Act, 1991. So far, four such conferences have taken place, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999. This year's conference is the fifth to be held since the 1991 Act came into operation.

The aim of the conference is to give the judges of our superior courts of record the opportunity to come together every two years to discuss our common problems, exchange ideas and experiences for the betterment of our performance as arms of the federal and states' governments. There are no less than 526 judges participating in this year's conference.

The theme of the Conference is: "The Role of the Judiciary in the Attainment of Good Governance under a Democratic Dispensation". It needs be mentioned repeatedly, that the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which we now operate has distributed governmental powers among three organs of government, namely, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. This is better known as "separation of powers". The principle behind the separation of powers is to vest each arm of government with precise and well defined powers and to avoid interference by one arm with the conduct of the business of the other arms.

The judiciary is that department of government which is charged with declaration of what law is and its interpretation. It consists principally of the courts. Therefore, the Nigerian judiciary is expected to keep the legislature on its toes, in that it will not hesitate to rule that a piece of legislation that offends the provisions of the constitution is null and void.

To have good governance, the Nigerian courts must, without fear or favour, give liberal interpretation to the provisions of the constitution.

This, I dare say, our courts have been doing and will help to usher in good government rooted in the Rule of Law.

The primary role of the judiciary is adjudication. This presupposes that there must of necessity exist a dispute. In other words, dispute or controversy is an essential ingredient of adjudication, without which there would be no adjudication. In any democratic order, people are free to hold opinions and to express them as vehemently as they wish. Consequently, it is inherent in such freedom that controversies are bound to arise and so the role of the judiciary becomes indispensable.

Given the role of the judiciary as an arbiter between government and the people inter se, it is very important that citizens' should enjoy easy

access to the courts, as that will enable them to have their grievances, not only ventilated but also adjudicated upon by the courts. This is the essence of democratic spirit which is conducive with good governance.

Nigerians now agree that democracy is the best form of government and that real democracy will offer a ready solution to all the political and social ills of the country. Therefore, democracy which is synonymous with the rule of law envisages a good government.

In a democracy, power resides in the people and belongs to the people. In other words, the people own the government and not the government owning the people. In a democracy, the people choose their leaders and representatives and charge them with the responsibilities of governance. Therefore, the leaders and representatives are not the rulers of the people but the people's servants.

Democracy envisages obedience to law and this is popularly referred to as the "Rule of Law". That is, all authorities as well as individuals shall act and be bound by the law; there shall be equality of persons before the law and all disputes between persons or between government or authority shall be referred to the ordinary courts of the land for adjudication.

Your Excellency Mr. President, Hon. President of the Senate, Hon. Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Members of the National Assembly, Hon. Members of the Federal Executive Council, my lords, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the acid test to find out how free and how democratic any nation is, is to look at its judiciary to find out what powers the nation is prepared to concede to this vital partner in governance. The complete and real independence of the judiciary is thus a reflection of the nation and of the freedom.

The independence of the judiciary can only be sustained and guaranteed when there is no interference by the other arms of government or their agencies in the discharge of its duties. The funding of the judiciary is crucial and is a most important index for assessing the independence of the judiciary. Although the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has made special provisions towards funding the Nigerian judiciary, those provisions are not free from ambiguity; consequently, the application of those provisions is reportedly half-hearted. While the Federal Government and the National Assembly are willing to pay and do respectively approve the budget of the National Judicial Council in respect of the Recurrent Expenditures of both the federal and states' judiciaries, the state executives concerned refuse to provide funds for the capital expenditures of their judiciaries.

This is contrary to the provisions of Section 121 subsection (3) of the constitution. Some state governors have resorted to buying cars as good gesture which they give to the judges of their state judiciaries

While the intention in doing so may be good, it is in reality, derogation from the provision of the constitution. The funds used in buying such cars should have been made part of the capital budget of the judiciaries concerned so that the judiciaries themselves can purchase the cars.

Any notion of doling out cars to judges is not only a negation of the independence of the judiciary but an act reminiscent of the military era in



Muhammadu Lawal Uwais, CJF

governance. Important equipment or tools for the functioning of the judiciary, such as law textbooks, typewriters, photocopying machines, electricity generators and so on, are to be purchased with the vote for capital budget but this is denied the state judiciaries.

I appeal to the state governors concerned to have a second look at the situation in the interest of good governance and upholding the constitution which they have sworn to observe and apply.

The National Judicial Council which was constituted in April last year has been working hard in the discharge of its responsibilities. It has dealt with many recommendations for the appointment of judges and the issue of discipline of judges. It has succeeded in collecting funds for the recurrent expenditure of the federal and state judiciaries as approved by the National Assembly on monthly basis and disbursing such funds to the states. Though the monthly allocation is paid to the council in arrears of one month because the funding had been coming from the federation account; the recent face-off between some state members of the Federation Accounts Committee and the federal executive is affecting the allocation to the National Judicial Council and thus, hindering the function of the council to release funds to the judiciary.

So far, release of such funds by the Federation Accounts Committee has been suspended for about two months. This means that judicial officers are to go without salaries and allowances until the impasse between the state governments and the federal government is resolved. A situation where the judiciary is not only starved of funds but the salaries and allowances of judges are not paid is, to say the least, very serious for the sustenance of democracy and the Rule of Law and cannot be described as good governance.

I am aware that about 14 or more state governments have sued the federal government in the Supreme Court challenging the deductions being made from the federation account to fund the National Judicial Council. I am restrained from saying any more as the matter has become sub-judice.

The National Judicial Council is currently dealing with Justice Eso Panel Report, which was sometimes ago referred to it by His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Some scepticism is being expressed about the

various judicial conferences, workshops, seminars and induction courses for newly appointed judges, to the extent that our code of conduct- Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria- provides under Rule 2A(2) that, "a judicial officer must avoid the abuse of the power of issuing interim injunctions, *ex parte*." Judges have been retired prematurely or dismissed for injudiciously granting the injunction. All these do not seem to have effect on some judicial officers. The only inference to be drawn from such behaviour is that the judicial officers so involved grant the injunctions deliberately in bad faith for improper motives.

I think the time has come that where a report is made by a litigant or an appeal court finds that the grant of *ex parte* injunction is culpably wrong and manifests gross injustice, such that a reasonable person may conclude that the judge had some ulterior or subterranean motive to serve, the judge should be reported to the National Judicial Council so that he can be disciplined. If the delivery of judgment out of the three months prescribed by the constitution is reportable to the council, and can attract sanction, I see no reason why injudicious granting of *ex parte* interim injunction cannot, since it is a misconduct under the Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers. It will be remembered that at the conclusion of the 1999 All Nigeria Judges' Conference, we issued a communiqué advocating that the powers under the Pensions Act, Cap 346 of the minister responsible for administering the Act should be delegated to the judiciary as far as it concerns the payment of pension to retired judicial officers. The National Judicial Council has adopted the resolution and mandated me to write to His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, requesting that his powers in that respect be graciously delegated to the National Judicial Council. I am to report that this has been done more than a year ago and we are awaiting the approval of Mr. President.

In order to enhance the image of the judiciary, the heads of federal courts under my chairmanship recently met to discuss the federal government's New Policy for the Award of contracts in order to show transparency and accountability. We adopted the policy in general but with modifications to suit the peculiarities of the judiciary.

Apart from giving chief registrars the powers to make purchases, similar to the powers given to permanent secretaries and heads of parastatals, we approved the existence of Departmental Tenders Board with similar powers to those given to Ministerial Tenders Board. In place of the Federal Executive Council as the final authority for the award of contracts, we created a Federal Judicial Tenders Board, with the administrator of the National Judicial Institute who is a retired judge as its chairman and all the chief registrars as members and so also the secretaries of the National Judicial Council, the Federal Judicial Service Commission and the National Judicial Institute. The power of

Board is to award contract for amounts exceeding N25 million. This has become necessary in order to uphold our independence from the other arms of government in accordance with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Since the inception of the current democracy, the federal judiciary as well as two or so state judiciaries have experienced the appointment of judges at the instances of ministers of chair tribunals of inquiry without due consultations with the heads of their courts. This is clearly a violation of the principle of "separation of powers" between the three arms of government as laid down by the constitution. By section 6(6) of the constitution, the duty of a judge is to hear and determine disputes arising between fellow Nigerians, *inter se*, and between the citizens and the government or between the federation and the states and to pass binding decisions thereon, and so there is no obligation on any judge to undertake the duties of a chairman or member of a tribunal or commission of inquiry. However, in 1982 at the All Nigeria Judges' Conference held at Ilorin, we decided that it was desirable that we continue to undertake inquiries. We laid down conditions for such participation in the following resolution:

Be it resolved and it is hereby resolved as follows:

1. A Judge may in the interest of the nation or the state, act as chairman or member of such a commission or tribunal of inquiry but only on matters of great national importance which are not politically loaded, and subject to the following safeguards, namely:

(i) that, having regard to the doctrine of separation of powers applicable to the three branches of government as entrenched in the constitution, the chief executive, whether federal or state, when asking for a judge to conduct an inquiry should not ask for a particular judge nor coerce any judge to undertake such an assignment but shall get in touch with the Chief Justice of Nigeria or the Chief Judge of a state, as the case may be, and inform him of the subject of the inquiry and ask him to nominate a judge who may be able, willing, and available to undertake the inquiry;

(ii) that the Chief Justice of Nigeria or the Chief Judge of a state, as the case may be, as well as the judge who undertakes the inquiry, shall be fully informed of the subject of the inquiry, the terms of reference, as well as other members, if any, of the tribunal;

(iii) that the Judge shall be the chairman or sole commissioner of the tribunal; and

(iv) that the report and findings of such a commission of inquiry shall be published in full along with the whitepaper thereon.

On no condition in future shall any national honours be awarded or any honorarium, apart from out-of-pocket expenses, be paid to any judge in consideration of his having taken part in such an inquiry.

It is hoped that these conditions will in future be observed in order to make for harmonious relationship between the federal executive and the judiciary.

News

National Confab...

National Confab...

National Confab...

Is this confab derailing?

By **Habeeb I. Pindiga,**
Political reporter

One of the fears expressed against the on going national political reform conference even before the forum kicked off was that it may go out of hand. That is to say in spite of the confined agenda given to the confab, some rabble-rousers may go hay wire and plunge the nation into trouble. If the events of days three and four are anything to draw conclusions from, a conference that is barely two weeks old has started to develop some symptoms of derailing.

These who entertained doubts in this confab gave examples of how conveners of previous conferences found it almost impossible to exercise any form of control over them. During the 1995 constitutional conference convened by General Sani Abacha, despite the intimidating influence of the military regime on the confab, and notwithstanding the preponderance of government appointees in attendance, a group of delegates spearheaded by Late General Shehu Musa Yaradua championed a resolution that gave the junta a deadline to quit office. Though the resolution was reversed eventually, the signals were sent.

This is one case in point of how a conference can defy its convener. If it happened during the military, many people felt it could happen easier under this dispensation. Thus the apprehension that Nigeria will not emerge united after the confab, especially with speculations that the convener is not entirely sincere.

Barely a week to this conference, President Olusegun Obasanjo seemed to have given many people hope that this will not happen. He talked about not fearing to discuss or discussing in fear. He also at the inauguration of the confab said it categorical that the gathering was never meant to dismember Nigeria nor was it intended for hidden motives. The president went on to quarantine some eight sensitive areas and warned the delegates - not to compromise them.

Obasanjo said: "My fellow compatriots, I believe that certain issues must by now be accepted as minimum issues that must be regarded as given. These are issues that have resulted from decades of political engag-

negotiation, networking and confrontation with the stark realities that unite us as a people. These are issues that are central to the oneness of Nigeria and are core to our

to be more powerful than its architect and financier. It is also about to vindicate pessimists.

Indications that the delegates would be rebellious first emerged on Tuesday and the tendency continued throughout the Wednesday session.



President Olusegun Obasanjo

stability, security, peace, growth and developmental process.

"They include: the oneness of Nigeria; federalism and federal system of government; presidentialism; multi-religiosity; federal character; popular participation; the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy; and separation of powers."

These 'given' issues were interpreted widely to mean areas that can not be tampered with by the conference. In other words, the conference's terms of reference do not include them, or the forum does not have the powers to discuss them

But the third and fourth days of the confab's plenary has begun to indicate that a form of militancy is emerging. The conference is now poised to challenge the authority of its convener and his powers to chart a *modus operandi*. Besides challenging the president, some of the delegates have even gone a bit further to question the integrity and competence of the National Assembly.

This confrontational

sovereignty or weaken our national cohesion. These constitute the bedrock of our national unity, identity and political praxis."

To Ezeife and many other speakers after him, if the 'minimum' areas were in order, then there was no need

Ezeife. He said anybody should be free to question everything including the nation's unity and especially the listed eight areas.

"Is it not true that there are people who question Nigeria's unity? In my view, it's our duty to allow those

Ahmed (Gombe), Babalola, and a few others talked about poverty eradication and good leadership as the major challenges, most delegates concentrate on non-issues. Many were also worried about devolution of powers and the money-guzzling presidential system operated.

But the insistence on shedding of any 'no go' areas was dominant. A delegate was talking about the conference having powers to discuss anything under the sun.

Perhaps more worrisome is the tenacious attack on the National Assembly by some delegates. Malu for instance said the lawmakers were more of selected than elected people. General A. B. Mamman (FCT) said the conference resolutions should not be sent to the National Assembly, but instead should be subjected to referendum. According to him, considering the running battles the legislature had with Obasanjo over the conference, there is little doubt that the lawmakers would tinker with the confab recommendations when tabled before them.

No doubt the fears of some people that this confab may get out of control for both its convener and Nigeria itself are beginning to manifest. Only four sessions gone and the attacks on the nation's unity, which the confab's primary assignment is to strengthen, have reached an uncomfortable level.

The eventual scenario may not be too difficult to predict. Some regionalists will surely push for regionalism; some ethnic supremacists will for sure argue against federal character and talk about pure merit instead; some religious bigots will try to put one religion into ridicule and thus lead to upheavals; some people will also make case to have a taste of the presidency or else the nation go for parliamentary system so that no executive president would come again; above all some secessionists will make attempts to water the ground for breaking Nigeria, as a delegate yesterday stopped just short of calling for balkanisation.

May be there is need for the conveners of this conference to devise some method of reminding the delegates of their brief. Perhaps also the delegates should have been put on oath to defend Nigeria at all cost. In the meantime, chairman of the conference, Niki Tobi should be calling the delegates to order and



Justice Miki Tobi, Confab chairman

for the conference. They contended that not even the sky should constitute the limit of what the conference should discuss. He said "If the federal character is good for example, we won't be here. So we should do away with all these inconsistencies (in Obasanjo's speech) by discussing anything that's discussable."

These who see the conference agenda through the same prism as Ezeife, as far as 'no go' areas are concerned, include Ime Udom (Akwa Ibom), Bello Kirfi (Bauchi), Victore Malu (Benue), Gamalie Onosode (Delta), Martin Elechi (Ebonyi), Mike Akhigbe (Edo), Matthias Offoboche (Cross River), S. K Babalola (Ekiti), Adams Oshiomhole (NLC), Umaru Dikko (Kaduna), David Jemibewon (Kogi), Albert Ogunshola (Kwara), General A. B. Mamman (FCT) and Alfred Horsefall (Rivers).

Malu said "If there are any untouchable points, then I think we have no reason to be here. Most of us are here because we feel we should represent our states because things are not going well"

Perhaps only Oshiomhole

who have that view to talk, let's listen to them because you don't solve problem by wishing it away." He said.

The NLC president also challenged the federal system as too manipulative, with too much power concentrated at the central level and cries of marginalisation from all over. "What can we do in a country where even the majority allege marginalisation?" He asked rhetorically. Oshiomhole suggested therefore that if there are unitarists, they should be listened to.

A word of caution on dabbling into religious matters was also dismissed by the NLC president. Kirfi had suggested that even though the 'no go' areas should be tabled for discussion; religious matters should be kept away because of the sensitivity of the subject. But Oshiomhole said no. "To assume that we are not mature enough to discuss sensitive issues is to admit failure. We should listen to these who want the country to be Islamic and these who want it to be Christian, and even these who want us to return to Stone Age."

Of course some delegates including Onosode

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Idang Alibi on Thursday

SHORT PIECES

With Professor Layi Erinoso
laierinosh@yahoo.com

Weekly

Three days of the National Confab

After the adjournment for one week immediately after its inauguration on 21 February, the National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) settled down to serious business beginning from last Monday 28, February.

For three days beginning from that Monday and yesterday, this column watched very closely, the conference at work. What impressions have we formed of the talk-shop which some one described as the mother of all Nigeria's Political Constitutional Conferences as this one is expected to be the last of our attempt to fashion-out a lasting political arrangement for Nigeria?

Do actions and utterances of the delegates so far give any one hope that they will give Nigeria a good report that will lead to the making of laws that will guarantee everybody a sense of belonging?

What has been the performance of the principal offices of the Confab so far? How they given any one cause to hope that they will be competent pilots for the conference?

How should delegates sit and in what order should they talk? Should the members sit according to states or zones or in alphabetic order? Should speakers be recognised at random and should they ramble on or ought there to be a time limit of say at most five minutes for each speaker? Should delegates speak on any issue under the sun or ought they not to follow strictly the Order Paper for the day?

These were some of the seemingly trivial issues that dominated deliberations on Monday at the confab as the august gathering tries to find its feet.

As a toddler trying to take its tentative steps, these issues pertaining to the rules of procedure, were all that the conference could achieve that day it adjourned for the day.

For nearly all of the four hours it sat, the conference debated whether delegates should sit according to states or zones to facilitate consultation or there should be a free sitting arrangement in order to create a sense of unity, or oneness.

It is hardly surprising that the arguments appeared so repetitive and may be quite boring to some observers. The confab consists of a good number of conferees who are first-timers to such an event and are therefore not conversant with parliamentary procedures.

The old-timers, most of

help matters. It was quite amusing seeing them jostle to speak, only to repeat almost exactly what the previous speaker had said on the issue of sitting order or order of procedure. To a practised observer, the action of the old hands was deliberate. Some of them have been out in the cold for so long and they reckoned that they may have gone out of public consciousness. They were therefore anxious to speak even if it was for the purposes of speaking themselves into public reckoning once again or to impress their constituencies back home.

In the heat of the motions that were generating more heat than any light, former Senate President in the Second Republic, Dr Joseph Wayas, took to the floor. He lamented about the haphazard manner of the contributions, pointing out that so many issues were thrown up and very little resolutions were being made.

In the midst of accusations by many conferees that not much was being achieved by the repetitive nature of the contributions, Gamaliel Onosode (Delta State) said the day was not as unproductive as some were insinuating. He was however unhappy with what he said was the penchant of members to say the "right thing" in order to appear broad-minded and patriotic. He said many people came to the conference there with pent-up feelings of anger and that it would be more useful if the confab settled down to business.

The floor roared into wild laughter when another delegate, a woman from one of the South-West States, took to the floor. Speaking in the same vein as those who had complained about the repetitive nature of the speeches. The woman began: "Mr. Chairman, Sir, so many people have said so many things."

The chairman cut her short and sent the hall roaring with laughter by saying, "say your own, Madam."

On Tuesday, there was a slight improvement on the performance of the previous day. The agenda for the day were consideration of the draft Standing Orders or Rules of procedure and the debate on the President's inaugural speech. Eminent jurist and elder statesman, Prince Bola Ajibola spared the gathering of another repetitive and bring speeches when the House was about to go into a debate of the Standing Orders by

to look at the draft and give a report to the committee of the whole House. As a "reward" for his brilliant suggestion, he was appointed to head the committee made up of seven other members.

The haphazard manner of contributions continued for about two hours before it was finally resolved that leaders of the state delegations and the special interest groups should speak for three minutes on the president's speech.

Some of the most insightful or work while contributions of Tuesday came from Alhaji Ibrahim Damcida, former Super Permanent Secretary and leader of the Borno delegation and General David Jemibewon, deputy leader of the Kogi delegation.

Damcida who began on a very slow note as if he was not going to say anything useful, ended up being one of the stars of the day as he spoke a lot of sense to the applause of the gathering. One of the major points of his contribution was a case for the jettisoning of the present expensive and corruption-inducing presidential system and a return to the good old parliamentary system of the First Republic.

Jemibewon called, among others, for a return to the old development planning of the Gown days which he said, will lead to a more accelerated development of the country.

On Tuesday, I thoroughly enjoyed myself with a good laughs as I was privileged to sit near the very friendly and witty General Alwali Kazir, former Chief of Army Staff. Every once in a while, the perspicacious and humorous Infantry General will make funny remarks to some of the contributions for both our consumption.

For instance, he told me rather sarcastically, "Democracy good o. It is only in a democracy that you will spend over two hours discussing the modalities for discussing the President's speech."

Yesterday, the major voice was easily that of Chief Richard Akinjide who held the audience spell-bound with his passionate declaration that the rather frequent constitutional conferences Nigeria is holding is becoming an embarrassment. He submitted that the fault is not with our several constitutions but with the actors in government.

The chair of the conference which appeared soft or rather indecisive on the first two days, because more authoritative and firm yesterday giving a clear indication that as time goes on, the chairman will learn and

Of development and our underdevelopment

The other day I was invited to lead a seminar at one of our universities on the subject matter of development and underdevelopment. The staff and students expected me to bring along a full-length paper on the theme of the seminar. However, I opted for a participatory approach.

The audience was disappointed when I indicated at the onset that I had not prepared a paper but would like to encourage all those that were in attendance to brainstorm on the theme, as this would stimulate a lively discussion.

I began by posing a number of questions that were to guide our discussion. These are: what is development? Which are the most developed countries in the world why are they regarded as such? What is the problem with Nigeria? In other words, did they think that Nigeria is a developed country and if so why and if not why not? What should be done to bring about development in the country? It was clear we had a handful of questions that could be explored at the seminar.

To summarize, I found that there were two subgroups among the participants. There are on the one hand those who argued that development means new roads, physical facilities, housing estates, hospitals etc and on the other hand those that felt that it is about consolidation and 'sustainable growth'.

the attraction of our people towards the developed countries is because of the absence of beautiful infrastructural facilities in our country that enhance the quality of life.

Nigeria, according to this group, is a richly endowed country that could afford to build beautiful edifices. We should therefore continue to impress it upon the President, State Governors and Chairmen of Local Government Authorities that they should construct new structures that are at par with those in the developed countries. New structures mean development in the real sense of the word and in no time we would catch up with the developed countries. The group also explained their notion of rapid development and gave the example of a state Governor that is spending some much money to construct new roads and other facilities.

But the other subgroup vehemently disagreed, arguing that development is about consolidation and sustainability. To this group, what is the point in building new structures when existing ones are in a complete state of disrepair? Why build more universities when several of the old ones that had been in existence for not less than twenty years are still at their temporary sites? Why build new hospitals when existing ones have not been in operational state for years? Why construct new roads and superhighways when the old ones are not motorable due to pot holes? Why do we need to build

accept the position of the second group. It was from this point that I encouraged all the participants to adduce the reasons why our leaders often opt for the first strategy, - building new structures.

One of the reasons that they adduced was that Nigerian leaders are very petty. They often distance themselves from the policy/programmes of their predecessors in office rather than identify with those of them that are good and build on them. The quality of life is about making the environment livable. But our country is littered with abandoned projects that undermine the quality of life. They noted that countries like the US and Britain would have been Nigerians had they adopted this approach towards development.

They concluded that development would continue to elude us as long as our petty.

Second, the participants claimed that corruption is another factor accounting for our penchant for new projects rather than consolidate/sustain existing ones. New projects create avenues for siphoning funds from the public treasury. They provide the façade for our politicians to claim that they are facilitating rapid development when their real intention is to corruptly enrich themselves.

Finally, the participants suggested that our approach to development is largely because our leaders have not decolonised their mentality. The colonial concept was predicated on the fact that new projects should be conceived and executed. However, the participants often failed to

"The participants claimed that corruption is another factor accounting for our penchant for new projects rather than consolidate/sustain existing ones. New projects create avenues for siphoning funds from the public treasury. They provide the façade for our politicians to claim that they are facilitating rapid development when their real intention is to corruptly enrich themselves"

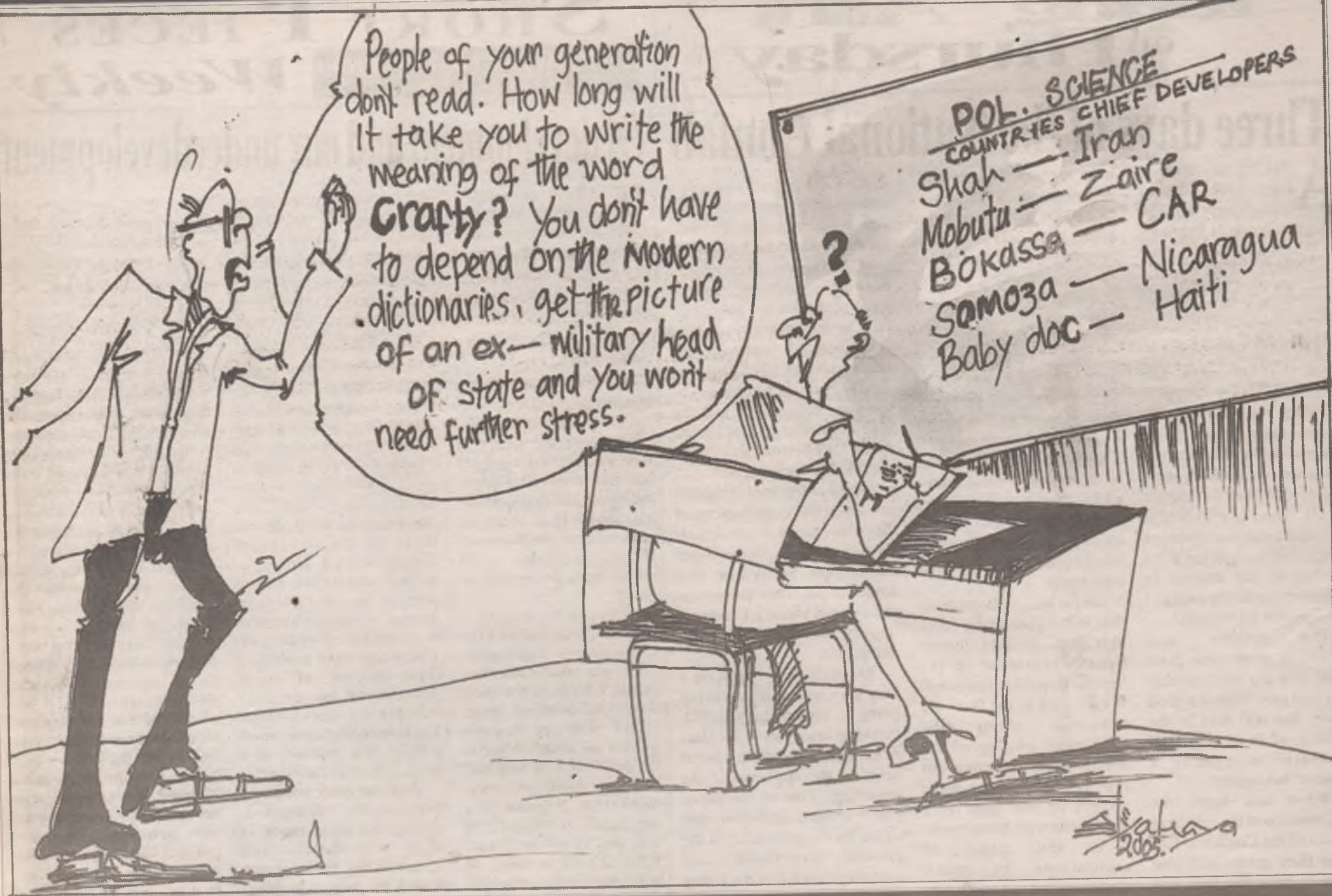
The first group argued that Nigeria is not developed because she lacks super highways. Our universities are not listed among the top five hundred in the world despite the fact that we churn out thousands of graduates every year. To this subgroup, our universities do not have impressive physical facilities like those in the United Kingdom and the United States. They were quick to point out that our teaching hospitals are glorified consulting clinics and that we have nothing to show to the world at our

new housing estates when those in place lack basic infrastructural facilities like motorable road, piped water, drains etc.? Why attempt to build satellite towns/estates in Abuja, Lagos or Abeokuta, Enugu, Maiduguri, Jos etc when the roads within these towns are not passable or when their residents are still procuring water from tanker owners at astronomical amounts of money? Consequently, this group argued that development is not just about new structures but the consolidation and sustenance of old ones.

The first group lost out as

appreciate the fact that the colonial authorities. This notwithstanding, our leaders have often failed to realise that that the colonial authorities equally attached great importance to sustainability.

In concluding, I wish to throw the debate open to our readers and would welcome comments on our perception of development. The question that should be addressed is as follows: should our leaders be concerned about building new structures or strive to



YOUR LETTERS

Tribute to Abdulkarim Adisa

The news of the death of General Abdulkarim Adisa hit me like a thunder bolt and made one miss a couple of heartbeats. Those who broke the news to me on phone did so hesitantly as if afraid to pass on a blasphemy!

Adisa Dead? Can't be! A week before his passing away he looked me up at my Abuja residence. He walked in looking clean as usual, in his spotless white native attire and with his

trade mark smile. He said in his unique Ilorin Yoruba - "Good afternoon Sir, I came for a marriage here in Abuja. We have just finished and I said I must see you before I set off for Ilorin."

"Must you go today, it is already 1.00pm?" I asked. "I should be home by 7:00pm. It is about six hours drive," he replied. Then in his characteristic way he went straight into why he came to see me. No beating about the bush. "The reason I

have come to see you Sir, is about the Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF," he said.

He said he came to plead with me not to be discouraged or angered by certain people who had formed rival organisations to attack ACF for reasons best known to them. Their reasons for so doing were false and, designed to destroy the ACF, the only organ developed by our Chiefs and leaders to work for the cohesion of the North in a united Nigeria.

He said his Emir, Alhaji Sulu Gambari in particular, had worked so hard as chairman of the implementation committee which established the ACF. The Emir received the praise and gratitude of the whole North. We the older members of the ACF may not wish to say anything to condemn what was happening but they the younger ones will not keep quiet only to see what his Emir had helped to build being destroyed.

I was moved by his sheer passion and assured him that I would not be discouraged. No one who believes in the future of this ill-used country can afford the luxury of being discouraged in these times. He said he was relieved and I saw him out, and he drove off. Fine fellow I mused.

General Adisa loved his people and used his influence to help the fortunes of those who could benefit from such help and used his wealth to succour the afflicted.

General Adisa was a great fun to talk with. He had a kind of humour which was self-deprecating, behind which he could make some of the most outrageous but truthful down-to-earth pronouncements about any issue - whether personal, political or social.

Strong support of ACF

He was a strong believer in the non-discriminatory um-

brella status of the ACF, under which all and sundry in the North irrespective of status, or religion, or ethnicity, or gender can take refuge and pursue their common interests in peace and harmony. He attended most of the Forum's meetings in Kaduna and was one of the life wires of the Kwara Chapter of the Forum. We shall miss General Adisa most sorely indeed. A mighty elephant has fallen and the entire forest is gravely distraught. May his soul rest in peace.

On behalf of the entire members and supporters of the Arewa Consultative Forum, ACF, I send our heartfelt condolences to his entire family, the people of Ilorin, Kwara State and his wide circle of friends for the irreplaceable loss of this unique man, General Adisa.

Sunday Awoniyi (Aro of Mopa), Chairman, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF).

BPE privatisation: Letter to Mr President

NAFCON, a nitrogenous fertilizer complex in Onne, Rivers State, was established to produce ammonia, urea and NPK fertilizers respectively. The company was in operation up till some times in July, 1999, when the plants were finally brought down for repairs. Since then, efforts made by Mr. President to revive the plants in 2001 were thwarted as a result of power tussle between the Federal Ministry of Industry and BPE. Despite the fact that all the equipment and spares needed for the repair jobs were ordered and presently lying at the complex, the repairs could not see the light of the day.

BPE was then given the go ahead by Mr. President to sell NAFCON. Companies were invited to bid for NAFCON and due diligence conducted on the assets and liabilities of the company. At the end of the day, the company was sold to one SINO-AFRICA which unfortunately could not pay and take

communities) are hearing is that Mr. President has granted approval to BPE to liquidate NAFCON, because BPE made Mr. President to believe that based on the quantum of debts NAFCON is owing, no company would be able to buy up to that amount to enable them off-set the debts. Agreed NAFCON is indebted hugely, but if BPE were sincere and ready to tell Mr. President the truth, with the rate of properties NAFCON is having coupled with the plant itself, and the spare parts for the repairs already at the site, they would be able to sell the company at a reasonable price and off-set the said debts.

For good five (5) years, BPE has been on the privatisation exercise of NAFCON without completion, which is an indication of incompetence on the part of BPE. The lukewarm attitude of BPE towards speedy privatisation of NAFCON which was the directive of Mr. Presi-

pointed) because, whatever they (liquidator) say they realise from the sale of the assets of the company is what is going to be used to pay workers, contractors, banks, etc no matter how little. Monies that were genuinely deducted from workers salaries as contributory pension runs into millions of Naira, not to talk of terminal benefits. How does BPE intend to clear all the mess it has created as far as privatisation of NAFCON is concerned?

Mr. President, it is pertinent to remind you that about 80-90% of the workforce of NAFCON is from Rivers/Bayelsa States respectively. These people have since been thrown out of job, and the only consolation they will get is for them to be paid their entitlements in order to avert any restiveness that might likely arise from total liquidation of the company.

Mr. President could send an independent body to verify the above properties of NAFCON

approval to BPE to liquidate NAFCON as this move is not to the interest of the workers.

Mr. President should also direct BPE to expedite action on the privatisation of NAFCON as all necessary preliminary exercises have been conducted, and that whatever proceeds realised from the said privatisation should be used to settle the indebtedness of NAFCON to workers and contractors alike. This is based on the premise that BPE had earlier set up a Debt Review Committee which reviewed downward all the debts of NAFCON to a minimal level.

Mr. President, the above steps are necessary to forestall the likely confrontation any person or group of persons might face in a bid to take over NAFCON after liquidation. Also, your timely intervention as suggested above will assuage the sufferings of workers of the company.

Adieu Emma Arinze

I just heard of the passing of Dr. Emma Arinze, the former Director of the NCAC. When he took journalists round during the exhibition of royal regalia at Sheraton Hotels and Towers, last year, it was clear that an encyclopaedic mind, lover of the arts, and quintessential gentleman was in his element. It was truly a memorable day. Here was humility and knowledge streaming end-

lessly out of a simple soul. Of Igbo parentage, he had lived in Jos, and the old Mid-West, making him pan-Nigerian.

This is truly a great loss to the arts community and to the country as a whole.

May the Almighty Father strengthen the Arinze family and the departed one.

Tadaferua Ujorha, 22, Lusaka Street, Zone 6, Abuja.

Reactions to articles published in this paper may be directed to the

Opinion

Banning foreign vegetable oil

The recent statement by Malam Adamu Bello, the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development reiterating the ban on the importation of vegetable oil by the Federal Government was received with joy by the thousands of large, medium and small-scale processors and producers of the commodity throughout the country.

A document from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development indicates that a large quantity of vegetable oil is imported into the country regularly from Malaysia, which currently has 1.3 million metric tonnes of excess palm oil (*Daily Champion*, January 20, 2005, page 16), Indonesia and some ECOWAS countries to meet the annual shortfall in the local production of the commodity. Nigerian consumers use some one million metric tonnes of assorted vegetable oil per annum.

The Government justified the ban on the importation of vegetable oil for a variety of reasons, such as a demonstration of government policy consistency and as a clear act of patriotism aimed at advancing the national interest of Nigeria. It would serve as a spur for the successful implementation of the presidential initiative, that is, the Vegetable Oil Development Programme being pursued by the federal

By Salisu Na'inna Dambatta

government. The Vegetable Oil Development Programme was evolved by the government alongside several other initiatives in the agricultural sector covering rice, cassava, livestock, dairy, fisheries and cocoa with the overall aim of boosting their production to attain or sustain self-sufficiency, or for exportation.

Specifically regarding vegetable oil, Malam Adamu Bello said in the statement that "Our aim is self-sufficiency and to eventually be an exporter of the product."

The Minister said during his 2004 Ministerial Press Briefing that an estimated additional 300,000 metric tonnes of vegetable oil, or some 910 trailer each carrying 33,000 metric litres of the commodity has to be produced annually for the country to attain self-sufficiency, against the current estimated annual production of 700,000 metric tonnes. The Vegetable Oil Development Programme is the vehicle provided by the Government to take us to that destination. It has really stimulated more activities in the sub sector.

"Under this intervention programme, production targets have been set for selected vegetable oil sources. The targets are one million hectares of oil palm capable of producing 15

million fresh fruit branches, 15 million tonnes of groundnuts annually and 670,000 to one million tonnes of soybean" the Minister disclosed.

The mass production of Sunflower, Coconut, Sheanut, Beniseeds, Castor, Mellon and Cocoa, all of them important vegetable oil bearers, is part of the programme.

A steering committee dominated by private sector vegetable processors and producers, a Board of Trustees (BOT) and a few government officials as advisers and administrators, runs the Vegetable Oil Development Programme, for which the Federal Government provided N242 million in the year 2004 budget.

Indeed industry players like Affcott of Yola, which plant at Ngurore, Adamawa State, has a capacity to process and produce 30 metric tonnes of vegetable oil per day has accepted the challenge to play a positive role in this national drive.

The death of its Chairman, Mr. G. D. Chanrai of the Kewlram/Chanrai Group on December 7, 2004 on his way to Bauchi and Gombe States to visit sites for his agro-industrial activities is a major loss to the vegetable oil producers association of Nigeria, and some people regard the re-affirmation of the ban on the importation of the commodity shortly after his death as a sort of fitting tribute for a man

who spent some 40 years in the agro-industrial sub sector, in addition to textile manufacturing and general trading.

With 25,000 farmers producing cotton and its by-products to feed its installations in the North Eastern geo-political zone, the company, which is a subsidiary of *Asprint Nigeria Plc*; has invested heavily in vegetable oil production and processing. Its second vegetable oil production and processing facility at Zaria, Kaduna State, *Sunseed Nigeria Limited*, engages thousands of cotton out growers in the North Western geo-political zone, who make a living and some fortune out of their partnership with the company.

The cotton is ginned, some of the cotton seeds dressed and supplied to the farmers for planting and most of it processed to produce vegetable oil for domestic and industrial consumption as well as cake for animal feed.

Had the ban on the importation of vegetable oil been lifted, it would have a devastating impact on the thousands of farmers engaged in the production of oil-bearing fruits and seeds for the estimated 3,500 vegetable oil processors and producers in this country, who have invested a lot of energy and resources in the sub sector.

Referring to the positive impact of the ban and other steps taken by the

government to stimulate vegetable oil processing and production locally, the late Chairman of Affcot of Yola, Mr. G. D. Chanrai told the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development on December 4, 2004 during last year's *Affcot Farmers' Day* "Honourable Minister, your initiative for the revival of the Vegetable Oil sector is working. Oil seed production has grown and Nigeria has become self-sufficient in vegetable oil production."

The Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, Adamawa State Governor Boni Haruna and the Minister of Commerce, Alhaji Adamu Danjuma Idris Waziri, graced the *Affcot Farmers' Day*. The Vice President toured the factory, inspected a mini agricultural show and distributed prizes to outstanding cotton farmers drawn from Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, and Gombe Taraba and Yobe States.

It is appropriate at this juncture to list some of the major vegetable oil processors and producers in Nigeria such as Sunseed Ltd of Zaria, Affcot of Yola, PS Mandrides of Kano, Jof Ideal Family Farms, Akure; Katsina Oil Mills, Zamfara Oil Mills, Turaku Oil Mills, Benue State, Okumu Oil Palm Plc, Okitupupa Oil Palm Plc and Presco Plc. Presco Plc has just announced a profit of N600 million from a turnover of N2.4 billion in the 2004-operating year.

There are thousands of

other tiny, small and medium processors and producers of vegetable oil in the vast oil palm belt of Nigeria, and in the cotton seed, soybeans, groundnuts and other oil seed production areas of this country. The country should not force them out of business by allowing unnecessary importation of vegetable oil.

In fact, Presco Plc, one of the important players in the vegetable oil business in the country, has just announced its intention to invest the sum of N1 billion this year (2005), in order to expand its operations and produce more vegetable oil, according to its Managing Director, Mr. Pierre Vandebecck. Reports say the company cultivates oil palm trees, extracts and refines palm oil and engages in the fractioning of crude palm oil into vegetable oil and palm stearin.

The industry is so vast that an estimated 1.4 million citizens of this country are believed to be actively engaged at the various levels of the vegetable oil industry as farmers, machine operators, labourers, engineers, technicians and in several other jobs. They individually and collectively toil to produce palm oil, groundnuts oil, cottonseed oil, soybean oil, and sesame oil, all from oil seed produced in Nigeria. They deserved total support.

Dambatta writes in from the OSGF, the Presidency Abuja.

Letter to Mr. President on agric reform

Your Excellency

I am a citizen of this great and rich country called Nigeria. I want to chip in my little contribution, even though so many beautiful programmes are there for you to choose from. If you compare and contrast Nigeria with most nations in the world you will agree with me that God has blessed us ABUNDANTLY with both human and material resources. I have never been to any Asian countries. However, I have learnt that due to lack of habitable and arable land, some of them have learned to build houses and create farmland on mountains and in seas. It baffles me when I go to our market, and see items like rice, spaghetti, tooth pick, candle, etc (to mention but a few) made in China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea etc. I keep wondering how they are able to cope with life and even export all these consumables to other parts of the world.

We have so many universities, polytechnics, and colleges of technology. Some Nigerians are not even contented with all these, they train themselves and wards abroad. What have we got to show for all this? Educationists say "...Learning is a change in behaviour as a result of experience". Where is the tangible result of all our experiences? Or has learning

By Abdurraheem Buhari

not taken place? Our learning apparently does not change our behaviour. We just learn to pass exams and become professors with no concrete result to show for it.

I am sorry to mention that our leaders need to buckle up and face the realities of life. We are tired of their frequent visits abroad to come back with large framed pictures of themselves and people like George Bush, Queen Elizabeth II, Tony Blair and other world leaders, just to display in their living rooms. They create so many reasons to travel, some of which are to import technology; to invite foreign investors or to witness sessions of the American Congress.

One funny observation I made over the years is that, in the speech of very minister or commissioner for agriculture you hear that "... Malaysia took palm kernel seedlings from Nigeria in so... so... years... now they are the major producers of so... so and so." My question is this, "what have we actually done about the remaining seedlings"? With our vast arable land, we import almost every thing you can think of. If serious care is not taken GARRI & OKRO will be imported to Nigerian some day, the way things are going.

Your Excellency, it is

pertinent to note that our overall problems are centred on poor leadership. Our leaders are self-centred and greedy. Only the immediate family and family friends of who is who can get employment or even admission to schools. It has reached a stage that whenever you want to go; you need a note from somebody who knows somebody. For how long should life continue like this?

Most of our leaders maintain foreign accounts. I read in one of the dailies that deposits belonging to individual Nigerians have risen from \$55 Billion in 1999 to \$170 Billion in 2004. This trend is on the increase. Yet they are quite aware that they are developing those countries by keeping their looted or "earned" funds to the detriment of Nigeria. The irony is that most of them die and these funds could not benefit even their immediate families. This is due to the secret nature of such deposits. Another newspaper (sometime in September 2004) reported that Nigeria's total indebtedness to the World bank stood at \$34 Billion. How can one justify debt relief to such a country? In the first place, I cannot justify the loan.

But Your Excellency, I digress somewhat. To return to

the subject of this letter, I do not know the actual size of arable abandoned land uncultivated and uninhabited through out the length and breadth of this country, but I have travelled almost all over by road and what my eyes have seen in terms of land space, I mean virgin land, is ENORMOUS.

Your Excellency, God gave you the foresight and will power to create Otta Farm to cater for you and your family and sell its products to the public. I would like you to see Otta farm as a MICRO project only for the Obasanjo and immediate family. I implore you to create in all local governments MACRO Otta Farms before the end of your tenure, or at least initiate the programme.

Our leaders are busy fighting over the 2007 elections. They have to be forced to see what is good for this country and what is not. Ban all political activities right up to six (6) months to elections. Nigerian do not really care who is leading, once they are cared for. Provide in the vast land in each Local Government, large mechanized farms with all facilities of life (i.e. electricity, water, telephone service, all season roads, etc). Each area should cultivate what is suitable to its

geographical location. Shift incentives to agricultural ventures. Each of the local governments must have well equipped Agric Technical departments to take care of farmers' needs in their areas. Establish relevant fertilizer industries in each state to cater for all farmers in the State.

Sadly, however, some of our governors are busy inviting white from South Africa to come and colonize our lands and people for the second time. I believe that when the white farmers come, they will use Nigerians to till the Nigerian soil and, of course, collect the proceeds and provide peanuts as salary to the farmers. We should learn to enrich ourselves. We have all it takes to design programmes and develop our land and people. If Japan and China can do it we too can. Any attempt to give our lands to foreigners is creating enslavement to our people not the (purported) employment.

Mr. President Sir, poverty has eaten deep into our people. If you drive a posh car in town and you look carefully into the eyes of people you come across, do not make the mistake of thinking that they are admiring you and your car. Far from it, they are giving you scornful stares. They have been reduced to a people in

need of daily bread and shelter. A people in distress - yet from an oil rich country.

Your Excellency, divert attention of the nation from the proliferation of independent and dependent oil marketers to agric officers and farmers. Make agric the cardinal objective of your remaining two years or so in office.

Two other major problems eating my heart up are the issue of Ajaokuta Steel Rolling Mill and our four refineries. I have lost trend. I do not know who is doing what about these two giant live wires of the Nigerian economy. Are the Western powers against their reactivation? Or are there some Nigerian who are seriously benefiting from their inactivity?

Mr. President Sir, a lot of campaign should be mounted to install patriotism into Nigerians to desist from looting our treasures and stashing same in various countries.

Those with foreign deposits should be encouraged to repatriate such funds for development of our motherland. I wish you well in the leadership of this great country. I also wish you God's guidance.

Buhari writes from 1, Madaki Street, Sani Mai Nagge P. O. Box 703, Kano state

THE PASSING OF AN ICON

With thanks to God, we announce the transition of our wife and mother,

Chief (Mrs.) Folayegbe Mosunmola Akintunde-Ighodalo oon,

an Icon of our nation, the first woman to be appointed Permanent Secretary in Nigeria; which occurred on the 14th day of February, 2005, having lived an eventful, fulfilled, pioneering, nurturing, Christ-filled, and loving life; and having given unreservedly to her country, her society, and her family.



◆ OBSEQUIES ◆

Sunday 6th March 2005 3 - 5 pm Commendation Service conducted by The RCCG Christ Church Parish Gbagada Lagos
6pm - 7p.m Service of Songs by Centre for Applied Religion & Education/Christians for a New Society/Student Christian Movement

Monday 7th March 2005 5pm - 6.30 pm Service of Songs by the Nigerian Association of University Women/ National Council of Women's Societies

Tuesday 8th March 2005 5pm - 6.30 pm Service of Songs by "Egbe Ayanfe Kristi"

Wednesday 9th March 2005 4pm - 5p.m Service of Songs by Isokan Obirin Onigbagbo/YWCA

5.30pm - 7.30 pm Service of Songs by World Communication Ministries (WOCOM)

Thursday 10th March 2005 12 noon -1p.m Esan Progressive Union (EPU) IGBABONELIMI

2pm - 3pm Service of Songs by Women's Improvement Society

5pm - 7pm Service of Songs by All Saints' Church

9pm - Dawn EBHOKIMI (EWOHIMI) Aso'logun

ALL ACTIVITIES FROM SUNDAY 6th MARCH THROUGH TO THURSDAY 10th MARCH WILL BE HELD AT HOME, 3 Ighodalo Drive, Irepodun Bodija, off Bodija/U.I Rd. (Behind the Plaza Hotel, formerly JKIC Hotel), Agbowo, Ibadan

Friday 11th March 2005

8am - 10a.m Lying in State (At Home)

11am - 12.30pm Funeral Service at All Saints Church Jericho, Ibadan

1pm - 1.30pm Interment

1.30pm - 7.00pm Reception (S.S. Peter & Paul, Bodija Ibadan)

with us forever

◆ Husband ◆

Jeremiah Ighodalo

◆ Children ◆

Tolulope Ighodalo; Asue & Ifeyinwa Ighodalo;

Ituah Ighodalo; Akinlolu & Arin Kehinde;

Saliu & Iyabo Bello

◆ Grandchildren ◆

Jinmi Sonuga; Feran Sonuga; Fiola Sonuga;

Omoehi Ighodalo



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Misery in Afghanistan

By Joanne Laurier

A recent United Nations report on social conditions in Afghanistan provides a glimpse of the social reality behind the American media's talk of a "new democracy" and the supposedly benevolent role of the US government in that country.

A quarter of a century after Washington intervened to support Islamic fundamentalist forces fighting a pro-Soviet government in Kabul, and three years after the American military invaded Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban regime, the war-torn nation ranks 173rd out of 178 countries in the United Nations 2004 Human Development Index. Only a handful of sub-Saharan African nations suffer more wretched conditions.

The survey, Afghanistan, National Human Development Report 2004: Security with a Human Face, was recently released in Kabul. It begins by asserting that the country has not seen any significant "span of stability" over the past two decades—i.e., shortly after the US first intervened in Afghanistan. "Years of conflict and neglect have taken a devastating toll, as measured by dramatic drops in human, social and economic indicators," the report's authors write.

After noting that a global survey in 1992 revealed atrocious conditions in Afghanistan, the report continues: "By the beginning of the new century, human development estimates as recorded in this NHDR (National Human Development Report) had become even more alarming: Life expectancy today is approximately 44.5 years, with healthy life expectancy at birth estimated at 33.4 years. One out of five children dies before the age of five, and one woman dies approximately every 30 minutes from pregnancy-related causes."

The infant and maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the world, with life expectancy at least 20 years shorter than in neighbouring countries.

Eighty percent of the deaths of children under five are due to preventable diseases. About half of this same age group are physically stunted due to chronic malnutrition, and some 10 percent suffer acute malnutrition.

Only 25 percent of the population has access to clean drinking water—one in eight children die from lack of the resource. One of two Afghans can be classified as poor, with 20.4 percent of the rural population consuming less than 2,070 calories per person per day. Only Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali have lower literacy rates.

"Human poverty in Afghanistan is a multidimensional problem that includes inequalities in access to productive assets and social services; poor health, education and nutritional status;

weak social protection systems, vulnerability to macro and micro-level risks (both natural and human-triggered); human displacement; gender inequalities and political marginalisation," summarizes the report.

Children have been the primary victims of more than two decades of conflict. Of the estimated 1.5 million people killed during this

major depression or severe anxiety, and 40 percent met the criteria for all three diagnoses.

The relationship between the state, the warlords and the narco-mafia bosses have added to the level of psychological "insecurity." The report quotes a man from Jalalabad who provides a description of the dysfunctional, US-supported government of President Hamid

conflict," beginning in the 1970s, whose predominant causes stem from "external factors such as foreign invasion and interference."

The country's present borders were established at the end of the nineteenth century, "when the great powers sought to establish a buffer state between the British and Russian empires." In the 1970s, two political coups brought to power, in

That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap. You want me to regret that?"

Asked if he regretted providing sustenance for future Islamic fundamentalist terrorists, Brzezinski replied: "What is more important to the history of the world...the Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end

forces left a weak state with weak military capability," argues the UN report. In an earlier chapter, the authors write: "The Western world was more interested in curbing the expansion of the Soviet Union than in the consequences of heavily arming resistance groups. It then abandoned Afghanistan, and its people, after the pull-out of the Soviet Army."

Until the late 1990s, the US turned a blind eye to the extremely regressive social policies of the Taliban, which had come to power in 1994. Under the Taliban, according to the report, "the war economy was further consolidated and Afghanistan became the world's major source of opium." The September 11 terrorist attacks provided the Bush administration with the pretext to invade Afghanistan and oust the Taliban regime.

The years following the US invasion witnessed "a deeply embedded war economy, which leaves the majority of Afghans living in heightened states of both fear and want." This era has seen an expansion of narco-warlordism and the opium trade. It is estimated that in 2003, Afghanistan produced three-quarters of the world illicit opium, and officials warn that the country could become "a narco-terror state in the future."

The survey also contends that besides opium, trafficking in archeological artifacts has been a source of booty, estimating that since 1992, approximately 75 percent of the ancient artifacts belonging to the National Museum in Kabul have been smuggled out of the country.

Security with a Human Face presents a harrowing picture of a country whose "free election" last October was timed to provide Bush with a pre-election boost. The prescriptions advanced by the report in its later chapters



Afghan President, Hamid Karzai

period, some 300,000 were children. Abduction and trafficking in children is now a rapidly growing threat, with the most common forms of trafficking being child prostitution, forced labor, slavery, servitude and the removal of body organs.

Only 14 percent of women are literate, and the rate of pregnancy-related deaths is 60 times higher than for women in industrial countries. Seventy percent of those affected by tuberculosis are women.

Afghanistan is one of the countries most heavily saturated with land mines. An estimated 10 million scattered throughout the country have been responsible for disabling hundreds of thousands of Afghans. The country is also one of the world's major sites of human displacement, where one in every three people is either a refugee or an "internally displaced person."

The report states: "Mental disorders are another of Afghanistan's war wounds, yet they have been largely ignored. WHO (World Health Organization) estimates indicate that 95 percent of the population in Afghanistan has been affected psychologically, and one in five suffers from mental health problems." Some 30 percent of the population may suffer from forms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A survey of women in Kabul found that 98 percent met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD,

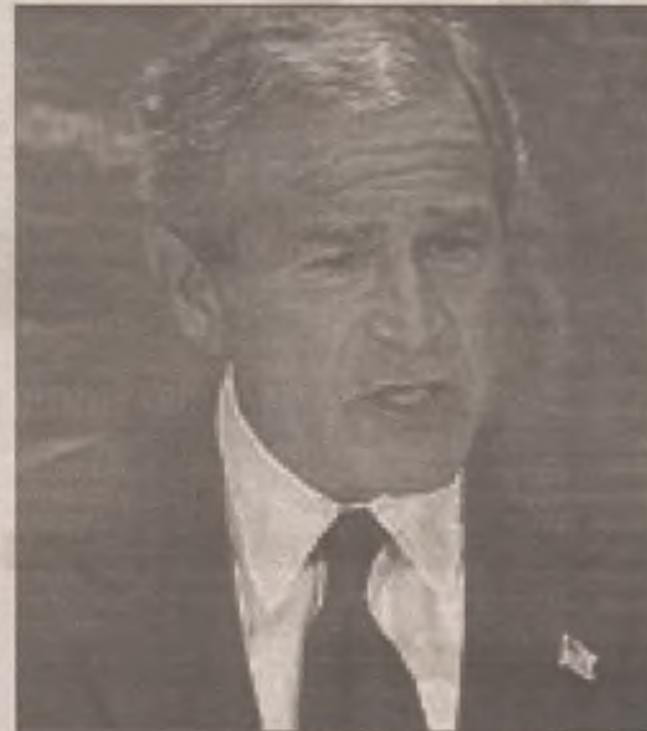
Karzai: "It has no education policy, it has no health policy, it has no economic policy, it has no environmental policy, and it has no security policy. It just takes everything by the day and many of the days are bad."

The report argues that progress has been made in certain areas since the US invasion in 2001. School enrolment has increased, particularly among girls. It notes, however, that more than 61 percent of children are not going to school in at least nine provinces. In ten provinces, more than 80 percent of girls are not enrolled in school.

Afghan gross domestic product (GDP) has increased, but it was climbing out of a very deep hole. The nation's GDP was estimated to be about \$3.7 billion in 1977; it dropped by some 20 percent over the next decade. By 2000, GDP had fallen even farther, to an estimated \$2.7 billion. It has now risen to approximately \$4 billion.

According to a *New York Times* article on the UN report, while there has been progress, Zphirin Diabr, associated administrator of the United Nations Development Program, said, "the country has a long way to go just to get back to where it was 20 years ago."

One part of the report attempts to place this disastrous state of affairs within an historical context. The chapter provides a brief overview of the "Afghan



US President, George Bush

1978, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which installed a pro-Soviet regime.

In response to the destabilising impact of the anti-Soviet mujahideen guerrilla insurgency, according to the report, the PDPA "invited" the USSR to enter the country in 1979, marking the beginning of Afghanistan's 23-year-long war.

The UN report does not explain that in July 1979, US President Jimmy Carter signed a secret directive providing clandestine assistance to the Islamic fundamentalist forces. This was six

of the cold war?"

Along with the present social disaster in Afghanistan, the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks can also be traced, in the final analysis, to the strategy first employed by Carter-Brzezinski and actively pursued by the Reagan administration during the 1980s of manipulating Islamic fundamentalism to undermine the Soviet Union.

The UN study points out that during "the phase of the Cold War that stretched between 1979 and 1989, the Mujahideen groups received about \$7 billion in military and economic aid from the US and

The years following the US invasion witnessed "a deeply embedded war economy, which leaves the majority of Afghans living in heightened states of both fear and want." This era has seen an expansion of narco-warlordism and the opium trade. It is estimated that in 2003, Afghanistan produced three-quarters of the world illicit opium, and officials warn that the country could become "a narco-terror state in the future."

months before the USSR invaded.

Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski acknowledged this in a 1998 interview. He explained, "We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we consciously increased the probability that they would.... Regret what?

some other western countries." In this same period, the war created 5 million Afghan refugees.

The fall of the Afghan government of Mohammad Najibullah in 1992 "and the total chaos in the country in the aftermath of the withdrawal of the Soviet

for a stable and democratic society appear absurd in light of current Afghan reality: foreign imperialist occupation, political power in the hands of mafia-like warlords; unspeakable conditions for broad masses of the population.

WSWS

Trust International

Middle-East & Asia

Saddam tribunal judge shot dead

A judge on the special Iraq tribunal set up to try former president Saddam Hussein has been killed in Baghdad.

Barwez Marwan and his close relative - who was also working at the tribunal - were gunned down outside their home on Tuesday, police said.

This is the first known murder of any of the 20 judges on the tribunal.

In a separate incident yesterday, a car bomb at an army recruiting base in western Baghdad killed at least six people and injured more than 20 others.

A second blast was heard an hour later in another part of the city - there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Insurgents have targeted anyone associated with the US-backed authorities, including Iraqi officials, judges, and people seeking state jobs, in the hope of undermining the interim government.

The judge and his relative

Syria to pullout soon - al-Asad

Syrian President Bashar al-Asad said his troops are most likely to pull out of Lebanon in a few months.

Syria has 14,000 troops in Lebanon, but its dominant role in the country has come under increasing scrutiny as a result of mass demonstrations sparked by the assassination last month of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

"The withdrawal should be very soon and maybe in the next few months. Not after that," al-Asad told *Time* magazine in an interview published on Tuesday.

"I can't give you a technical answer. The point is the next few months."

Two weeks of unprecedented protests forced the pro-Syrian cabinet of Prime Minister Umar Karami to step down on Monday, piling pressure on Damascus and leaving officials with a complicated search for a new premier.

The Syrian president said the pullout depended on technical, rather than political considerations.

"I could not say we could do it in two months because I have not had the meeting with the army people. They may say it will take six months," he said.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has welcomed what she described as moves to restore democracy in Lebanon.

"Events in Lebanon are moving in a very important direction," Rice said. "The Lebanese people are starting to express their aspirations for democracy... This is something that we support very much."

were both shot dead by gunmen as they were leaving their home for work

on Tuesday morning, Iraqi police and security sources say.

London Peace confab supports 'Palestinian State'

The Palestinians and the international community have agreed "practical steps" to create a viable Palestinian state.

An agreement reached at a London summit covers governance, security, and economic and social development.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, attending the summit, said prospects for peace between Israel and Palestinians were the best in years.

The conference aimed to show world support for the Palestinian Authority.

Ms. Rice said the recent elections in Iraq and the Palestinian territories, and moves to broaden political participation in Egypt and Saudi Arabia spelled momentous times for the region.

The peace that has now become the dire need of Palestinians and Israelis is possible

"We are trying to lay a foundation for a successful movement through the road map to a two-state solution," she said.

Earlier, she urged Israelis to avoid taking actions that could harm the fragile peace process, and praised Israel's "historic step" to disengage from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank later this year.

She also called on Arab countries to crack down on militant groups that target Israel.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said the Palestinians were committed to the peace process, and were doing everything they could to preserve a truce with Israel.

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair - who hosted the one-day conference - said the accord was not only for the sake of the Palestinians, but also the wider world.

Mr Blair said the EU would assist with the establishment of the new Palestinian political institutions, the US would set up a security-co-ordinating group and the World Bank would focus on economic development.

An end-of-summit communique set out the measures the PA says it will take to reform itself.

The 17-page document referred to the goal of a sovereign, democratic and territorially-contiguous Palestinian state - existing side by side with Israel.

The Israelis were called on to dismantle the system of restrictions hampering economic activity, and the Palestinians are to carry out reforms, including the consolidation of the security and intelligence services.

The communique stated that "while participants noted that the situation on the ground remains fragile, they underlined the importance of working to establish a virtuous circle and the renewal of progress towards peace through the full implementation of the roadmap".

Hong Kong leader 'to step down'

Hong Kong's chief executive Tung Chee-hwa has decided to resign for health reasons, according to local press reports.

Mr Tung, 67, took over as leader of the former British colony when it reverted to Chinese rule in 1997.

Last year, Hong Kong saw massive pro-democracy protests, as Mr. Tung became increasingly unpopular. His term of office is due to end in 2007.

The government in Hong Kong has so far refused to comment on the reports.

The chairman of the opposition Democratic Party, Lee Wing-tat, said it was strange the reports had not been denied.

"If there's a widespread

rumour about this thing, it's very natural for the central authority or even Mr Tung himself to stand out and make everything clear but we don't have that sign at this moment," he said.

Mr Tung also refused to respond to reporters' questions before leaving on yesterday for a scheduled trip to Beijing, where he will take part in a meeting of the nation's top advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

The BBC's Hong Kong correspondent said that if Mr Tung does resign, it may be announced at the end of the CPPCC meeting in 10 days' time when it is understood he will be made a vice-chairman, a position of some influence.



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

HADEJIA JAMA'ARE RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY KANO

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION TO TENDER FOR EROSION/FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS IN KANO MUNICIPAL AND GAYA LG. AREAS OF KANO STATE

The National committee on Ecological problems under the Ecological Fund Office of the PRESIDENCY, through the Hadejia Jama'are Basin Development Authority is desirous of undertaking Erosion/Flood control project in Kano Municipal and Gaya Local Government Areas of Kano State.

Interested contractors are hereby invited to apply for pre-qualification in respect of the intended works.

< Kano Municipal is one of the four local government council areas curved out of the Kano metropolis

The projects is for the channelization of Jakara River comprising of:

River channel de-silting and improvement, slope protection works, pedestrian crossings, construction and rehabilitation of feeder drainages and associated works.

< Gaya Local Government Areas is located some 60 KM east of Kano along Wudil-Jahun Road.

The Project for Gaya Local Government Area comprises of: Drainages, roads, culverts, slope stabilization /retaining walls, land reclamation and other associated erosion and flood protection works.

REGISTRATION

Pre-qualification forms are obtainable from the office of the Managing Director-Hadejia Jama'are River Basin Development Authority PMB, 3168 along Maiduguri Road Hoto Kano on payment of a non-refundable fee of N300,000.00 for the Jakara project and N150,000.00 for the Gaya project, in bank draft payable to Hadejia Jama'are River Basin Development Authority.

PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Interested contractors are expected to provided the following information in sufficient details.

- * Name and address of company
- * Certificate of incorporation with Corporate Affairs Commission
- * Certificate of registration with F.M.W. and H, Abuja
- * Evidence of company income tax and VAT payments for the years 2002-2004
- * Company profile and evidence of previous experience particularly on similar works
- * List of key technical staff including their curriculum vitae
- * List of relevant Equipment/construction land to be deployed on the project
- * Any other information to further prove the company's corporate existence and technical experience and capability.

CLOSING DATE

Pre-qualification documents are to be collected, filled and returned within two weeks from the date of publication of this invitation. The criteria for scoring/marking the pre-qualification dossier will be made known on purchase of the pre-qualification documents.

Pre-qualified contractors will be issued with the bidding documents to be filled and returned within six weeks from the first date of issue which will be made known to the successful contractors in writing

Signed
Management

Trust International

World Report

Togo: W/African leaders approve new President

West African leaders have welcomed Togo back into the fold following the resignation of army-installed president, Faure Gnassingbe. The presidents of Niger and Mali flew to Lome to meet the new interim head of state, Abass Bonfoh, and help the West African nation plan fresh elections.

Gnassingbe, the 39-year-old son of deceased president Gnassingbe Eyadema, finally bowed to intense international pressure and stepped down on Friday night. Bonfoh, the vice-president of the national assembly, was subsequently nominated acting head of state.

Niger President Mamadou Tandja, the current chairman of the Economic Community of

West African States (ECOWAS), flew into Togo's seaside capital on Monday to meet Bonfoh and give him the international seal of approval.

Tandja, whose own country is widely regarded as a model of democracy in West Africa, was accompanied by Malian President Amadou Amani Toure and Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS.

"ECOWAS approves the choice of Mr Bonfoh and elections should happen as soon as possible," the 15-nation body said in a statement issued after the team had met with Togolese government officials and opposition leaders.

This green light disappointed Togolese opposition leaders who maintain that the constitution is still being violated, despite Gnassingbe's departure.

They want Fambare Ouattara Natchaba, the former head of the national assembly who was shoved aside by Gnassingbe and his military supporters following Eyadema's death, to oversee the elections process.

Natchaba was in Europe when the 69-year-old president died on 5 February. Although he hurried home, his plane was prevented from landing in Togo and he has been lying low in neighbouring Benin ever since.

A coalition of the six main opposition parties has pledged to continue its weekly protest demonstrations in Lome, but the Natchaba issue appears to be done and dusted as far as ECOWAS is concerned.

The West African body is now turning its attention to the organisation of fair polls in a country which was ruled by one man as his personal fiefdom for almost four decades.

ECOWAS said it was appointing Mai Manga Boukar, an electoral expert from Niger, as its special envoy to Togo to oversee the election preparations. It also pledged to

provide three other electoral experts to help organise the polls.

In its statement, ECOWAS noted the need for "transparent, free and fair" elections in 60 days as laid down in Togo's constitution. The constitution was tweaked by Gnassingbe to legitimise his seizure of power, but he hastily revoked these changes after ECOWAS and the African Union imposed sanctions against his regime.

Togo's constitution once again stipulates that if the president dies, the 'electoral body' must be convened within 60 days to choose a new leader. But there is some disagreement amongst Togo's political players about whether that means actually holding elections or simply announcing them.

"The constitution demands that we have elections in 60 days," said Dama Dramani, the secretary-general of the ruling Rally of the Togolese People (RPT) party.



Togolese Interim President, Abass Bonfoh

Group sues Rumsfeld over prisoner abuse

Two US human rights groups have sued Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, saying he first authorised, then failed to stop torture of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Human Rights First on Tuesday filed suit in federal district court in Rumsfeld's home state of Illinois on behalf of eight former detainees who said they were severely tortured.

All eight were subsequently released without being charged.

"Secretary Rumsfeld bears direct and ultimate responsibility for this descent into horror by personally authorising unlawful interrogation techniques and by abdicating his legal duty to stop torture," said Lucas Guttentag, lead counsel in the case.

The Pentagon denied that it ever sanctioned or condoned the abuse of detainees.

"There have been multiple investigations into the various aspects of detainee abuse. None have concluded there was a policy of abuse," the Defence Department said in a statement.

The ACLU filed similar complaints against three other senior officers: Colonel Thomas Pappas, General Janis Karpinski and Lieutenant-General Ricardo Sanchez on behalf of prisoners mistreated at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison.

The suit against Rumsfeld focuses on an order he signed in December 2002 that authorised new interrogation techniques for detainees in the "war on terror" being held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

These included "stress positions", hooding, 20-hour interrogations, removal of clothing, exploiting phobias, prolonged isolation and sensory deprivation.

"When evidence became overwhelming that prisoners were being tortured, Rumsfeld turned a blind eye," the suit alleged.

"Secretary Rumsfeld knew full well that his orders were causing torture and he knew that torture was occurring on a widespread basis and he did not stop it," Guttentag said.

The plaintiffs want the court to declare Rumsfeld's actions unconstitutional and a violation of US and international law.

Uruguay gets new president

Uruguay has inaugurated its first left-wing president, Tabare Vazquez, in front of several of Latin America's most prominent leftist leaders.

Thousands of Uruguayan supporters celebrated in the streets of the capital, Montevideo, as he took office.

President Vazquez restored full diplomatic relations with Cuba immediately after being sworn in.

He said that ties between the two countries - severed in 2002 - should never have been broken off.

Mr Vazquez, whose win in presidential elections in October ended almost 180 years of two-party rule, promised to "work tirelessly" for Uruguay's people.

Uruguay becomes the fifth Latin American nation to move to the left.

Mr Vazquez was sworn in for a five-year term in front of leaders including Brazil's Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and Argentina's Nestor Kirchner.

Cuba's President Fidel Castro cancelled his trip at the last minute,

citing health reasons, but Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque did attend the ceremony.

Uruguay broke off diplomatic ties with Cuba three years ago under outgoing President, Jorge Battle, after Fidel Castro accused him of being a traitor for supporting US efforts to condemn Cuba's human rights record in a United Nations vote.

The Cuban minister and his Uruguayan counterpart Reinaldo Gargano signed the agreement restoring relations.

"It is with great pleasure that I am welcoming the Cuban people once again at this house and thus strengthening that friendship and ties that should never have been broken," said President Vazquez.

The 65-year-old's win at the head of the Frente Amplio (Broad Front) coalition party ended the long dominance of the ruling Colorado Party, beaten into third place, and the National Party, whose candidate came second.

"I swear to work tirelessly for the prosperity of the Uruguayan people," Mr Vazquez said as he took office, also promising to respect the constitution.

US court bans juvenile executions

The US Supreme Court has abolished the death penalty for those who commit murder when under the age of 18.

The court was divided on the issue, but voted 5-4 that the death penalty for criminals aged 16 and 17 should be declared

unconstitutional.

The decision affects not only those convicted in future, but about 70 prisoners already on death row for offences committed before they were 18.

Anti-capital punishment campaigners claimed the decision as a victory.

"Now the US can proudly remove its name from the embarrassing list of human rights violators - that includes China, Iran, and Pakistan - that still execute juvenile offenders," said William Schulz, executive director of Amnesty International USA.

The highest US court upheld an earlier ruling by the Missouri Supreme Court, which banned the execution of people convicted of crimes they committed before turning 18.

The Missouri court said putting minors to death was a violation of the US constitution, which outlaws "cruel and unusual" punishment.

That ruling overturned the death sentence given to Christopher Simmons, who was 17 when he kidnapped a neighbour, tied her up and threw her from a bridge to her death.

Simmons's attorney, Seth Waxman, said the death penalty did not deter minors, since "they weigh risks differently" to adults.

There are 19 states where capital punishment for juveniles is allowed. But Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, who voted for the ban, noted that even in these states the ultimate sanction was not often carried out.

Odd World

Naked man threatens neighbours with sword

A man threatened his neighbors with a sword after they complained about him being naked in his front yard, police said. Curtis D. Rarick, 44, was charged with assault while displaying a dangerous weapon.

Rarick had been naked in his yard and became angry when neighbors asked him to put clothes on Sunday afternoon, police said.

He went inside and came back out with a 2 1/2-foot long sword and began threatening the neighbors, court records show.

He was released from jail Monday after posting \$2,000 bond. If convicted, Rarick could face up to two years in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

'World's record for non-stop drumming'

Nine men in Kenya have claimed the world's record for non-stop drumming. The drummers - eight Kenyans and a Nigerian - kept playing for 100 hours, smashing the previous record set last year by 16 hours.

They started their attempt to pound their way into the Guinness Book of Records last Friday in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

They drummed away in eight-hour shifts of three, enduring scorching days and chilly nights, to reach their goal.

The marathon finished at 1500 local time (1200GMT) to the standing ovation of a big crowd which turned up outside the Kenya International Conference Centre.

The drummers said they were exhausted but enjoyed every bit of the marathon.

"After feeling that tired you feel sweet afterwards. You feel healed, you feel cured. So this is our happiness," one of them told the BBC.

The event was organised by the Sarakasi Trust which is involved in the promotion and development of arts and culture across Kenya. Its organisers said one of the main objectives was to change the sometimes negative perception of Africa and Africans.

"We managed to put ourselves on the map internationally as a drumming nation. Drums are very important in Africa," Sarakasi Trust chairman Rudy van Dijk, the man who broached the idea, told the BBC.

The new record must still be confirmed by the Guinness Book of Records.

The longest individual drumming record is currently being held by Australia's Arulanantham Suresh Joachim who pounded non-stop for 84 hours last year.

The 'tsunami gifts'

Indian divers have found more evidence of an ancient port city, apparently revealed by December's tsunami.

Stone structures that are "clearly man-made" were seen on the seabed off the south coast, archaeologists said.

They could be part of the mythical city of Mahabalipuram, which legend says was so beautiful that the gods sent a flood that engulfed six of its seven temples.

Other relics were revealed when the powerful waves washed away sand as they smashed into the Tamil Nadu coast.

The Archaeological Survey of India launched the diving expedition after residents reported seeing a temple and other structures as the sea pulled back just before the tsunami hit.

The new finds were made close to the 7th Century beachfront Mahabalipuram temple, which some say is the structure that survived the wrath of the gods.

"We've found some stone structures which are clearly man-made," expedition leader Alok Tripathi told the AFP news agency.

"They're perfect rectangular blocks, arranged in a clear pattern."

The ancient "gifts" of the tsunami are expected to be presented to an international seminar on maritime archaeology in Delhi next month.

Other discoveries made at Mahabalipuram earlier this month include a granite lion of a similar age to the temple that experts believe had been buried for centuries before the tsunami shifted the sand.

Country bans use of plastic bags

Authorities in the self-declared republic of Somaliland on Monday banned the use of all types of plastic bags, information minister, Abdillahi Duale, told IRIN.

"The bags have not only become an environmental problem, but also an eyesore," he said on Tuesday from the Somaliland capital, Hargeysa.

The Somaliland cabinet, he added, made the decision to ban the bags, which had been nicknamed "the Hargeysa flower", following an assessment of the damage they caused to the environment. The ban marked the end of a 120-day grace period that the government had given to the public to get rid of their stocks.

The bags were mostly used to carry groceries and other goods. They were often discarded and litter most streets and landscapes across Somaliland. Many of them ended up being blown around and deposited on trees or shrubs, posing a danger to livestock because the animals that fed on the leaves in the shrubs often ingest the bags accidentally.

The Ministry of Trade and Industries announced the decision in a decree titled: "Banning importation, production and use of plastic bags in the country".

Duale said it would be accompanied by an awareness campaign to inform the public about the danger of plastic bags. "We will use both the print and broadcast media to reach as many people as possible," he added.

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 - Cal	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	2:30pm.
Dasab Airlines	
Auja-Lagos	8:30a.m.
Lagos-PHC	10:30a.m.
PHC-Lagos	12:30a.m.
Lagos-Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano-Lagos	4:30p.m.
Lagos-Abuja	6:30p.m.
ADC Airline	
Lagos-Abuja	7:15a.m.
	12:45p.m.
Abuja-Lagos	8:55a.m.
Lagos-Calabar	11:15a.m.
Calabar-Lagos	7:20a.m.
P/H-Lagos	9:45 a.m.
Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.	

Finance

ACB unveils 25bn shares offer

The ACB International Bank Plc has unfolded its offer of 25bn shares to the investing public in a move to recapitalise and reinvent its past glory in the nation's banking industry. The shares offer opened yesterday, March 2, 2005.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) quotes the bank's chairman, Professor Green Nwankwo, as saying after the bank's completion board meeting that the bank was interested and committed in reclaiming their position in the nation's financial sector.

According to Nwankwo, the offer has received tremendous support from all classes of people and it is a confirmation of the

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor, with agency report

anticipation of the investing public to a thoroughly Nigerian bank.

Apparently overjoyed by the level of share deposit funds with the bank in respect of the offer, the board chairman, who was silent on any mergers or acquisitions, only said that the bank's primary objective was to successfully raise N20 billion from the offer.

In his contribution, the managing director of NAL Bank Plc, Mr Ben Akabueze commended the board and management of the bank for their foresight in resuscitating

the glorious past of ACB.

The chairman of Diamond Bank, Mr Pascal Dozie, told NAN that the shares of ACB were infectious because of the bank's track record in growing local business.

According to the offer document, ACB will between March 2 and 31, 2005 offer for

subscription 25,000,000,000 ordinary shares of 50k each at 80k per share.

The net offer proceeds of about N20 billion, according to the bank, will be used primarily to meet the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) minimum shareholders funds requirement of N25 billion.

The other areas the seed funds will be channelled include expansion of the bank's branch network to 85 branches in the next three years, upgrading the bank's information technology, process re-engineering of the bank and enhanced working capital.

Naira depreciates at DAS

The Naira depreciated by N0.01 against the dollar at the official Dutch Auction System (DAS) segment of the Nigerian foreign exchange market last week, closing at N132.86 against the US currency.

The exchange rate was N132.85 to the dollar two weeks ago but depreciated to 132.86 naira to the dollar at the first auction of the DAS last Monday. It maintained the rate at the second auction held on Wednesday.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) offered 200 million dollars at the two auctions and the same amount was demanded by the banks that participated.

Bid rates offered by the

banks ranged between N132.60 to N133.10 to the dollar.

A total of 1,975 participants were successful at the two auctions while 77 participants failed.

Meanwhile, the naira remained stable against the dollar at the parallel (black) market segment of the foreign exchange market last week, being exchanged for between N138.00 and N139.00 to the dollar.

It, however, appreciated against the pound sterling and the Euro at the black market.

The currency was between N255.00 and N256.00 to the pound against last week's rate of between

N257.00 and N258.00.

It was traded for between N177.00 and N178.50 to the Euro from the old rates of between N179.00 and N180.00.



Charles Soludo, CBN Gov

CBN sells N137.3bn treasury bills

A total of N137.315 billion was withdrawn from the financial system last week by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) through the sale of treasury bills.

This was against the N87.232 billion withdrawn from the system through the same instruments in the preceding week.

Treasury bills are short-term government securities traded daily by the apex bank. They are mostly used in the management of liquidity in the financial system.

About N60.00 billion worth of the treasury bills were sold at the two auctions conducted at the Primary Market Auction (PMA) segment of the government securities last week.

The first auction of the PMA held on Wednesday had N15.00 billion worth of treasury bills traded.

Range of bids offered by investors at the auction varied between 12.24 and 14.00 per cent. The true yield rate of the 182-day tenured securities traded at the auction is 13.4718 per cent.

Volume of transaction increased at the second auction of the PMA held on Thursday with a total of N45.00 billion worth of the bills sold.

Bid rates at the auction ranged between 11.00 and 14.00 per cent while. The true yield rate for the 91-day tenured instruments traded at the auction is 12.3227 per cent.

The remaining N77.315 billion worth of treasury bills were sold at the five auctions conducted at the Open Market Operation (OMO) end of the government securities market.

About N31.900 billion worth of the securities were

sold at the first auction of the OMO conducted on Monday.

Range of bids offered by investors at the auction hovered from 10.95 to 11.50 per cent. The true yield rate for the 21-day tenured bills traded at the auction is 11.3737 per cent.

Volume of transaction, however, dipped at the second auction of the OMO held on Tuesday with N1.200 billion worth of treasury bills traded.

Bid rates offered by investors at the auction ranged between 11.25 to 11.35 per cent. The true yield rate for the 35-day tenured securities traded at the auction is 11.4234 per cent.

A total of N11.00 billion worth of the instruments were sold at the third auction of the OMO held on Wednesday.

Bid rates at the auction hovered between 11.00 and 11.30 percent. The true yield rate for the 35-day tenured bills sold at the auction is 11.4234 per cent.

Transaction surged further at the fourth auction of the OMO conducted on Thursday with N21.105 billion worth of the securities traded.

Bid rates at the auction varied from 11.10 to 11.30 per cent; the true yield rate for the 35-day tenured securities sold at the auction is 11.4234 per cent.

The last auction of the OMO held on Friday recorded N12.110 billion worth of treasury bills as sold.

Range of bids at the auction varied between 11.00 and 11.30per cent. The true yield rate for the 35-day tenured securities sold at the auction is 11.3728 per cent.

The CBN's Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR) is still 13.00 per cent.



Strong, Biggest and the Best

NICON INSURANCE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FROM INTERESTED COMPANIES

NICON Insurance Corporation is in the process of acquiring an archival system for the purpose of saving its old files and documents on electronic media. Also, there would be need to access the archives from time to time and as the need arises. We are requesting for Requirement Specification and Costing proposals based on the guidelines to be picked up from the Information Technology Division of the Corporation, and bearing in mind that the corporation has accumulated files for over 35 years of its existence.

1. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information contained in the Request for Proposal will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

2. METHOD OF RESPONSE

Response to this advert must be submitted in writing, with four (4) copies of the document and marked "PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL", addressed to the Executive Director (Finance & Administration) Plot 242, Muhammadu Buhari Way, Central Business District, PMB 5029, Garki, Abuja, FCT to reach him not later than two weeks from the date of publication.

3. PROJECT SCOPE/TIME

This project is to be implemented immediately it is signed and not later than 30th July 2005.

4. RESPONSE

There are two proposals namely, Requirement Specification Proposal and Costing proposal. Each proposal should be in separate envelope and sealed.

* You are required to respond in detail under the following sub-headings with necessary supporting documents.

4.1 Detail Specification Proposal

*Response on how you intend to meet the requirements as per the guidelines.

*State any support and maintenance arrangements.

* Implementation schedule and number of consultants involved

*Recommend staff requirements to support the implementation in order to meet up with the schedule.

*Training plan for the system staff and user departments

*Summarise the benefits to be derived by using your services.

4.2 Detail Costing Proposal

* One-time purchase, installation and implementation cost.

* Support and maintenance charges per annum.

* Cost of operating/development environment and tools (if necessary)

* Service Cost (if applicable) - Day rates for anticipated resources, Technical consultants, Project Managers, Trainers etc.

* Cost of archiving per page.

* State any additional costs yet to be quantified which are not included in this section.

*Quotation must be Naira denomination.

* Payment terms - can payment be phased? Is deposit payable? When is balance due?

*Validity of quotation.

5.1 Interested companies are requested to register with a non-refundable fee of N200,000.00 payable to NICON INSURANCE CORPORATION after which they can pick up the requirement specifications.

5.2 Provision of three years Tax clearance

5.3 Company Audited Accounts for the last three years

5.4 Evidence of similar jobs successfully executed.

5.5 Certificate of Incorporation

Management

Business Trust

Telecoms

NCC orders GSM operators to drop activation charges

BRIEFS

NITEL

The Lagos Mainland Territory of the Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) has commenced an instant connection programme for its customers, in a bid to recapture the company's dwindling market share.

Mr Frank Igbokwe, the Public Relations Manager of the area told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos on Monday, that the instant connect programme would make NITEL regain lost customers.

He said that the Manager of the Mainland Territory, Mr Alex Aku, had set up teams to tour parts of the Mainland to hunt for customers and give them telephone lines on the spot.

According to him, the lines on offer were going for N9,450 and the customer would be given services even before the customer could complete the documentation process.

V-mobile

For fear of being sanctioned by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) over violation of safety rules, V-mobile Telecommunications has pulled down its mast at the Escravos in Delta State.

The tower was located 310 meters away from the runway of the Escravos airstrip, which records more than 200 flights daily, thereby posing danger to aircraft.

The NCAA had threatened to report the company to the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) for its failure to obtain aviation height clearance before mounting the structure.

The aviation regulatory body also said V-mobile Telecommunications would be made to pay a fine of N500,000 for the infraction on safety, while its top management staff would be prosecuted for endangering human lives.

NCAA imposes a fine of N25,000 and N500,000 for illegal erection of three-legged masts and four-legged towers respectively.

Confirming V-mobile's action, Mr Sam Adurogboye, Media Assistant to the Director-General, NCAA, said the company pulled down the tower on Sunday.

Starcomms

From Musa Umar Kazaure, Regional Editor (Kano)

Kano residents wishing to link up with relatives, friends or business partners in Maiduguri have been offered a two-for-one service by Starcomms.

Announcing the new offer in Kano at the weekend, Mrs Wanmi Sabiotimo, who is in-charge of promotions in Kano zone said, any customers that buy one Starcomms wireless telephone under the latest promotion will have one free delivered to any of his friends, relatives or business partners in Maiduguri.

She explained that, in addition to the phone set for relatives in Maiduguri, there it will provide N1000 free airtime pre-loaded, a free call minder voicemail, instant messaging, and will also deliver it to the address given by the purchaser in Kano at no cost, Mrs. Sabiotimo said Starcom has created a lot of business opportunities for the youth in Kano through the cheap tele-center service rates, adding that Starcom to Starcom calls in Kano is still full provider could match in Kano.

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has directed GSM operators to stop charging high fees for the re-activation of lost SIM cards.

Speaking against the backdrop of the recent crash in the prices of SIM packs, the Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC, Chief Ernest Ndukwe, said most customers would rather replace SIM cards than pay more money for re-activating lost or misplaced ones.

Ndukwe, who gave the directive at the African ICT Consumer Parliament held in Abuja at the weekend, said the high charges for re-activation would make it difficult to compute statistics of subscribers as some would keep migrating.

"The cost of re-activating a line should not be higher than the cost of acquiring it. I do not think it makes sense that someone has to pay more money to re-activate than when he is acquiring the line because people will dump the lines and buy new ones."

"The dumping of lines will distort our data. We can

keep claiming we have 10 million subscribers, but some of the SIM cards are no longer in operation," he said.

On the outcry by some customers that the NCC should ensure proper disposal of handsets

because of the likely side-effect of its components on the environment, Ndukwe said there were established government agencies for such functions.

"People are expecting too much from the regulator," he said, pointing out that all the

states and local governments had agencies for managing the environment.

The executive vice chairman directed one of the fixed wireless networks, Intercellular, to improve on its customer service by indicating the number of its service centres on all recharge cards regardless of the region.

He said a single number should be provided by the network that would be easily accessible by customers from

all parts of the country.

Ndukwe directed one of the GSM networks, V-mobile, to compensate some of its customers who bought bumper cards and could not activate them, noting that it was unfair to keep shifting grounds with excuses instead of responding to the customer's needs.

He also directed Glo mobile to localise its 121 number so that every region could have access to it, adding that there was a need for all

operators to provide e-mail addresses for those who would want to lodge complaints via the Internet.

At the consumer parliament, witnessed by delegates from African countries, who came in

for the 4th African Internet Summit and Exhibition (AFRINET), one of the GSM operators, MTN, agreed to start refunding N100 Per Second Billing (PSB) charge to its customers from next week.

Illegal Commissions: EFCC recovers \$5m for V-Mobile

About \$5 million illegally paid to some commission agents by V-Mobile Networks have been recovered by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the commission's chairman, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu has said.

Addressing a cross section of the South African business community on Monday in Johannesburg, Ribadu said the money, which was an illegal commission paid to the agents for persuading three state governments to invest in V-Mobile, has been returned to the cellphone company.

The News Agency of

Nigeria (NAN) reports that Ribadu, who was in South Africa on the invitation of the Patriots' Club of Nigeria International, spoke to the country's business community on "Sanitising Nigeria's Business Environment for Direct Foreign Investment".

The EFCC boss said the commission was pursuing 185 fraud-related cases in 12 EFCC-designated courts across the country.

According to Ribadu, the commission is challenging the immunity clause in the constitution to enable it prosecute Plateau state

governor Joshua Dariye, adding that 12 other state governors have been lined up for prosecution for corruption as soon as it gets the greenlight to charge them from the appeal court.

Ribadu said the commission had also charged five bank managing directors "who helped Dariye to commit the alleged crime".

"If Dariye enjoys any immunity, the bank bosses don't", he said.

"By challenging the immunity clause, which is a constitutional issue, in court, we want to take the short cut because some of the corrupt

public officials don't deserve immunity", NAN quotes the EFCC boss as saying at the business luncheon attended by SA business leaders and the media.

He warned that the status quo, where politicians and public servants see government as a way of becoming rich overnight, had to change.

"Hitherto, politicians steal money, rig elections and get back into government to steal more money. With the ongoing economic and socio-political reforms, those who participated in ruining Nigeria will never see power again", Ribadu said.

He confirmed that it was the findings of the EFCC that nailed former Inspector General of Police Tafa Balogun, adding that the commission was compiling more dossier on the former IG to enable him face prosecution.

Besides money and assets worth over US\$700 million seized from advance fee fraudsters between May 2003 and June 2004, the commission has also recovered another three million pounds sterling from the British government, Ribadu said.

He added that about 1,000 suspected notorious 419 kingpins have been arrested and were awaiting trial.

By recovering over N20 billion for the federal government through the Federal Inland Revenue Service and the seaports, the EFCC boss said the commission has increased the nation's revenue profile by about 20 percent, while several billions of naira were recovered to the federal government in respect of failed government contracts.

NITEL'S NEW MANAGERS



Mr Albert J. Mashi
Managing Director/Chief
Executive Officer



Engr. Emmanuel Adedayo
Adekoya Chief Technical
Officer



Alhaji Hassan Garba
Yar'Adua Chief Finance
Officer



Arc. Shamsuna Ahmed,
Head, Human Resources
and Corporate Services

MTN refunds N400m to customers

GSM operator, MTN, has agreed to refund about N400 million to its customers through Short Message Services (SMS) for illegally charging them N100 to migrate to Per Second Billing (PSB).

The operator is acting on the directive of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), which, last year, gave MTN an ultimatum to refund all monies charged for migration from Per Minute to PSB or risk a N10-million sanction and a daily charge

of N100,000. MTN officials, at the African ICT Consumer parliament held in Abuja at the weekend, have expressed the readiness of the network to start refunding the money from next week.

The GSM operator, which came under attacks for poor services and what consumers called "penchant for draining its subscribers," apologised for the inconveniences suffered by customers in the past.

Mrs Ijeoma Abazie, the network's Legal and Regulatory Adviser, who was at the parliament had to abandon her seat in the audience to assist

her colleague who was answering queries as he was consistently jeered for trying to wave the questions from consumers.

"I will enjoin MTN to keep to that next week and let their next week be next week in refunding the PSB money to its customers," the Executive Vice Chairman of NCC, Chief Ernest Ndukwe, said.

The NCC had directed MTN to advertise the stoppage of N100 charge for PSB and refund the collected amounts to subscribers in December.

MTN complied with the

directive by placing adverts in papers to announce that it had stopped collecting money for migration within its network, but it was yet to advertise the refund to customers.

Sources in the Ministry of Communications who attended meetings between MTN and NCC on the PSB issue told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja that the regulatory body ordered the network to refund N100 to all customers when it claimed that it had no concrete record of those who had migrated to the PSB.

Business Trust

International

Aviation Lagos Airport

By Anas A. Galadima,
Business Reporter

The Minister of Aviation, Mallam Isa Yuguda, has commissioned a security surveillance system at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos.

According to a statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the minister, Mike Nwokoro, the minister said he was impressed with the operation facilities.

"It would now be difficult for people with criminal intentions to operate in the airport," said the minister.

He added that the surveillance system, which is under the auspices of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), has the state-of-the-art equipment to effectively cover activities within and outside the airport for twenty four hours.

The statement further revealed that the minister and his delegation also inspected the site for installation of the Lagos Radar equipment, and directed the managing director of the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) to mobilise contractors to site with the view to ensuring timely completion of the work.

Meanwhile, the minister also revealed that the federal executive council has approved the draft civil aviation bill. The bill is said to contain all international conventions and national regulations on aviation.

The bill, according to the statement, has provisions for private participation in the establishment and operation of aerodromes under an integrated national airport system supervised by the relevant government agencies.

NAHCO

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed,
Correspondent (Lagos)

The lingering crisis of concession at the Nigerian Aviation Handling Company Limited (NAHCO) took a different dimension over the weekend as the acting general manager, Mr. E. O. Imoh who was appointed by the board chairman of the firm was removed.

Imoh's removal is coming barely two weeks after the general manager, Chief Musa Agboneni was suspended for alleged misappropriation of funds.

Imoh who was employed by the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) was, last weekend, replaced with Alhaji Sule Mohammed who was FAAN's cargo manager at the Hajj camp.

Sources within NAHCO headquarters told *Business Trust* that Imoh was removed for his alleged failure to act the script of the chairman, Alhaji Mohammed Gambo Umar who is also the managing director of FAAN.

Business Trust gathered that more staff of FAAN would be deployed this week to head the accounts, cargo, passenger services and other critical departments.

The sources equally disclosed that the only expatriate in the company, a Briton, was allegedly pencilled down for sack because he may not do the bidding to work for the interest of FAAN to the exclusion of the foreign shareholders.

US company admits Benin bribery

A US defence and telecommunications company has agreed to pay \$28.5m after admitting bribery in the West African state of Benin.

The Titan corporation was accused of funnelling more than \$2m into the 2001 re-election campaign of President Mathieu Kerekou.

At the time, Titan was trying to get a higher price for a telecommunications project in Benin.

There is no suggestion that Mr Kerekou was himself aware of any wrongdoing.

Titan, a California-based company, pleaded guilty to falsifying its accounts and violating US anti-bribery laws.

It agreed to pay \$13m in criminal penalties, as well as \$15.5m to settle a civil lawsuit brought by the US financial watchdog, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The SEC had accused Titan of illegally paying \$2.1m to an unnamed agent in Benin

claiming ties with President Kerekou.

Some of the money was used to pay for T-shirts with campaign slogans on them ahead of the 2001 election.

Shortly after the poll, which Mr Kerekou won, Benin officials agreed to quadruple Titan's management fee.

Prosecuting attorney Carol Lam said: "All US companies should take note that attempting to bribe foreign officials is criminal conduct and will be appropriately prosecuted." The company says it no longer tolerates such practices.



These are samples of the illicit drugs traded on Internet.

Oil prices hover under \$52

Oil prices hovered under \$52 a barrel yesterday, supported by strong demand and forecasts of low heating oil stocks in the face of freezing weather in the United States.

US light crude futures were down 3 cents to \$51.65

a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, after hitting a four-month high of \$52.28 on Monday. Prices are about \$4 off the record peak of \$55.67 in late October.

Lower-than-normal temperatures in the U.S. Northeast, the world's biggest heat-

ing oil market, have led to a 1.4 million-barrel drop in U.S. distillates stocks last week, a decline for the sixth-week running, a Reuters survey showed.

But the survey found that crude stocks rose 1.0 million barrels and gasoline increased

by 900,000 barrels. The U.S. government Energy Information Administration (EIA) will release its inventory data for the week ended Feb. 25 at 10:30 a.m. EST.

"Each time prices showed signs of moving down, the dips get bought fairly quickly and they go back up. I would have expected prices to ease due to the high gasoline stock levels as we are already moving out of the winter and into the gasoline season," said Tony Nunan, a manager at the international petroleum section of Mitsubishi Corp.

"It would seem that the market is more focused on the macro factors like OPEC having little spare capacity, strong demand from the U.S., China and India. This is the best chance for prices to fall and if they don't fall now, I would hate to think what prices will be later."

Traders said the tight global supply-and-demand balance, along with the weaker U.S. dollar, had attracted increased interest from speculative funds in recent weeks.

"The downside is minimal as OPEC can always cut its capacity, as they have considered doing in recent weeks, if they feel the price is falling," Nunan said.

Yet OPEC producers are backing away from talk of a possible production cut for the second quarter as oil prices have stayed high above \$50 a barrel.

Kuwait, Qatar, Venezuela and Indonesia have come out in favor of keeping OPEC's formal output limits unchanged when the cartel meets in Iran on March 16.

Acting Secretary-General Adnan Shihab-Eldin has said OPEC saw a growing consensus that a \$40-50 range was sustainable, backing up comments by Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi last week that prices could stay in that range this year.

'Illicit drug sales booming online'

The internet has replaced the street corner for illicit drugs sales. The worldwide trade in illegal drugs sold over the internet has surged, according to the UN's drug watchdog.

Dangerous drugs are being sold without prescription

in a virtual marketplace that is difficult to control, says the International Narcotics Control Board.

In its annual report, it says that 90% of online drugs sales take place without a medical prescription.

Legal suppliers were fuel-

ling the trade, it says, by providing unlicensed internet pharmacies with drugs.

The INCB warn the web is increasingly a source of illicit drugs for children offering access which is not restricted by age.

"The illicit trade over the

internet has been identified as one of the major sources for prescription medicines abused by children and adolescents in certain countries such as the United States," it says.

The US, it says, remains the largest market in the world for illegal drugs with 8.2% of its population of 293 million people using them.

The most common sales are of mind-altering substances such as amphetamines.

"Billions of [doses of] controlled substances - some of them highly potent drugs such as oxycodone, equivalent to morphine, and fentanyl, which is many times stronger than morphine - are being sold by unlicensed internet pharmacies."

The INCB called for better co-operation between governments, international organisations and the pharmaceutical industry.

The report also highlighted that drug abuse and trafficking was a growing problem in many African countries.

It cited a marked increase in the use of intravenous drugs - such as heroin - in eastern and southern Africa and said this could have serious ramifications for the spread of HIV and Aids.

The INCB also said it was worried by Afghanistan's opium production.

The country now supplies three-quarters of the world's heroin as well being a major source of cannabis resin.

Ex- HP CEO, Carly Fiorina eyes World Bank top job

Former Hewlett-Packard head, Carly Fiorina is well placed to head the World Bank, the New York Times said.

The daily, quoting a Bush

administration official on condition of anonymity, said Fiorina was the lone woman on a US list of candidates to replace James Wolfensohn to head the multilateral bank.

Carleton Fiorina headed HP since 1999 and oversaw its merger with Compaq, but failed to turn enough profit to satisfy her board, and she left on February 9.

The New York daily also named Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz as a possible World Bank president when Wolfensohn leaves in June.

The *Financial Times* also floated his name.

"Neither Mr. Wolfowitz nor Ms. Fiorina is an expert in development," the New York Times said.

Wolfowitz was most recently dean of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, an international relations institution in Washington. He has also served as ambassador to Indonesia.

A spokesman for Treasury contacted by AFP declined to comment on personnel decisions.

The United States, by tradition, names the World Bank head, while Europeans name the International Monetary Fund director.



Ex- HP CEO, Carly Fiorina

Business Trust

Finance

Insurers liaise on pension fund administration

In a bid to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the new pension scheme, some insurance companies are planning to collaborate as Joint Pension Fund Administrators (PFA).

The Act establishing the new Pension fund scheme provided for the registration of Pension Fund Administration (PFA) outfits by organisations, which intend to take part in the scheme.

The President of the Chartered Insurance Institute

of Nigeria (CIIN) and Managing Director of Niger Insurance Plc, Alhaji Bala Zakariya'u, told NAN that "discussions are being held with some organisations on the scheme".

"Some of us intend to enter into strategic alliances in the establishment of a PFA outfit," he said.

Zakariya'u noted that the alliance would enable the companies take full advantage of the opportunities provided in the Act.

He said that his company and the other companies were already studying the National Pension Commission guidelines in the establishment of the PFAs and would make full use of the opportunities the scheme would offer the company.

First Atlantic Bank gets stakeholders' support

Stakeholders in the nation's capital market on Tuesday assured the board and management of First Atlantic Bank Plc of their support in the ongoing offer of 3 billion shares.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that stockbrokers and investors were of the opinion that the offer would be successful and could meet the financial needs of the people.

Some of the stakeholders, who spoke at the banks facts behind the offer in Lagos explained that the pioneering status of the bank in internet banking, electronic banking and electronic banking products had continued to attract many investors to the bank.

Speaking earlier, the Assistant Director-General of the Exchange, Mr Lance Elakama, charged stockbrokers to assist the bank in mobilising investors, stressing that the financial institution had the potential to strengthen e-business in the country.

In his contribution, the doyen of stockbrokers and a Council member of the NSE, Mr Olu Odejimi, said: "your bank deserves to be supported in the US and the UK because what investors are buying is a company with positive track record and great potential."

The bank, currently on public offer to the investing public, is selling 3 billion ordinary shares of 50K each at N2.50 per share.

According to the bank, the offer is to raise N7.5 billion, toward growing shareholders funds to more than N10 billion and also make the bank competitive within the four-bank merger grouping "Astra Bank group."

Meanwhile, the financial report of the bank showed that its balance sheet grew from N7.9 billion in June 2000 to N30 billion in June 2004, while shareholders funds appreciated to N4.54 billion in the first half of 2004.



(L-R) Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria President, Mrs. Ibiwonke Osiyemi, Executive Director, Standard Trust Bank (STB) Plc, Mr. Phillip Oduoza and ICAN Vice President, Alhaji Lateef Awoyemi during a courtesy visit to the bank in Lagos on Tuesday

Bearish trading persists at Exchange

Equity transactions on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) today continued on a bearish note with the cumulative average price of the 207 listed companies dropping by 1.3 per cent.

The market capitalisation also dipped by N24 billion to close at N1.759 trillion, down from N1.792 trillion achieved on Monday.

The NSE all-share

index today depreciated by 293.84 points to close at 21,659.66 points, compared with 21,953.50 points recorded on Monday.

Total led the price losers chart, shedding N6.61 to close at N173.38 per share.

Mobil Oil also lost N4.49 to close at N174.50 per share while Nestle share price fell by N4.01.

Earlier, Conoil led the price gainers chart, chalking up N4 to close at N116 per share. The

Construction giant, Julius Berger also gained 74k to close at N15.54 per share, while 7Up Bottling Company share price rose by 49k to close at N23.49.

An analysis of the market showed that the Insurance sub-sector for the first time in the year attracted investors attention with 49.53 million shares worth N49.47 million executed in 50 deals.

A further breakdown of the activities in the Banking

sub-sector showed that UNIC Insurance accounted for the bulk of the transactions with 49.16 million shares valued at N48.66 million in 12 deals.

The Banking sub-sector followed with 21.54 million shares valued at N202.57 million traded in 1,736 deals while the Breweries sub-sector accounted for N124.65 million in 684 deals.

In all, investors today bought 79.24 million shares worth N502.91 million in 4,012

deals. Meanwhile, the following are the major price gainers and losers on the NSE on Tuesday.

NURTW calls for transport bank

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma, Labour Reporter

The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) has called on the federal government to establish what it referred to as "transport bank" in order to encourage development in the transport sector of the nation's economy.

President of the union, Alhaji Gidado Hamman who made the call in an interview with *Business Trust* in Abuja, said, establishment of the bank would in no small measure assist transporters across the country.

Alhaji Gidado said further that the establishment of a transport bank would add more value to the banking industry and create employment opportunities for the teeming unemployed youths in the country.

The NURTW boss also expressed concern over what he called multiple taxes imposed on transporters on highways across the country.

According to him, transporters especially members of the NURTW have suffered untold hardship from certain groups who mount illegal road blocks on highways in the name of collecting taxes for the government

Local bourse can absorb more IPOs - Shareholder

The Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) has enough depth to absorb the upsurge of companies seeking to raise funds from the market.

The National Coordinator of the Independent Shareholders Association

of Nigeria (ISAN), Mr Sunny Nwosu, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday in Lagos that some existing investors and new investors were always willing and ready to buy the numerous stocks on offer.

Nwosu disclosed that ISAN had been engaged in

sensitising investors on the advantages of investing in the capital market.

"We have started the enlightenment campaigns in the rural areas through the state radio and television stations," he said, adding that students were included in the target segment of ISAN in line

with its policy of catching them young.

Nwosu said that ISAN, which will celebrate its 5th year anniversary this year, had established zonal offices in Abuja, Asaba, Calabar, Ibadan, Kaduna, Lagos, Port Harcourt and Jos.



L-R: Alhaji Bashir Borodo, chairman of NAL Bank and its managing director, Mr. Ben Akabueze during its completion board meeting held in Lagos...recently.

Business Trust

MARITIME

More inland container ports underway

Against the backdrop of complaints of marginalisation in the citing of inland container ports in the country, the new chief executive of the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC), Captain Adamu Biu has assured that government has not ruled out the establishment of more of such ports.

Captain Biu was however quick to add that for now attention was being concentrated on the development of the ones already on ground.

The issue came up at a meeting of stakeholders in the shopping industry from the North-eastern zone of the country organised by the Nigerian Shippers' Council in Jos.

A stakeholder from Borno state, Alhaji Umar Adam Kolo had argued that there was need for an inland container port in Borno state, noting

NMA gets new DG

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Transport Reporter

President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the appointment of Engineer Festus Uchenna Chiedu Ugwu as the new Director General for the National Maritime Authority (NMA).

A statement by the chief press secretary to the minister of transport, Mr Fidelis U. Osamor and made available to *Business Trust* pointed out that the appointment took effect from March 1, 2005.

Engineer Ugwu, according to the statement was born on 16th August, 1949 at Weke, Isi-Uzo local government area of Enugu state. He is an engineer with a Master of Science (Msc) degree in engineering from the higher Institute for Electrical/Mechanical Engineering (NOW Technical University) Sofia, Bulgaria in the year 1980.

The new NMA DG started his working career in 1981 as a principal engineer at the Anambra state Television, Enugu. He was commissioner in the ministry of works and transport, Enugu before his recent appointment as the director general of the NMA.



Engr. Festus Uchenna Chiedu Ugwu, NMA DG

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

that apart from the volume of trade, the state is strategically located as it shares borders with Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea.

Also, representative of the Gombe state government wondered why it was only a freight station that was given the state instead of an inland container port though, it produces large quantity of food items such as onions, tomatoes and assorted grains on a daily basis.

He also said Gombe state has 35 different variety of minerals including Gibsom, limestone and that another cement factory is being proposed for the state apart from Ashaka Cement company.

Responding, Captain Biu who said their recommendations would be studied, stressing that government cannot afford to jettison the inland ports already on the drawing board.

"There can be more ports in the country, but for now government's effort is geared towards developing inland container ports on ground," he added.

ICAN boss advocates maritime accounting

President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Chief (Mrs) Ibiroke Osiyemi has called for the institution of an accounting policy and standard for the maritime industry as a panacea for checking the ambiguities inherent in the financial programmes of the sub-sector.

She made the call in Lagos while on a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC), Captain Adamu Biu.

The ICAN president said this has become inevitable in view of the vital role that the maritime industry plays in the country, which is the second biggest sub-sector after oil and gas.

Citing accounting as an

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

example, the ICAN president said she was particularly delighted with the Nigerian Accounting Standards Board (NASB) which, in conjunction with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) support of ICAN, has put up a monetary guideline for the system, and that so far, this has proved tremendously fruitful.

She added that it was this effort that begun a good check on the MTN, a GSM operator against carting away all the billions of naira profits it makes out of Nigerian soil.

She therefore urged her host, the NSC to create a record by spear-heading the standard policy in the maritime industry through drawing out a proposal to the NASB, adding that her institute will give it total support.

Customs seizes luxury bus with smuggled goods

The Federal Operations Unit (FOU) Zone "A", Ikeja, of the Nigeria Customs Service has arrested an Onitsha-bound luxury bus loaded with prohibited goods.

The zonal controller of the FOU, Alhaji Umar Daura, at Ikeja invited newsmen to witness the off-loading of the seized bus "because there had been allegations of arbitrary seizure of luxury buses by their owners".

"What you are witnessing now is contrary to these allegations and I am assuring them that for as long as they continue to use their buses to convey prohibited goods, law enforcement agents will not stop arresting them.

"I have implored the luxury bus owners to always monitor what is loaded into their buses before any trip, but they seem not to respect the laws of the land by using

their buses to convey prohibited goods," Daura added.

The bus was arrested along Ijebu-Ode/Sagamu road on Wednesday.

A correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), who witnessed the unloading of the bus, reports that it contained thousands of pairs of jeans trousers; ladies underwears and cartons of wrist watches.

The content of the bus, about a tenth of which were brought out from under its seats, were computer monitors and printers; bags of rice and tomato puree.

The driver of the seized bus, names withheld, told newsmen that he knew nothing about the several tons of goods brought out from under its seats and its cargo bay because he was not present when the vehicle was loaded.

Daura told newsmen that the driver and the bus would be detained until the popular owners of the vehicle could come to the FOU to explain what happened.



A front view of Genesis Explorer, at the Halifax Port, Nova Scotia, Canada.



This is a side view of Genesis, also at the port in Canada.

Nigerian crew receives MT Genesis Explorer

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor

All Nigerian seaman-ship crew took delivery of a deep-sea going, international trading ice class tanker vessel, the MT Algosar, now renamed the MT Genesis Explorer in far Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada on behalf of Nigerian buyers and new owners, Genesis Worldwide Shipping and Trading Company of Lagos.

It would be recalled that the MT Genesis Explorer, a 13000 mt dwt Ice Class 1 tanker vessel was recently acquired as an addition to the fleet of Genesis Worldwide Shipping, to complement its existing fleet of coastal trading tanker vessel and also to facilitate the company's desire to expand the scope of its maritime capacity development and training platform.

It is reported that the

newly acquired vessel, Genesis Explorer has in addition to the normal accommodation which is statutorily required to be provided for the full crew complement, at least eight further berths which the company intends to offer in the training of deck and engineer cadets, ex-graduates from the Maritime Academy, Oron as well as from the School of Fisheries, Lagos.

The special characteristics of the Genesis Explorer which formed the basis of the acquisition interest of Genesis Shipping in the vessel includes the fact that the vessel is of a shallow drafted configuration, being a short-fat-ship, which can lift its design deadweight of

13000mt at a draft of 7.7 million.

The vessel is also reported to be fitted with steam heating coils in 15 of its 18 tanks and can reportedly sustain cargo temperatures of up to 150f in the coiled tanks.

Additionally, the vessel is reputed to be served by the facility of three very fast steam turbine pumps, each with a discharge capacity reported at ell over 800mt/hour making it theoretically able to discharge its full deadweight cargo in less than 24 hours.

The Genesis Explorer arrived Lagos from Canada, laden with a cargo of tallow for Nigerian ports discharge, according to a statement made available to *Business Trust*.

I am not bothered by critics —

Governor Ali Modu Sheriff says he believes that the people of Borno State are always the ones to give an assessment of his administration, which has spent nearly two years in power, whatever its critics would say. In this interview with Daily Trust's Regional Editor (North East) Abdullahi Bego, however, the governor tried to review the performance of his administration, saying that as a government, "we are satisfied with the interventions we have made so far". The governor also spoke on his party, the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), which got out of its internal leadership crisis recently, and the situation within the ANPP in Borno State. He also commented on his effort to have the federal government cede control of the Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA) to the Borno State government, among others.

Excerpts:

The health sector in Borno State has had to contend with a number of crises over the past few years, partly as a result of a series of strike actions embarked upon by workers but also due to general lack of equipment, hospital consumables, etc. Would you say that you are satisfied with the level of intervention of your administration in this critical sector so far?

Gov Sherrif: It's very difficult for me to speak about my achievements myself with regards to the modest work we have done so far. It is the people of Borno State who would make that assessment. But we did our best to improve services across vast sectors of the economic and social life of our people.

Since we came, we have tried to improve services, particularly in our hospitals. When we came the hospitals were even closed down indefinitely by doctors who were on strike not to talk of

having new ones to serve the people.

We felt that was dangerous for any society to have hospitals closed because people cannot have easy access to medical care. We said it is unacceptable. Therefore we decided to talk to the doctors to find out their grievances. When they talked, we found out that they had valid grounds to be aggrieved. They were not paid for one year despite four different agreements reached with the previous government to settle their arrears and allowances.

The hospitals too did not have medical equipment and drugs. So even if they wanted to work, there were no adequate tools to work with.

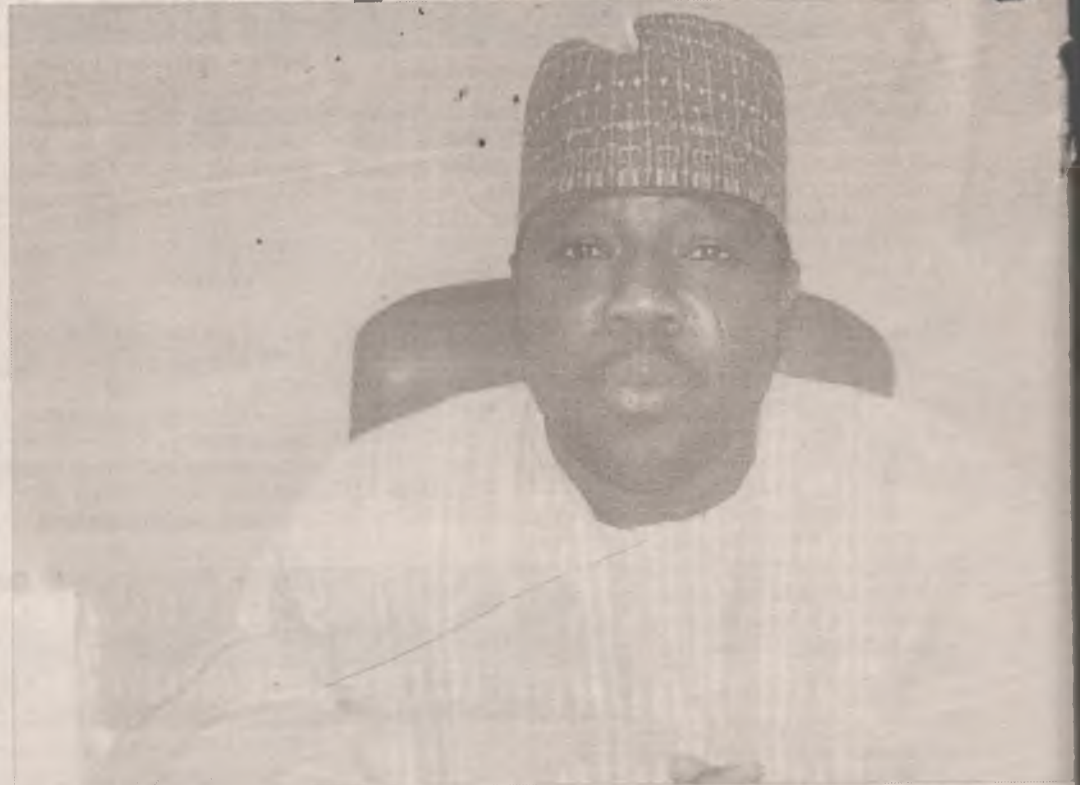
So, we negotiated with them to pay them within a space of four months, giving them about N100 million every month. Within six months or so, we finished paying them all arrears.

We then moved to address the problem of lack of drugs in

the hospitals by setting up a Revolving Fund, to which we gave N60 million in two installments.

Thereafter, we started renovating the hospitals in the urban centers and went into the rural areas. There were about nine Comprehensive Health Centers which contracts were signed in 1992, during the defunct Maina Ma'aji Lawan administration. After that administration, there were about five or six different administrations in the State. But none of these administrations felt it was necessary to bring to light those health projects. So, when we came, we re-negotiated with the contractors and executed the projects. We also provided equipment. Seven of these Comprehensive Health Centers are now fully ready, and I believe before the end of the month, the rest would also be ready.

And we didn't stop at that. We also embarked on the construction of a new General



Governor Sheriff stressing a point during the interview

Hospital in Maiduguri because we saw that Maiduguri has grown too big for a single General Hospital constructed since 1950's. So, we signed a contract for the construction of a new 300-bed General Hospital, we paid the contractors forty percent of the total cost and the balance of the money is kept in the accounts of the ministry of health. We also started the construction of another General Hospital at Askira Uba where we also provided forty percent of initial payment to the contractors.

Therefore, as a government, we are satisfied with the level of intervention we have made so far. The rest is for members of the public to judge and make their own assessment.

DT: Another public sector so much in need of rejuvenation is education. Various United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP) reports tend to suggest that Borno is still one of the most educationally backward states in the

sitting on the ground for their classes in almost all the schools. So, we are doing a programme of total rehabilitation of the schools. By

I have no need or desire from exercising their government because the If you want to get power people. I am not bothered by baseless insinuations.

country. And as if this is not enough reason to look at the education sector more proactively, we learnt that student scholarships, especially those studying abroad, were not being paid. What would you say on that?

Gov Sherrif: One, the situation with regard to primary and secondary schools is very true. Almost all the schools in Borno State have totally collapsed.

What I did was to get the education ministry to set up a committee to rehabilitate all the schools. As we are talking now, about 12 such schools have been well rehabilitated. Also because the schools lack educational materials such as chairs and desks, we have awarded contract for the supply of desks and chairs worth over N200 million, and these have already been supplied.

However, we are going to do more, because when we came in, we found that students were

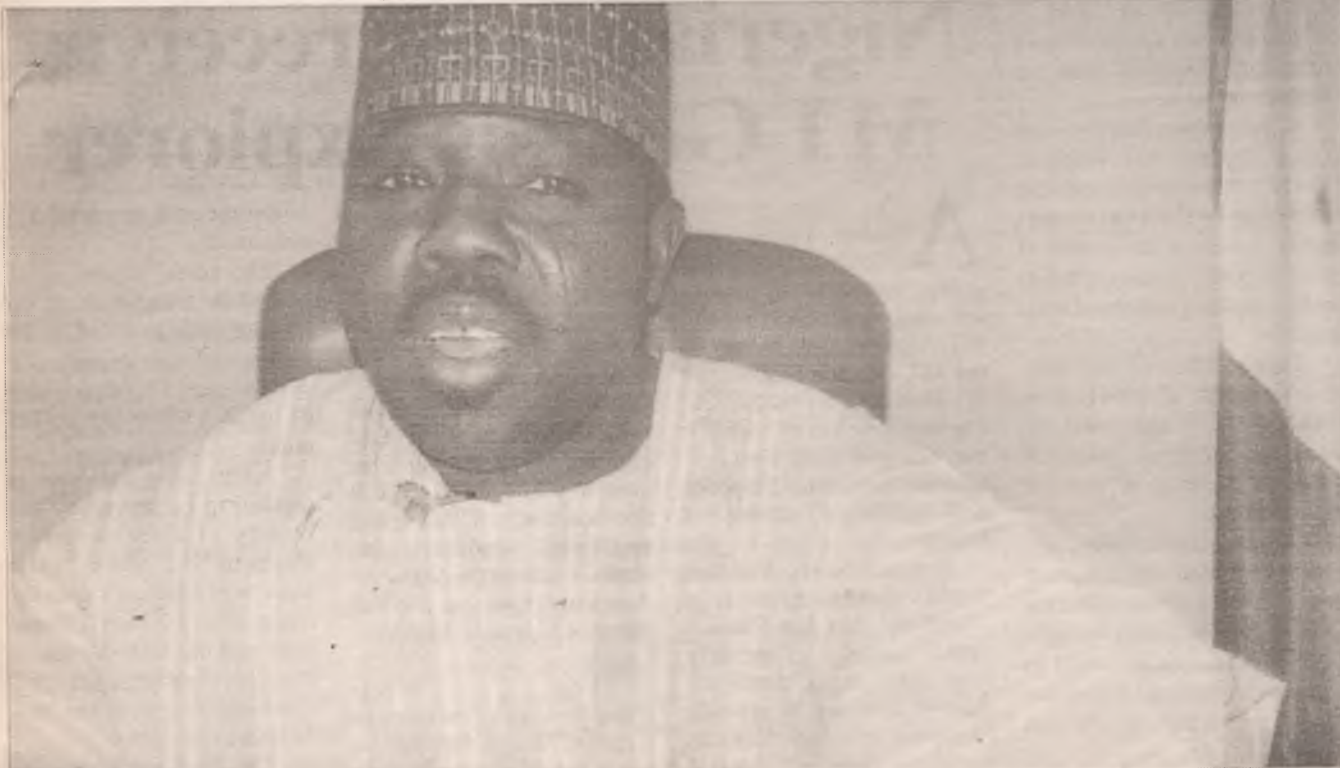
the end of the year or by early next year, we will be able to finish all the work needed to bring the schools back to shape for normal academic programmes to take place.

But we should not forget that it took a period of around twenty years for the decay to set in. So it is not possible for us as a government to change everything in one year. However, I agree with you that the situation is so pathetic but we shall address it.

DT: And how about the scholarship issue?

Gov Sherrif: As for the scholarship, there was a problem. First, we were able to pay all students studying within the country. It is the overseas scholarship that is problematic.

Many of the students studying abroad got scholarship through Government House and the Ministry of Finance before we came in without any records at the Borno State Scholarship



"As a government we are satisfied with the level of intervention we have made so far."



JOINT TAX BOARD

The 110th Edition of the Joint Tax Board meeting will be holding from 7th – 10th March, 2005.

Venue: Abuja Sheraton Hotel and Towers
Ladi Kwali Way,
Maitama-Abuja

Programme of Events:

Day 1 Sunday March 6, 2005

Arrival and Registration of members
(2pm – 7pm) at the Joint Tax Board
Secretariat ETF Building Maitama-Abuja

Day 2 Monday 7/3/05

a) Courtesy call on Mr. President and
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces,
Minister of Finance and Minister of FCT.

b) The 110th meeting to be declared opened
by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Dr.
Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala).

Day 3-4 Tuesday 8/3/05 – Wednesday 9/3/05
The meeting continues.

Day 5 - Departure

Signed
Secretary JTB

SECTION II INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Federal Government of Nigeria, Kebbi State Health System Development Project II Procurement and Installation of Furniture and Medical Equipment

Credit No. 3653 – UNI- IFB No. KB/HSDPH/GD/001/ICB/05

1. This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business, issue No. 608- of June 16, 2003.
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria *has received a credit* from the *International Development Association (IDA)* towards the cost of *health system development project II*, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this *credit* to payments under the contract for Procurement and Installation of Furniture and Medical Equipment
3. The *Kebbi State Health System Development Project II* now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for *the supply and installations*. As per bid documents.

Bidders may bid for any one or more lots and discounts offered for the award of combined lots would be considered in bid evaluation.

4. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits*, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.
5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from *Kebbi State Health System Development Project II (KBSHSDPII)*, 21 Emir Haruna Road, Birnin Kebbi, Tel/Fax: 234068 – 320968 – 70 and inspect the bidding documents from 10:00am to 3:00pm commencing on Monday 7th March, 2005.
6. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of N20,000.00 (Twenty Thousand Naira Only) or USD 2,657 (Two thousand, six hundred and fifty seven dollars only). The method of payment will be *in cash or bank draft payable to Kebbi State Health System Development Project II*. The document will be collected by hand or sent by courier services on request.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before 10.00am Local time on 11th April 2005. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of at least 3% of bid price or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders representatives, who choose to attend at the address below at 10:00am local time on 11th April, 2005.

The Project Manager
Kebbi State Health System Development Project II
21, Emir Haruna Road, Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State
Tel/Fax: 234 64 320 968-70

Inside MARCH '05 Edition



**On Sale Nationwide
Throughout March!!!**

COVER

Since inception in 1999, the President Olusegun Obasanjo administration had been studiously ignoring the potentials of the agricultural sector. Now, it seems as if a hidden agenda is afoot to scuttle the nation's food and raw material self-sufficiency.

INTERVIEW

Prof. ANGO ABDULLAHI, former Presidential Adviser on Food Security spoke on the Obasanjo administration, crisis in the PDP and the way forward.

AVIATION

Even though a truly modern and progressive Nigerian economy cannot emerge until the aviation sector is strong enough to service the yearning needs, the Federal Government seems to be doing very little to actualise the potential.

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES, CONTACT:
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NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC RC 9409

PROVISIONAL ACCOUNTS FOR HALF-YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2004

	2004 30TH SEPTEMBER N'000	2003 30TH SEPTEMBER N'000
Turnover	<u>2,870,182</u>	<u>1,884,540</u>
Profit before Taxation	117,080	105,172
Taxation - estimated	<u>29,296</u>	<u>26,465</u>
Profit after Taxation	<u>N87,784</u>	<u>N78,707</u>

The turnover for the half-year increased although the net profit did not increase in the same proportion as a result of the reasons stated below.

During the period under review cost of materials, electricity/diesel, wages and other related operating costs escalated. In addition, selling price could not be increased because of stiff competition in the market.

The Management expects better results in the second half of the year provided the operating environment improves.

Signed:
R.M. GWARZO
Managing Director

Gov Ali Modu Sheriff

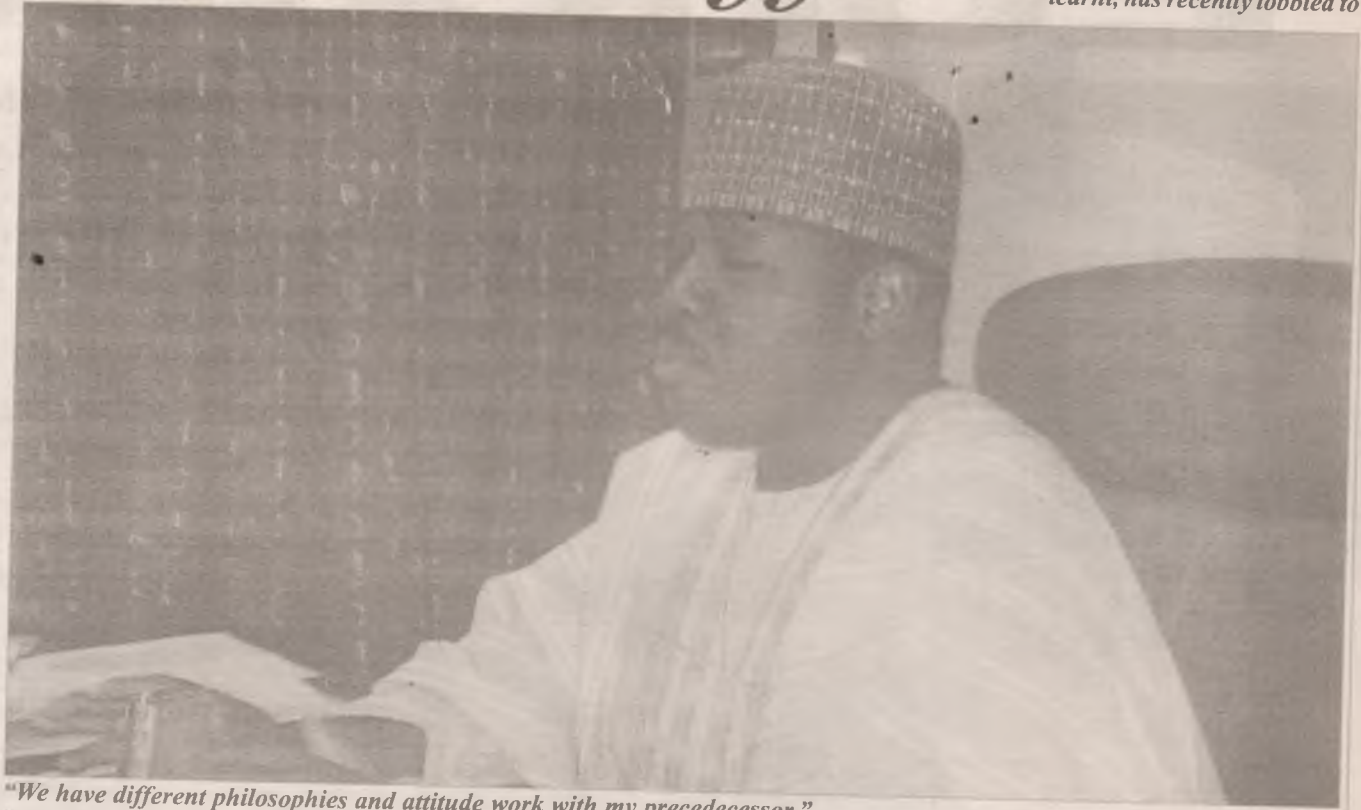
of our people and ensure that we make life better for the citizens of the state.

DT: Your administration, we learnt, has recently lobbied to

problems but we were able to solve them. So, we wanted to show the whole world that we are capable of solving our problems ourselves. I am sure many of you in the media were taken aback when you saw them driving together in Maiduguri. The message therefore is that we have settled all our quarrels and we are now one big, strong family. We are also re-positioning for the tasks ahead.

DT: But in Borno State itself, there seems to be some disquiet within the ANPP, with some members saying they have been neglected by your administration despite the support they rendered in ensuring your success. Don't you think these people have a point?

Gov Sherrif: No, I don't think so. I am surprised when journalists ask these questions. To my understanding, 99 percent of our party men and women are happy with what the government is doing.



"We have different philosophies and attitude work with my predecessor."

in my party or any other political party. You saw that I had court battle for one year (following the 2003 gubernatorial election). They didn't go to court because they knew they had a case. No! They went to court to see if they could steal power through the back door. Therefore, in politics it is normal that people who want to get power try all means to get it.

But I want to say that ANPP in Borno is much solidified. If, as a journalist, you talk to the people, you would get to hear that from them.

I have no need or desire to stop anybody from exercising their right to criticise government because they want to get power. If you want to get power, go and talk to the people. I am not bothered at all with baseless insinuations. Let those who want to

criticise continue, and then when the time for elections come, they would develop high blood pressure because the people would always make their choice and decision as to who they want to lead them.

DT: Your administration always basks in its construction of the 730 Housing Units. Many of your critics however said that you engaged in the project primarily to rival the construction of the 202 and 303 Housing Units by your immediate predecessor; that it was more of competition than benevolent intervention.

Gov Sherrif: No, that's not the case. We have different philosophies and attitude to work with my predecessor. Our perception of things and understanding of issues in the state are different...

More fundamentally, as a

journalist, you know that civil servants in Borno State are operating under a very difficult atmosphere. You also know that Borno has expanded so much over the years to the extent that even if we put 5000 houses, we would still not have met the demand of especially government workers, who now number around 29,000.

Even if workers retire, they have to have somewhere to live. So, unless we plan very well, there may be crisis in the future in that regard.

Therefore, what we did was not to rival anybody. Power belongs to God and He gives and takes as He wills.

As a leader, one would only try to satisfy his conscience that he has done what is expected of him and that people get benefits from that. So, we are doing everything we are doing to alleviate the suffering

take away control of the Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA) from the federal government. Given the size of the projects of the CBDA, it is not likely that the state would be able to fund them, in addition to the fact that the Lake Chad itself has continued to dry up. So, why would you like to take over the CBDA when you are unlikely to maintain it?

Gov Sherrif: Well, we understand that the federal government is working with other Lake Chad Basin countries to recharge the drying Lake Chad. The fact is that if agricultural activities are properly developed and harnessed in our own sector of the Lake Chad, Borno can feed the whole of this country.

So, what we hope to do, once we get control of the CBDA, is to provide incentives and encouragements to our farmers to enable them engage in large scale farming.

In several locations around the world, we have seen that deserts have been turned into green areas through conscious and deliberate effort. I have seen that in Israel and Egypt. You can drive from Cairo to Alexandria seeing lush and green surroundings when those areas were desert before.

So, given the right conditions, desert agriculture really works. Also, the federal government has so many responsibilities and cannot therefore do all that is required in the Lake Chad. This is why we want to take control of the CBDA to help improve agriculture because it provides the best means of sustenance and economic growth.

ire to stop anybody right to criticise y want to get power. r, go and talk to the hered at all with

authenticate genuine students Borno State studying ad and the High missioner obliged me. As as we receive the enticated list of our ents, we shall open files them at the State arship Board and pay accordingly.

r belief is that if things are lone properly, there are ally going to be set backs, this was exactly what ened with regard to the arship issue.

Recently, you brought her the ANPP National rman Chief Don Etiebet is deputy (north) Lt. Gen niah Useni to Maiduguri you commissioned the Adam road project. e are people who only ntly reconciled after a iff leadership crisis that apart your party. What age did you intend to ey by having them come aiduguri together?

v Sherrif: Well, we had

However, in every society, there are people who want power and would stop at nothing to try to get it, whether



"Once we get control of the Chad Basin authority, we'll encourage farmers to engage in large scale farming."

Science & Education



Mr. Jacobs M. Ajekigbe, managing director, First Bank (right) and Otunba Stephen Ogundipe, President, University of Ibadan alumni association, Lagos branch in a chat at the annual alumni lecture held in Lagos...recently.

NUC declares UNIPORT best governed varsity

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has rated the University of Port Harcourt as the best governed and administered university in Nigeria.

The university's vice-chancellor, Prof. Nimi Briggs, made this known while briefing newsmen on the activities of the institution at its Choba campus in Port Harcourt on Monday.

Briggs, who spoke through the deputy vice-chancellor (Administration), Prof. Mark Anikpo, said it was encouraging and heart-warming for the institution to have achieved double national recognition within three years.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that the university in 2003 bagged the NUC commendation as the best in undergraduate academic programmes in the country.

The institution also won the hosting right for the Nigeria Universities Games (NUGA) 2004 and the best college of health sciences in the country.

Briggs noted that with the latest approval by the regulating body, the University of Port Harcourt had consolidated its eminent position in the country.

Anikpo told NAN that the recognition accorded the institution, apart from rubbing off positively on its staff and students, would attract more prospective students.

He said: "More students are likely to pick the university as their first choice in IAMB, while more post-

graduate students are likely to opt for the university.

"But we are not likely to deviate from the rule that gave science students 60 per cent placement and humanities 40 per cent."

Anikpo said the Rivers and Bayelsa governments, and some private organizations had contributed toward

upgrading the university's infrastructure to match its eminent status and increased student's population.

"We now boast of modern hostels, recreation and study facilities to engage our students and maintain our standards in discipline, hard work and academic excellence," he said.

Ogun spends N30m on polytechnic library

Ogun State government has expended N30million to complete the auditorium of the Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, the Ogun State commissioner for housing, Chief Wale Egunleti has disclosed.

Addressing pressmen on the activities of his ministry in the last one year, said the state government has completed arrangement to construct hostel accommodation in all the state owned higher Institutions.

He said, the Moshood Abiola Polytechnic auditorium which foundation stone was laid, in 1989, was initially to gulp N60 million if it were to be given to contractors declaring that state government resolved to complete the project through direct labour at the reduced price of N30million

Chief Egunleti who lamented that the state had witnessed many administrations which did not deem it fit to complete the project.

The commissioner who

By Ajibola Kayode, Stringer (Abeokuta)

disclosed that the ambition of Otunba Gbenga led administration is to construct mass housing units throughout the state further stated that the auditorium will be completed in the next three weeks.

Speaking on hostel accommodation, Chief Egunleti said the state government has resolved to construct hostel accommodation in all the State-owned Higher Institutions.

He explained that the state government decided to wade-in because of the hardship being encountered by students in higher institution in the state.

According to him, "this began with the foundation laying ceremony of the hostels done recently at Olabisi Onabanjo University by Otunba Gbenga Daniel through private participation.

"The design of a typical hostel accommodation has been prepared by my ministry and discussions are going on with the private investors"

Higher Education This Week

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

The ongoing silent 'revolution' in UNN

When in June 2004, we wrote on the challenges before the newly appointed VC of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) Prof. Chinedu Ositadinma Nebo, we had only what one could describe as a shallow knowledge of him as a person. Our attempt to get more information from very reliable and objective sources did not succeed before we went to press. However one statement we got from Prof. Ogbu Kalu (one of the most distinguished scholars of UNN now based in Chicago, United States) while reacting to our earlier article on the *Politics of Appointment of VCs*, gave us some measure of confidence with which we portrayed Prof. Nebo as a Godly man even though we still appeared cautious. But just day after we sent out our article for publication, a very reliable source we had earlier requested to tell us something about the person of Prof. Nebo replied back.

That source was Dr. Dan Osy Okanya, now with the Policy Analysis section of the National Assembly and then a former Head of Department of Political Science and Dean of the Faculty of the Social Sciences at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (an institution where Prof. Nebo was prior to his appointment). Dr. Okanya sent in what we can now (with hindsight) regard as a good description of Prof. Nebo. According to Dr. Okanya 'Prof. Nebo is kind, engaging and a team player. He is a stickler to rules and can sometimes be overzealous about this'. He then added as a word of advice that 'being a good man may not save him from the hawks...in the present day sharply divided UNN'. And lastly he approvingly concluded that 'I must give it to him, that he is a courageous man, may be the only one to come out of ESUT in recent time'.

Although we felt bad that we could not use Dr. Okanya's input as we had intended, we however thought that there could be a second opportunity. Here we are again today to assess what is happening in UNN given our special interest in the institution where we not only received our masters and doctorate degrees, but also where we taught for some years before leaving for the Social Science Academy of Nigeria (SSAN) Abuja and subsequently to where we are now. We have monitored closely the philosophy, policy directions and administrative actions of Prof. Nebo for the past nine months and we can humbly and objectively report that there is what we can call a silent revolution going on in the institution. At the risk of sounding sycophantic, this article is intended to encourage Prof. Nebo to remain on the path he has chosen and be mindful of the fact that the hawks would still be looking for ways of swaying him to their selfish side which had long been a critical factor in the awful performance of previous VCs. The first noticeable thing about Prof. Nebo when he assumed office was the loud and clear declaration of his philosophy of reconciliation and correction of deep-rooted injustice that had for well over twenty years been crying to high heavens in UNN. One of the measures he took to give practical expression and meaning to this philosophy was the invitation he gave to Prof. Frank Ndili a former VC of UNN who left office in a very controversial manner many years ago. By a twist of fate, ever since Prof. Ndili left UNN, over twenty years ago, peace and progress continuously eluded the institution. During those periods of unexplainable persistent deep-rooted rancour and acrimony among staff of UNN, people on the street gradually came to believe (rightly or wrongly) that Prof. Ndili and his family cursed the institution. It is against this background that one could fully appreciate the invitation given to Prof. Ndili.

In a well-attended reception held in honour of Prof. Ndili on December 17, 2004 Prof. Nebo declared that his home-coming was momentous and historic (see Information Bulletin of UNN, January 14, 2005). According to this source, Prof. Nebo explained further that 'very few people...considered it possible that Prof. Ndili could be invited back to the University where he toiled with all his might and thereafter left unceremoniously' and that he decided to invite him so as to 're-integrate him into the University and to show that the University still cherished him'. Paying glowing tributes to Ndili's legacy, Prof. Nebo prayed for mutual forgiveness necessary for a renewed onward relationship and the realization of the excellence destined for UNN. On his part Prof. Ndili said that he never cursed UNN and that even though Prof. Nebo's...

member him, he harboured no malice against them or other staff of the institution. However people see this home coming, one undeniable fact is that it was a bold and spiritually discerned initiative that only those with a good and deep sense of history of UNN can appreciate fully.

On another issue, for the first time in many years, the staff of UNN celebrated the Christmas with their December salary and on top of it got a surprise package along with it. This surprise package emanated from the years of mountain of arrears of so many allowances owed to the staff. During our recent visit to Nigeria and to UNN this last February, we were greeted with beaming rays of hope on the faces of some colleagues we met and discussed with. Without necessarily initiating any discussion, one colleague after another voluntarily told us that the man at the head was on the right course given some notable bold actions he had taken and they wished and prayed fervently that he would remain on that courageous part.

Those who know UNN very well would agree that some entrenched interests have been at the center of the inability of previous administrations from making any impact. Some few months ago, the VC courageously removed some sacred cows from their high positions. And some of these people had all along cleverly and deceptively paraded themselves as 'great achievers' in the minds of people (a ploy to blur the people's right sense of judgment regarding their atrocities). In one academic department generally regarded as the seat of bribery and corruption and all forms of administrative abuses against the students, the VC was able to push the army of professional sycophants aside and made a headship appointment that reflected a good understanding of the mess for which the department was known for nearly a decade now. We have it on good record that this department has successfully carried out an admission exercise without cases of allegation of bribery. In another academic department, the VC was also able to dislodge a 'mafia' group that had over the years kept the department in perpetual acrimony by always having their way through in the appointment of headships.

Lastly, the greatest of the ongoing revolution in UNN is the decision by the management to stick to due process in the appointment of staff which had never been so for many years now. For lack of space, we can only pray that this silent revolution should continue and that also those of us who spoke against the abuses of the past and thereafter became victims of the highhandedness and gross injustice of the authorities, would sooner or later ask for a redress of such.

Tribute to Prof. Donald E. U. Ekong: Some weeks ago we announced the passing away of this great African scholar and distinguished higher education administrator. Prof. Ekong died in Houston, TX, United States. A man of distinctive academic career, Prof. Ekong served as a VC in Nigeria, before becoming the Secretary General of the Association of African Universities (AAU) based in Accra, Ghana where he left an indelible mark on the sands of administrative history of higher education management and policy in Africa. Furthermore, Prof. Ekong among many others served as an eminent member of the Council of the University of Botswana in the southern African region. Again he served as the VC of the University of Gambia in the western African region. I recall meeting him and his darling wife Dr. (Mrs.) Afi Ekong in Dakar Senegal few years ago while still serving in that capacity in a higher education research workshop, and I still cherish the encouraging and inspiring discussions I had with the wife. Bearing any change in the burial arrangement sent to the University of Botswana by his son Dr. Donald Ekong Jr., the remains of Prof. Ekong would be buried on Saturday May 21, 2005 in his home town Afaha Ibesikpo, Akwan Ibom State. May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace-Amen.

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

Science & Education

Unimaid convenes conference on university education

The University of Maiduguri is to hold a national conference on 'Nigerian Universities in the 21 Century' with the aim of examining wide ranging issues on the Nigerian university system. A statement made available to *Daily Trust* and signed by Professor D.S.M. Koroma on behalf of the Faculty of Arts, the organisers of the conference, said that the conference would be as important as the recently convoked National Political Reform Conference, in the sense

that 'what happens inside universities affects and is influenced by what happens in the larger society'.

The national conference will be part of events planned to mark the 30th anniversary of the institution, which was established in 1975.

According to Professor Koroma, some of the issues to be discussed at the conference include the challenges of crime and crime-control in Nigerian university campuses, academic trade unionists, administration of universities in the 21st Century, the promotion of democratic culture, universities and gender issues as well as the problems and challenges of HIV/AIDS as they affect Nigerians universities.

The conference and other activities marking the anniversary will last for three days, from 27th June to 29th June, 2005.

Kogi education board embarks on certificate verification exercise

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Correspondent (Lokoja)

Worried by poor standard of teaching in primary schools in the state, the Kogi State Primary Education Board is embarking on certificate verification exercise of all primary school teachers with a view to sanitising the system.

The executive secretary of the Kogi State Primary Education Board (KSPEB), Mr. Samson Enesi, who disclosed this to newsmen in Lokoja, said about 1,500 qualified teachers would be recruited to replace those who will be affected by the exercise.

Mr. Enesi said the state government was worried by the number of half-baked pupils passing out of primary schools every year, and has to do something urgently to redress the situations. Primary schools in the state, he noted, is being manned by unqualified personnel and blamed the education secretaries in local governments across the state for the menace.

He equally blamed the local government chairmen for frustrating the recruitment of teachers for primary schools in a bid to prevent further deductions from their monthly allocations.

Kogi varsity holds convocation March 12

The Kogi State university, Anyigba, holds its maiden convocation on March 12, 2005, during which it will confer honorary doctorate degrees on eminent and qualified Nigerians.

The senate of the university which announced the date for the maiden convocation in a statement made available to *Daily Trust*, remarked

Yobe polytechnic commences academic programmes

The newly established Yobe State Polytechnic at Geidam in the northern part of the state has commenced academic programmes with the induction of 392 students into various science and engineering courses.

The rector of the polytechnic, Dr. Mutawalle Ajagana Geidam, revealed this when Governor Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim of Yobe state visited the institution recently.

He added that the three pioneer schools of the institution, namely schools of general studies, engineering and environmental studies as well as administrative and business studies have all taken up successfully, after a teething selection and review process that saw the admission of the students being inducted as well as various categories of academic and non-academic staff.

As a science, engineering and administration based in-



Former president, National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), Hajia Zainab Maina (l) presenting an award to Mr Felix Okokhere during the 5th annual all Nigeria NGO summit and award night held...recently.

From Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (Maiduguri)

stitution, Yobe State Polytechnic, according to the Rector, will in the near future expand the range of its academic programmes to include such high-tech areas as biotechnology, solar energy studies, leather technology, petroleum engineering, publishing studies and desert studies, among others.

Dr. Mutawalle explained that the polytechnic is already engaged in a technical partnership with Austin Community College, and would seek to consolidate the 'linkage arrangement' with the college in order to tap relevant advantages for the benefit of the new polytechnic.

The rector however called on the Yobe state government to provide additional N500m to the institution for the purpose of providing befitting

infrastructure to help put the polytechnic on a sound footing.

A breakdown of the request shows that around N360 million would be required for the purpose of building, furnishing and equipping the three engineering courses that the institution offers, while N100 million would be needed to establish a modern library complex.

Meanwhile, the Yobe state governor has approved the appointment of Dr. Mutawalle Ajagana Geidam as a substantive rector of Yobe State Polytechnic.

The appointment was conveyed in a letter dated February 3, 2005 and signed by the state's commissioner for higher education, science and technology, Alhaji Ibrahim Ali Gadaka.

The appointment, which takes immediate effect, is, according to the letter, for a pe-

riod of four years, and is thereafter renewable for another term 'upon recommendation to the governor by the (polytechnic's) governing council in line with the law establishing the polytechnic'.

Yobe State Polytechnic was established in October 2002 but academic programmes could not start until now because of accommodation, logistics and other imperatives.

NANS oppose ASUU planned strike

The National Association of Nigeria Students (NANS) has appealed to the leadership of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to stop its planned action in order to ensure stability in the university system.

Speaking through the association's public relations office Mr. Yinka Dada the students body said it is worrisome that every successive ASUU leadership takes the inglorious path of academic disruption which in their opinion is worse than cultism and students therefore, suffer as the two elephants tango over our future."

Dada said that frequent strikes in universities are capable of prolonging students' stay on campus and impoverish parents, while further "depreciating the value of our education, encourage crime, banditry, prostitution, cultism and other vices."

He further lamented that from 1990 till date, ASUU has embarked on over 12 major strikes, stressing that over 10 million graduates are unem-

By Salaudeen Ozigi (Intern)

NANS spokesman said ASUU as an indispensable stakeholder in the universities sector, is expected to be more proactive on issues that tend to decline the standard of education in the country, adding that ASUU should be more concerned now than ever before to shun acts that may damage the universities system.

Data said if ASUU eventually embarks on the proposed strike action, Nigerian students will stand to protect their common future.

LG inaugurates education endowment fund

The Kazaure local government council in Jigawa state has inaugurated an endowment fund to promote science and technical education in the area. The chairman of the council, Alhaji Sabi'u Musa, said in Kazaure that the council had disbursed N6.8 million in the payment of scholarship to 240 students in the area. He explained that the fund would assist indigent students in

courses would receive N20,000 each, while medical students would get N24,000.

The chairman reiterated the council's resolve to support students in furthering their education through providing financial support. The council, he said, had set up modalities to promote science and technical education through school rehabilitation and improved funding.

Musa advised students to



Science & Education

NUC names top 10 over-crowded universities

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has carried out a national study on the carrying capacity, of Nigerian universities.

The carrying capacity of an institution is the maximum number of students that an institution can sustain for qualitative education, and as well as the availability of human and material resources.

In a memo made available to *Daily Trust*, not less than 10 federal universities namely: Olabisi Onabanjo University,

By Salaudeen Ozigi, (Intern)

Ago Iwoye; Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Lagos State University, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Delta State University, Abraka; Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Rivers State University of Science and Technology have exceeded their enrolment figures by between 10,000 and 11,000 students.

According to the NUC, the carrying capacity indicator is the degree of deviation from carrying capacity and how well enrolment of the university matches available human and material resources.

The exercise which began with an intensive national study on carrying capacity on a programme-by-programme basis for all Universities also shows that seven out of 25 federal universities (including NDA) have enrolments below their carrying capacity, with the Universities of Maiduguri, University of Uyo, University of Jos, NDA, University of Ibadan, Federal University of Technology, Akure and University of Agriculture, Markurdi as culprits.

On the compliance of state universities, Niger Delta, Enugu State University of technology, Nasarawa State University, Adamawa State, Kano State University of Technology and Adekunle Ajasin University in that order also fall into the category of

institutions that have over enrolled students.

For private universities, all except Covenant University fall within their carrying capacities. The commission noted that the data was from only full-time students, adding that it is aware that all universities have enrolled part time students that double the number of full-time students in many of their programmes.

"If such data were captured in the study, the picture would have been more alarming."

To arrest this trend, the NUC has pledged to take appropriate sanctions against erring universities to ensure compliance with carrying capacity.



The minister of state for education Hajia Bintu Ibrahim Musa with the Registrar and Chief Executive of JAMB, Prof. Bello Salim when the minister visited JAMB office in Abuja...recently.

WAEC releases Nov/Dec exam results

By Samson Ojo, Correspondent (Lagos)

The West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) has lamented the increasing rate of examination malpractices in the country, and has promised to arrest the menace through vigilant invigilation.

Announcing the release of the November/December 2004 WASSCE results in Lagos, the head of the Nigeria national office of the WAEC, Mr. Tunde Oloyede disclosed that the result of about 65,832 candidates representing 12.82 per cent, who sat for the examination were being withheld due to reports of alleged involvement in various forms of examination malpractices.

According to him, out of 513,583 candidates that sat for the examination, 475,496 candidates representing 92.58 per cent have their full results released, while 38,087 candidates (7.42) per cent have their results released partially.

Mr. Oloyede lamented that the examination body lost three of its officers last year as a result of attack from candidates who were bent on perpetrating examination malpractices, but assured that WAEC has put a better security arrangements in place to prevent a re-occurrence.

He explained that the various reports on the malpractice cases in the November/December 2004 WASSCE examination have been compiled and will be presented to the Nigeria examinations Committee of WAEC while the committee's decision will be communicated to the affected candidates at the appropriate time.

Danfodio varsity to offer engineering courses

The Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto is to run engineering courses in the next few years.

Declaring the institution's intention to establish the faculty of engineering, its vice-chancellor, Professor Tijani Bande confirmed that with the demand for new technological inventions increasing by the day, it has become necessary for the university to consider offering some engineering courses to meet both local and national technological needs.

According to him, the programme would commence in the next three or four years "because we do not want to rush to have one until we are sure we can deliver."

Professor Bande said there was nothing wrong in taking time to prepare for a very good investment just like the way the university did in the case of its medicine faculty which is today producing quality graduates

From Aminu Mohammed, Regional Editor, (Sokoto)

who are performing very well in the global market.

The vice-chancellor lamented that there are a lot of diploma holders in engineering courses who could not further their studies for lack of space, adding that by running some engineering courses at the university, those from the catchments area states would be able to actualise their dreams.

He said, already the catchments area states of Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina and Zamfara have all shown interest in assisting to establish the engineering faculty.

Professor Bande however said universities like Bauchi, Kano and ABU, Zaria, are already offering engineering courses and are doing well, "but setting up one in Sokoto

would further help in enrolling more students."

According to him, the catchments area states are new focusing on the training of physics, mathematics and science teachers without which "you cannot have a good programme for engineering in terms of students."

"With the efforts being taken by the catchments states and even nationally, we will have more and more demands for the faculty of engineering sciences which we will take as a challenge because pharmacy also started like that, where we have the faculty of medicine without a pharmaceutical science programme, but today we have some of the best graduates in the country."

He however assured that the faculty of pharmaceutical sciences would soon be a reality as funds for the buildings have been budgeted while the N250 million voted in the 2004 Appropriation Act for the constitution of a library "is a major milestone in the history of the university."

Speaking on cultism,

Professor Bande claimed that "for now we have no room for cultists but I am not saying cultism cannot take place in our university, but we are in contact with the security agents on regular basis to make sure that we check this menace."

The vice-chancellor pointed out that universities are meant for youths to be trained for the future and not to become bandits and frown at the rampant cases of cultists harassing vice chancellors, lecturers and examination officers for grades they do not deserve.

He however agreed that despite some of these ugly cases like students cultism, Nigerian graduates are still the best in Africa going by the demand for them in some African countries.

"In fact, I used to worry about the quality of Nigerian graduates academically until I left this country for an international assignment for a period of four years. That was when I knew we have quality graduates because the demand for them was very high and they always perform very well," the vice-chancellor said.

Fed Poly Idah introduces new dress code for students

The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, is to introduce a new dressing code for students in its bid to restore sanity to the institution.

Rector of the institution, Prof. Joseph Ndanusa Egila who disclosed this in an address at the 18th matriculation ceremony of the polytechnic said the new dress code for the institution has become necessary following reported cases of harassment of female students because of their indecent dressing.

Lamenting how decency had been thrown to the winds by students, Prof. Egila said the ugly phenomenon has become a threat to peace and stability on campus and that efforts would be made to restore the much cherished moral values through necessary

By Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Correspondent (Lokoja)

laws.

He therefore urged students of the polytechnic to acquaint themselves with new approved dress code which takes effect from this academic session.

"We are more positioned to get rid of some unscrupulous elements who from time to time warm their ways into the institution to cause breach of peace," he stressed.

He commended the Kogi state governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris for his quick intervention in the wake of the crisis that led to the burning of vital section of the institution, saying that the timely intervention of the governor and the donation of three buildings to the polytechnic to replace the burnt structures has gone a long way to give the entire community hope to move forward.

The polytechnic

matriculated about 3,500 students for this academic session.

ANCOPSS president charges stakeholders on funding

Governments at all levels in the country have been charged to give priority to the education sector by providing all the necessary facilities in order to enhance a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere in Nigerian schools.

This was made known by the national president of the All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS), Mr. N.E. Olisah in Gusau, the Zamfara state capital.

Mr. Olisah who was in Gusau to attend the national executive meeting of the ANCOPSS which was held at

Gusau, stated that the standard of education in the country needs to be improved in the interest of both the government and the people.

According to the national president, there is also the need for all the stakeholders in the sector to ensure the maintenance of the existing infrastructural facilities in all the schools.

He also explained that stakeholders in the education sector such as PTA, old students association, multi-national companies, philanthropists, financial houses and other NGOs should be encouraged to

collaborate in the provision and maintenance of infrastructure in schools.

Mr. Olisah further stated that the inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities in the nation's schools, like classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshops and hostel accommodation as well as water and electricity supply has resulted in poor teaching conditions in the various institutions of learning in the country.

"Even the already existing ones are much insufficient and poorly maintained, thus aggravating the deteriorating conditions of these facilities," he added.



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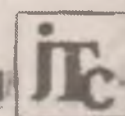
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ABUJA TRUST

World Bank grants N455m to FCT Fadama project

Impressed with the performance of the FCT Fadama Development Project, the World Bank is to disburse N455 million to boost the implementation of the project in the territory.

Dr Sidi Jammeh, head of the World Bank delegation, which visited the FCT Fadama Development Project office in Gwagwalada, said the decision to increase funding for the project, was due to the success recorded so far.

Jammeh said the increased funding would empower more farmers, hunters, fisher folk, widows, orphan and women to engaged in agricultural activities.

He said the funds would be distributed to Fadama Development Associations in

all the six area councils in the Territory, adding that the release of N455 million was part of the N1 billion proposed for the project.

The economist said 10 fadama development areas had been demarcated in the six area councils.

He said that the project, which was funded from a 100 million dollar World Bank credit, had been further divided into Fadama community associations.

Jammeh added that 47 local development plans formulated by the fadama community associations are also to be funded from the credit facility.

Jammeh explained that under the project, communities develop the plan and the World Bank through the FCT Fadama project, provide money to actualise the plan.

In his remark, the FCT coordinator of the Fadama development project, Mr Mike Uwazie, said the success so far recorded was due to the commitment of facilitator posted to the area councils.

Uwazie said the development plans covered areas such as machines for rice and cassava processing and other facilities needed by farmers.



Mallam Nasir el-Rufai

Displaced Wuse Market traders relocate to Herbert Macaulay Way

Sacked traders from the old Wuse Market in the Federal Capital Territory have begun the sale of their goods at the bus stops located along Herbert Macaulay Street, the main commercial transport route in the city. Our correspondent who passed through the main thoroughfare found several items, such as shoes, clothes, perfumes, and wristwatches spread on the pedestrian lane while buyers were seen purchasing items of their choice.

Speaking with correspondent, a trader, Abdullahi Shuaibu, expressed happiness over the 'new site'. According to him, he sells more goods along the road than when he was at his demolished container at the old market. He revealed that he sells goods worth N3, 000 daily.

Another trader, Mr. Alabi, said he chose to sell at the bus

By Maimuna Yusuf, Reporter, Abuja

renting a shop at either Utako or Dei-Dei was too expensive for him to pay. Also Mama Bose, a hairdresser, who manages her business under a small canopy, said she plaits a minimum number of six people daily.

However, when *Abuja Trust* asked some of the traders about the possibility of the task force of the Abuja

Environment Protection Board (AEPB) descending on them, they responded that they were prepared to quit the premises as most of their goods were portable.

This development was as a result of last three weeks' demolition of illegal structures at the old Wuse Market by the authorities of the Department of Development Control of the defunct MFCT.

Ex-policeman bags 3 months jail for possessing fire arms

Magistrates' Court sitting at Jabi in Abuja has sentenced a 23-year-old ex-police officer, Sani Bello, to three months' imprisonment for unlawful possession of firearms. The offence is contrary to section 28 of the Fire Arms Act, cap 148, laws of the federation.

According to the First Information Report (FIR), Bello was on January 21st

By Ekanem Bassey Eyo, Intern

in charge of Dutse Alhaji police station, ASP Elisha Atikinpan and his team in possession of one locally made pistol and three rounds of live ammunition, which during investigation, he (Sani) could not give any satisfactory account of the said pistol.

When the case came up for hearing, the accused

By Nasir Imam, Property and Environment Editor Mallam Nasir el-Rufai.

The chairman of the committee, Hon. Philip T. Aduda, who presented the budget proposal to the House of Representatives, said the total revenue projection stood at N48.44 billion, while recurrent expenditure was N16.61 billion.

Hon. Aduda said that the secretariat of the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory has been allocated almost N2.29 million, while the total projection for capital expenditure was N32.31 billion. He said that since the FCT occupies a strategic position in the socio-political landscape of Nigeria, 'we must adopt new trends towards improving budget practices, especially towards the treatment of expenditure which requires the collective

action of policy makers'.

Hon. Aduda prayed that the executive will provide valuable information on the format of the budget to members of the House which will provide the preliminary revenue and expenditure profile and support. He added that his committee intended to move towards refocusing its *modus operandi* on its budget procedure, while the process of formulation under the new system would primarily focus on policy thrust and sorting of the various allocations into priority categories that would impact on the lives of the people.

The budget estimates, the

chairman said, would be subjected to debates with a view to finding the best means of adopting a good budget.

"In the process of fine-tuning the budget, the committee shall harmonise efforts and systems that will not only minimise conflicts, but ensure an acceptable equilibrium between the two perspectives," the chairman said.

Hon. Aduda urged the FCT ministry to approach the budget exercise with the intention to share data, experiences and recommendations freely, even in the face of contrasting views.

Soldiers beat police inspector, take him away inside car booth

An unidentified police inspector who is also the transport officer of the police headquarters (Louis Edet House), Abuja, was yesterday mercilessly beaten up by a detachment of uniformed soldiers attached to the Military Pensions Board, Wuse Zone 3, Abuja.

Trouble began when about six policemen arrested a man at Wuse Zone 3 on an allegation of theft. He was however released when he was identified to be a staff of the Military Pensions Board.

But shortly after his release, he left and returned in

By Abbas Abdullah, NYSC, Abuja

car occupied by armed soldiers, who at once swooped on the crowd who had gathered at the scene and caught the police inspector, while the other policemen ran away. He was thoroughly beaten by the soldiers, before he was eventually dumped in the booth of the Toyota saloon car and driven to an undisclosed destination.

The crowd hailed the soldiers' action, chanting: 'power pass power,' 'soldiers pass police,' 'fire pass fire,'



It is business as usual under a bridge along Herbert Macaulay Way in Wuse Zone 6, Abuja. On top of the bridge exists a bus stop and a market which sprang up early this week.

KANO TRUST

KNSG seeks WHO, UNICEF's assistance on mosquito control

Kano state government has made a passionate plea on the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations children Fund (UNICEF) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to offer appropriate assistances for the prevention, control and management of mosquito vector that bedevilled the state.

Governor Ibrahim Shekarau who made the appeal while Kunching Vector and mosquito control programme, observed that participation of these international organisations will play a significant role towards total mosquitoes that have been giving a sleepless nights to the people.

He acknowledged the global humanitarian services rendered by the organisations saying it has negatively, impact on the lives of African countries, and asked them to extend same to the Kano communities.

The state chief executive explanation that the programme was a practice ini-

Board establishes tax academy in Kano

A tax academy will be established in Kano by the Federal Board of Internal Revenue, the Chairperson, Joint Tax Board, Mrs Ifueko Omoigui, has said.

Omoigui said in Kano when she visited the Commissioner for Finance, Alhaji Musa Shanono, that the academy would improve tax administration in the three tiers of government.

She said the Board decided to establish the academy in Kano because of the state's leading commercial position and because of measures introduced by the state to enhance its revenue generation.

She explained that the academy was to offer various courses on tax administration and generation for all categories of revenue staff to update their skills.

The chairperson, however, appealed to the state government to improve on funding to the board and make it more autonomous.

Responding, the commissioner pledged the state government's support, adding that all necessary facilities would be provided for the successful take-off of the academy. He advised the board to study and address the issue of multiple taxation, "which is causing a lot of concern to both authorities

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru
Correspondent Kano

tiative unveiled to rid the breeding grounds of mosquito, saying it was a clear signal of government zeal to do away with predicament militating against the welfare of its populace.

Also speaking, the state commission for environment, Alhaji Kabiru A. Bichi, conceded that mosquito vector has caused series of disease to the people, saying malaria and yellow fever are not the only ones inflicted by the insect.

He maintained that the establishment of refuse management and sanitation broad (REMASAB) determination connected with government environment so as to quell the spread of mosquitoes.

The commissioner

pointed out that government has spent huge amount of money for the purchase of mosquito spraying machines and other insecticide for the success of the programme, saying the health status of the state will be overhauls.

In his remark, the Kano Alhaji Ado Bayero, called on the people to desist from indiscriminate refuse dump, and ensure cleanliness of their environment.

The emir observed that the vector and mosquito control programme could only be actualised if people slumped all acts capable of making enabling atmosphere for the breeding grounds of mosquito, just as he solicited the support the people and stakeholders for the successful and hitch-free implementation of the programme.

NOA moves to promote community participation in education

The National Orientation Agency (NOA), in collaboration with the Jigawa Government, is to set up a platform to promote community participation in education.

The state's NOA Director, Hajiya Tani Umar, said in Kazaure, when she visited the Ministry for Basic Education, that increasing access to education was the main focus of the agency.

She explained that the NOA, in collaboration with an NGO called Children of the World Foundation (CWF), was working toward promoting community participation in the management of education.

"NOA has worked out a programme aimed at thrusting the responsibility and ownership of the tools for basic education to commu-

nities," she said.

Umar said the programme was geared toward increasing educational opportunities and harmonising the socialisation process of children within the community.

The programme, she said, would basically focus on public awareness and encouraging community participation to raise standard in the sector.

The Jigawa Commissioner for Basic Education, Alhaji Lawan Danzomo, said the state's policy on education was initiated to empower youths "and drastically reduce street begging".

He urged the agency to evolve a programme that would facilitate effective mobilisation of the communities toward promoting the UBE programme.

Security guards nab fake doctor

Security guards at the Murtala Mohammed Specialist Hospital, Kano, nabbed a suspected fake doctor in the hospital on Monday.

The suspected fake doctor, who gave his name as Dr Ismaila Sadiq, 31, was apprehended when the hospital security suspected that something was amiss in his demeanour.

An eyewitness told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that Sadiq was dressed like a doctor and entered the hospital with a female patient whom he pretended to be treating.

The eyewitness said Sadiq had collected N17,000

ing her to the hospital where he was nabbed while roaming around the premises.

The suspected fake doctor was then taken to the office of the Chief Medical Director, where he confessed that he was not a doctor.

He also told newsmen that he was not a doctor, but a one-time medical student who dropped out of Bayero University, Kano.

"Although I received the patient's money, I am not a doctor and I am not working here," he said.

The Chief Medical Director, Dr Suleiman Wali, confirmed the story, saying the hospital management would hand him over to the police



Milk Maid dancers of Kano performing at a function...recently.

Excessive heat worries Dutse residents

Excessive heat coupled with frequent power outage now make life uncomfortable for the residents of Dutse, the Jigawa capital.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that the heat, normally a geographical feature of the area "has risen to its peak with the temperature fluctuating between 37 and 40 degrees centigrade".

The hot condition being experienced in the Dutse has forced families to sleep outside in spite of the large number of mosquitoes, which make sleeping impossible.

NAN reports that the problem had been compounded by the epileptic power supply, which has also made life unbearable, both at home and in the offices. Residents are now forced to suspend their daily activities until when the heat subsides in the evenings, while others seek shelter under trees.

Meanwhile, workers in government offices use manual fans in a bid to make themselves comfortable.

Malam Aminu Isa, a trader, told NAN that it was

becoming extremely difficult for him to carry on with his business, due to the harsh weather condition.

Hauwa Abdullahi and Malam Yakubu, who corroborated Isa, said the heat had caused heavy drain on their pockets as they spent more money buying water to drink.

Meanwhile, the state government has embarked on

mass vaccination of the people against possible outbreak of measles and Cerebro Spinal Meningitis. (CSM).

The Commissioner for Health in Jigawa, Alhaji Muktari Birniwa, said the state government had earmarked N16 million for the vaccination exercise and was targeting some 1.1 million people.

FRSC opens mini number plate plant

From Ahmed Abubakar
Reporter with Agency report

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), in conjunction with the Joint Tax Board (JTB) has opened a mini embossing number plate plant in Kano.

The plant which is one of its eleven proposed kind to be established across the country has the objective of serving as number plate replacement centre for motorists whose vehicle or motorcycle number plates are either lost, damaged or defaced.

Speaking at the opening, in Kano on Monday, the Corps Marshal and Chief Executive of the FRSC, Maj-Gen. Haldy Hananiya, said the plant was part of the commission's decentralization policy of the National Vehicle Identification Scheme

(NVIS).

Represented by the HOD, Motor Vehicle Administration, Mr Frederic Oshinowo, Hananiya explained that the Lagos plant, which hitherto produced the number plates, was over-stretched.

He added that the Lagos plant had now become inadequate to satisfy the high demand, hence the decision to evolve a sustainable solution.

He disclosed that the plant in Kano would act as a number replacement centre, where motorists, whose vehicle or motorcycle number plates were lost, damaged or defaced, could get replacement.

The mini plant in Kano, he said, would also serve Zone One of the FRSC, comprising Kano, Katsina, Jigawa and Kaduna states, the corps marshal said.

He stated that similar mini plants would be established in all FRSC zones across the country to make number plates production more accessible to the people.

Hananiya commended the Kano State Government for its continued support to FRSC programmes and activities in the state.

The Kano State Governor, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Alhaji Faruk Yola, commended the FRSC

LG inaugurates education endowment fund

Kazaure Local Government Council in Jigawa State has inaugurated an endowment fund to promote science and technical education in the area.

The Chairman of the council, Alhaji Sabi'u Musa, said in Kazaure on Monday that the council had disbursed N6.8 million in the payment of scholarship to 240 students in the area.

He explained that the fund would assist indigent students in tertiary institutions, adding that the N6.8 million, paid in the first phase

He noted that those pursuing degree courses would receive N20,000 each, while medical students would get N24,000.

The chairman reiterated the council's resolve to support students in furthering their education through providing financial support.

The council, he said, had set up modalities to promote science and technical education through school rehabilitation and improved funding.

Musa advised students to register with the fund while also improving their academic

EKO TRUST



Choir members of the Apostolic Faith, Lagos entertaining guests during a concert in honour of Rev. Darrel Lee, superintendent-General of the Apostolic Faith World Wide at Anthony Village, Lagos...recently. Pic: Oladipupo Odunmwa

Suit: LASG chides AD factions over additional councils

Lagos State government on Tuesday dismissed plans by the Senator Mojisoluwa Akinfenwa faction of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) to engage it in a legal duel over the creation of 37 additional councils as an exercise in futility.

By Oluwade Bajulaiye, Correspondent, Lagos

According to Alake, the assassinated attorney general and Justice minister rebuffed Akinfenwa's desperate lobby to secure his endorsement as the AD gubernatorial aspirant in Osun State in 1999.

"Instead, Chief Ige asked Chief Bisi Akande to run for the office even though Chief Akande was reluctant," Alake said.

Alake alleged that Ige only conceded a senatorial seat to Akinfenwa when he (Ige) was sure of monitoring Akinfenwa's activities at the upper chamber of the National Assembly.

In a statement issued by its Information and Strategy commissioner, Dele Alake, said the faction has no *locus standi* to institute legal action against the state for the simple reason that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) gave official recognition to Chief Bisi Akande as the national chairman of the AD.

Alake accused followers of what he called the "self appointed leader of the AD" of being fifth columnists and willing tools in the hands of the rival Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Said Alake; "It is important to inform unsuspecting members of the public that this faction of fifth columnists is aware that it has no *locus standi* to institute any such case.

"If decision is part of the ground plan of the Peoples Democratic Party which is the financier of the faction, to destabilise the AD and the only government under its control in the federation."

The commissioner assured that the Lagos State government would give whatever it takes to scuttle any attempt by the Akinfenwa faction to wage war against the wishes of Lagosians.

Said he, "The decision of Akinfenwa to wage war against the masses of Lagos State in their just and popular struggle for councils will be resisted with all the legitimate resources that our constitutional democracy can provide."

He counselled Akinfenwa to sum up courage and declare publicly for the PDP rather than deceive his followers that he belonged to the AD.

Alake alleged that the unfolding development was a confirmation of late Chief Bola Ige's description of Akinfenwa as a treacherous politician.

Govt establishes monitoring c'ttee on commercial vehicles

Reforms in the public transportation sector continued on Tuesday in Lagos with the state government inaugurating a five-member committee to monitor the activities of commercial vehicle operators within the state.

The committee, which was given the responsibility to restore sanity to the parks, would checkmate the activities of social miscreants, touts and other undesirable elements who harass and extort money from law abiding residents at bus stops and motor parks.

The inauguration of the committee by Transport commissioner, Muiz Banire, followed the streamlining of the various transport unions to two - National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN).

According to Banire, the Tinubu administration would not relent until it succeeded in bringing Lagos back from the brink of social degeneration to live to its billing as the centre of excellence.

Said Banire, "The chairman and members of this committee are also to ensure that the sale of alcoholic drinks and narcotic drugs under any guise in the motor parks is totally eradicated.

"There is no gainsaying that most of the accidents that occur on our roads are due to human errors which are mostly the result of judgment taken under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Banire directed that the collection of union dues by transport operators be limited to the parks, warning that collection of dues at the various bus stops would henceforth attract sanctions.

He informed that law enforcement agents have been put on alert to apprehend and prosecute erring operators,

urging officials of the two recognised unions represented in the committee to spread the message among their members.

"Government shall no longer tolerate this act of indiscipline that is already having adverse effect on the traffic in the state as commuter bus drivers now resort to picking passengers on the expressway in their attempt to escape from union members who extort money from

Lagos to spend N518m on abattoir project

The yearly ministerial press briefing kicked off on Tuesday in Lagos with the state government speaking of plans to splash about N518 million on the rehabilitation of its abattoir and lairage complex at Agege.

State commissioner for Agriculture and Cooperatives, Mr. Olusanya Kaoli who dropped the hint said the government has shut no fewer than 20 illegal slaughter slabs across the state with a deadline to phase out the unhygienic mode of transporting meat in Lagos by the end of June this year.

According to Olusanya, a private company, Messrs Harmony Abattoir Management Services Limited, has been granted an 8-year franchise to manage the sprawling complex, the rehabilitation of which is expected to gulp N260 million.

The commissioner also named Messrs Idrissu Yaro and sons as the new management in charge of the animal market on which about N258 million would be spent to enable it measure to international standard.

Olusanya noted that the complex commissioned in 1992 at a cost of N600 million was in a state of disrepair when the Tinubu administration assumed office six years ago.

FG issues relocation letter to 1004 estate residents

The federal government may have succeeded partially, in breaking the struggle by residents of the 1004 estate on the highbrow Victoria Island, Lagos to retain their respective apartments as some of them had received letters of relocation.

The estate had been sold by the federal government to a consortium of buyers coordinated by the UACN property Development Company and consortiums of firms who were operating

under the auspices of 1004 estates Nigeria Limited amidst protests by the resident.

Our correspondent gathered at the Lagos office of the federal ministry of Housing and Urban Development that some of the residents of the estate who signified interest to be relocated were issued forms, which they filled.

An official of the ministry who spoke on conditions of anonymity said some of them were actually issued letters of relocations and had been fixed up in some federal government estates in the state, which were not affected by the sale.

Attempts to find out details of the relocation process from the office of the controller of Housing and Urban Development were not successful on Tuesday, as officials there said the officer would not grant any interview on the matter.

The chairman of the residents association, Mr. Abdul Kohol however told our correspondent in an interview on Tuesday that the measure adopted by

government was most unfair.

Kohol wondered why government did not come up with a more transparent and proper procedure in relocating residents of the estate instead of adopting a divide and rule tactics.

Although Kohol could not confirm whether those who had received their letters of relocation actually lobbied for it but insisted that all legitimate and legal occupants of the estate, deserved to be properly relocated through an accepted procedure.

He said information at the disposal of the association had it that most of those who were relocated were working with government agencies, which had completely complied with the monetisation policy.

He said, "The exercise as it being presently done is to the wrong people. The position of the association is that every legal occupant deserved to be relocated."

Kohol urged government to come up with details of the entire process so that others would know their fates especially if it was being done in phases.

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TIME: 9.00 A.M. EACH DAY

CHAIRMAN OF THE OCCASION
ENGR. (DR.) NURU A. YAKUBU
Executive Secretary, NBTE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
PROF. I. B. OSAZUWA (A.B.U. ZARIA)

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THE JIGAWA STATE GOVERNMENT

APPRECIATION

The Executive Governor of Jigawa state His Excellency Alhaji (Dr) Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, his government and the good people of the State wish to thank His Excellency the Executive Governor of Plateau State Chief Joshua Chibi Dariye, his government and the good people of the state for their warmth reception and brotherliness shown to our entourage during the conferment of the Doctorate Degree of Science by the University of Jos recently.

As we share a long standing history that has bonded the peoples of Jigawa and Plateau states, we on our side will continue to lead by example by ensuring stability, peace and cooperation as exemplified by your commendable and warmth reception accorded to us and our people.

I also wish to thank General Jerry Hussaini, Chief Solomon Iar, Alhaji Yahaya kwande, Turakin Jos, Alh. Shehu Ashaka, leaders of the Muslim community in Jos, The ECWA church president and others too numerous to mention.

Thank you all once again and may the almighty God continue to guide you and the good people of Plateau State as you continue to make the lives of your people better.

LONG LIVE JIGAWA STATE!

LONG LIVE THE PLATEAU!!

LONG LIVE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA!!!

SIGNED

His Excellency Governor (Dr) Ibrahim Saminu Turaki



His Excellency,
CHIEF JOSHUA CHIBI DARIYE
Executive Governor of Plateau State



Dr Ibrahim s Turaki
Executive Gov. Jigawa state

News



The Deputy-Governor of Nasarawa State, Malam Labaran Maku, discussing with the Commissioner of Commerce, Mrs. Dinatu Iwala (left), during the Nasarawa Special Day at the just-concluded Kaduna International Trade Fair, held recently.

Cross River needs N65m to complete electrification project

More than N5 billion is required by the Cross Rivers state government for the completion of the remaining electrification projects in the state. Governor Donald Duke stated this at the commissioning of the Etomi rural electrification project in Etung local government area of the state. According to

From Bassey Ita, Reporter (Calabar)

him, N1 billion will soon be released for the completion of some electricity projects in some communities of the state.

Duke emphasised the importance of electricity to economic development, saying such prompted the

state government to embark on general electrification of communities in the state. He promised to electrify all communities in the state by 2007. According to him, his administration was out to make the difference in terms of infrastructural provision to make the masses feel the impact of democracy.

He used the occasion to charge the youth of the state to be useful to themselves, and their various communities, as the provision of electricity should afford them the opportunity to go into small scale industries and become self-reliant.

The governor challenged them to always imbibe the positive side of development as the electricity comes with positive and negative influences. He also called the authorities of the communities to protect the electrical installations in their areas from vandals.

Show proof that the drugs are false

Judge tells NAFDAC

A federal high court presided over by Justice Adeniyi Ademola Adeto-kunboh has asked the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control's laboratory experts to come before the court and show the results of the laboratory tests confirming that drugs produced by one Mr. Nonye Iwunze were fake.

The 26-year-old drug dealer was arraigned late last year before the court on a two-count charge of illegal manufacture and possession of two different brands of fake and counterfeit drugs. The suspect was arrested by NAFDAC regulatory officers at his residence in Bachalawa quarters, Kano, which he allegedly used for producing fake *barbicillin ampicillin* syrup and *rampicillin ramsey* syrup (powders). The act, according to the agency's public relations officer, Abubakar Jimoh, in a statement made available to *Daily Trust*, contravenes section 1(a) of the counterfeit and fake drugs and unwholesome processed foods (miscellaneous provisions) Act cap. C34, of the Federation of

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter

same Act.

Though Mr. Iwunze pleaded guilty to the two count charge with no counsel to represent him, Justice Adetokunboh said, "even though the case against the accused has been proved beyond reasonable doubt, there was the need for NAFDAC laboratory experts to come before the court and show results of the laboratory tests confirming the drugs products to be fake."

Earlier, the prosecuting counsel, Mr. Kingsley Ejiofor, urged the court to commence trial of the case since the accused had pleaded guilty to the charge, adding that there were six prosecution witnesses to testify against the accused and tendered before the court samples of the alleged fake drugs and materials used by the accused for faking them.

Justice Adetokunboh adjourned the case till March 3, 2005 for possible ruling, and ordered that the accused be remanded in Kano prison. The accused, it was gathered, risks a maximum of five years jail term or payment of N5m

Be prudent, accountable, Agabi tells LG chairmen

The special adviser to the president on Ethics, Good Governance and Human Rights, Kanu Agabi, has urged all local government chairmen in the country to be prudent and accountable in running the affairs of their various local governments. He was speaking during the opening session of a national seminar for the leadership of local government councils organised by his office. He observed that many local government council chairmen have been accused of corruption, and urged them to have a change of heart.

"In the last six years," he said, "no local government council in Nigeria has collected less than N2b revenue allocation from the federal government", and expressed sadness that most of them cannot give account of the fund.

Prof Jerry Gana, the special adviser to the president on Political Matters, who also spoke at the seminar, which has "Powers, Finances and Good Governance in Local Government Administration," as its theme, told the local government chairmen to avoid electoral malpractices and respect the principles of

By Anas A. Galadima, Reporter (Business)

democracy.

In his words, "Please do not take a mandate that is not yours because you will not have the legitimacy to govern and you will not get respect from the people," he said.

Answering questions from newsmen, the president of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Bayer Dzeremo, said he acknowledged that corruption was prevalent in local government areas, but believed that some of the chairmen were prudent.

Dutse emirate distributes N125m Zakkat to the needy

The emir of Dutse, Dr Nuhu Muhammadu Sanusi, has flagged off the 1425 A. H. (2004) *zakkat* distribution exercise at Danfusan village of Kiyawa local government area of Jigawa state with N125m worth of goods distributed to the needy in the emirate.

While declaring the distribution open, the emir said the exercise was in fulfillment of God's order. Over 17,000 beneficiaries will benefit from the gesture.

He urged Muslims to be strict in the observance of Allah's orders, adding that *zakkat* was an institution established by Allah to

From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent. (Dutse)

bridge the gap between the have's and the have-not's. He stated that the exercise would go along way in ensuring peace, stability and harmonious relationship within communities.

"In the last few years of the beginning of *zakkat* collection, we have achieved a lot in the uplifting of the people's welfare and entrenching the fundamental pillars of Islamic pillars," he said.

While lamenting over the refusal of some people to give out money for *zakkat*, he reminded the rich that *zakkat* was ordained by Allah to maintain justice and ensure security in society.

A total of 41,661 beneficiaries qualified for the distribution this year; amongst them were 17,181 less privileged; 10,716 wayfarers, 9050 destitute, and 4,714 committee collection members.

According to the statistics of the property and money collected during the 1425 A.H. Islamic calendar, 35,206 bundles of millets were collected, 15169 guinea corn bundles, 209 bags of groundnut, 15 bags of beans as well as 13 bags of maize. Additionally, 170 goats, and 404 cows among others would be distributed to the beneficiaries.

The *zakkat* collection, which began 4 years ago, had raked in N57m in 2001 and N125m in 2005.

Earlier in his speech, Governor Ibrahim Turaki of Jigawa state, represented by the Kiyawa local government chairman, Alhaji Adamu Idris Andaza, described the contribution of the emir towards establishing the institution of *zakkat* as commendable.

He therefore called on the people to pay their dues as a way of ensuring purification and justice in the society.

Osun police arrest 16 policemen over extortion

The Osun state police command has arrested 16 police men from various parts of the state over extortion of money from motorists. The commissioner of police in the state, Alhaji Audu Abubakar who disclosed this while parading the erring officers, stated that the command would make flushing out of bad eggs in the force a continuous exercise.

According to the commissioner, the breakdown of those arrested indicated that one assistant superintendent of police and an inspector were involved. The police boss, who hinted that a sizeable number of

From Bisi Taiwo, Stringer (Osogbo)

the erring policemen ran away to evade arrest, said a dragnet had been set for them.

He said: "In all, a total sum of N15,325 was recovered from the culprits. It was concealed in either their vehicles, grass verges, nearby bushes, or in their possession at their duty posts.

"At the end of the raid, a total of ten policemen with some of their cohorts who took to their heels were caught red-handed extorting money from motorists. Efforts are being made to apprehend the fleeing policemen."

Abubakar appealed to members of the public, especially commercial motor drivers, travellers, private motorists and other road users to cooperate with the command in giving useful information that would lead to arrest of corrupt policemen on the high ways as well as on those at the police stations where complaint were being received and investigated.

He warned policemen to desist from extorting money from motorists under the guise of checking vehicle particulars, cautioning that "our main concern is to track down criminals on the highways".

Police ban private security guards from carrying firearms

Police ban private security guards from carrying firearms.

The police have banned private security guards from carrying arms. The inspector general of police, Mr Sunday Ehindero, announced this in Abuja while receiving the regional vice president of ASIS Security International, Dr. Ona Ekhomu.

Ehindero said the decision was taken to check the lawlessness in the society and the misuse of such arms by unauthorised persons. He recalled that when the U.S. was faced with a similar problem in the early '70s, the late President Richard Nixon's government had to withdraw arms from unauthorised individuals in

had recommended to the highest authority that private security outfits should not be allowed to carry arms.

To bring back the lost glory of the Nigeria Police Force, Ehindero said his administration had fashioned out a 10-point programme of action.

Responding, Dr. Ekhomu stressed the need for the police to protect freedom of speech and worship so as to guarantee Nigerians hope of a better life. He said that no nation could move forward with a police with a tinted image, and advised that the image of the police must be salvaged to restore public confidence in it.

NAN gathered that ASIS is

CORRIGENDUM

RE: HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ABUJA

The public hearing on "A Bill for An Act to provide for the establishment of Nigerian National Commission for United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the purpose connected therewith (HB98)" has fixed 3rd and 4th March, 2005.

We are very sorry for all the previous misinformation of the date

News

Adefarati solicits Yoruba, North-East alliance

The former governor of Ondo state, Chief Adebayo Adefarati, has called for cooperation between the South-West and the North-East, saying that both zones share things in common.

Adefarati was speaking on Tuesday when he paid a courtesy visit to governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim in Damaturu, Yobe state.

Adefarati who recalled that the presentation of a single presidential candidate in 1999 by an alliance between the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and the ANPP, shows that the parties share common interest, said that a team

From Isa Umar Gusau, Damaturu

work between the south-west and the North-East would enhance the relationship that exist between the two zones.

Adefarati also noted that a bond exists between the Yorubas and the Kanuris from Borno and Yobe states, and called for stronger ties.

Responding, governor Bukar Ibrahim said that the South-West and the North-East geo-political zones have a long standing political relationship.

He said that a strong bond exists especially between the Yorubas and the people of Borno and Yobe states.

Governor Ibrahim noted that Yorubas and Kanuris have shared the same political parties, adding that the North East and South west will continue to work for political unity in the interest of the nation.

Meanwhile, some analysts suspect that Adefarati's visit may have to do with consultations towards the 2007 elections, even though both the visitor and the host did not make that clear.

It should be recalled that Borno state, before the creation of Yobe state, had a large population of defunct UPN followers, then dominated by people of the South-West, under the leadership of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo.



Member house of representatives, Hon. Dahiru Bornoma (with white dress) commissioning a borehole at Toungo ward, Yola South local government Adamawa State during his visit constituency tour and commissioning of projects...recently.

2007: New group wants Ijaw as VP

A new group called Ijaw Vice president Project [IVPP], is calling for the next vice president come 2007 to be an Ijaw and has begun campaigns to realise the project as against the current demands for the zoning of the presidency to the south-south.

The publicity secretary of the group, Mr. Datson Nemieboka, told *Daily Trust* that the group has realized that it would be difficult for the south-south to produce the president as is requested now and now considers the vice presidential position as a stepping stone.

According to him, the

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani, Bureau chief, Port Harcourt

Ijaws are the fourth largest ethnic group in the country and deserves to produce the vice president for the first time. He said the group has studied the present political equations resulting from the zoning of the presidency to the north by the two major political parties, the PDP and the ANPP and feels that the slot for the vice president which will naturally come to the south should be picked by the Ijaws.

Mr. Nemieboka said the group has started mobilizing to reach out to other parts of

the country and people to support the Ijaws.

He asked other parts of the south-south to support the project although he pointed out that the campaign was not an entirely south-south affair as the group will not mind if the vice president is from Ondo state where they are Ijaws. "What we want is an Ijaw vice president. We don't care where he comes from as far as he is an Ijaw man", he said.

On why the issue was not discussed at the recent Ijaw National Congress, the publicity secretary said that the congress was not a political forum and did not look at such issues, although he said the issue was taken up at individual levels.

The south south has been campaigning for the position of the next and has gone ahead to form the South-South Peoples Assembly (SSPA), to forge a common front to realise the scheme.

Hausa/Fulani community seeks speedy selection of Mambilla chief

The Hausa/Fulani community in Sardauna local government area of Taraba state have called on the Taraba state government to urgently fill the vacant stool of the Chief of Mambilla because of the positive role the traditional institutions plays in fostering inter ethnic harmony and peaceful co-existence among the people.

This statement formed part of a 14 point communiqué issued at the end of a one day Hausa/Fulani summit on peace and development held in Gembu, Sardauna local government area.

To reduce the level of unemployment, the summit noted the economic potentials of the Mambilla Plateau and the need to create an enabling environment to harness these resources and establish industries in order to solve the problem.

The summit noted with concern the alarming rate of educational retardation amongst youths in the community due to the cost and distance of institutions of higher learning and urged government to assist by establishing institutions of higher learning in the area to absorb the youths who have difficulty securing admissions into tertiary institutions outside that area.

It called on the leadership of the Sardauna local government council to reflect the spirit of federal character in

From: Ado Adamu, *Stringer* (Jalingo)

local government to ensure adequate representation of all communities.

In order to avoid friction between farmers and grazers, the summit called on pastoralists to imbibe the modern system of livestock production and herd management. It also noted the level of overgrazing the range land and depletion of pasture particularly during the dry season and called on government to support the establishment of fodder banks, pasture development and environmental protection for peace, stability and economic development. The community also wants the government to allocate to them, a substantial portion of the ecological funds to address the environmental degradation in Sardauna local government area.



NARTO issues 14-day ultimatum over diesel price

By Austine Odo, Senior Labour reporter

The National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), has handed a 14-day ultimatum to the Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC), and the Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulatory Agency (PPPRA), to reverse the N12.00 increase in ex-depot price of Automotive Gas oil (AGO) otherwise known as diesel. The increase has jerked up the price from the former N41 per litre.

Addressing a news conference in Abuja yesterday, the national operations coordinator of NARTO, Alhaji Lawal Isa, said following in national executive council meeting of NARTO held in Kano on February 19, 2005, the association after rejecting the price increase, resolved to issue the 14-day ultimatum which took effect from yesterday.

He said the association's national secretariat had been mandated by the meeting which was attended by 36 branch chairmen and leaders of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), to put all machineries in place and act within the law to ensure a reversal of the increase failure of which all members will be mobilised to withdraw their services nationwide with effect from a date to be announced by the national secretariat.

NARTO warned that the N12 increase per litre of AGO by the PPPMC is bound to jerk up the cost of vehicle operations by more than 12 percent because of the multiplier effect as this would be reflected in the prices of food-stuffs and general commodities in the market.

In addition, Alhaji Isa said the latest increase is a gross

violation of the basic principle of deregulation as diesel had been deregulated more than two years ago, just as it would nullify the efforts of the Senator Ibrahim Mantu palliative committee to cushion the pains of previous fuel price increases.

NARTO also called for the scrapping of the PPPRA which they allege was responsible for the current price increase, saying that to feign ignorance of the increase was hypocritical and lacked transparency.

Describing the PPPRA as an almost unnecessary agency which needs to be replaced with a more responsible organisation which would ensure a level playing ground for all operators in the downstream sector of the petroleum industry, Alhaji Isa said, NARTO has sufficient evidence to prove that the N12 per litre increase in the price of AGO was effected on the prompting of the PPPRA and expressed readiness to challenge them to deny it.

A source at the NNPC however told *Daily Trust* that NARTO was not supposed to direct their protest at the PPMC but the IPMAN because at N41.50k, the PPMC expected IPMAN to sell at around N50 but the price was above that, so, "we said rather than continue with this subsidy, let us review it since they were not delivering at prices they were supposed to deliver. They are not supposed to protest to the NNPC but to IPMAN."

The source however said it was expected of the PPPRA to enforce approved products prices, instead of what it is presently doing.

Narcotic boards warns Nigerians over Internet drug procurement

The International Narcotics Control Board yesterday alerted Nigeria on the emerging with procurement of drugs through internet pharmacies.

Speaking during the formal presentation of International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) report 2004, Dr. Philip Emafo said several billions of doses of medicine are sold illicitly on the internet every year, posing potential fatal health risks to consumers.

He said that unlicensed internet pharmacies routinely sell pharmaceutical preparations containing internationally controlled substances without required prescriptions.

He mentioned the drugs sold on the internet to include Otycodone, a potent opinion similar to heroin, stimulants such as amphetamine, benzodiazepine otherwise known as vallium and other potentially fatal substances such as fentanyl and sceobarbital.

According to him, unlicensed internet pharmacies require no prescription from their customers while they will sell the drugs to anyone including children.

He said, "often, the authenticity and quality of the drugs sold are questionable as counterfeit drugs are also

By Kemi Odedengbe, Judicial Editor

cent case, supplies for two internet pharmacies were illicitly manufactured in a clandestine laboratory."

Dr. Emafo said that "some countries seem to be unconcerned by this type of drug trafficking, while illegal shipment of psychotropic substances from an internet pharmacy in Pakistan to Switzerland and other European countries have so far not been investigated."

According to him, despite significant achievements, Africa remains a weak link in international drug control and called on the African governments to give higher priorities to addressing the drug problem in their countries.

In his address, the attorney general of the federation, Chief Akinfolu Oluyimi (SAN), said that fight against drug abuse and trafficking is one of the most important challenges of the globalising world.

He said "the drug dealers and traffickers who are often well ahead of the law enforcement agencies are getting more determined and better organised and more brazen international community should come closer to develop innovative, proactive and coordinated strategies to

LOSS OF ORIGINAL LAND DOCUMENTS

This is to inform the General Public, especially the Ministry of Lands Kaduna State of the loss of the original certificates of occupancy, rent fees, deeds and other attachments in respect of the following plots (a) KD 1920 (b) KD 3246 (c) NC 21699 belonging to Alhaji Dabo Aliyu of P. O. Box 7432 Kaduna. The three plots are in the following names (a) KD 1920 Compol Dabo Aliyu (b) KD 3246 M.B Ibrahim (c) NC 21699 A. Bello. If found

News

NBA seek policemen's arrest over Benue killing

The Benue state branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has risen against the police, demanding a full scale public investigation, and by extension the arrest and prosecution of its men responsible for the brutal murder of one Miss Suleyol Hiikyaa on February 20, in Makurdi.

Miss Hiikyaa, a 19 year old waitress at a pub in Makurdi, was shot dead by the patrol team of the Benue police command while she was being driven home after she had closed from work about past 10 pm, by her lover, Charlse Ibanga, son to Governor George Akume's chief security (police) officer. The command's public relations officer, Mr. Samuel Jinadu, explained that "the lovers were making love late night in the vehicle before the police killed one of them, suspecting them to be armed robbers."

The killing which generated widespread protest from youths and relatives of the deceased, also brought the NBA into legal action against the act.

• Describing the PPRO's

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

defence as "not only unreasonable and devoid of any merit, but lacking statutory or constitutional basis for the unlawful and illegal murder of Miss Hiikyaa," the NBA in a three paged statement signed by its secretary, Mr. J.S. Okutepa therefore demanded a full scale public investigation to be carried out in the circumstance that led to the act.

"Those who are responsible for the killing should be arrested, investigated and arraigned in a court of competent criminal jurisdiction to determine their guilt or otherwise," added the February 28 statement which was made available to *Daily Trust* yesterday.

The statement further described the PPRO defence as "contrary to and has the tendency of corrupting public morals," adding that it cannot be grounds for extrajudicial killing as done in the case of February 20.

It said though it (NBA) does not support the lovers in their alleged act which led

to the illegal act of the police patrol team, the NBA however expressed difficulties in marrying the act of love making and the theory of armed robbery.

It said the constitution guarantees the right of life to the deceased and that taking it has to follow the due process permitted by the same constitution or other statutory provisions.

Dariye: MBF criticizes London court over arrest warrant

The Middle-Belt Forum, Plateau state chapter, has described the warrant of arrest of Governor Joshua Dariye by London High Court as an assault on the sovereignty of Nigeria, even as it asserted that it is the state House of Assembly that should handle such issues affecting the state.

Addressing a press conference in Jos on Tuesday, the coordinator of the state chapter of the forum, Mr. Reuben Kutok, emphasised that if the governor has any case to answer, due process and rule of law should be followed, stressing "the Plateau state House of Assembly is the right structure to use in this case."

Mr. Kutok added, "we consequently take exception

The Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) Yobe state chapter has called for appointments of career staff of local government areas as directors of personnel management and head of departments in the administration of local government areas in Nigeria.

The call was made by the president of NULGE, Yobe state, Alhaji Ali Kolo, while making his remark at the 2nd "Quadremial State Delegates Conference" ceremony of NULGE, which took place on Monday in

NULGE wants career LG staff appointed DPM, HODs

From Isa Umar Gusau, Correspondent (Damaturu)

Damaturu. "Accordingly to the union, (NULGE) is calling on you (government) to consider henceforth the appointments of career local government staff as directors of personnel management, and

head of departments in all local governments," the NULGE president said.

Alhaji Kolo noted that such appointments of career staff of local government areas would address administrative problems faced in some local governments. "This will check the lapses that are experienced in local governments," he said.

He added that the union under the present state executives has recorded some achievements that aims at moving NULGE forward, having started their leadership at a time when some basic facilities were not at the disposal of the union.

"In line with our objectives, we obtained a piece of land and constructed the secretariat that was to be commissioned on Monday. We also obtained two utility vehicles and employed five workers to assist us in the day-to-day running of Yobe State NULGE affairs in addition to four corps members posted to the secretariat," the NULGE president stated.

Obasanjo lauds NSITF

President Olusegun Obasanjo Tuesday commended the board of the Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) for its outstanding performance.

At an audience with a delegation of the board led by the chairman and minister of Labour and Productivity, Dr. Hassan Lawal, at the state House, Abuja, the president particularly commended the fund's diversified investment portfolio and experience in pension fund administration.

"The NSITF has creditably acquitted itself" he said, adding that "it is nice to have a parastatals that is performing."

The managing director of NSITF, Alhaji Ahmed Rufai Mohammed, said that the fund has a total diversified

investment portfolio of over N40 billion in real estate, capital market and government bonds and treasuries.

He said that the fund would continue to develop mass housing projects for low income earners, and as well as to uphold the principles of accountability and transparency.

The managing director also said that the accounts of the fund are audited annually and published in the newspapers and posted on the internet, while contributors to its insurance scheme are paid their benefits within two weeks of application through the banks. Adding that currently, 2,700 beneficiaries were paid about N28 million monthly.



Gov. Joshua Dariye

Ethno-religious conflicts: US official tours N/East

Following ethno-religious crises that have bedevilled Nigeria, an official of the United States Embassy in Nigeria, has embarked on a tour of the North/Eastern states in the country, with a view to sourcing information for onward passage to the US authorities in Washington D.C.

Speaking to newsmen shortly after he paid a courtesy visit to Yobe state gov-

From Isa Umar Gusau, Correspondent (Damaturu)

into reporting issues that affect human rights and religious freedom, and the roles played by government in addressing ethno-religious issues.

The American who is the political officer of the United States Embassy, said it was part of his responsibilities to house a proper understand-

capital. Mr. Roesing noted that Yobe state was the area that is not well known to the United States of America, as such, the US Embassy political officer said that he was in Yobe state to learn about the happenings and people of the state.

Roesing said that the one-day-visit would provide him the opportunity of seeing things for himself so as to



NAMIS

NIGERIA AGRI MARKET INFORMATION SERVICE

RETAIL PRICES OF AGRI-INPUTS & PRODUCE

RETAIL PRICES OF AGRI-INPUTS AND PRODUCE (N/Unit) - 15th February 2005

(A) INPUTS:	Kano	Bauchi	Oyo	FCT	Adamawa	C/Rivers	Abia	Niger	Imo	Katsina
SEEDS (Kg)										
Maize (Hybrid)	140	150	100	150	125	140	140	148	148	140
Sorghum	75	85	-	80	60	-	90	80	-	60
Groundnut	90	99	130	120	140	130	130	85	130	60
Rice	95	150	120	170	65	100	115	100	125	100
FERTILIZERS (50Kg Bag)										
NPK 15-15-15	2400	2350	2300	2250	2350	2400	2450	2400	2700	2550
NPK 20-10-10	2220	2300	2400	2400	2350	2500	2400	2200	2850	2550
UREA	2350	2450	2300	2400	2350	2500	2500	2200	2850	2600
(B) COMMODITIES (Kg)										
Maize	43	44	35	41	32	50	-	40	40	40
Sorghum	40	50	65	54	32	85	-	40	-	45
Groundnut (shelled)	70	60	75	120	59	90	95	64	85	70
Rice Local (milled)	95	120	100	111	96	98	120	75	80	75
Yam	65	65	45	110	35	65	70	83	75	60
Cassava	45	35	40	45	42	25	21	50	30	80
Pepper (Dry)	90	90	80	72	103	90	90	105	52	95
Onion	45	45	55	71	45	65	75	48	65	50

INTERNATIONAL FERTILIZER PRICES - AS AT 11th February 2005 (FOB)

Fertilizer Type	Source	Price US\$/mt	Fertilizer Type	Source	Price US\$/mt
DAP - Bulk	Morocco	263 - 266	NPK - 16-16-16 (Bulk)	W Europe	230 - 240
"	Tunisia	250 - 255	Ammonium Sulphate	Black Sea	98 - 110
Urea - Prilled (Bulk)	Baltic	175 - 178	MOP - Bulk	NW Europe	135 - 165
"	Arabian Gulf	220 - 230	"	Israel	140 - 160
Urea - Granular (Bulk)	Arabian Gulf	215 - 220	"	Jordan	145 - 165
Urea - Prilled (Bagged)	Middle East (Arab Gulf)	230 - 235	"	Brazil	195 - 212

Source: IFDC



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

INVITATION FOR:

1. BIDS TO ACQUIRE ASSETS OF THE DEFUNCT FEDERAL URBAN MASS TRANSIT AGENCY (FUMTA) EARMARKED FOR SALE.
2. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI) TO LEASE AND OPERATE ON A LONG TERM BASIS, EXISTING FUMTA BUS TERMINALS IN ONITSHA, SANYO-IBADAN, KETU-LAGOS AND KADUNA.

The Federal Ministry of Transport, in fulfillment of its mandate to wind up the defunct Federal Urban Mass Transit Agency (FUMTA), hereby invites from reputable companies, Bids to purchase and acquire some of the movable assets of the defunct FUMTA and Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the Lease of FUMTA Bus Terminals in Onitsha, Sanyo-Ibadan, Ketu, Lagos and Kaduna.

MOVEABLE ASSETS:

These assets consist of different categories of assets as listed below, owned by the defunct (FUMTA), currently being wound up by the Federal Ministry of Transport in compliance with the decision of the Federal Government.

These moveable assets being put up for outright purchase and acquisition have been grouped into Lots. The Bids to be submitted by prospective bidders shall be in respect of all assets contained in each Lot.

LOT 1. FERRIES:

S/N	Name	Year of Acquisition	Engine Type	Sitting Capacity	Gross Tonnage	Hull	Location
1.	M/F Badagry	1989	Catapillar D3306	110 Passengers	76.24	Steel	Lagos
2.	M/F Yankari (Luxurious)	1989	Catapillar D3306	110 Passengers	76.24	Steel	Lagos
3.	M/F Ajuma	1990	Catapillar D3306	280 Passengers	92.67	Steel	Lagos
4.	M/F Nhali	1990	Catapillar D3306	280 Passengers	92.67	Steel	Lagos

LOT 2. BOATS (Water Buses):

S/N	Name	Year of Acquisition	Engine Type	Sitting Capacity	Hull	Location
1.	River Konshisha	1992	Yamaha M.E. (2)	30 Persons	Fibre Glass	Lagos
2.	River Beri	1992	Yamaha M.E. (2)	30 Persons	Fibre Glass	Lagos
3.	River Orashi	1992	Yamaha M.E. (2)	30 Persons	Fibre Glass	Lagos

LOT 3. SPARE PARTS FOR THE FOLLOWING BRANDS OF BUSES:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. Mercedes Benz MB1414 | d. Mercedes Benz MB608D | g. Bedford | j. Peugeot (Boxer) |
| b. Mercedes Benz MB809 | e. Mercedes Benz MB180 | h. Russian Bus | |
| c. Mercedes Benz MB0365 | f. Nissan Civilian | i. Workshop tools | |

All the Spare Parts are located in Kaduna, except those of the Peugeot (Boxer), which are in Abuja.

LOT 4. FURNITURE, FITTINGS AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT IN ABUJA:

LOT 5. FURNITURE, FITTINGS AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT IN LAGOS:

LOT 6. FURNITURE, FITTINGS AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT IN KADUNA:

Procedure for Sale:

The following rules shall apply:-

1. Interested Companies, particularly reputable Transport Companies, are expected to obtain Bid Forms from FUMTA Office, Plot 152, Tunis Street, Wuse Zone 6, Abuja (between 10.00 AM and 3.00 PM daily) from Monday the 28th of February 2005 upon payment of the following fees per Lot:

a. Lot 1-Ferries	N50,000.00	d. Lot 4-Furniture, Fittings and Office Equipment (Abuja)	N10,000.00
b. Lot 2-Boats	N20,000.00	e. Lot 5-Furniture, Fittings and Office Equipment (Lagos)	N10,000.00
c. Lot 3-Spare Parts	N20,000.00	f. Lot 6 - Furniture, Fittings and Office Equipment (Kaduna)	N10,000.00

2. The Forms are expected to be filled with the required information and returned to the Ministry in a sealed Envelope marked "FUMTA BID in respect of (Item bidden for)" at the top right corner on or before Wednesday 16th March, 2005 by 12.00 Noon at the address specified below.
3. All Bids received would be opened immediately thereafter on Wednesday 16th March, 2005 by 1.00 PM at the Conference Room of the Ministry, 8th Floor, Bukar Dipcharima House, Abuja.
4. The assets are grouped into Lots and the Bids shall therefore be for all the items in the Lot.
5. All the assets for outright purchase and acquisition are to be sold on "As is - Where is" basis.
6. Minimum Reserve Prices (MRP) exist for all the items.
7. If MRP is not achieved at the opening of the Bids, the Ministry reserves the right to ask Bidders to improve their Bids and such shall be so taken into consideration in arriving at the Preferred and Reserve Bidders per Lot.
8. Successful Bidders are expected to pay in Full for their Bids within 14 (Fourteen) Days from the date of the opening of the Bids. No extension of time would be granted for payment thereafter.

The Ministry is not bound to accept the highest Bid.

2. TERMINALS

The Terminals are properties of the defunct Federal Urban Mass Transit (FUMTA) and are strategically located at Bridge-Head, Onitsha, Sanyo-Ibadan, Ketu-Lagos and Kakuri-Kaduna. Their major attraction is their potential in bringing about decent, safer and affordable avenues for the transiting of Passengers in some of our major cities.

Applicants are expected to be local/international investors with proven track record in ownership, financial capability and technical competence in the management of Terminals. In order to be pre-qualified for the lease of any of the Terminals, the prospective Investor must possess verifiable evidence of Technical, Managerial and Financial capability to operate and manage the Terminals. These include, but are not limited to:

- Record of successful investment and technical management in the Terminal Transportation Industry;
- The requisite financial resources; and
- Technical competence not only to run the Terminal efficiently but also to improve the Terminal thus enhancing financial and economic value to other Nigerians in general.

METHOD OF APPLICATION:

Interested investors should indicate their interest by obtaining an Expression of Interest Form upon the payment of a non-refundable application Fee of N10,000.00 only from FUMTA Office, Plot 152, Tunis Street, Wuse Zone 6, Abuja. An original copy and five (5) other copies of Expression of Interest in a sealed envelope clearly marked "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR (the chosen location) FUMTA TERMINAL," at the top right hand corner, should include the following:

- Full name of company and contact person, postal address, telephone/fax numbers and e-mail address(es).
- Ownership structure of company:
- Name(s) of major shareholders, and
- Percentage shareholdings.
- Audited Financial Statements for the past five (5) years and most recent Management Accounts.
- Technical and operational capabilities
- Number of years in Terminal/Transportation industry
- Local and international experience in the industry, and
- List of plants owned or managed by the firm.
- Composition and profile of management team showing qualification and years of experience in the Terminal/Transportation industry
- Evidence of ample financial resources.

The above shall be delivered to the address below not later than Wednesday 16th March, 2005 by 12.00 Noon:

The Secretary,
Committee on the Winding-Up of FUMTA,
Land Transport Department,
Federal Ministry of Transport,
Room 5B-001, 5th Floor, Bukar Dipcharima House,
Central Business District,
Abuja - Nigeria

Late submissions will be rejected

NOTE:

All Bids for the assets and Expressions of Interest for the Terminals would be opened immediately thereafter on Wednesday 16th March, 2005 by 1.00 PM at the Conference Room of the Ministry, 8th Floor, Bukar Dipcharima House, Abuja.

All Bidders are accordingly invited to attend.

Upon receipt of Expression of Interest from interested investors, the Ministry shall evaluate and pre-qualify applicants. Thereafter, pre-qualified applicants would be issued an Information Memorandum on the Terminal of their choice upon payment of a non-refundable fee of N100,000.00 (One hundred-thousand naira), only in bank draft drawn in favour of the Federal Urban Mass Transit Agency (FUMTA). Details of the bidding procedure for the Terminals shall be contained in the Information Memorandum.

Signed

**Secretary, Committee on the Winding-Up of FUMTA
For: Honourable Minister of Transport**

News

Rural electrification for 400 communities in Kwara

Over 400 communities are to benefit from the rural electrification project of the Kwara state government to enhance integrated development in the state. Already, about 378 projects covering all parts of the state have been identified by a committee raised by the state government at a cost of over N4 billion.

The state governor, Dr Bukola Saraki, dropped the hint on Tuesday in a message to the official commissioning of the 200KVA substations at

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent, Ilorin

Elgm-osa and Sango areas of Oke-Oyi Oja, in the Ilorin east local government area of the state.

The governor, who was represented by the special adviser on rural electrification, Alhaji Isa Bawa, said the projects would be financed through a tripartite agreement between the federal, state and local governments as well as donor agencies.

The federal government under this agreement, Dr Saraki said, would contribute 20 per cent of the total cost of the project as counterpart funding; state government, 30 per cent; local government, 40 per cent and 10 per cent by the donor agencies.

He commended the authorities of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and the Ilorin east council area for working round the clock in making the project a reality.

In an address of welcome, the chairman of Ilorin east local government council, Alhaji Saad Ahmed Babatunde, said the impact of the state government has been felt by the people of Oke-Oyi Oja with the donation of the transformer to boost its electricity supply.

Alhaji Babatunde also thanked Dr Sarki for the resuscitation of the Oke-Oyi Poultry Farm and the renovation of schools across the state to create conducive learning environment.

Minister identifies problems plaguing African continent

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter

The minister of state for Agriculture and Rural Development, Bamidele Otumba Dada, has identified food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and un-committed leadership as the major problems plaguing the African continent in improving the lives of the African people.

The minister declared this recently in Otta, Ogun state, when he paid a courtesy visit on the director general of the African Leadership Forum, Dr Ayodele Aderinwale.

Otumba Dada, according to a statement by his press secretary, Mr James Odandu, stressed the need for the development of enough political will within the African leadership hierarchy in line with the principles of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

The statement also announced that Nigeria will, this year, host the internal fish summit geared towards the harmonisation of the fishery policies of fish producing African nations.

The summit, which will bring together heads of state and governments, including their ministers in charge of fisheries as well as other stakeholders in the sub-sector, is aimed at generating adequate political will towards the development of the sector.

According to the minister, Nigeria has made tremendous progress in agricultural development since the inception of the Obasanjo administration, through the presidential initiatives on various commodities with emphasis on production for both local and international markets. He called on African leaders to replicate such agricultural initiatives that have led to Nigeria's success stories in agricultural development.

The director general of the African Leaders Forum, Dr Ayodele Aderinwale, in his response, said the forum had played important roles in agricultural development in the past, especially in policy advocacy among African leaders.

He recalled that in 1989, the forum had a workshop on "leadership challenges in agricultural production and food security, and expressed optimism that with the renewed cooperation with the agriculture ministry, a lot could be done to complement the efforts of the government



Former President Shehu Shagari receives his vice Alex Ekwueme's gift from Alhaji Ibrahim on his 80th birthday...recently.

FG targets 1m tonnes of cotton by 2007

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief, Kaduna

In a bid to boost cotton production in the country, the federal government has set a production of one million tonnes of seed cotton per annum from 2007.

The minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Malam Adamu Bello, who disclosed this at the National Cotton Forum in Kaduna on Monday, said the objective was to derive 0.66 million tonnes of cotton seed for crushing into edible oil as well as 0.34 million tonnes of quality fibre for the textile sector.

He said the federal government also set up the Cotton Consultative Committee, the Cotton on Revolving Fund and its Management Committee and recently the Arable Crops Development and Marketing Company to demonstrate its keen interest and support for the sector.

Malam Adamu said the cotton sector had undergone various phases and challenges over the years not only in response to decline in international prices, but also in term of cotton yield decline as well as non-adherence by key players to conventional regulations and practices at the domestic front.

He said another factor in the decline in cotton production was the fact that cotton promotion thrives under subsistence farming and the farmers also depended on cotton merchants or the textile sector whose forward and backward linkage has helped in yielding results.

He said the textile sector did not enjoy a large domestic and regional market for African print as was the case in the past, adding this has also impacted negatively on local cotton production.

The minister said this has led to low quality production, low yields, volatile supply

while price remained unstable. And urged the forum to critically examine and re-evaluate factors that impinge on the growing and harvesting of seed cotton for export.

He said such factors as disorganised support services, lack of transparency

by merchants and middlemen, rising cost of inputs while seed improvement and distribution should rationalised. He said quality cotton and improved marketing arrangements must be made while inputs and risk support management and sector financing be addressed.

Pankshin LG boss advocates upward review of council allocations

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent Jos

The chairman, Pankshin local government area of Plateau state, Chief Anthony Goyok, has called for an upward review of revenue allocations to the local councils, even as he lamented that the council owed a total of N245 million to its staff as well as former legislators of the council.

Chief Goyok, who was speaking in an interview in Pankshin, said the council owed its staff N180 million as it has eight months' salary arrears to pay while it also was yet to settle N65 million as outstanding allowances to former legislators of the council.

While noting that there had not been a significant increase in allocations to councils since 2003, the chairman said what the council gets was inadequate to meet its needs.

According to him, if the revenue allocation to the local government received

an appreciable increase, they would be able to meet the yearnings of the people at the grassroots.

He lamented that due to financial constraints, the council had not been able to address the needs of teachers and health workers.

Goyok also spoke of the electricity problem facing the local government area, asserting "in order to address the constraints, 11 local government cour jils in the central zone of the state were indeed to enable us to tap electricity supply from Bauchi to complement NESCO's supply to our areas. But unfortunately, whether for political or other considerations, the supply was no longer coming."

He however listed some achievements since his assumption of office, disclosing that he had spent N13 million to rehabilitate roads.

Poverty Alleviation: Borno builds TV viewing centres

From Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (Maiduguri)

The Borno State government is to construct 25 new television viewing centres across 10 of its 27 local government areas as part of its effort to spread awareness, create community-wide enlightenment and fight poverty. The viewing centres would be built and furnished with television sets, satellite receivers and video machines, among others, at a cost of N58 million.

The state commissioner for Poverty Alleviation, Alhaji Mai Modu Sherrif, made this known yesterday while issuing contractors for the project with their contract documents and 30 mobilisation fees to enable them to begin work immediately.

The commissioner explained that the viewing centres are especially needed at this time that the state government is seriously

engaged in fighting and alleviating people's poverty by exposing them to various agricultural and trade techniques that they could use to support themselves.

Mai Sherrif added that "video cassettes demonstrating techniques such as those of farming or tree planting would be made available to the centres on a periodic basis" so that the rural communities could learn from them.

The commissioner said that 50 to 100 such viewing centres would be established across the state before the end of the year "to link rural areas with happenings in both the state and the country at large."

He however cautioned the contractors to do their jobs according to the 'bill of quantities' as specified in the contract agreement, warning that "I will not hesitate to revoke any shoddy job execution immediately we see that or otherwise spare those who fail to execute the contract as agreed with government."

The commissioner also explained that the contracts were given to people within the communities where the projects would be sited as a means of empowering the communities and making them enjoy the dividends of



Gov Abdullahi commended over NASEEDS

From Lawal Kaile

The governor of Nasarawa state, Abdullahi Adamu, has been commended for his commitment to the devolvement of Nasarawa State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NASEEDS) by constituting a core policy group of 9 eminent members in the constitution of a 34 member broad based NASEEDS Drafting Committee with his excellency as the chairman and the engagement of a professional NASEEDS' consultant to facilitate the process.

The commendation was made by NASEEDS Drafting

sioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Alhaji Usman Bagudu.

He said the over four decades of development strategy to address the nation's poverty situation led to the constitution of a National Economic Group (NEG) by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003. The NEG brought about the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) as a response to the development challenges of Nigeria.

The National Economic

these developments, met and conceived the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) as a response to critical issues of underdevelopment and governance in individual states.

Four cardinal objectives of the new reform initiatives under NASEEDS include reduction of poverty, creation of wealth, employment generation, re-orientation of values and attitudinal change. These objectives, the chairman, said, were to be achieved through the instrument of popular participation and involvement of all

Inside Politics

My recall threat, a ruse - Kumalia

Member of the House of Representatives from Maiduguri metropolitan federal constituency of Borno state, Alhaji Muhammadu Kumalia has called on his supporters to disregard the purported attempts to recall him, saying the threats were mere imaginations of his antagonists.

Kumalia said in a statement in Abuja that news of his attempted recall was being hatched by people who did not have the interest of the state at heart.

By Habebb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter

He, however, vowed that they will fail.

The lawmaker said some enemies of progress had "devised methods including use of the media to trumpet a recall that exist only in the infertile imagination of protagonist of recall of representatives.

"In spite of unmerited provocations, I appeal to my teeming constituents and supporters in the Maiduguri Metropolitan federal consti-

tuency and indeed Borno state to remain calm," he said, adding that the state would emerge victorious in the end.

Kumalia also said that only God would determine his rumoured gubernatorial ambition in 2007.

"At the end of my tenure in the House of Representatives as a second-term member in 2007, God using the good people of my state, would decide if I merit crucifixion or adulation for how I conducted myself in the federal house on their behalf," he added.

2007: New pro Marwa group, G36 debuts

A new non-party organisation, Group 36 (G36) has been formed to campaign for the actualization of the presidential aspiration of former Borno and Lagos states military administrator and chairman of Albarka Airlines, Brigadier General Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd) in 2007.

A press statement signed by the national coordinator of the group, Prince Abraham Isobor said that G36, which derived its name from its

presence in all the 36 states of the federation, was a child of Marwa's immense popularity, acceptability and electability in all parts of the country.

Describing the Albarka Airline chairman as the most electable person among all the known presidential hopefuls, it said he was the aspirant to beat in 2007 because of his mass appeal which cut across all social strata.

"Given his track record in both public and private pursuits and also his disposition

as a detribalised, humble, caring and large hearted Nigerian, we have come to the conclusion that he is the messiah Nigeria has long awaited for," the statement said calling on all Nigerians to support the presidential aspiration of General Marwa in 2007.

Nigerians, G36 cautions, should not make the mistake of electing somebody who will not serve the nation but himself and a very select few of unpatriotic people who will only lead the country into further problems.

Gov Saraki lists conditions for accepting Lawal into PDP

Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara state has spelt out conditions for former governor Mohammed Lawal's acceptance into Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The former ANPP governor had made a lot of appeal and overtures to President Obasanjo seeking to join the PDP but conditions laid down have not been palatable as the president referred him to the governor.

Fielding questions from correspondents in Ilorin, Governor Saraki said Mohammed Lawal would have to go through the ward level to actualise his ambition.

He also reminded Lawal of a number of issues on which the present government "is asking questions from the previous administration and they must be

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo,
Correspondent, Ilorin

addressed.

"A lot of outstanding issues abound which must be addressed first and then we can think about what happens next," apparently referring to deals of Lawal's administration which included N1.4 billion Asa dam project.

Governor Saraki said "Asa dam project is like starting all over again, we are now discussing with the federal government contractor to come to our aid.

"Even if he comes to come at the state level, he has to go to the ward and you know there were lots of complaints about atrocities committed during his regime," Governor Saraki added.

Speaking on road accidents particularly among

government officials, governor Saraki emphasised the need to ascertain the ability of some drivers and ensure they are responsible citizens.

He said the Head of Service, Alhaji Daibu Kawu Yusuf, had been directed to summon all government drivers today to address them on the new code of conduct about speed limit, warning that any driver that violates the new rule would be dismissed.

Governor Saraki also hinted that some of the council chairmen now facing the state House of Assembly over certain misconducts may not survive the heat on them.

He disclosed that solar energy may be adopted for the supply of power to provide street lights in some strategic areas of Ilorin, the state capital.

Code of Conduct: What is Senate talking about?

By Isa Sanusi

At a retreat in Port Harcourt, exactly a year ago the senate pledged that it will pursue the establishment of a budget office, information technology centre, a standard legislative research library and importantly the enactment of a code of conduct. Upto today none of these is realized and it seems the whole senate is not bothered with been faithful to even its own promises to itself. Particularly from inception to date, the upper chamber has been hovering from one conduct problem to another and the atmosphere is looking like

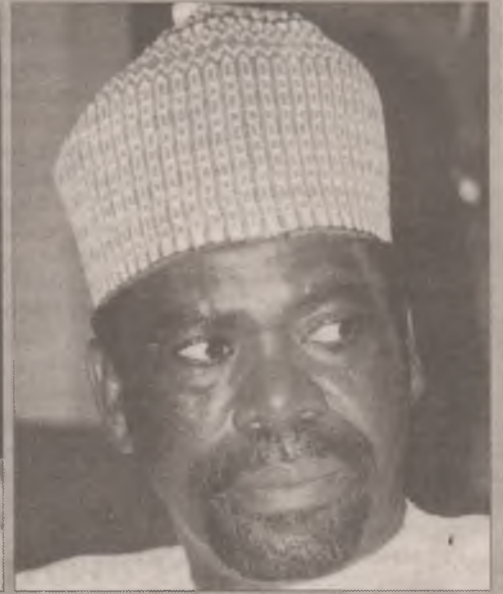
difficult to smoothly conduct business of the senate. Reason? Senators hardly adhere to an operational calendar and schedules. At the beginning of this legislative year, a calendar was presented and copies circulated to all senators detailing what should come when for the whole year. Some committees are as good as dead. They do nothing and keep bills with them for up to a year. Infact the Chairman of Rules Committee, Senator Umar Ibrahim Tsauri told *Daily Trust* that 36 bills are now

Offices of senators are always jammed by people seeking favours. Their offices are ill equipped. While senators most often blame poor performance on poor committee staffing, the staff were of the view that the lawmakers handle the committees like personal enterprise. The senate leadership has to shift emphasis in selecting leadership of committees from patronage and politics to capacity and merit.

Code of conduct is timely for the senate before another image damage. Regulating the conduct of senators is not easy nor is it straight forward. Given the demands



Senator Adolphus Wabara



Senator Umar Ibrahim Tsauri

more of these problems are on the way. In January last year Senator Uche Chukwuemerije accused his colleagues of taking bribe in exchange for supporting a motion for the declaration of a state of emergency in Anambra state. Three months later, a group of 48 senators led by Senator David Mark launched a strong move that nearly saw Wabara out of his seat. They accused him of inflation of contracts and arrogance but the intervention of the Presidency nipped the rebellion in the bud. Six months later, Senator Isa Muhammad slapped his female colleague, Senator Iyabo Anisulowo in public over committee funds. In all these cases of misconduct the senate did not more than take actions that ignored the fundamental issues.

If the senate is to be what it is supposed to be, the lawmakers have to respect their rules and observe ethics in doing what they are voted for. But, the senate Rules and Business committee is finding it

hanging at committee levels. He noted that "It is unfortunate for a committee to given two weeks to report on a bill since March last year without doing anything up to now. How can a report be at the committee level for one year? "At a point, Wabara threatened to sanction committees failing to perform their duties. Some committees exist only in name and nothing else. One is often amazed by the manner in which senators deploy excuses to delay their report(s) or even halt the whole legislative day. Expediency comes only if the bill in question is the type in which the Presidency has more than understandable interest.

The failed anti-labour bill is a good example here. The quality of debates on the floor of the senate is in most cases not dotted with the significance legislation has in a democratic nation.

On the other hand one has to appreciate the condition in which the lawmakers operate. At committee levels the staffing is absolutely poor likewise working tools.

of the dirty nature of politics in our society one can even say a code of conduct will not help matters. Still the senate has to show seriousness in providing ways of dealing with the behaviour of lawmakers that may thwart the operation of the senate or bring into disrepute the institution or other members. Beyond these the codes of conduct most contain clear prescriptions and prohibitions. The senate standing rule has sufficient provision for managing the behaviour of senators in section 56 and 57

The seriousness with which the senate pursues the issue of conduct and ethics will to an extent determine development of democracy in the nation. But when it was realized that the senate committee on ethics and code of conduct has since completed its report on a new code of conduct one has no any reason to doubt the fact that the upper chamber is not all that bothered about regulating itself and serving its face from further moral quiz.



"If the senate is to be what it is supposed to be, the lawmakers have to respect their rules and observe ethics in doing what they are voted for. But, the senate Rules and Business committee is finding it difficult to smoothly conduct business of the senate. Reason? Senators hardly

Advertorial

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE ON COMMUNICATIONS BY Y.S. ADAMU, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (NITEL) ON THE AWARD OF MANAGEMENT CONTRACT TO PENTASCOPE BY THE BUREAU FOR PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (BPE) AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS

INTRODUCTION:

The Nigerian Telecommunication Ltd (NITEL) was formed on 1st January 1985 as a result of Merger of the Telegraph arm of the former Post & Telegraph (P & T) and the Nigerian External Telecommunication (NET). Prior to this, P&T was run as a public utility. The history of Nitel is a long one dating back to the first telegraph communication in the 1800s. This history made NITEL a national heritage as well as a national treasurer.

Since its formation in 1985, the company has been running as a self financing and never took any subvention from the Government. It has undergone a number of restructuring and transformation with commercialization of its operations in 1988 under the Privatization and Commercialization Act of 1988 following the Establishment of Bureau for Public Enterprises and the Act of 1993 put the Company on the list of public Utilities for Privatization.

In 1999, the New Democratic Dispensation under Chief Olusegun Obasanjo through the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) evolved a programme for the Privatization of key utilities.

The PAC document proposed and approved a guided privatization programme and in line with a Telecommunication "Policy Workshop" was held in July 1999. The outcome of this policy became the Telecommunication Policy of this Administration which itself formed the basis of the New Telecom Act.

The PAC had a very good vision but that vision was bungled by the BPE under El-Rufai.

The mid 90s to some extent up till now the "Telecom Market" world wide was in serious troubles with most 1st Class Operators in deep trouble so the hope and aspiration of this Administration to Privatize NITEL was suddenly in trouble and the search for a Strategic Equity partner could not succeed and the climate generally was not right.

International Experts offered free advice to the BPE and MOC that there was no way the privatization of NITEL could succeed and as such the FGN should be advised to shelve the idea and concentrate on restructuring and modernizing NITEL for eventual privatization when the climate improved and is conducive.

The BPE under El-Rufai refused to acknowledge this and insisted in going ahead with the exercise. Apart from this, El-Rufai's approach to the sale of NITEL was simply unprofessional. Running down the Enterprise was the strategy he adopted (Please refer to his several press conferences and TV appearances). Even at this, Experts warned that this method was not good and that instead of running down an enterprise the DG, BPE should concentrate in restructuring the Company to improve its operations and value.

All these Experts advice and observations were completely ignored and NITEL was systematically allowed to decay.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Against Experts advice and against the Global Telecommunication market, the BPE went ahead to advertise for EOI in 2001. As expected no serious SEP (Strategic Equity Partner) showed any interest and instead for the BPE to see the handwriting on the wall and accept that the privatization of NITEL could not go on, they went ahead to re-advertise. Again no serious SEP (Strategic Equity Partner) showed any interest and local arrangements were made to allow local companies to apply. The ILL that won the bid was floated solely for the purpose of buying NITEL. Of course, they had not the slightest idea of what they want and ILL could not honor its Commitment. Again the Experts are vindicated. The so-called fastest Privatization has turned into a serious embarrassment to Nigeria. It failed woefully!

Surprisingly with all these dismal act performance, BPE could not on its own reappraise itself and ways and accept the reality of the situation and advise the FGN that there was a problem and that FGN should re-schedule the exercise until the situation improves but for whatever reasons they came out with a more dangerous and catastrophic option of management contract which was never in the original programme. When the adverts came out, untiring experts again sounded a several note of warning to both NCP and BPE but alas this warning was ignored.

At this juncture industry watch dogs/ analyst began to suspect of a "hidden Agenda". Today, at every stage of the Privatization of NITEL, the Experts have been vindicated.

HOW WE GOT TO THIS POINT

The issue of Pentascope is now over and their performance has been over flogged in both media and public discussion and at the end, the FGN has terminated the contract but how did we get to this?

Selfish, greed, irrational and irresponsible over exuberance and self-serving interest are the main reasons that led to the failure of both privatization and management contract. The question is how did they get the contract? Is the process credible? Why did World Class Company like BT who have edge over any bidder withdrew from the process? They formed NITEL in 1985.

The whole process was fraudulent from the company itself - The Pentascope to the target given to them. There was no way Pentascope could perform because they had not the slightest idea of what they were signing for when they signed at any rate you do not expect somebody to give what he does not have. Certainly Pentascope does not have the competence, the experience, the knowledge to deliver and that is why they failed. There was nothing-original from BPE as far as targets given to Pentascope. What the DG BPE did was simply to lift NITEL 4-year plan approved by Government to give to Pentascope. This itself is CRIMINAL and a deceit to the Government and the people of Nigeria. Again even with this they could not perform.

Now that the Experts and the Nigerian people are vindicated, what next? Who are to blame? Should the actors in this mess be allowed to go free with this monumental betrayal of trust and economic treason against the Nigerian State and its people? These are the moral questions.

I remember that 2 sets of Nigerian Management Group (Otiji and Bajoga) were removed and humiliated and even faced Judicial Commission of Inquiring (which is still going on) for serving their country. What do you do with the leadership of BPE that destroyed investments of over 100 years? The Pentascope thing is the biggest Economic Crime in the history of Nigeria.

You can see clearly that the NCP/BPE who are servants of the Nigerian people deliberately allowed NITEL to become a "Distressed Asset" by bankrupting it and turning it into a "Shell" that is worthless and valueless and to some extent insolvent.

THE FUTURE OF NITEL/MTEL

The problem facing NITEL are obvious to anyone in the industry. The Company's business is fast eroding and is bleeding financially and there is therefore no doubt that a difficult path lies ahead of managing it.

Do we privatize for Privatization sake? Or do we accept for the past 5 years or so we have been as wrong path and retrace our step for the sake of national interest.

THE MTEL - SUBSIDIARY OF NITEL

The focus of media as well as the Government has been NITEL and MTEL its subsidiary company is extremely serious and you need to pay special attention to it. This company that is supposed to be the "Cash Cow" of the two companies is bleeding financially and is lagging behind the other mobile operator's despite its advantage.

The cost of Equipments is far higher than those of the competitors. The place is just a goldmine of same people. The Contractors determined the direction of the company. Forensic experts need to look into the whole operation of this company to determine the extent of the rot.

It is criminal despite vendor financing of contract that loans have to be taken from banks to run its operation while its competitors are posting huge profit.

ROLE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS (NITEL & MTEL)

While Pentascope has done its damage they could not do this without the tacit support, connivance and approval of the BODs of the two companies. Your tasks cannot be complete without checking and investigating the BODs. Their role in contract awards, frivolous overseas trips to contractor's headquarters and their refusal to take action or raise alarm about the operational and financial status of the companies clearly show that they took a compromising stand and certainly against the Nigeria State.

Why can't we pause and think why it is difficult or impossible to privatize NITEL? Why can't we accept the fact that our approach to this exercise is completely unconventional and go back to the drawing board? Why the hurry despite the obvious facts that we will not succeed?

So far, no Africa Country has successfully privatized its TELCO and they all accept the reality and put their programme on hold.

NITEL is allowed to become a problem. Should we privatize a problem?

LESSONS FROM THE FAILED PRIVATIZATION OF NITEL 1999 - TO DATE (ILL-PENTASCOPE MISADVENTURE)

It is clear to every casual observer of the happenings in the way and manner the BPEI NCP have and is still handling the NITEL sale. The reason why the exercise could not succeed and lessons from the process is:

- (1) The approach to the exercise is unconventional and shows lack of competence and ability to handle the process.
- (2) That the necessary steps for privatizing a telecommunication company were and are still not followed (please invite BT or any 1st Class TELCO to explain what process they went through before they were privatized)
- (3) (1) and (2) explain why the ILL and the pentascope arrangement failed.
- (4) The incompetence and ineptitude of the BPE was responsible for the huge loss in revenue, finances and bankruptcy of these companies.
- (5) The embarrassment the Nigerian State went through by the poor handling of the exercise (ILL-Arbitration going on Pentascope turning a solid company into an insolvent one) cannot be imagined.

WAY FORWARD

What is the way forward? Can the situation be salvaged? While the belated decision to cancel the Pentascope contract and take them to court. What is the best way for NITEL and Nigeria? The decision by the Government to dispose of NITEL to the highest bidder as quickly as possible is likely not to be the best. While sentiment of selling may have some strong points and should take a wider perspective of the decision and look to further considerations outside of the sale process that would need to be investigated.

- NITEL is bastardized and made distressed asset and as such it would receive far less than its true worth if sold now. Both NITEL and MTEL are currently running at huge monthly losses would reflect in the current evaluation of both companies.
- NITEL needs to be restructured prior to selling to achieve better value.
- The Global market for Telecommunication companies is still depressed, with fixed line operators struggling and only the mobile (cellular) market on the upswing. Both companies should be seen as "Cash Cows" and therefore, be brought into a stable profit making entity (i.e. cash positive) prior to sale.
- Selling of NITEL will have a serious impact on Nigeria ability to earn/have access to foreign currency. The international divisions of both NITEL & MTEL. should be dollar revenue earners for the country.
- From Social-economic prospective and new buyer of NITEL will ship both companies back to a bare minimum and that means people. NITEL is currently running at twice the industry average in the indices of Revenue Vs Staff. The sale of NITEL could result in thousands of Nigerians out of Work.

CONSIDERATIONS

With any sale of an asset, any buyer worth his salt will want to carry out due diligence before consulting with his financial backers to make an offer. The funds will then need to be raised and its legal eagles will move to prepare the deed of sale documents. In real terms this could take months to complete, even if an interim offer is made within weeks. Under present management NITEL will not survive for the next 12months. It is currently insolvent and will be bankrupt then. (Serious embarrassment to Government). We should avoid the ILL experience.

One should never privatize a problem and one should learn from the experience of the privatization exercise from the failed ILL to the Pentascope saga.

Consideration should be given to the appointment of "Turn Around" Consultant that would take the form of

- "Partnership" with NITEL who would supply assistance and advice through a team of experienced people to the Senior Nigerian Management Team include appropriate knowledge and skill transfer so that Nigerians can be seen to be running a Nigerian Flagship Company and that the Consultant role is that of guide and mentor.
- Recall the past EDs who were unjustifiable retired when Pentascope took over.
- Anything short of these will pose a serious danger to Nigerian Telecommunication system as NITEL is still the only nationwide operator and the sustenance of the success of this Administration in Telecommunication industry depends on the health of Viability of NITEL.
- Any fire brigade solution to the privatization of NITEL will fail. There is no hiding the fact. It happened with ILL and Pentascope and it will still happen if the process does not follow the stages it supposed to follow.

I note from the list of companies that expressed interest for the purchase of NITEL and it is just a repeat of what happened during El-Rufai.

Signed

(Handwritten Signature)

2/3/05

SPORTS

Pennant guilty of wasting talent

Had Jermaine Pennant fulfilled the enormous potential that convinced Arsenal to pay Notts County £2m for the 16-year-old in January 1999, his fall from grace might have registered more than a blip on football's Richter Scale.

But the Nottingham-born winger has repeatedly failed to grasp the opportunities presented to him by the Gunners, so much so that it is inevitable the club will release him when his contract expires in the summer.

Pennant effectively blew his chances of ever making it at Highbury by upsetting the club's normally unflappable manager Arsene Wenger, who finally lost patience with the player's poor timekeeping.

Now, after being caught drink-driving for the second time in 12 months, Pennant no longer has to worry about whether he makes it to training on schedule.

Aged 22, there is no doubt Pennant still has time to resurrect his career when he is freed this summer.

Compare his fate with that of West Bromwich Albion striker Lee Hughes, who will be 34 by the time he has served his six-year sentence for causing death by dangerous driving.

Pennant may even find himself back at Birmingham City, the club who handed him a lifeline when it became clear his Arsenal career was well and truly over.

Blues manager Steve Bruce apparently saw enough in Pennant in the month he was at St Andrews to issue an impassioned plea for leniency ahead of sentencing, claiming he had finally turned the corner.

"We've got him in a flat up here, we've got him away from the distractions of London, we've had someone with him for the best part of every day and .. done

everything we can to try and put him on the straight and narrow," Bruce said ahead of Tuesday's court hearing.

"He's done wrong and we've all done stupid things when we were younger and he admits that now.

"You can't describe how stupid he has been but as long as he learns from it, I don't think there is going to be any benefit from sending him to prison."

The judge apparently disagreed.

Birmingham chairman David Gold said last month he would still be keen to sign Pennant even if the 22-year-old got a custodial sentence.

But wherever Pennant ends up, talk will not be of his potential but whether he can steer clear of trouble off the pitch.

Pennant has insisted in the past that he does not have an attitude problem.

But this is a player who, as well as failing to turn up to training on time, has been:

- Caught driving under the influence of alcohol twice;
- Sent home by England after breaking a team curfew before a Euro Under-21 qualifier against Turkey in April 2003;
- And been sent off in an U-21 friendly against Croatia in August of the same year for punching an opponent, although he claimed he was

racially abused.

Pennant's supporters may claim that too much fame and money at an early age are in some way to blame for his lapses in judgment.

During his sentencing, his lawyer Barry Warburton told the court Pennant had never been in trouble during a difficult childhood in Nottingham, despite growing up on "one of the worst estates" in the city.

He had only "intermittent" schooling and when he arrived at Arsenal "had very little reading and writing skills".

"They in fact educated him," said Mr Warburton, who had claimed imprisonment "could completely destroy his career".

But his childhood aside, Pennant knows he has been treading a fine line for some time.

He has publicly stated on numerous occasions that he is grateful to Wenger and Arsenal for their faith in him.

Yet he continues to spurn the chances that are given him.

It all looked so good for Pennant when he scored a 10-minute hat-trick against Southampton on his full league debut for Arsenal in May 2003.

Yet his wayward behaviour coupled with his inability to displace Robert Pires from the Gunners first team mean he is a talent quickly disappearing over the footballing horizon.

Whether he vanishes completely is down to him.

As Professional Footballers' Association chief executive Gordon Taylor puts it, Pennant is now at a "crossroads in his career".

"I hope he has got the strength to come out of this and be better for it," said Taylor.



Wasted talent? Pennant may not fulfill his enormous potential

Woosnam to captain Europe's Ryder Cup team

Welshman Ian Woosnam has been picked to lead the European team in their defence of the Ryder Cup in 2006.

In an unusual step, Nick Faldo has already been named in the role for 2008, when the event is in the USA.

The 14-strong committee met on Tuesday and asked Woosnam to lead the side at the K Club in Ireland in 2006.

"The Ryder Cup has been a big part in the lives of my wife and I and it is a huge honour to be named captain of the European team," said Woosnam.

Woosnam was vice-captain at The Belfry in 2002 and is a popular choice for the post, although England's Faldo has won more tournaments.

It was a day of double celebration for Woosnam,

who turned 47 on Wednesday.

"What a fantastic way to celebrate my birthday and this is something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

"This makes me feel very proud, especially as Wales has such a great tradition of producing Ryder Cup captains," he said.

"I have enjoyed the thrill of playing under three superb captains and I can't tell you how much I missed not being involved last year.

"Now it is all systems go for 2006 in Ireland. I have great affinity for Irish golf and especially the Irish golf fans."

Woosnam has played in eight Ryder Cups from 1983-1997 and was on the winning side four times.

Six-times major winner Faldo, 47, has scored 25 points in a record 11 Ryder Cups.

"It is a proud day for Ian and I and a huge honour and I can't say how excited I am at the prospect of leading the side in the United States," Faldo said in a statement.

"The Ryder Cup has always been important to me and I will look forward to planning for that match but, for now, it's Ian's time and I wish him the best for his captaincy."

Scotland's five-time Cup

veteran Sandy Lyle had also expressed his interest in the role.

Langer opted to step down after overseeing Europe's record 18-9 victory in Detroit last September.

Four of the 2004 European Ryder Cup side are on the selection committee - Colin Montgomerie, Darren Clarke, Paul McGinley and Miguel Angel Jimenez.

Alongside them are Langer and his two assistants at Oakland Hills, Thomas Bjorn and Joakim Haeggman, while Scotland's Andrew Coltart and vice-chairman Jean van de Velde played in America in 1999.

The other members are all former Tour winners - chairman Jamie Spence, Roger Chapman, Henrik Stenson, Mark Roe and Robert Lee, now best known as a television commentator.

Tom Lehman has taken over from Hal Sutton as the American captain for the event, which will take place from 22-24 September 2006 in County Kildare.

Woosnam also confirmed that he would announce his vice-captain at the Smurfit European Open at the end of June and it would be an Irishman taking up the post.

Iverson burns Bucks

League scoring leader Allen Iverson poured in 48 points to lead the Philadelphia 76ers to a 118-111 win over the Bucks in Milwaukee on Tuesday. Iverson scored 20 points in the opening quarter and hit 30 at the half.

However, the all-star game MVP could not keep up his relentless pace after the break, settling for his seventh 40-plus performance this season as the 76ers registered their first win since February 14.

Iverson has feasted on the Bucks throughout his career reaching the 40-point plateau six times, including three times this season.

Kyle Korver added 20 points to the Philadelphia effort while recently acquired Chris Webber chipped in with 15.

Michael Redd had 35 points for the Bucks, including a perfect 14-of-14 from the free throw line.

In Chicago, Tracy McGrady scored 32 points and Mike James added 26 as the Houston Rockets blasted the Bulls 119-89, to snap a three-game losing streak.

Eddy Curry had 17 points for Chicago and Ben Gordon added 15 as the Bulls absorbed their worst defeat of the season.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony notched 23 points in leading the Nuggets to a 97-74 win over the woeful Atlanta Hawks, who suffered their 20th consecutive road defeat.

Andre Miller and Earl Boykins each had 14 points for the Nuggets.

Al Harrington led Atlanta with 18 while Obinna Ekezie was the only other Hawk in double figures scoring 12.

In Indianapolis, Rashard Lewis hit for 30 points, including 10 in the final five minutes as the Seattle SuperSonics rallied to claim a 101-93 win over the Pacers.



Woosnam has been named to lead European Ryder Cup team



Iverson... poured in 48 points to burn Bucks

Sports

Barcelona held by 10-man Espanyol

An inspired performance from Espanyol keeper Carlos Kameni prevented Barcelona from extending their lead to 11 points at the top of the Primera Liga as they were held to a goalless draw at the Nou Camp on Tuesday.

Barcelona started the day eight points clear of Real Madrid, who host fourth-placed Real Betis, on Wednesday, but their local rivals frustrated them with a robust defensive display.

Miguel Angel Lotina's side, who moved up to fourth in the standings, finished the game with 10 men after defender Daniel Jarque received a straight red card in the 66th minute.

Barcelona pressurised Espanyol throughout the second half and created a number of scoring opportunities, but Kameni and his defenders held firm to leave Barca nine points clear at the top.

La Liga's top scorer Samuel Eto'o had the perfect chance to put Barca ahead inside the opening minute as he cut into the visitors area and fired goalwards, but Kameni made his first intervention of the night to turn the shot wide with his foot.

Espanyol's five defenders weathered a nervy opening period but effectively smothered out most of the home side's attacking impetus and Kameni had little to do until after the interval.

With playmaker Ivan de la Pena suspended, and striker Raul Tamudo injured, Espanyol struggled to create much on the counter and failed to test Barca keeper Victor Valdes throughout the game.

Barca coach Frank Rijkaard made a tactical change at halftime, withdrawing striker Maxi Lopez and midfielder Gerard Lopex replacing them

with Juliano Belletti and Andres Iniesta in an attempt to create more goalscoring opportunities.

The changes produced the desired result for Rijkaard and within minutes Kameni came to the rescue once again with a stunning one-handed save from a driven Iniesta shot.

Barca's wide players found more space and crea-

ted a number of chances for Eto'o but Espanyol defender Antonio Soldevilla, and Kameni, stopped the Cameroon international adding to his tally of 17 league goals with desperate defending.

Jarque's dangerous challenge on Rafael Marquez earned him a straight red card with 24 minutes remaining, but Barca failed to take full advantage of the extra man.

Robben plays down Barca comeback

Chelsea winger Arjen Robben has played down his chances of making a return against Barcelona in the Champions League next Tuesday when the English league leaders have to make up a 2-1 deficit.

The 21-year-old has been sidelined since breaking a

foot against Blackburn last month and at first it looked as if he would be able to play after he resumed training earlier than expected.

"My recovery is going better than we expected a few weeks ago but I think the Barcelona game will come too soon," Robben told the *Daily*

Star on Wednesday.

"It is not impossible that I will play against Barcelona but it is just a very, very small chance - about 10 per cent.

"I won't take any risks and come back too soon."

Robben has been an inspiration for Chelsea following a switch from PSV Eindhoven last summer.

Second-string Gunners show steel

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger believes his under strength side's gutsy penalty win over Sheffield United in the FA Cup proves the Gunners can yet salvage something from the season.

Arsenal are as good as out of the running for the Premiership, trailing Chelsea by 10 points, and have to make up a 3-1 deficit against Bayern Munich next week in the UEFA Champions League.

And they were not given much hope when injuries and suspension deprived them of nine first-team players - Thierry Henry, Dennis Bergkamp, Jose-Antonio Reyes, Robin van Persie, Sol Campbell, Robert Pires,

Gilberto Edu and Justin Hoyte.

But Arsenal, better known under Wenger for pretty football rather than battling performances, dug deep to clinch a place in the sixth round of the FA Cup where they will face Bolton later this month.

After a 1-1 draw at Highbury 11 days ago, the sides could not be separated by another 120 goalless minutes before the Gunners' came clinched a penalty shoot-out with their Championship challengers.

United goalkeeper Paddy Kenny, hero throughout the game with a string of fine saves, was beaten from the spot on each occasion by Lauren, skipper Patrick Vieira, Freddie Ljungberg and Ashley Cole.

Arsenal's Manuel

Almunia captured the glory with saves from Jon Harley and Alan Quinn for a 4-2 victory after Andy Gray and Phil Jagielka had scored.

"We can be proud of our performance because we had a very young generation, inexperienced side out there," Wenger said.

"We have shown not only quality, but real character and determination that is needed at the top level and I am very proud of the attitude of the boys.

"I am very positive. For a while the team has looked as if it has missed that fraction of success our game should allow us to have, but we got it in this game.

"What I am very happy about is that it didn't come easy. We needed to be tough, strong and focused. The atti-



Espanyol's Cameroonian keeper Carlos Kameni denied Barcelona in the Catalan derby.



Baros says he will end his career in Liverpool.

Baros sees end of road at Liverpool

Milan Baros says he will leave Liverpool in the summer if manager Rafael Benitez fails to give him a regular place in the starting line-up for the rest of the season.

Benitez left the Czech Republic striker on the bench for Sunday's Carling League Cup Final loss to Chelsea, only sending him on to replace Fernando Morientes after 73 minutes.

And although he has scored 12 times this campaign, he has become more and more frustrated at not commanding an automatic slot on the team sheet.

Just two goals in his last 14 matches for Liverpool has not helped and Baros told *The Sun*: "I think my time at the club is ticking down.

"I've nothing against Liverpool. I love the fans and am proud of being able to play

here. "All I want is to play regularly. If it's not going to be here, then I hope that I will get a good offer from elsewhere."

After being the leading scorer at Euro 2004, Baros looked set for a prominent role at Anfield following the departure of Michael Owen and a serious injury to Djibril Cisse.

"I stayed at Liverpool in the hope I would be playing more," added the 23-year-old.

"After Owen left for Real and Cisse got injured, it looked like I could begin making regular appearances in the starting line-up.

"But it seems they just don't regard me as a regular starter.

"I need to play regularly, though, and not just waste my time on the bench."

tude of the team was completely right.

"I now hope this is a turning point because on Saturday we came back from Southampton frustrated, and previously we came back from Munich frustrated, and this could have been frustrating again."

Wenger is also hoping the match will prove a turning point for Almunia, who has faced the flak this season - along with fellow Gunners keeper Jens Lehmann - for a number of poor performances, not least those against Manchester United in both the Carling Cup and league.

"What is good is that he has shown the qualities we know he has and that we have seen in training," added Wenger.

"Sometimes when a goalkeeper comes in for his first spell, he either does very well or is under too much pressure, and I feel he was under too much pressure and never completely himself.

"He says he has never lost his confidence, but I feel when he played in his first

spell he was not free and not the player we know he is.

"At least I now know I have two good goalkeepers. I hear every day I must buy a new one, but if you tell me I have two then I don't need to buy.

"I just have to choose one, which is my job, and I will do that with pleasure."

United manager Neil Warnock knew his side had little chance from the shoot-out.

"It's worse losing on penalties - it's a horrible way, but then there's no other way," said Warnock.

"Up until the penalties, nobody knew who was going to win. I've nothing but credit for all of my players. From one to 11, they were outstanding.

"But I'm not a big fan of penalties. I'm never confident with them, and you can't blame Jon and Alan. They are both disappointed, but that's life.

"I just think Premiership players have so much technique. We had a job to find five volunteers. I know I wouldn't have wanted to take one."

Inzaghi hoping for United return

A C Milan striker Filippo Inzaghi returned to full training on Tuesday and said he hopes to play some part in next week's Champions League tie with Manchester United.

Inzaghi missed the bulk of this season with an ankle injury and then on his return suffered a fractured hand in late January.

"I hope I'll be available for the Manchester game but I need to be realistic. I haven't played for a long time and I only started running again today," said the Italy international.

"But if I am able to offer a hand then I am ready. I've

done it before and I can do it again. I'd be willing to go on the bench but let's see nearer the time," he added.

Milan, who lead 1-0 from the first leg at Old Trafford last week, are currently without their Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko, who is recovering from a fractured cheekbone and remains a major doubt for the return game with Alex Ferguson's side.

Top of the table Milan face lowly Atalanta in Serie A on Saturday and coach Carlo Ancelotti could opt to rest Argentine forward Hernan Crespo for the United match and give a rare start to Dane Jon Dahl Tomasson.



NATIONAL HEALTH SUMMIT FOR WIVES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHAIRMEN



As part of the activities to mark the International Women's day, Her Excellency, **Chief Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** has given approval for a National Health Summit for wives of Local Government Chairmen in Nigeria.

Theme:

"The Health of the Nation: Roles of Wives of Local Government Chairmen in the fight against HIV/AIDS, Malaria Polio and other Vaccine preventable Diseases."

The Summit is being hosted by ALGON in collaboration with the office of the First Lady. Discussions will be based on the above theme and lectures delivered on them as follows:

- "The role of Women in the prevention, mitigation and management of HIV/AIDS in our Local Communities" - **Professor Babatunde Osotimehin, Chairman, National Action Committee on Aids.**
- "Healthy Living as an essential ingredient in Primary Health Care Delivery: Women's role and perspective" - **Dr. Shehu Mahdi, Executive Director, Primary Health Care, Federal Ministry of Health.**
- "Achieving sustainable immunization service delivery through Community Ownership, Community Operated and Community Driven Strategy." - **Dr. (Mrs.) Dere Awosika, National Coordinator / Chief Executive, National Programme on Immunization.**
- "Fake and Adulterated Drugs and Foods - What women in our Local Communities should know." - **Dr. (Mrs.) Dora Akunyili, Director General, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC)**
- **Special Guest of Honour - Her Excellency, Chief Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, First Lady, Federal Republic of Nigeria.**
- **Chairman - Professor Eytayo Lambo, Honourable Minister of Health.**
- **Guest of Honour - Obong Rita Akpan, Honourable Minister, Women Affairs and Social Development**

- **Special Delegates** - Wives of all State Governors.
- **Chief Host - Mr. Frank Nweke Jnr., Honourable Minister, Intergovernmental Affairs, Youth Development and Special Duties**
- **Host - Honourable Bayer Dzeremo, National President, ALGON.**

DELEGATES:

- **Wives of All Local Government Chairmen**
- **All female Councillors**
- **Supervisors for Health of all Local Government Councils**
- **Directors of Health of all Local Government Councils**
- **Women Development Officers of All Local Government Councils**

Date - 8th & 9th March, 2005.

Opening Ceremony - 10 a.m. prompt on the 8th of March, 2005

Venue - National Centre for Women Development.

Participation Fee - ₦25,000 per delegate

Registration and Accreditation commences at 1p.m. on 7th of March, 2005 at the Summit Venue.

Summit shall be declared open by Her Excellency, **Chief Mrs. Stella Obasanjo**, the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The National President of ALGON wishes to use this medium to express the love and appreciation of Local Government Chairmen to Her Excellency the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, their Excellencies, wives our Governors, Chairmen and all women in Nigeria.

Congratulations, as you celebrate the International Women's Day.

SIGNED
Honourable Bayer Dzeremo,
National President, ALGON.

Sports

Gombe players are hungry – Tenge

Gombe United technical director, Justin Tenge is sounding it loud and clear that lack of adequate funding from the government could be the albatross of the 'Scorpions' ambition to

realise their dream of picking a continental ticket this season.

The coach told *Kick Off* that the team is yet to receive any funding from their sponsors.

"I'm appealing to the

governor to release funds to the team, we cannot continue playing football without money. It is not possible.

"The players are hungry and the coaches too are not faring better. We need motivation now and the only

motivating factor that can push the boys further is money. We have been expecting money from them, but it has yet not come."

Club chairman, Alhaji Lamido informed *Kick Off* that governor Danjuma Goje will soon make funds available to the club.

"The governor has been

busy and the management is making efforts to make sure that the money is released on time for the players and the technical crew."

Gombe United are joint leaders with Kwara United and Pillars on the League table with seven points from three matches and are yet to lose a game in the three week old Premier League.



Tennis star Serena Williams hits a back hand to Russian Elena Bovina during the second round of the Dubai Open...yesterday.

Lawmakers wade into NFA crisis

The House of Representatives committee on sports plans to intervene on the protracted crisis in the NFA to avoid a setback on Nigeria's world cup campaign.

Chairman of the committee, Rep Sirajo Dambatta, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday in Abuja that members were concerned about the crisis in the Glass House.

He explained that the committee, led by its deputy chairman Salau Tunde, had scheduled a meeting with the Sports Minister Musa Mohammed over the NFA issue.

"We will try to make them hasten up their

investigations so that Nigeria's chances at the world cup campaign are not dimmed.

"We will certainly help them to finish the issue once and for all," he said.

NAN reports that since the management staff of the NFA was sent on compulsory leave, activities at the Glass House have not been the same.

The situation is now threatening the resumption of Super Eagles' build-up to the African Nations Cup and Germany 2006.

The Eagles, currently occupying the second position behind Angola in the world cup qualifiers, would resume hostilities against Gabon later this month.

NFA invites Okocha, Martins for Gabon

Super Eagles captain, Austin Okocha, topped the list of 22 players invited to camp by the NFA ahead of the Super Eagles' World Cup qualifier against Gabon.

The release signed by

By AbdulRaheem Aodu, Sports Reporter

Anne Chukwu NFA acting spokesperson, also listed Dynamo Kyiv of Ukraine midfielder, Yusuf Ayinla and

Inter Milan youth prodigy, Obafemi Martins as well as Celestine Babayaro and Garba Lawal.

Erstwhile Enyimba goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama and his former team mate

Obinna Nwaneri who now plays for Orlando Pirates in South Africa also made the list.

The 22 players and the technical crew are expected to report at the Beverly Hills

Hotel in Port Harcourt, on March 18.

The Eagles will trade tackles with the Panthers of Gabon on March 26 at Liberation Stadium, Port Harcourt.

THE LIST

- Cl idi Odi
- Ifeanyi Udeze
- Celestine Babayaro
- Austine Ejide
- Seyi Olofinjana
- Joseph Yobo
- Vincent Enyeama
- Joseph Enakhahire
- John Utaka
- Kanu Nwankwo
- Austin Okocha
- Yakubu Aiyegbeni
- Obafemi Martins
- Yusuf Ayinla
- Garba Lawal
- Julius Aghahowa
- Chrstian Obodo
- Obinna Nwaneri
- Wilson Oruma
- Osaze Odemingwe
- Ifeanyi Ekwueme
- Taiye Taiwo

NTF names players for African juniors

The Nigerian Tennis Federation (NTF) has invited junior tennis players to camp ahead of Africa Junior Championships

scheduled to hold at Mauritius.

Some of the players are Sunday Emmanuel, Samuel Amaele, Sunny Adamu,

Blessing Samuel and Nneka Okoro among others.

Segun Oguntade, NTF's secretary, said the championship is a yearly

event, which would afford the players the opportunity to get more points and also be ranked.

Oguntade said that the players' performance in the Heinekens Futures last year was a great improvement.

His words: "Nigerian players are improving greatly and for one of them to feature in the final of last year's Heineken open revealed the growing standard of the game. It never happened in the last four years."

He said the president of NTF, Sanni Ndanusa, has helped the players greatly, as the International Tennis Federation (ITF) now ranks some of them.

Speaking further, Oguntade stressed that Nigeria needs to have four good players if it hopes to excel in world tennis.

Oguntade added that a player could develop by getting the skill right from a tender age, as the game needs concentration and

Chelsea gives Okocha Euro hope

Austin Okocha and his Bolton team mates may yet have cause to be grateful to Roman Abramovich's Chelsea after the London club's Carling Cup win created an extra Uefa Cup spot for England.

The Carling Cup is usually allocated a place in the Uefa Cup, but with Chelsea on track to win the Premiership and qualify for the Uefa Champions League, the sixth-placed team in the Premiership will claim the allocation and The Football Association have confirmed that the extra slot will go to the team that finishes in sixth place will be given the slot.

But Okocha and his mates will have to beat off strong opposition from Middles-

borough, Tottenham and Charlton. Even Manchester City in tenth are not ruled out of the race.

Boro currently lie sixth on 42 points, separated from

fifth-placed Liverpool by only one point. Bolton in seventh are on 40 points. Spurs and Charlton are tied on 39 points with a game in hand.



Okocha

Onikeke defends C'wealth title in Ghana

Fatai Onikeke, Nigeria's Commonwealth Boxing Council (CBC) Welterweight champion is billed to defend his title on Friday 4 March. The fight, which is against Ghana's Joshua Okine, holds at the Azuma Nelson Sports Complex in Accra, Ghana.

Soloman Egberime and Ike Obi, both Nigerians are also contenders for the title.

Earlier, Nigeria's Peter Oboh, the CBC Light Heavyweight champion was given one last opportunity to defend his crown against a mandatory challenger.

The fight against Daniel Sackey of Ghana, it was noted, must take place before March 31st.

Likewise, Light Welterweight champion, Junior Witter, has been granted an extension to defend against Ben Wonder Tackie of Australia, but the winner will defend the crown against Nigeria's Ajose Olusgun at the end of the month.

Also, two Ghanaian Commonwealth champions, Joseph Agbeke and Osmanu Yahaya, are to engage in a mandatory defence of their titles by the close of the month. They are the only Ghanaian boxers on the CBC latest rankings with titles.

The duo are holders of the CBC Bantamweight and Super Welterweight titles, according to the current ratings of the council, are expected to defend their titles by the close of March to avoid being stripped of their titles.

Meanwhile, two Nigerian boxers, Friday Abunanya and Henry Akinwande, in the November ranking of the CBC, were the top contenders for the heavyweight belt while Nigerian/Canadian Kingsley Ikeke remains a top contender for the CBC Middleweight title.

Five stadiums for 2006

Nations Cup

Hosts Egypt has announced that five different venues will be used for next year's African Nations Cup finals.

The three-week event will be held from 20 January to 10 February 2006.

The matches are scheduled to be played in Alexandria, Cairo, Ismaili and Port Said.

Two stadiums are to be used in the capital Cairo, whose international stadium will also host the opening match and the final.

The Cairo stadium is being extensively refurbished for the event.

However, the other venue in the capital is still to be decided between the Arab Contractors stadium or the

Contd. on Pg 2

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for sale*

DAILY TRUST

THURSDAY COLUMN

Thursday, March 3, 2005

General Abdulkareem Adisa

By Is'haq Moddibo Kawu
kawumodibbo@yahoo.com

I think it was May 1997; I was just about three months into my job as the pioneer General Manager of the Kwara State Television Service in Ilorin, when I received an invitation to a meeting with General Abdulkareem Adisa. I had met him as governor of the old Oyo state. But like most people of my generation, he was an 'unknown quantity' in the context of the tapestry that is social life in Ilorin. More about this later.

On this day, I went to his house at the Ilorin GRA and would discover a couple of other people also waiting to see General Adisa. These included Professor Rotimi Fakeye, the Chief Medical Director of the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital; Professor Shehu Ahmad Jimoh of the University of Ilorin; Samuel Kolawole, the Managing Director of Trade Bank; Hajiya Zainab Oniyangi, wife of the Walin Ilorin and former minister, Akanbi Oniyangi; Justice Jimoh Lambo Akanbi and Hajia Ayinla who was the vice principal of the Queen Elizabeth School, Ilorin.

After a few minutes of bantering with these distinguished people, we were ushered into a large living room in the house, and a smiling General Adisa. He was then at the height of his power as Nigeria's minister of works, and one who never seemed able to stop talking to the media, and who has cut a rather controversial image.

Adisa told us that he was trying to institute a scholarships scheme and had decided to search for a creditable group of people to run the scheme. It was his search that brought us together, and before long, we constituted the Board of Trustees of the Adisa Bakare Educational Endowment Fund (ABEEF). The fund was launched with much funfair, and we eventually collected over Twenty five million naira, which has been kept in a fixed deposit at the Trade Bank, ever since. Each year, since 1998, the Board of ABEEF has awarded scholarships to hundreds of indigent students to help their educational pursuit.

I found quite instructive the story General Adisa told us that evening about his life. He said that he was born into near abject poverty, and his father had in fact been a migrant labourer somewhere on the outskirts of Ibadan, the capital of the old Western Region. Adisa said that he was very lucky to have received any form of education at all, and in fact praised the Nigerian military school system for giving him the opportunity to get a headstart in life.

His decision to institute the scholarships fund, was therefore a reflection of a passion that was coming from his lived experience as a young boy. He knew that there were several young people like him out there who would not be able to reach their potentials in life, just because they don't have somebody who could give a helping hand with the financing of their education. If he could step in, at least these young people would have been able to get the opportunity to become an asset to the community and our country.

The logic of his thought convinced all of us and we worked with a great deal of determination to get the fund running. As it was, he would be arrested for participation in the coup attempt against General Sani Abacha at the end of 1997, but that did not stop the work of the Adisa Bakare Educational Endowment Fund (ABEEF). We have continued to give out the scholarships, using a formula General Adisa himself worked out: Sixty percent to citizens of Ilorin Emirate; thirty percent to other local government areas of Kwara State and the remaining ten percent going to non-Kwarans, resident in the state.

It was quite instructive to note that by the time of his arrest for the 1997 coup attempt, General Adisa had become increasingly popular amongst the people of Ilorin Emirate as a philanthropist and promoter of community development efforts. It came as a shock when he was arrested and it was also a kind of challenge to the spiritual prowess of the Ilorin community.

This is because after the arrest, the Mallamai in Ilorin began a series of special prayers in all the mosques of the Emirate, for the release of General Adisa. A leading Mallam in Ilorin told me during the period, that they had done, at the behest of the Emir of Ilorin, some special prayer, which had not been done for any individual in living memory. He had told me, that even if they had tied him to a stake, they would



Late General Abdulkareem Adisa

somehow have to release him! As it turned out, a sequence of events led to the release of General Adisa and the others, and his return to Ilorin, on a Friday, when people were massing for Jumat Service, witnessed an outpouring of jubilation and a crowd, the size of which I had never seen in Ilorin. It seemed that the spirit of Islam was truly strong in Ilorin after all.

For anybody who had grown up in Ilorin, it is easy to notice some basic incongruities in the personality of the late General Adisa. His language and general style of speaking sometimes brash, often uncouth, are not typically Ilorin in content and form. These are directly related to the fact that he did not grow up in Ilorin. The South West where he grew up, seemed to have burnt an imprimatur on his language and behaviour. These are traits that Ilorin people generally find vulgar, unattractive and often offensive. However, the strength of General Adisa's personality and a single-minded commitment to find relevance assisted him to overcome this negative aspect of his persona.

Adisa discovered that total fidelity to Islam was the most constant aspect of the social existence of the Ilorin people; he plugged into the life of the community almost with a vengeance, and before long, he became an accepted member of the elite of Ilorin. In so doing, he overcame the debilitating poverty of his birth, the non-recognition of the earlier years and we might even say that he turned into strength the peculiar weaknesses of his life. How he did it must be sought in another unique side to his life. Most of Nigeria's neo-colonial elite, especially the soldiers amongst them made so much fortune through a rogue process of privatisation of the state. Adisa benefited from this process during the nineteen nineties. However, while many of his colleagues would enjoy their wealth alone with members of their nuclear families, General Adisa

made a productive use of his wealth.

I don't know of many people in our community who have invested in various employment and wealth generating ventures like General Abdulkareem Adisa. He made investments in Banking, with his AFONJA Community Bank; DISKABOG FARMS; DISKABOG HOSPITAL, DISKABOG RENTALS; a sprawling Resort named after his mother, called BELAWUAKANKE DIMENSIONS (BEKANDIMS). All of these organisations employ people from various parts of Nigeria, and in their different ways to remove several people from the streets.

General Adisa's presence in the community in Ilorin extended to such areas of social life as visits to the sick, and the bereaved and the regular donation of money towards all forms community development projects. In my view, it is these acts of generosity and sincere engagement with the community that will for long be remembered about General Adisa. It is also these sides to his life, which brought out the genuine outpouring of emotions in Ilorin, when the news of his death broke last week.

Many commentators have underlined his sense of loyalty and fidelity to his military constituency. They are very correct reflections of General Adisa's attitude. But a lot of the commentators did not bother to situate these elements of his person, within a larger context of the difficulties of his birth and upbringing; the poverty of a labouring family that was torn away from its roots in the context of a colonial political economy. That political economy had instituted a taxation regime and the rudiments of a colonial capitalism which demanded labour in a cocoa cash crop region in Western Nigeria. Gen. Adisa's father was drawn into that nexus and he (Adisa) was born into the deprivations so characteristic of that period in Nigerian history.

Adisa's life might not have been different from thousands of other young people of his generation, but for the break he got from the colonial military that was transforming at independence into the Nigerian army. He lapped up the opportunity to begin to build new friendships within an institution that had rigidly defined boundaries and codes of authority. The military and its ways was an escape from the poverty of a peasant surrounding in Western Nigeria, and it became everything away from the drudgery he would possibly have lived and died in, unknown and unsung. So despite all the odds, Adisa learnt his ropes as a "militician," in a Nigerian manner of speaking, and found a national relevance and eventually, a local acceptance in the context of the cultural norms of his hometown, Ilorin, from where his father had been torn much earlier.

The negative elements of the social life of General Adisa must be firmly analysed in the context of the military dictatorship that took hold of Nigeria by its jugular for years and by extension, the inability of Nigeria's ruling class to assume a historical role of a modernizing ruling class, able to lay the basis for the institution of an industrializing society and leading a cultural revolution against superstition and backwardness. In this milieu, General Adisa must be adjudged as guilty as other members of the elite, which took our country to its sorry pass today.

However, General Adisa was a compassionate human being, who was able to pull free of the poverty of his childhood. He did not forget the pains of poverty and therefore did everything to assist others to fulfil dreams that would otherwise lie prostrate due to the disadvantage of poverty. He became increasingly committed to Islam in his latter years, and held passionately a loyalty to the history of Ilorin Emirate and Northern Nigeria. May Allah forgive his sins and grant him Alianna Firdaus