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 NIGERIAN POSTAL SERVICE

Hajj: Nigeria seeks 3 days extension

Few days to the closure of Jeddah airport and with over 30,000 intending pilgrims still stranded, Nigeria is asking for three days extension from the Saudi authorities.

"We are struggling to get a shift in date by 72 hours. We have contacted the Saudi authorities and their response so far is positive," minister of state for foreign affairs Abubakar Tanko, said yesterday in Abuja.

Tanko who spoke to the News Agency of Nigeria

(NAN) in Abuja, said that only half of the nation's 56,000 intending pilgrims have been airlifted to the holy land.

He blamed the hitch on delays by some airlines who according to him, "delayed for 10 days as they could not position planes."

"The delay affected our plans and we have been trying to cover that lapse," he said.

He said that the airline had since begun mobilisation which had improved the

situation.

The minister also blamed the weather for the delay in the airlift especially in Yola, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Sokoto and Kano.

Tanko hinted of plans to arrange an intervention airline, saying that Kabo airline so far contacted had shown a desire to assist.

On problems pilgrims

usually face in the holy land the minister said that government had learnt from its mistakes and would make sure the situation was not repeated.

He, however, advised pilgrims against excess luggage, saying that they should stick to the 40kg limit by avoiding the temptation to go on a shopping spree.

NAN reports that angry intending pilgrims stranded in Gwagwalada had continued to protest over the lack of aircraft to lift them to the holy land.

With barely four days to the closure of the Jeddah Airport, only 1,000 of the over 2,300 intending pilgrims from FCT have been transported

to the holy land.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that since the beginning of the airlift on Dec. 28, only two flights had taken off from FCT comprising of pilgrims from the Kogi, Niger and Nasarawa states and FCT.

NAN reports that after the inaugural flight, further

Contd. on Pg 2

RESIGNATION

Senators lobby Ogbeh to rescind decision

CNPP hails Ogbeh

Senator David Mark (PDP/Benue) yesterday said moves have begun to persuade the National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh to withdraw his resignation from the position even as the PDP Senate caucus intensely moves to secure membership of the party's National Executive Committee for all Senators.

Responding to question **Senate passes budget Jan 27**

By Issa Sanusi, Political Reporter (Senate)

The Senate had further extended the passing of the 2005 Budget to the 27th of January contrary to its earlier promise to pass it yesterday while attributing the prolonged delay to the upward review of the Oil Benchmark by President Olusegun Obasanjo to 30 dollars per barrel.

In an explanation to the Senate, the chairman of the Senate Appropriation and Finance Committee, Senator John Azata-Mbata also lamented that sub-committees are not forthcoming with their submissions while saying that the new time table for the work on the budget has to

Contd. on Pg 2

By Issa Sanusi, Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter, Senate

from newsmen, Senator David Mark who said the crisis rocking the PDP is "minor" also said effort were being made to persuade Chief Audu Ogbeh to withdraw his resignation letter and reconsider his stance on the crisis going on in the party.

"Well the chairman said he has taken the decision in the best interest of the party and I am sure he is in a position to understand the situation. PDP got very capable hands and we have a number of people that canvass that position but I am sure that we are going to prevail on the chairman to withdraw his letter (of resignation) and reconsider his stand."

Senator David Mark further said: "We feel that persuading him to change his stance will be in the best interest of the party and the country. Yes, there are moves, we want to talk to him and see if he can change his stance," he said.

The PDP caucus in the Senate had earlier met behind close doors with very low attendance at its first meeting this year in which the Senate Leader, Dalhatu Sarki Tafida and the Senate Whip, Senator Udo Udomas briefed the

Contd. on Pg 2



The Iranian President Mohammed Khatami, inspecting a guard of honour during his arrival at the State House Abuja -yesterday.
 Pic: Joe Orave

INEC explains disparity in Ogun polls results

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) yesterday broke its silence on the verdict of the Presidential Election Petition Tribunal which voided the Ogun State results and indicted the commission for aiding malpractices as well as refusal to provide all results sheets subpoenaed by the court.

INEC explained that the disparity between the presidential and gubernatorial election results in Ogun State could not void the latter since voter turn-out did not exceed the register. Besides, it said, only the courts could void declared results.

Following the tribunal's

By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter (Senate)

verdict last month, there were calls on INEC to declare as void the Ogun gubernatorial results, since the election was held same day with the

Obasanjo submits new revenue formula to Senate

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday submitted a revised version of the revenue sharing formula to the Senate, 13 months after he withdrew it on the grounds that there were fake versions in circulation.

According to the president's submission, indices of

presidential polls that was nullified by the tribunal.

But the commission said in a statement in Abuja yesterday, signed by its director of public affairs, Steve Osemeke, that only the court could take such a decision.

horizontal sharing formula between local governments no longer include equality of the councils.

Obasanjo had written to the two chambers of the National Assembly in November 2003 withdrawing the revenue formula before the lawmakers, alleging that there were multiple flying around.

"It is pertinent to make reference to the disparity as regards the voter turn out in the presidential and gubernatorial elections in some states. It must be pointed out that there was no state of the federation where the voting could take such a decision."

Contd. on Pg 2

The Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), consequent upon this, redrafted a new formula and presented it to the president September last year.

In a letter dated January 6, to the President of the Senate, Adolphus Wabara,

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NEWS

Haji *Contd. from Pg 1*

flights were suspended due to the non-availability of aircraft.

Transportation of pilgrims from FCT, however, resumed on Jan. 7, when 470 intending pilgrims were flown to Mecca for the pilgrimage.

NAN reports that another batch of 450 intending were expected to be transported to the holy land yesterday.

The director of the FCT Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji Hussani Ashara, told NAN yesterday in Gwagwalada that preparations had been concluded for the departure of another batch of 450 pilgrims.

Ashara said departure of the batch would bring to 1,000 the number of FCT pilgrims so far transported.

He assured that adequate arrangements had been made to fly the remaining 1,300 pilgrims before Saturday's deadline issued by the Saudi authorities.

"We have made adequate arrangements to ensure that all intending pilgrims to this year's Hajj perform the hajj," he assured.

Ashara added that the board was also making arrangements to ensure that pilgrims did not encounter any difficulty on their return journey.

He appealed to the pilgrims to cooperate with the board in its efforts to ensure a smooth and hitch-free Hajj operations.

Barely four days to the closure of the Jeddah Airport to Hajj flights, some intending pilgrims have threatened a showdown with the FCT authorities.

"There will be a showdown if we are not transported within 24 hours," they warned officials of the FCT Muslims Pilgrims Welfare Board.

Reacting to the threat, the Executive Secretary of the Board, Alhaji Salisu Ashara, warned that the board would not transport any pilgrim found to be involved in any

form of strike or protest.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the pilgrims were angry with the board over its inability to provide an aircraft to transport them to Saudi Arabia.

NAN correspondents affected by the flight delay reports that most of the affected pilgrims had been sleeping in the Hajj transit camp in the past 10 days, waiting for their flight.

The pilgrims numbering about 2,000, who had been cleared for the journey, gave the 24-hour ultimatum after a meeting on Monday night.

The meeting was triggered off by the announcement of non-availability of aircraft in spite of repeated assurances that they would be transported by Kabo Airlines on Monday.

The pilgrims at their informal meeting complained of lack of basic facilities such as water and electricity at the camp, a situation that had worsened the living condition in the camp.

But in a swift reaction, Ashara said that anybody found disturbing the peace at the camp would be prosecuted in accordance with the provisions of the law.

He explained that the board had made adequate arrangements for the transportation of pilgrims but that the plan was scuttled by IRS Airlines originally slated to transport the pilgrims.

While appealing to the pilgrims to exercise patience, Ashara assured that they would be transported before the Jan. 15 deadline for the closure of the Jeddah Airport.

He also promised that the pilgrims would be given some allowances for the inconvenience they suffered on Monday.

Ashara reminded the pilgrims of the requirements of Hajj which include patience and fear of Allah and urged them to abide by them.

NAN reports that about 3,000 pilgrims are expected to perform this year's Hajj from FCT.

Resignation *Contd. from Pg 1*

lawmakers on the efforts being made to secure membership of the party's NEC for all Senators as obtained in other parties.

Meanwhile, the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) yesterday welcomed Monday's resignation of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) national chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh as the beginning of the end for the party and a fresh start for democracy in Nigeria.

In a statement in Abuja yesterday, signed by its secretary, Maxi Okwu, CNPP said "we of the CNPP see in the fall of Chief Ogbeh the beginning of the end for the ubiquitous PDP, a most welcome development if we must have genuine democracy in Nigeria."

Saluting Ogbeh for audacity and patriotism in writing his controversial letter to President Olusegun Obasanjo, Okwu said the president's seeming victory in the chairman's resignation would be short-lived.

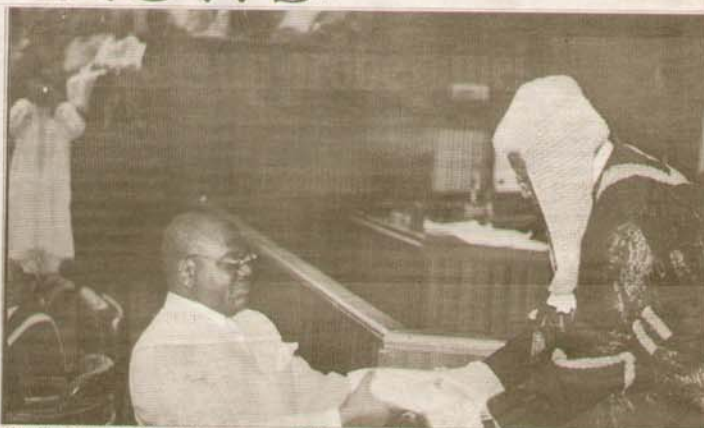
The statement said "The resignation yesterday (Mon-

day) of Chief Innocent Audu Ogbeh, chairman of PDP marks a turning point in our nascent democracy.

"We all knew all along that his days as chairman of the PDP were numbered as soon as he fired his audacious but patriotic letter to General Obasanjo. As we have always conceded, Chief Ogbeh's democratic credentials are sterling given his star performance as a minister in Shehu Shagari's lack lustre government.

"That he has finally slipped on the legendary banana peel-courtesy late Dr Okadigbo, has diminished the quality of our democratic enterprise. With the fall of Chief Ogbeh, a voice of reason, moderation and tolerance has been silenced.

"Once again it has been established that General Obasanjo does not take prisoners, but relentlessly takes out any one who dares to court his anger. General Obasanjo may be jubilating that he has scored once again, but we would like to assure him that his victory this time around is at best pyrrhic."



Akwa Ibom Governor, Obang Victor Attah presents 2005 budget to Speaker, Akwa Ibom House of Assembly, Chief Nelson Effiong in Uyo...recently.

Anambra: Senate stands down Panel report

By Isa Sanusi, Political Correspondent (Senate)

For the third time the senate stood down consideration of the investigative report of its committee on states and local government administration on the protracted political crises in Anambra State even though the report has been listed as second to the last item on the senate's order paper for Tuesday 11, January.

When the report came up for consideration on the floor of the senate, the deputy senate leader, Senator Jonathan Zwingina came by way of order 53 sub-section 5 of the Senate Standing Rules seeking leave of the senate to drop the report pointing out that since the matter is before a court of law it will be prejudicial for the senate to take a position on it.

Senator Zwingina further said the senate has no ground to discuss the matter because as he said: "I have in my possession a motion on Notice of the Supreme Court filed by the Attorney-General of Anambra State.

figures in the two elections were the same. The presidential election generated greater interest and wider participation among the electorate in many states.

"There was 1.57 million registered voters in Ogun State and reports from the field indicated that 1.3 million people voted during the presidential election, while over 738,000 people voted in the gubernatorial election. It should be pointed out clearly that the 1.3 million votes cast during the presidential election in Ogun State represent the total number of the votes scored by all the parties that contested the election.

"In Benue State, 1.24 million people voted during the presidential election, as against the 691,000 voters in the governorship poll. Similar disparity existed in a number of states. The position of the law is that the process could only be voided where the voter turnout exceeded the number of registered voters. In the alternative, the relevant tribunal is empowered to

This matter is before a court therefore our rule does not allow us to discuss any matter pending before a court of law," he said.

The Deputy Senate Leader who was seconded by Senator Tokumbo Afikuyomi noted that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Obanizeze Ndi Igbo have set up committees to look at the Anambra crises saying that in such a situation the Senate has to stand down any deliberation on the Anambra crises.

The senate then ruled out consideration of the report in the absence of the chairman of the Senate Committee on States and Local Government, Senator Iyabo Anisulowo who sources said got wind of the fact that her report may not see the light of day even before the senate plenary begins.

The suit filed before the Supreme Court by the Attorney-General of Anambra State, Mr U.N. Udechukwu

will come up for hearing on January 20, with the Attorney-General of the Federation and those of thirty six states joined as defendants.

The suit prays for the following interlocutory orders:

(1) An order of interlocutory injunction restraining the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from declaring a state of emergency in Anambra State, pending the determination of this suit.

(2) An order of interlocutory injunction restraining the federal government of Nigeria from removing or purporting to remove the governor of Anambra State from office whether as part of declaration of emergency or otherwise.

(3) An interlocutory order, staying any, or any further process or proceeding whether at the presidency or at the federal legislature, touching upon any issue in controversy in this suit.

Senate *Contd. from Pg 1*

be strictly adhered to. The Senate Leader, Senator Dalhatu Sarki Tafida, earlier appealed to Senate committees to endeavour to keep to the new deadline saying that the Senate is insisting on having the budget ready by the 27th of January, saying that without doing so the budget will be continuously delayed.

A motion moved by Senator Jonathan Zwingina and adopted by the Senate resolved that each committee of the Senate must make its sub-head submission by the 13th of January while failure to do so will compel the Appropriation and Finance Com-

mittee to impose sub-head of the committees. To keep to the new date set for the passing of the budget, the Senate has suspended plenary sessions to the 25th of this month to enable Senators attend to budget work at committee levels.

President Olusegun Obasanjo had late last year increased the oil benchmark to 30 dollars per barrel hence compelling the Senate to rework the budget to conform with the increase in the oil benchmark while a source said the budget may still be delayed as the president may send more amendments to the National Assembly.

Obasanjo *Contd. from Pg 1*

read on the floor yesterday, Obasanjo said he was removing the local government equality clause to discourage the unguided creation of additional councils by states.

"You will observe from section 2 sub-section 5 at page 5 that the horizontal formula proposed does not include 'equality of local government.' This is deliberate. As you are aware, there has been such unhealthy competition among states of the federation in the creation of local government without any regard for constitutional requirements. It is believed that the situation is being fuelled by the fact that 'equality of local government' which has to do with the number of local governments in a state is currently being reckoned with in the distribution of local government allocation. It is therefore thought that if 'equality of local government' is removed from the formula, creation of

additional local government may become unattractive to the states." He said the percentage initially set aside for equality, Obasanjo explained, had been redistributed among the other indices in the sharing formula.

Based on the revised formula, the federal government has 53.69 percent; states would share 31.10 percent; while local governments get 15.21 percent.

The horizontal allocation formula among the 36 states is 40 percent for equality of states, 30 percent for population, 10 percent for internal revenue generation effort, 10 percent for landmass and terrain, 3 percent for education and 3 percent for water.

The formula withdrawn in November 2003 was submitted December 2002, and had given 46.63 percent to federal government, 33 percent to states and 20.6 percent to local governments.

NEWS

Makarfi denies presidential interest

Governor Ahmed Muhammad Makarfi of Kaduna State has denied a media reports (not *Daily Trust*) that he is preparing to declare his candidature for the 2007 presidential elections.

In a statement made available to *Daily Trust* in Kaduna, signed by Mukhtar Zubairu Sirajo, Director-General media and publicity, Governor Makarfi said that he has not mandated anybody to speak for him on any purported

From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent Kaduna

presidential ambition. Governor Makarfi also said that, whoever declared that he is to contest for the presidential election is only expressing his or her personal opinion.

The statement said that as much as Governor Ahmed Makarfi is humbled by, and appreciative of the deluge expressions of confidence in his capacity from several quar-

ters he, at the same time wishes to reiterate his stand which he has made clear at several fora.

Governor Makarfi declared that he is still giving his best to justify the confidence reposed in him by the people of the state through overwhelming mandate that the people gave him once again in 2003.

The statement also said that the governor for now remains with the administration of the state, as his major pre-occupation for now.



The Information Minister Chiketa going through some documents with the Minister of State Works, Alhaji Saleh Shehu during the FEC meeting held at the State House Abuja...recently. Pic: Joe Oroye.

Senate to review insurance claims

The senate is proposing the upward review of the maximum insurance claim from N50,000 to N200,000 per depositor in event of bank failure while also proposing restoration of the power of the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) to act as liquidator which is fundamental to its mandate as a deposit insurer.

Vice Chairman Senate Committee on Banking and Financial Institutions, Senator Farouk Bello who led the debate for the amendments on the floor of the senate yesterday said the bill when passed into law will empower the NDIC to take prompt corrective action to check imminent distress in banks following findings on examination of

By Isa Sanusi Political Reporter (Senate)

a bank. The Bill which has passed second reading also seeks the establishment of a bridge bank as part of measures to resolve distress in the banking system. Such a measure the proposal amendment said will serve as a stop-gap measure to resolve distress in a bank by enabling the bridge bank to acquire the assets and assume the liability of the failing bank for the purpose of restructuring and sale.

"NDIC should have power to create separate insurance funds each category of insured financial institutions. As the corporation is required to insure other de-

posit-taking financial institutions, it is imperative that it should have the power to create separate insurance funds for such institutions licensed by the CBN."

Speaking further, Senator Farouk Bello said the amendment to the NDIC (Act) is part of the effort to consolidate on the reform in the banking sector saying when the new Act is passed into law the banking sector will be strengthened while depositors will be safer.

The new amendments he said is intended to harmonise the NDIC Act with provisions of the CBN Act of 1991 and Banks and Other Financial Institutions (BOFI) Act of 1991 as amended which brought all banking matters under direct supervision of the CBN.

The new bill increases fines for failure to comply with the provisions of the act adding that the fines provided by the existing Act are grossly inadequate.

The bill also makes a new provision for the corporation to withhold payment of deposit claims from accounts used for or held in furtherance of criminal activities pending the determination of culpability or otherwise by a tribunal or court of competent jurisdiction.

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Maccido Abubakar II, has declared Thursday 10th day of Dhul-Hajj 1425 (AH) equivalent to 20th January 2005 as Sallah day.

According to a statement issued and signed by the Chirman Dange and secretary of the Sultanate Council of Sokoto, Alhaji Umar Babuga, his eminence the Sultan accepted the recommendation given by the Central Moon Sighting Committee.

The statement said that the committee held its meeting at the Sultan's palace on Monday 10th January, 2005 and considered the reports sent by the various moon sighting committees.

The statement added that all the reports indicated that the moon of Dhul-Hajj was not sighted anywhere on Sunday 9th January 2005 the 29th day of Dhul-Qada.

It follows therefore that the moon of Dhul-Qada has completed the thirty days cir-

Sultan announces Thursday Jan 20 Sallah day

By Hassan Idris, Senior Reporter

Furthermore, his eminence the Sultan of Sokoto wishes the entire Muslim Ummah happy Eid-El-Kabir celebration, the statement said.

He prayed may Allah (SWT) accept our religious deeds.

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Jigawa denies N1bn gift to Niger Republic

Hassan A. Karofi Correspondent (Dutse)

The Jigawa State government has denied that it has given a gift of N1bn and six bullet proof jeeps to the government of Tanja Mamadu in Niger Republic, describing the allegation as a handwork of its opponents who have collaborators in some media houses.

Debunking the allegation, the state commissioner for information, Alhaji Abba Umar Kukama said the report as published by some media (not *Daily Trust*) was just a naked

falshood fabricated by opponents of the government of Ibrahim Turaki. The commissioner wondered how the media as the fourth estate of the realm should not investigate such stories but went ahead to publish it despite glaring evidence of a calculated plan by its authors to cause harm to a government that has been doing every thing possible to better the lives of its people.

"It is evident that from the fact that some newspapers have made the issue a topic for editorial just as some hitherto respected columnists have seen this as an avenue to unleash attacks on the Jigawa State government," he added.

It is for this reason that he revealed that the state government decided to react and state emphatically that the ongoing campaign is part of the well-planned campaign against the person of the state governor and the government of Jigawa State.

The commissioner also explained that it is worth asking by any right thinking person if there is any government in the country that has the capacity to donate N1bn while stressing that the administration of Governor Turaki has in the last few years of its existence been judiciously spending every kobo that has come to it for the betterment of its people.

Ogbeh was not forced to resign, says Gana

The Political Adviser to the President, Prof Jerry Gana, has said that the national chairman of the PDP, Chief Audu Ogbeh, was not forced to resign his post.

Addressing newsmen yesterday in Abuja, Gana said that rather, "Ogbeh resigned voluntarily to save the party and democracy". Ogbeh had on Monday confirmed that he had submitted a letter of his resignation with effect from Feb. 28.

The resignation was the fallout of the exchange of letters between him and President Olusegun Obasanjo on the protracted political crisis in Anambra.

"Ogbeh has not resigned by force or in protest, but for certain reasons of principles. In politics, this is nothing new, he should be saluted for his courage and wisdom," he said.

"The interest of the party transcends individual interest. This party also happens to be the party in government and therefore, in the interest of Nigerians, we should take the responsible step of ensuring that PDP is restored to its dig-

city and honour. "The interest of Nigeria transcends that of the party therefore, we should not allow party differences within to affect the stability and peace of this nation," he counselled. He expressed optimism that the party would emerge from the crises much stronger.

On the speculation that he would be the next chairman of the party, Gana, a member of the PDP Board of Trustee, was not categorical but insisted that it was only the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the party that could decide who to appoint.

"The party has its constitutional ways of doing things and it will take appropriate decisions when the time comes," he said.

...moves to certify title documents

The immediate past chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Audu Ogbeh yesterday in company of the FCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, went to the Abuja Geographic Information System (AGIS) the body

responsible for re-certification of certificates of occupancy in the FCT, in connection with title documents for his landed property in the FCT.

Chief Audu Ogbeh, who resigned as PDP chairman only this week, was received by the AGIS administrator, Madam Altine Jibrin who gave him a form to fill and had his photograph taken.

After about 20 minutes, the time it took to process Chief Ogbeh's documents, the ex-PDP chairman emerged and was accosted by reporters as he approached his car.

Reporters asked him why it took so long for him to resign, to which he responded that it is only now that it had to be done, and rebuffed all other questions from reporters.

He, however, said he intends to retire into farming in his village in Benue State, now that he is no longer the PDP chairman.

Khatami arrives

Abuja on 3-day visit

President of Iran, Mohammed Khatami, arrived in Abuja yesterday for a three-day state visit. He was received on arrival at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport by the Foreign Affairs Minister Amb. Olu Adeniji.

Shortly after his arrival Khatami, was driven to the forecourt of the Presidential Villa where he was received by President Olusegun

By Elkanah Chawal Reporter Foreign Desk

Obasanjo and inspected a guard of honour.

At the reception were Vice President Atiku Abubakar, some Ministers and Special Advisers. After the reception, the two leaders immediately went into the first round of bilateral talks. Khatami will later be hosted to a state banquet.

Works ministry gets N6.7 billion virement

The senate yesterday approved the sum of N6.734 billion as virement for the federal ministry of works, even as the ministry has said it awarded the contract of N926 million for the construction of Ibegwa bridge in Akwa Ibom State to Mothercat Ltd.

The amount approved for the virement is to be financed from the over N42 billion provided for the ministry in the 2004 budget for federal highways.

The amount which was initially meant for 52 new projects to which over N4 billion had been earmarked and

By Nasir Imam, Property and Environment Editor

N2.566 billion for 40 other projects were either completed, non-performing, stalled or terminated would now be re-assigned for projects in the six geo-political zones.

On the Ibegwa bridge project expected to commence in 17th January, release from the works ministry said the bridge among Ette-Abale road is a narrow, substandard bridge over Qua Iboe River constructed in 1957, and serves as the main access to the east west route.

NEWS

Doctors' strike: FG releases N7bn for settlement

The federal government has released the sum of N7,994 billion for the settlement of the shortfall owed resident doctors in the country's tertiary health institutions.

It would be recalled that resident doctors under the auspices of the National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) have been on strike since December 6, 2004 as a result of government's inability to pay them arrears of salaries and allowances owed them.

Committee on Christian pilgrimage inaugurated

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Alhaji Abubakar Tanko Monday inaugurated an eight-man committee to evaluate this year's Christian pilgrimage.

At the ceremony held in Abuja, Tanko challenged the members of the delegation to "spare no effort in ensuring a report that would help efforts toward a hitch-free pilgrimage."

He decried a situation where some pilgrims had turned the religious ritual into an avenue for questionable ventures and urged the delegation to suggest ways to end such a menace.

Tanko called for suggestions that would make the religious obligation an avenue for reinforcing their faith and commitment to their creator.

Tanko frowned at growing cases of abscondment during pilgrimages and described the trend as "very embarrassing."

"The activities of these unpatriotic elements in our midst have over the years been a source of embarrassment."

Deregulation successful

Special Assistant to the president on petroleum matters, Alhaji Ja'afaru Paki, says deregulation of the downstream sector of the oil industry is a success.

NAN recalls that the downstream sector was completely deregulated in October 2003 after a one-year campaign.

"I must say that the exercise is achieving its desired goals given the huge investments in the sector as well as availability of products," he said.

In an exclusive interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja, Paki said stakeholders were now recovering cost.

He explained that the gains of deregulation would be consolidated in the year.

"There will be more private depots as well as hundreds of retail outlets this year as a result of new entrants into the sector," he said.

The presidential aide said a number of storage facilities have been built by marketers while

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter

Addressing journalists yesterday in Abuja, the Minister of Health, Prof. Eytayo Lambo noted that the major cause of the strike was the shortfall experienced in the personnel budget released last year pointing out that the doctors' strike has been a thing of concern to the government and Nigerians.

The use of average salary steps in arriving at estimated personnel costs for federal

health institutions and inadequate provision in the payment of consultants in teaching hospitals, locum doctors in medical centres, NYSC and doctors who are not regular staff but need to be paid from the personnel vote, the minister pointed out were some of the causes for the short-fall.

He further disclosed that, inadequate provision for non-regular allowances of health workers, payment of 22 per cent salary increase on HATISS IV to resident doctors whose salary scale based on HAPSS, implementation of the contributory pension scheme and the non-redress of pre-2004 persistent complaints of personnel shortfall of some health institutions all contributed to what led to resident doctors' strike.

The national president of the National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD), Dr. Jerry Ogunzie commended the government for the release of funds to offset the shortfall owed resident doctors as against the earlier pronouncement that the money will be included in the budget, which will have to be signed into law before doctors can be paid.

He, however, noted that NARD will not call off the strike action until it is sure that the said amount is in the accounts of the various public health institutions in the country.

ment to the government and people of Nigeria and must be checked," he said.

In his remarks, leader of the delegation Bishop Peter Okoduwa, thanked the government for the appointment and promised that members would justify the confidence reposed on them.

He called for cooperation from all concerned and promised to submit the report as scheduled.

No fewer than 12,000 Nigerians are expected to perform this year's Christian pilgrimage to the Holy land.

Harmattan haze grounds flights again

Flight operations at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (NAIA), Abuja, were yesterday affected by harmattan haze that engulfed the city.

A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent who monitored development at the airport reports that the weather condition made it difficult for aircraft to take-off between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.

"Since morning, we did not record any flight due to the prevailing weather situation in Abuja," NANA spokesman Chris Ishiekwe told NAN in Abuja yesterday.

Ishiekwe, however, said that some flights landed from Lagos later in the day following improved weather condition.

He also said that due to clearer visibility in the afternoon, some airlines, namely Albaraka,

Chanchangi, Bellview and IRS airlines were seen boarding passengers for onward journey to Lagos and other parts of the country.

NAN reports that since last week, airlines were unable to operate scheduled flights following heavy harmattan haze that had blanketed the capital city and its environs.

Visibility last week was poor with weather forecasts placing it at between 300 meters and 400 meters, which made it difficult for airline operations.

However, as the weather condition improved between Monday and Tuesday, most domestic airlines were seen battling to cope with the backlog of passengers with most of them jostling for tickets.

Some airline personnel told NAN that they recorded losses, as large sums of money were lost within the period due to poor weather.

"This weather is very harsh both on the body and for our operations, it has made us to lose so much money in the last few days," one of the ticketing clerks added

Discussions have reached an advanced stage with the Swiss authorities to release looted funds to the Nigerian government by the end of this month, President Olusegun Obasanjo has said.

Part of the funds, the president said, would be used to finance the 2004 budget deficit.

The Nigerian government believes that it has about \$2.2 billion looted funds spread in several countries, including Britain and Switzerland.

Swiss authorities had repatriated \$200 million to Nigeria at the end of 2003 following settlement between parties to the money and the Nigerian authorities, as well as the seizure orders issued by the prosecutor's office in Geneva.

Obasanjo said in a letter to the Senate dated January 6, read on the floor yesterday by President of the Senate, Adolphus Wabara, that the Swiss government would re-

Swiss to release looted funds to FG

By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter (Covered)

Additional recovered monies by the end of this month.

He did not, however, mention the amount involved.

"As you would be aware, we have been expecting the return of the recovered (looted) funds from Switzerland. Our discussions with the Swiss authorities are now at an advanced stage and the funds are now expected to be released around the end of January, 2005," The president said.

In the letter, Obasanjo also announced government's intention to issue 90-day treasury bills as bridging funding to fill up the 2004 budget deficit.

The bills, he said, would be open to subscription to all those interested except the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), and would be redeemed when the recovered funds when government receives them.

Nigerian government accused late head of state, General Sani Abacha of looting huge amounts of money and investing same in Switzerland and other countries.

Only recently the German authorities, announced the arrest of Abacha's son, Abba in connection with the funds.

He was said to have been arrested when the German authorities were alerted by the Deutsche Bank in Essen, and is now in custody in Dusseldorf, Western Germany, awaiting extradition to Switzerland.



Abaji Chief Abdul-Rahim Oladimeji (the Asiwaju of Irele) (r), receiving the licence from the Minister of Education, Professor Fabian Osuji (l) for Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin during the presentation ceremony of licences to private universities held in Abuja... recently. Psc: Kennedy Egbosode.

FG writes US over Virgin restriction

In an effort to resolve the impasse between Nigeria and United States over the banning of the proposed national flag carrier, Virgin Nigeria from flying US routes, the federal government has written the US government over the ban.

According to the government, the US took the decision because facts were not available to them when they took the decision and now that they have written to them to explain the true status of the national carrier, the US may revert its decision.

The Aviation Minister, Mallam Isa Yuguda who disclosed this to *Daily Trust* said that the ministry had already written to the American Embassy and US Transport Department informing them of status of the carrier.

"Their earlier decision was based on speculation rather than facts. It was a misconception and misinterpretation of the situation because facts were not made available to them at the time they made the decision."

"It will be unfair for the Americans to do what their embassy officials were talking about."

He said Virgin Nigeria is

By Mohammed S. Shehu, Reporter (Travel & Leisure)

entirely owned and managed by Nigerians and he doesn't see the reason why the US would be hostile to such a company that is going to lead aviation in Africa.

"The Americans always supported Africa and this company is one of those companies that will emerge as an African Airline," Yuguda said.

The United States govern-

ment was reported to have banned the proposed virgin Nigeria from flying its routes due to information made available to it by representatives of Virgin Atlantic Airline and Nigeria that the emerging company would be controlled by the mother company in Britain, Virgin Atlantic.

In a swift reaction, the government had earlier debunked the claim insisting that the company is 51 per cent owned by Nigerians while 49 per cent by Virgin Atlantic.

... opens bids for FUMTA assets

The federal government yesterday in Abuja opened bids for the remaining assets of the liquidated Federal Urban Mass Transit Agency (FUMTA).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that out of the 35 investors that earlier bid for various categories of assets advertised, only 29 showed up at yesterday's bidding session.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Transport, Alhaji Nu'uman Danbatta, said that government decided to publicly open the bids in order to ensure transparency in the acquisition of the properties.

Danbatta said after the opening session all the bids would undergo a due process scrutiny between the ministry's officials

and the consultants engaged for the exercise.

He urged the bidders to exercise understanding and patience during the bidding exercise, saying "we have put in place all the necessary mechanism to guarantee a free and fair exercise."

NAN reports that the bidding exercise was witnessed by the interested investors, ministry officials and the media.

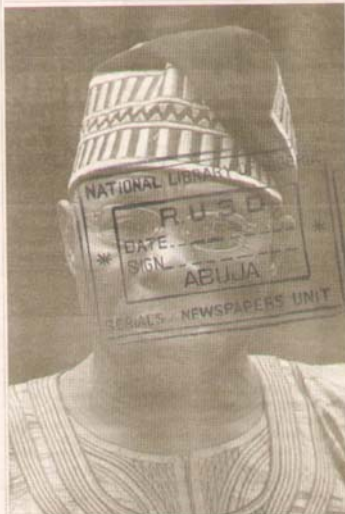
Among the items hidden were ferries, various spare parts of Mercedes-Benz buses and Nissan buses, workshop tools, landed property in some parts of the country, furniture and fittings and undeveloped plots of land in Abuja.

NAN gathered that results of the bids would be announced today.

News Focus

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President Olusegun Obasanjo



Chief Audu Ogbeh



Governor Chris Ngige

Ogbeh: Can PDP survive the heat?

By Hammeed M. Bello,
 Senior Political Reporter,
 Reps

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has broken records in several different ways. It is the ruling party since May, 1999 and has returned the president in 2003 though in an election that has remained controversial and was consequently challenged in the courts, although the court ruled that the irregularities alleged were not enough for it to annul the election of the president. The PDP also sets record as the largest political party in West Africa and has boasted of having overwhelmed the opposition parties and has therefore conquered the polity.

And to whom much is given, much is also expected, or put differently, uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. Such has been the challenge confronting the PDP.

The resignation of the national chairman of the PDP, Chief Audu Ogbeh, the lingering and almost intractable Anambra crisis, personality clashes and sharp chasm that has occurred ahead of 2007 and constant crisis of loyalty are parts of the difficulties which many believe could mar the party, or provoke some sort of rejuvenation.

But most current, and perhaps, the most unprecedented is the resignation of Chief Audu Ogbeh as

PDP national chairman, and the issues it has generated so far. Many have also questioned the how's and why's about Ogbeh's resignation, all of which will certainly get clearer in matter of days and weeks.

It is public knowledge that Audu Ogbeh might have been forced to resign at gunpoint, contrary to his interest, although he initially denied all that which observers said is a politician's way of shielding the uncomfortable facts from the public.

Ogbeh was quoted to have told newsmen that he resigned because President Obasanjo wanted him out by all means and had no choice but to allow the president have his way. "I am not in any contest for power or supremacy with the president," he said.

He disclosed that as part of strategy to get him out of office, he had been visited on Sunday morning by security operatives from the villa who told him that the president wanted to see him, but that he told the security operatives that he would visit the president later, but they insisted that he had to follow them because he could not delay the president's trip, on Sunday, to Congo Brazzaville unnecessarily.

At the villa the president was said to have asked Ogbeh why he had not turned in his resignation letter, and sources said on the eve of the PDP national executive committee meeting on January 4, Ogbeh had turned in a handwritten resignation letter in response to Obasanjo's declaration that he could no longer work with him. The president wanted the letter typed.

The president was said to have visited Ogbeh in his house on January 4 to collect the typed letter of resignation, but Ogbeh was said to have requested to consult with his family and supporters before releasing the typed version.

When Ogbeh arrived the villa on Sunday, the first thing the president was said to have requested to know was whether Ogbeh had concluded the consultations. Obasanjo was said to have reminded the PDP chairman that it would not be a virtue for him to be stubborn in the present circumstances. But Ogbeh was said to have made up his mind to quit rather than grapple with undesirable situations, and as it turned out, the bottom line is that Ogbeh ceases to be chairman of PDP from February 28, and part of the tactics was allegedly to intimi-

date members of his family and deny him access to his loved ones.

Now that Ogbeh has resigned, who occupies his position? Will it be someone whose world view is like that of Ogbeh; someone who has a sterling independence of principles or a stooge who does not have a mind of his own? As Ogbeh suggested, the deputy national chairman of PDP (North), Alhaji Ibrahim Safana would be the interim chairman pending the emergence of a substantive chairman at the convention billed for November.

But there are strong suggestions that about three people have been tipped, they include Ambassador Fidelis Tappun former Plateau state governor, and coordinator of the Obasanjo and Atiku success movement in the 2003 election with headquarters at the Legacy House in Abuja, the secretary of PDP board of trustees, Prof. Jerry Gana and Senator Ahmadu Ali, all from the North central. Feelers are also that the national vice chairman (south west) of the PDP, Chief Olabode George was also eyeing the PDP chairmanship. It is difficult to say however, how Bode George would achieve the ambition bearing in mind that the slot has been zoned to the

north central till 2007.

The way and manner of the resignation of Ogbeh has however provoked several reactions in the public. Feelers are that many likened the manner Ogbeh was forced to resign to some form of military coup. This is perceived to be anti-democratic especially that Ogbeh is entitled to seek another fresh mandate at the convention which is believed to be the proper forum to grant or deny him the mandate.

The crisis in Anambra state, the genesis of the sour relationship between Obasanjo and Ogbeh is yet another cankerworm which resolution is in doubt going by the fate of Ogbeh.

Ogbeh's letter to Obasanjo had expressed concern, among other things, to the crisis in Anambra which may plunge the country in a mess if not tackled properly. And Ogbeh has said that he wrote on Anambra to save Ngige from being killed because he (Ngige) had allegedly been marked for execution in December. But with the resignation of Ogbeh for daring to speak on Anambra, feelers are that Ngige might be in for some tough times. And already, a motion for a state of emergency was billed to be introduced at the senate yesterday but was stood

down. But it is doubtful if the motion would see the light of day because only the president or the state governor, through the state assembly, could call for a state of emergency.

Be that as it may, it is necessary to point out that in politics, there is no permanent friendship or enmity, that the only thing permanent is interest. And once common political interests begin to clash, mutual trust becomes suspect, and as long as the ranks remained unclosed and individual interest continue to override group interest, the falcon, as Chinua Achebe said, could no longer hear the falconer.

Things might begin to fall apart because the centre might no longer hold, and anarchy could turn against the world but may God save the country from any hopeless situation.

When Chinua Achebe wrote his record breaking novel, *Things Fall Apart* in 1958, little did he envisage that its philosophy would have universal and even political implication. Whichever way the crisis in PDP goes, it is instructive to exercise caution so that the collective destiny of Nigerians, entrusted to some extent with politicians, would not be plundered.

Nigerians are indeed not ready to be the politically endangered species.

Soliloquy

WITH
A. B. Ahmed
dahmed@csunida.com

JCB: Jah come black

What dem want? Dem want a white God? Well, Jah Come Black...

The Bob Marley Interviews. This piece has been a very long time writing. It is the outcome of an argument which has been raging between me, my friends and even my children for I can't remember exactly how long now. I have adamantly refused to shift ground, because I honestly believe that my arguments are unassailable, in this question of exactly what colour both religion and science agree and prove irrefutably that God was (and still is), before the beginning and right up to this moment.

I really do not hold it against those who adamantly refuse to accept my passionate arguments in the matter under discussion. It goes absolutely against the grain of their lifelong beliefs, religious upbringing, ingrained education and "accepted" wisdom. It is unimaginable to them, that based on the say-so of no greater authority than my humble and inconsequential self, they should abruptly begin to fly in the face of "irrefutable" religious, scientific and empirical evidence which prove so completely that black is the colour of the mark of Cain; the colour of failure and slavery, poverty and misery and mourning; the colour of sin and Satan and the netherworld. But for me, all these accepted wisdoms and transplanted racist beliefs are nothing more than hoary old wives' tales which easily melt away in the face of rational thinking and the application of simple common sense.

It really is of no importance to me whether you choose the religious viewpoint which holds that heaven and earth were created by a mystical and all-powerful Being (whose name is God in whatever language you like) saying imperiously: "Let them be" and lo, they became; or whether you are a thoroughly dyed-in-the-wool scientific man/woman who firmly believes in the Big Bang Theory as an explanation for the coming of creation into being. My own belief is that both before God said "Let there be" and before a super-dense lump of something triggered off a Big Bang, there must have been a Super Being who uttered the creative command, and/or who made that lump of something which exploded in a Big Bang. It is immaterial to me what name you choose to call this conceptual Super Being or what essence you choose to endow Him/It with, really. What is of crucial importance to me is the answer to this question: What colour was God of the Super Being in the beginning: what colour can He or It conceivably be now,

and what colour can He/It possibly be or become, by the end of time and creation?

Let us consider the religious case first, since it is the dicier one, which can easily send otherwise sane and reasonable men and women into inexplicable fits of absolutely mindless rage, in defence of their favorite deities. As if the God whom anybody claims to worship has ever cried out for help to His inconsequential and puny creatures like mankind. (Thank you *ojare*, President Obasanjo, for putting this question of "Whom has God ever appointed or begged to help Him fight His fight for Him?" among our fanatical religious crusaders and jihadists so very pitifully, in your own uniquely earthy and Kalahari-Pygmy-like language, the other day).

Any great religion of the world coalesces around one central fact, namely, that the deity whose worship it believes in and propagates is the creator of the universe. But especially for the two major monotheisms of the West, Christianity and Islam, both of which have their roots in the Middle East and are indeed first cousins one to the other, there is explicit doctrinal evidence which all believers and adherents must accept as a matter of faith, that God (or Allah if you are a muslim), having created the heaven and the earth, needed to especially create light in order that both Himself and His creatures might see what He had wrought, that it was (and is still very) good.

Now, since God created light, it stands to reason and logic that God and His creature, light, cannot be one and the same being. And exactly because light, like man, is merely one of the trillions of species of creatures which God made, it is capable of being subjected to scientific measurement and analysis by man, as well as by any other intelligent and scientific form of life. We know exactly what light is, in its many manifestations; from white light (whose components we know by breaking down the spectrum) to x-rays, ultraviolet rays and other forms of light and illumination.

To quote from the Christian Holy Book, the Bible:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth; And the earth was without form and void; And darkness was upon the face of the deep; And the spirit of God moved over the surface of the water. And God said 'Let there be light' and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good; And God divided the light from the darkness: And the light called 'He' day, and the darkness He called night. And the evening and the

morning were the first day'." [Genesis, Chapter 1; King James V version]

Arising directly from the authoritative quote above, my first question is: From what state was God coming, before He created the universe and then the light with which He saw His work, that it was good? Was it from a state of darkness, since He had not yet created light? In that case, what exactly is the colour of darkness? Can it, by any chance or stretch of the imagination, be BLACK? Is it possible and conceivable that before creation, the colour of eternity was BLACK? Is it both logical and religiously valid that we may therefore safely infer from the foregoing that the colour of God Himself, before He created light among other things, was (and is still) BLACK?

While we mull over these questions, permit me to quickly go scientific, since the size of space which I have to make my case here is not limitless. Astronomy as a pure science tells us without the slightest trace of equivocation that all the light which is available in the known universe emanates from things that came into existence as a result of the Big Bang or, in other words, creation: galaxies; globular clusters; open clusters; individual stars of various types, sizes and magnitudes; pulsars; quasars; neutron stars; nebulae; and all such other amazing astronomical phenomena which man has so far been able to measure in terms of size, distance, spectral attributes, luminosity and so on and so forth.

Would it be reasonable, logical and scientifically valid therefore to infer that before there ever was a Big Bang and the emergence and evolution of this entire universe the normal condition of nothingness was that of profound darkness or absolutely no light? And pray, what is the scientific definition of darkness or the absolute absence of light, perhaps borrowing from the scientific definition of an astronomical Black Hole? Or what about new frontiers of astronomy which are now studying phenomena like Dark Matter and Dark Energy? Moving on from here, would it be pardonable for me to arrive at the same conclusion which I arrived at earlier, using the mystical, mythical and superstitious tools of religious analysis? Would I be pardonable if I were to argue that, both scientifically and religiously, the only colour that God and eternity can possibly be is BLACK?

What dem want? Dem want a white God? Well, Jah Come Black...!!!

Postscript
Teacher, over at the school on Mombassa Street in Wise Zone 5 Abuja, does this piece adequately represent a summation of our reasoning before we adopted our JCB slogan? Let us now wait for

Opinion

The world as America's hostage

Before now, never has there been a time in the history of mankind and human societal development when one country, out of sheer arrogance and utter disregard for international norm and convention, forcefully lord it over the rest of the world and go unchallenged. It is even unfortunate that no nation or leader of international standing has the effrontery to say no to aggression and such mindless massacre of human lives as a deliberate foreign policy.

The future of the world has never been so gloomy and uncertain because nations have allowed themselves to be used as a mere play thing in the hands of the US. Today America is the only country which set the standard that all countries must follow. Its leader, President George Bush, the man who Michel Moor describes as leader of an idiot nation now runs the affairs of the world from the comfort of his oval office in DC; and the rest of the world has been reduced to US's vassal states and it's people, his obedient subjects.

Plan to dominate the world by America is indeed not new. Previous administrations in the US have for long been trying to achieve this wild and ambitious American dream. But before the emergence of Bush at the helms of affairs in Washington, no US president considered this issue as a do or die affair. To therefore accept the claim advanced by America that it attacked Afghanistan and later Iraq to avert what it describes as "recurrence of 9/11" is to say the least spurious.

The truth is that even before 9/11, there had been a report of a blue print for the creation of a Global Pax Americana by America's neo-conservatives think tank. The document entitled "rebuilding America's defences", was written in September 2000 by the think tank's project for the new American Century (PNAC).

Courtesy of PNAC, the world has come to know Bush's cabinet intention to take military control of the gulf region whether or not Saddam Hussein was in power or not.

The document says, "while the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American Force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein"

But the reality on the ground is that even with this presence of a

By Saleh Ibrahim Bature

substantial US army of occupation and colossal losses in both manpower and material from the US side; it is yet uncertain to determine whether America can sustain another one or two years fight in Iraq.

Exposing the plan of PNAC, Michael Meacher, member of parliament and former British minister for environment writes recently in the *Guardian* of London thus: the US must "discourage advanced industrial nations from challenging our leadership or even aspiring to a larger regional or global role". The US accomplice in crime against countries that are not in the good book of Bush and his hard line America's neo-conservative right wingers, the UK, is referred to as "the most effective and efficient means of exercising American global leadership."

Peace keeping mission, an important statutory function of the UN is described in the document as an effort that must demand American political leadership rather than that of the UN. The document further states that "even should Saddam Hussein pass from the scene US bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will remain permanently."

In a flagrant disregard for international norms and conventions, the document also picks on China for "regime change with an appeal to Bush administration that, "it is time to increase the presence of American forces in south East Asia and at the same time move for the creation of "US space forces to dominate space and the total control of the cyberspace, to prevent enemies from using the internet against America."

Countries such as North Korea, Syria and Iran are not spared as they are listed as dangerous regimes whose existence justifies the creation of a "world wide command and control system". Finally, the blue print also considers it worthwhile for the US government to develop biological weapons "that can

target specific genotypes (and) may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a political useful tool".

A cursory look at the above revelations will therefore expose all the blather about neo-conservative American policy aimed at carving a new "empire". "Pax Americana" "benevolent global hegemony" and a unipolar world where American position takes precedence in all international fora. America seems to ignore the reality that as one-civilization lapses another takes over from it. History is replete with so many such instances.

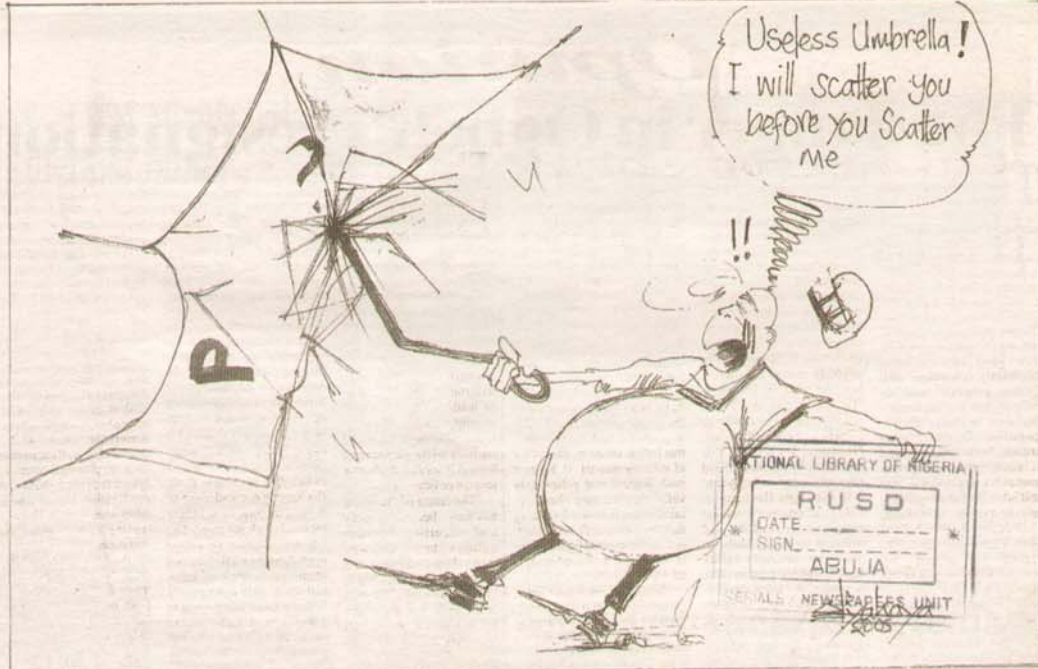
As 'Abu Umar al-faruq said, "civilizations decline when they have reached the peak of their usefulness to humanity, humanity could no longer endure their burden; they resort to force to command obedience". This aptly captures the current international scenario of the United States. The centre of US power becomes degenerate. Just as the Ottoman empire became the old sick man of Europe in the 19th century, America is the burden of humanity in this millennium. People of all races are uncomfortable and insecure with the modus operandi of the US as it affects other nations. Force, propaganda and economic power are used to punish and whip perceived enemy nations into obedience.

Just as the ancient great nations and civilization such as Egyptian, Phoenician, Mesopotamia, Byzantine, Greek, Roman and Ottoman empires once triumphed, ruled the world and then collapsed and vanished; it is only a matter of time for the world to witness the down sliding of the US power block into dustbin of history. This is inevitable, it is the ruling of a natural law that deals with the dynamism of human societal development.

Only time can tell when the American dream of global hegemony will, to borrow from Patrick I. Buchanan, "be quietly put on a shelf and forgotten as infantile prattle."

Saleh Ibrahim Bature writes from No. 24 Waziri street Azare Bauchi state.

"Only time can tell when the American dream of global hegemony will, to borrow from Patrick I. Buchanan, "be quietly put on a shelf and forgotten as infantile prattle"



Re: "Fraud: JSC probes FCT High Court"

We act as solicitors to the Committee of the Federal Capital Territory and we shall hereinafter refer to it as "the committee".

On Tuesday, the 21st day of December 2004, at page 3 of your Daily Trust Newspaper, you did publish or caused to be published an article with the above quoted caption. The publication was purported to be a report of an alleged interview granted to your reporter either alone or with

other members of the Press, by Mrs. Oluwatoyin Yahaya, who incidentally is the secretary of the committee. (We shall subsequently refer to her as "the secretary").

Let us begin by stating that, the representation being made by you through the said publication, i.e. that the secretary granted an interview to the press on the subject of the publication, is false, malicious, and a deliberate attempt to damage the reputation of the secretary. It

is true that sometime within the week preceding the publication in question, a veiled lady who introduced herself as a reporter for your newspaper was at the office of the secretary. The reporter sought to have some information about the alleged probe on the petition written by Alhaji Bala Haruna to the committee. The secretary however, expressly declined to make any comment regarding the probe.

The Secretary told your reporter that as a civil servant,

she lacked the competence to speak to the media on this or any other matter. Your reporter was further informed that, even the members of the Judicial Service Committee of the Federal Capital Territory, can not speak to the media on the issue or other official matters. She (the reporter) was finally directed to see the Honourable Chairman of the Committee, Hon. Justice I. H. Gummi, who is also the Chief Judge of the High Court of Justice, Federal Capital

Territory. All these transpired in the presence of witnesses who were with the Secretary at the time your reporter was ushered into the Secretary's office.

It is therefore appalling that, what subsequently appeared in the aforesaid publication was a report that leaves the entire public with the erroneous impression that the Secretary granted an interview to the press over the alleged probe of the Chief Registrar, High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, when in fact and in truth, no such thing transpired. The publication is false, malicious and a deliberate attempt to damage and discredit the standing of the Secretary, who is a highly competent, respected, and reputable public officer.

It is an attempt to present the Secretary as an officer who has no regard for the Oath of her office especially as it relates to the need to maintain confidentiality of official matters. The publication is no doubt designed and calculated to bring the Secretary at odds with her colleagues and also lower her estimation in the eyes of the right thinking members of the Public Service, the Judiciary in particular and the general public at large.

As much as we recognize the right of the Press to keep the public informed on matters of this nature, there is equally a corresponding duty to publish only what represents the truth on the matter. The Press must not, should not, and indeed have no right to damage or cause any damage

to be made to the reputation of any person. There is no general license to the press to publish falsehood on, or about an individual, with the attendant result of bringing such a person to public ridicule, contempt and opprobrium. Unfortunately, this is what your publication has presently done and our client has suffered grievous injury thereby.

On the premises above mentioned, we demand from you the following: A complete retraction of the said article as it affects the Secretary, Mrs. Oluwatoyin Yahaya; An unreserved apology to the Committee, the Secretary, Mrs. Oluwatoyin Yahaya as well as all other principal officers of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory mentioned in the publication.

Note that both the retraction and the apology are to be made within seven (7) days from the date of receipt of this letter, and must be published on a conspicuous page or column as was the case with the original article. We do hope that this incident would be laid to rest on this note.

Y. C. Maikya & Co Plot 2048, 2nd Floor, Akintola Williams House, Michael Okpara Way, Zone 7, Wuse, P.O. Box 12025, Garki P.C. 900 001-Abuja.

We have investigated the story and found that the reporter unethically quoted from a petition as if from an original interview.

The reporter will be reprimanded accordingly. We regret any embarrassment caused by the story.

-Editor

Journalism and censorship: The Kano example

The practice of journalism started in Nigeria in 1859 with the publication of a newspaper in Yoruba language called "Iwe Iroyin Fun Awon Egbani Yaruba" by a missionary, Henry Townsend, in Abokuta with the objective of getting people to read and have access to information.

The profession began with professionalism and fairness, but the legacy is nowadays being eroded by fake practitioners, censorship and corruption due to lack of prompt payment of salaries, especially in some print media outfits.

Disturbed by the unfortunate development, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) represented by the Nigerian Press Council (NPC), Nigerian Press Organization (NPO) on the interpretation and the provisions of the ethical code studied the old code adopted in 1979 to squarely tackle the problem.

The review took off when the press council in collaboration with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigerian Guild of Editors

(NGE) held a National Workshop in Ogun State in March 1996.

At last the code was successfully reviewed and the amended code of ethics, was adopted and declared at a forum for the implementation held in Ilorin the Kwara State capital.

In Kano, the Shekarau led administration is encouraging constructive criticisms as a means of respecting the rights of the citizenry for free expression of views on how their affairs are run. While presenting the 2005 budget proposal to the State House of Assembly, he restated his administration's readiness to accept constructive criticism from any quarters, through the State owned media bearing in mind that free and vibrant press is a sign of true

democracy, while allowing the private media organization to operate without intimidation.

While it is our hope that this trend will be sustained in Kano State for others to emulate, proprietors of Newspapers should give priority to welfare package as well as effective training to protect the image of the fourth estate of the realm.

To ensure meaningful development, governments and those in authority must provide information to journalists for onward dissemination without interference or censorship. Journalists as the watchdog of the society must avoid publicizing or broadcasting inaccurate or misleading information as provided in the code of ethics. Media should accord right of rejoinder to the public.

Re: That story of missing organs

In our letters page of Monday January 10th, 2005 edition, we inadvertently omitted the name of the author of the letter titled "That story of missing organs." The author was Dr. Magaji Dambatta (OFR). The error is regretted.

-Editor

The reviewed code of practice cautions journalists against disclosure of information obtained in confidence. In no small measure the code of ethics guaranteed individuals privacy, and charged practitioners to strive at all times to enhance press freedom.

Based on the above analysis governments in Nigeria especially, in this crucial period of democracy should avoid censorship in news reporting and allow independent editorial as freedom of expression and constructive criticism.

Other state governments in Nigeria should learn from the Kano State government which liberalized the State owned media (Radio Kano, CTV-67 and Triumph Publishing Company) for the citizens to express their opinions on the State of affairs and governance at all levels.

Isma'ila Annmai Matzare is the Secretary Kano State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists 24th December, 2004.

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

Opinion

The danger in Ogbeh's resignation

The crisis in Peoples Democratic Party calls for special concern for anybody interested in the stability of Nigeria. Since the President and the National chairman of the party began to fry themselves with hot words, the political atmosphere in the country started changing. Many people expressed concern over the crisis, but with the resignation of Chief Audu Ogbeh as the Chairman of the PDP it is clear that if care is not taken, the PDP may soon suffer from a "Tsunami Syndrome. In short Ogbeh's resignation is dangerous to the party and the nation.

What is happening in PDP today is not unexpected, for since the formation of the party, no national chairman of the party had a smooth exit, rather the departure of every chairman has been chaotic. This is happening in a party that claims to be the largest political party in Africa. Several theories are coming up, each trying to contextualise the crisis. But whatever people might say, the ongoing crisis in the party is something that should have been addressed

By Muhammad Jameel Yusha'a

during the 2003 elections. Simply put, the kind of election organised by the PDP-led federal government and the sophisticated rigging perpetrated during the election, while everything was swept under the carpet would certainly resurface, by way of a fair of controversy between the President and the Party Chairman.

Democracy has become a theatre, and the politicians are everyday busy in the act of performance, but instead of their actions producing a best-selling comedy, they end up producing series of actions that expose them as caricatures who specialise in political pretension. At least all the three major Political Parties are suffering from one form of crisis or the other. Audu Ogbeh should be grateful for at least getting the signals and responding to them on time (assuming he did not resign at gunpoint) before he was "gone". The only debt he owes Nigerians is to reveal his own part of the story on how the election results were fixed.

This is the problem of having political parties that are lacking in ideology, and citizens hunted by poverty, fear of sacrifice and ethno-regional hypocrisy. This is where Nigeria deferred from Ukraine. At least the citizens of Ukraine are united by a common goal and are willing to pursue it with a high degree of perseverance devoid of engaging themselves in any conflict.

Whoever emerges as the new leader of PDP should know that the party is not the paradise one should labour for, for in the end he would be hooked by the same chain that hanged his predecessors. He should know that party chairmanship in Nigeria means parroting with the President or the one occupying the most important executive position, like Governors in the States. If he intends to exercise some level of independence, then he should wait for the day he will occupy the same office and establish himself as the new commander in control. Otherwise he should be ready to say "yes sir" even before he is commanded.

This is just the beginning

of the crisis, more revelations will come up when other fixers disagree with their collaborators, or those who seek the soup on their table intend to retain both the soup and the table even if no soul will remain on earth.

The most interesting thing is that one day, the truth will disengage itself from the shackles of falsehood and the perpetrators of evil will pay the price. I couldn't imagine what I heard from one of the PDP members in an interview with the BBC Hausa service while responding to a question on the crises in the Party and how that will affect the image of the party in the eyes of Nigerians. He responded by saying the image of the PDP is even improving.

We will watch and see how the drama will end, after Ogbeh makes a press conference and the response that will come from the villa. The Nigerian political process is enriching the encyclopedia of politics, with democracy having additional definitions: promise without fulfillment, submission without criticism, responsibility without

performance and governance without a mandate.

To borrow from the late Wada Nas, "The greatest enemy to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo is General Olusegun Obasanjo". All the previous crisis in PDP have been associated with the president. The crisis in PDP indicate that the party should simply be made a parasitical under the presidency with a Permanent Secretary answerable to the president, so that nobody will be deceived by the election of party executives. For we now know who the chairman of the party is; the person who succeeds Ogbeh should know that.

Factions or no factions in PDP, this is bound to happen, the assertion that "democracy is a game of elites" is manifesting itself, and people are becoming specialised spectators glued to their radio, television and newspapers trying to know every stage of the crises, and the media setting the agenda on who will triumph between the "Atiku/Ogbeh" or "Obasanjo/IBB", camp while the main issue, that's the failure of the state to

deliver has been forgotten and the next thing you here is election. Poor Nigerian masses!

In his book, *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*, Noam Chomsky described the classification given by Walter Lippmann about the specialised class and the bewildered herd; the former referring to the few elites who control the government and make decisions, while the latter refers to the majority of citizens who become spectators in democracy. According to Chomsky, their role in democracy is, "occasionally, they are allowed to lend their weight to one or another member of the specialised class."

When will Nigeria be freed from the crises of leadership and face the hurdle of development and good governance? That is the prayer you and I should engage ourselves in until we see when the rain of justice will descend on our land and the fresh air of good governance blowing in every corner of the society; by His special grace.

mjushau@yahoo.com

Borno new breed politicians and the future

By Garba Baba Usman

The print media in the country has lately been inundated with what is gradually being turned into an unprecedented unfolding of political events in Borno State which, tended to suggest that a certain woman politician in the ruling All Nigeria People's party is slugging it out with Governor Ali Modu Sheriff over perceived attempts to deny her a "deserved shot" at the Borno North Senatorial seat which was declared vacant by a Court of Appeal's recent ruling. Of course, Hajia Fati Ibrahim Bulama has enjoyed media without sweat. Beyond the publicity however, are realities that cannot be wished away.

Surprisingly, her stories and those of her negligible number of acolytes, that her hard-earned victory against Senator Sami Daagash of the rival PDP has been denied her, appeared to have been swallowed hook, line and sinker by the media. This must have accounted for the seeming sympathy, which is unjustifiably accorded this self-acclaimed Amazon of Borno politics.

As a discerning and apolitical observer of this supposed drama and the unfortunate chain of events which it elicited, I find it worthwhile to make an informed interjection in an attempt to strengthen records and give the lie to the insinuations and innuendoes that have been peddled about on a matter that is purely and exclusively a routine party matter. In the process also, I will attach no importance to her tendency of cross-carpeting from one political camp to the other, at short intervals and the accompanying gains. Others

Consequently, her political marriages have never lasted beyond the honeymoon stage. In other words, once the honeymoon is over, the marriage comes to an irredeemable end. Her political flirtation stated manifesting during the 1991 Borno Central Senatorial elections. She lent her support to her female counterpart, Hajia Kolo Kingibe of the defunct SDP against Ali Modu Sheriff who was just cutting his political teeth with the National Republican Convention, NRC.

When Modu Sheriff clinched the senatorial seat, Fati Bulama could not wait for the victory song to fade away as she bade farewell to Kolo Kingibe and later pitched tent with Senator Ali Modu Sheriff in the defunct United Nigeria Congress Party, UNCP. During her political romance with Sheriff in the NUCP, she was groomed and brought to the political limelight of Borno State. When Sheriff later installed his godson, Mala Kachallah, as governor of Borno State in 1999, a political interregnum was to be created because of her. For six months, Kachallah could not form his cabinet as Sheriff insisted on the inclusion of Hajia Fati Bulama as a Commissioner. All this while, her colour was that of a loyal and die-hard foot soldier.

Having found her a worthy political bedfellow, Kachallah eventually brought her to his political fold, whereupon he held away as Commissioner in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Her die-hard posture in defending Kachallah's policies and programmes often pitched her against the

opposition.

Consequently, she came under serious attacks by the leadership of the NLC who sought her removal from office on the grounds that she was not qualified to be a commissioner in the first place. Indeed, her non-qualification to occupy a public office, as maintained by labour was fairly well known.

Those who thought that Hajia Fati's political flirtation had come to an end with her marriage to Kachallah were to be proved wrong. In 2002, the marriage hit the rocks. Having seen his defeat at the governorship polls, she dumped Kachallah and rushed back to Sheriff's camp. She then exhibited the repentance and remorsefulness of a "prodigal daughter". Being the accommodating political godfather that he is, Sheriff magnanimously accepted her back to his political fold thus carrying her along the campaign train that saw to his victory at the governorship polls.

In spite of the odds against her, she was eventually fielded as the ANPP candidate for Borno North Senatorial election. In fact, her candidature was widely believed to be in contravention of both the country's Constitution (1999) as well as the 2002 Electoral Law. For the avoidance of doubt, section 66 (1) sub-section (b) of the 1999 Constitution states that no person shall be qualified for election into the Senate or the House of Representatives if he or she has been indicted by a judicial commission of inquiry, administrative panel of inquiry or a Tribunal set up under the

Tribunals of Inquiry Law or any other law by the Federal Government which indictment has been accepted by the Federal or State Government.

The bond between her and Sheriff suffered a twist when the ANPP decided to field a new candidate for the Borno North Senatorial bye-election. It is interesting to note that the legal battle that Senator Sami Daagash has won, was said to have been financed and strategised by Governor Ali Sheriff who availed Hajia Fati with his legal springboard made up of a consortium of legal luminaries. That the legal battle was sustained and finally won was down, primarily, to Governor Sheriff's penchant for getting things done meticulously. In spite of this fact and the realization by the top hierarchy of the state ANPP that the best candidate must be fielded for the overall good of the Borno North Senatorial Zone, Hajia Fati felt slighted by the decision of the ANPP to replace her with another candidate allegedly vowed to deal blows on the Sheriff generation whom she was said to have accused of masterminding her being shortchanged.

To make good her threat, she quickly went to town with the malicious allegation that the governor was a homosexual and that five of his (the governor's) friends and aides were his bedmates. The five namely: Alhaji Mala Atuman, Mallum Buba, Mustapha Fulama and two others have since petitioned the police following which she was arraigned before a Maiduguri Magistrate's Court for a criminal defamation of the character of the executive

governor. Against the above background, it is hardly surprising that Hajia Fati Bulama has again resorted to her widely known machination to blackmail the Governor. This time around, the people of Borno State must emphatically and resoundingly place this woman where she rightly belongs: straight to the psychoanalyst.

The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a place for serious minded servants of the people. The educational background of our Amazon, which is below a school certificate, her kind of upbringing and her less than impeccable manners have on their own disqualified her. The man that is touted to have replaced her is reasonably on the right moral and educational pedestal to mingle on the same frequency with the formidable personalities in the senate. The Nigerian senate of the 21st century is not really for drop-outs or backbenchers.

The interest of the ruling party in Borno State supercedes any individual interest aimed at personal aggrandizement. Therefore the claim that governor Sheriff has deliberately chosen a new candidate for Borno North Senatorial seat to dispense with Hajia Fati Bulama does not hold water.

I am particularly worried by the apparent senseless gang up by unscrupulous inter and intra party elements to distract the State Government from its noble mission. A little caution would save the State's political class.

Baba Usman Writes From Bolori Layout, Maiduguri, Borno state.

Trust International

How much "aid" will the tsunami survivors get?

While the corporate media has hailed the increased promises of assistance from the US, Australia and other wealthier countries to the tsunami-hit nations, the almost \$5 billion pledged over the past fortnight will do little to overcome the extraordinary problems confronting survivors.

According to Britain's Overseas Development Institute, at least \$25 billion is needed to restore basic infrastructure and provide shelter. This raw estimate, however, does not take into account the amounts required to provide adequate food and health services to the more than five million people facing the outbreak of dysentery, malaria, pneumonia, cholera and other life-threatening diseases.

In Sri Lanka, for example, the United Nations World Food Program announced last week that it would distribute some 4,000 tons of rice, wheat flour, lentils and sugar. But this is enough only to supply approximately 500,000 people for two weeks. On current estimates, over one million people are now homeless in Sri Lanka, with around 400,000 having taken refuge in public buildings, schools and makeshift camps.

In Indonesia, where over 80 percent of western Sumatra's towns and villages have been destroyed and more than 100,000 are dead, thousands face dying because no mechanisms exist for the rapid distribution of assistance. Aceh, the worst hit, has no airport capable of receiving heavy transport planes, with the nearest facility located in Medan, 400 kilometres from Banda Aceh, the regional capital. Two weeks after the tsunami, parts of the province have not received any assistance.

Even within the framework of official government assistance, the amount spent on foreign aid from the world's richest nations has declined dramatically over the past decade or more. According to Paying the Price, a report published last December by Oxfam, the annual aid budgets of the top 20 donor nations are half what they were in 1960, in real terms. On average, G7 nations—Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the US—allocate only 0.19 percent of their Gross National Income (GNI) for international assistance.

The combined annual foreign aid from the world's wealthiest nations is about \$55 billion—far less than capital expenditure on the military. Britain currently spends eight times as much on its military as it does on aid, France 9, Italy 15 and the US 33 times. The US annual defence budget in 2003 was over \$400 billion, or 3.6 percent of its Gross National Income (GNI), while its

By Richard Phillips
foreign aid was only \$16 billion or just 0.14 percent of GNI. This is about a ninth of the \$148 billion it has spent invading and occupying Iraq. While aid from the economically powerful nations has always been

commodity price fluctuations or access to international markets. In other words, compliance, rather than improving living conditions in the under-developed nations, worsened the poverty and undermined the existing, and generally

banks, included agreements to increase the privatisation of Sri Lanka's ports, health, education and other state sectors.

"Tied aid", which forces countries receiving assistance to purchase goods and services from donor

is distributed to a select group of wealthy local companies involved in the "aid" industry. GRN International, which is owned by Kerry Packer, Australia's richest individual, for example, receives \$200 million per year for

assistance, but vital strategically for the "war on terror", also began to receive funds. At the same time, under-developed countries that refused to back US demands in the United Nations for war against Iraq had their development funds cut.

Washington followed this by blocking assistance to any country that refused to grant American citizens immunity for human rights violation cases in the International Criminal Court. Likewise, underdeveloped countries that supported abortion rights were cut out of US aid.

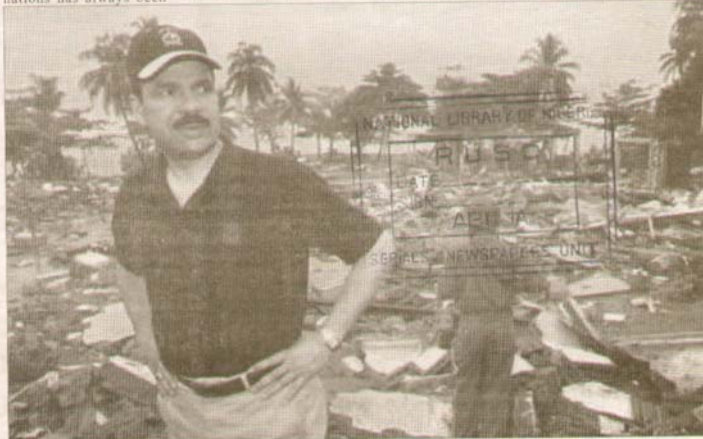
Foreign assistance for long-term development not only dropped during the 1990s but donors also expanded their definition of aid to include spending on refugees in the donor country and the education costs of overseas students from the recipient nations. Debt relief was added into the donor nation's overall aid spending. These calculations cut real assistance to the underdeveloped countries and artificially boosted official aid budgets.

Another means of inflating aid figures has been "technical assistance". This involves forcing recipient countries to use expensive consultants and financial corporations from the donor nations. According to a 1999 UN estimate, technical assistance swallows up \$14 billion per year, or about a quarter of total annual development aid. Even as overseas aid to the less developed nations remains close to an all-time low, moves are afoot to modify OECD rules so that spending on so-called peacekeeping operations, or the training of foreign armies, can be counted as aid spending.

Even this brief overview shows that foreign aid from the world's wealthiest nations in the twenty-first century has little to do with overcoming the terrible poverty that afflicts most of the world's population. On the contrary, it is a multi-billion dollar exercise that ultimately worsens the conditions of life for the oppressed.

Having ignored the deaths of thousands each year in South East Asia and the Indian sub-continent from typhoons, floods and other natural disasters, donor governments and the corporate interests they represent are using the tsunami disaster to expand their political, economic and military influence in the region. Their concerns are not and never have been humanitarian.

In January 2004, a major earthquake hit the ancient Iranian city of Bam, killing almost 32,000 people and destroying the city. While more than \$1 billion in aid was promised by Western governments, only \$17.5 million arrived. Twelve months after the catastrophe, survivors are still living in temporary accommodation, with little of the city's infrastructure rebuilt. Given the recent history of "aid" what, therefore, is to be the fate of the tsunami survivors?
#SWS



Man walks among rubbles of destroyed houses in Galle, Southern Sri Lanka

Man walks among rubbles of destroyed houses in Galle, Southern Sri Lanka. Behind the official government rhetoric of "poverty reduction" and "development assistance", the international financial institutions also began devising new methods to extract more from the underdeveloped world.

Assistance and development loans to the less-developed nations started to come with increasing demands from donor nations and the international banks. From 1995 to 2000, for example, there were, on average, 41 conditions attached to every International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan to poorer countries. These included specific demands on exchange rates, pricing and market privatisation, financial sector regulation and privatisation of education, health and social welfare systems.

By 1999, IMF loans to sub-Saharan African countries had 114 conditions on average, with most requiring prior compliance before the finance, or part thereof, was granted. These directives were made irrespective of the social and economic impact on the recipient nations or factors outside their control, such as currency and the

inadequate, basic infrastructure in water, power, health, education and transport.

The "aid" offered to Indonesia following the 1997-98 Asian economic crisis, for example, increased poverty significantly. To secure emergency assistance, the Indonesian government had to agree to privatise state services, restructure national banks, cut social spending and move to abolish price subsidies on fuel, electricity and food. These measures were clearly incompatible with the basic needs of the majority of Indonesians. The number living in poverty doubled to 100 million, and real wages plummeted by 30 percent during this period.

Like Indonesia, Sri Lanka is also dependent on international aid. But apart from some basic health programs and other limited measures, recent foreign assistance packages have done little to improve the position of the poor.

A high-profile international aid project was launched in June 2003, following the Tokyo aid conference, with representatives from the US, Japan, the European Union, the IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank. The \$4.5 billion promised at the meeting was to be provided only after the Sri Lankan government agreed to introduce a number of so-called "poverty reduction" programs.

One of these, entitled "Regaining Sri Lanka", drawn up by the Sri Lankan government in conjunction with donor countries and the

nations, is another notorious technique that ensures most foreign aid flows back to the donor. Although officially condemned by international financial institutions and the UN, "tied aid" has increased over the past 20 years.

According to a recent UN survey, 84 cents of every US aid dollar returns to America in the form of purchased goods and services. Up to 75 percent of Canadian aid is tied, while Germany, Japan, France, Australia and numerous other donors insist that a large proportion of these funds must be used to buy their goods and services. This can include anything from food products, telecommunications, transport, and technical advice to policing and security.

Last week, Australian Prime Minister John Howard made clear that his government's \$A1 billion tsunami aid package to Indonesia would not be channelled through the UN or other international aid agencies. His government, he said, did not want to see any "unnecessary bureaucratism" of the relief effort or the money being "put into the hands of others". Australian aid will be distributed via a Jakarta-based planning agency and overseen by a committee headed by Howard and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. How this will work and how much will be distributed is still not clear, but much of it will flow back to Australian corporations.

In fact, approximately \$1.8 billion per annum in official Australian foreign assistance

Australian aid projects. As AusAID, the official donor of Australian aid money, declares in its mission statement, its prime objective is to improve Australia's "national interest".

Washington's African Growth and Opportunity Act is another example of how foreign aid is directed back to US banks and corporations. Adopted by the US Congress in May 2000, the Act stipulates that African countries seeking American aid must comply with IMF "structural adjustment" conditions. Free market access to the US for African textile, clothing and footwear, however, is only provided if the manufacturers use nominated American raw materials.

One of the more blatant examples of "tied aid" is Washington's HIV/AIDS assistance program. Under this policy, African governments seeking help for HIV/AIDS treatment are compelled to purchase all anti-AIDS drugs from the US, instead of cheaper generics from South Africa, India or Brazil. US drugs cost up to \$15,000 per year compared to \$350 for their generic versions.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the US also provided Washington with the opportunity to radically transform its international assistance. Aid would now be distributed according to Washington's immediate military requirements and its so-called "war on terror".

Pakistan became a major recipient of US aid, receiving over \$600 million in 2001. Other countries previously deemed ineligible for

Trust International

UN to deploy troops to Darfur

The U.N. Security Council said it would speedily consider sending peacekeepers to Sudan to support a new peace deal and urged the new government of national unity to work actively to end the conflict in western Darfur.

If implemented, the peace deal signed Sunday in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, would end 40 years of civil war which has caused 2 million deaths, mainly from war-induced famine and disease, uprooted 4 million people, and forced 600,000 to flee the country altogether.

The U.N. Security Council said it looked to the world to help implement the deal as well as help with the rebuilding and rehabilitation process.

It said it hoped the agreement would "mark a watershed" in Sudan's history and urged the new government to fully commit itself to ending the violence in Darfur and "to work expeditiously to consolidate peace throughout the country."

Jan Pronk, the top U.N. envoy to Sudan, said last month that if a peace agreement was reached, he envisioned Security Council adoption of a resolution in the third week of January authorising a wide-ranging U.N. peacekeeping and peace-building mission, hopefully with 9,000 to 10,000 troops.

Pronk, who will brief the Security Council Tuesday, said the peacekeeping operation would likely face "immense logistical difficulties" because of lack of roads, airfields and communications.

Meanwhile, Sudan's president began a triumphant tour of his country Monday, greeted by 10,000 mainly Christian revellers in this long time southern garrison city, which his army once used to stage attacks against rebels during a 21-year civil war.

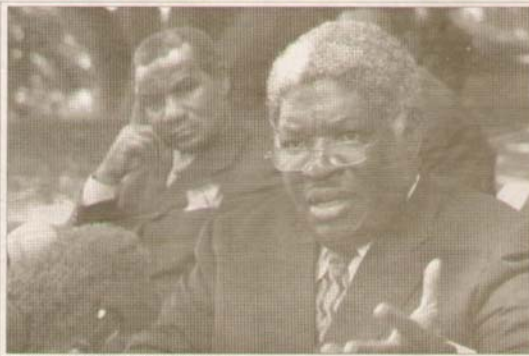
President Omar al-Bashir, wearing a long, white chief's turban and his safari suit, stopped and restarted his speech several times when onlookers regularly broke into deafening applause and began waving white pieces of cloth in signs of peace.

"Our ultimate goal is a united Sudan, which will not be built by war but by peace and development," al-Bashir said. "You, the southerners, will be saying, 'We want a strong and huge state, a united Sudan.'"

Juba, about 750 miles south of the capital of Khartoum, was al-Bashir's first stop on a two-day tour to celebrate Sunday's landmark signing of the treaty to end the African continent's longest war.

al-Bashir later flew east to another southern town, Torit, to celebrate the peace deal and inaugurate a power station before returning to Juba.

"The money which we have been spending on war will now be spent on services and development in the south," al-Bashir said from his heavily guarded podium.



Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa

AU urges action on Cote d'Ivoire

The African Union called on the international community to take tougher action in Ivory Coast and Congo, two of the continent's biggest crises that risk destabilising their wider regions.

Thirteen heads of state and ministers from at least 10 other nations met late into Monday night to try to revive faltering peace efforts in the two countries as well as in Sudan's Darfur region, anxious to show the African Union (AU) is more than just a talking shop.

"The talks were very serious," Ghanaian president John Kufuor said as he left the meeting in Gabon's capital Libreville. "I think we made some progress."

The AU called on the United Nations to increase its presence in Ivory Coast, said "Interahamwe" Hutu fighters in eastern Congo needed to be disarmed with international help and announced it was speeding up the deployment of troops in Darfur.

The summit had been due to last two days but delegates crammed the talks into just 12 hours.

The 53-member body said the United Nations needed to

substantially increase its presence in Ivory Coast and beef up its mandate and also called neighbouring nations to respect a U.N.-imposed arms embargo.

But AU said sanctions such as travel bans and asset freezes, which the world body has been considering, should be postponed to let individuals show their commitment to peace and give Thabo Mbeki time to resolve the crises.

It said a constitutional change that would allow a northern opposition politician to run for president - a key sticking point in Ivory Coast's peace process - could go to a referendum as a last resort.

"It has not been ruled out as an option," AU commissioner in charge of peace and security, Said Djinnit, said in a summing up of the day's talks.

Nigerian President Obasanjo said instability in Democratic Republic of Congo was of great concern and warned against underestimating the potential of the country's internal strife to destabilise the wider region.

Delegates said they had agreed that the "Interahamwe" Hutu fighters who fled into the former Zaire after

taking part in Rwanda's 1994 genocide still posed a threat to both countries.

AU member states pledged to support Congo in its efforts to "neutralize and disarm" the militias and called on the international community to do the same, Djinnit said, without giving details of what form the help would take.

"We cannot keep talking about a problem while the problem is still there," he said. "The AU council decided it was time for Africa to take responsibility for its problems."

Rwanda has long expressed frustration at Kinshasa's failure to disarm the Hutu fighters, who have staged attacks on Rwanda from their jungle bases.

Congo's President Joseph Kabila and his Rwandan counterpart Paul Kagame both attended the summit. Their strained ties soured further after Rwanda threatened to invade Congo in November.

The AU welcomed a peace agreement struck on Sunday for southern Sudan, ending Africa's longest-running civil war, and said it hoped the deal would help end the Darfur conflict.

The union has sent around



Gabon's President Omar Bongo Ondimba and President Olusegun Obasanjo, chairman of the African Union, at Libreville's international airport.

I have failed -Zambian president

Zambia's president has apologised to his country for failing to tackle poverty, but insisted he will stay in office until elections are due in 2006.

"It has not been possible to reduce poverty and I feel sad about it," Levy Mwanawasa said, describing the issue as "one of my failures".

"Unfortunately, if Zambians made a mistake to elect me as president, they are stuck with me," he added.

About 75% of Zambia's 10 million people live on less

than \$1 a day.

And almost 1.8 million Zambians, or 16.5% of the population, are living with HIV/Aids.

"Poverty continues to grip our nation. I want to work hard this year so that poverty levels are reduced," he said.

Mr Mwanawasa's admission came as he announced a reshuffle of his cabinet that included the sidelining of a close friend, Works and Supply Minister Ludwig Sondashi.

Home Affairs Minister Ronnie Shikapwasha swapped positions with Kalombo Mwansa, who held the foreign affairs portfolio.

He brought another ally, Vernon Mwaaga, into the cabinet as chief whip, reportedly ahead of an election campaign.

Last year Mr Mwanawasa said he was tired of his "artificial" life as president, complaining that everything was done for him.

Congolese protest poll delay

Police have fired teargas to disperse thousands of protesters in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital. Demonstrators were angered by Friday's announcement that elections set for later this year could be delayed.

Police deployed to prevent thousands of protesters from marching into the centre of Kinshasa. They fired shots in the air and arrested dozens.

A 2002 deal to end five years of war set June as the deadline for elections, while allowing for limited delays.

However, elections Chief Apollinaire Malu Malu has indicated the poll will probably take place in October, before heavy rains make parts of the country inaccessible.

Government spokesman Henri Mova Sakanyi played down the protests and said they were organised by supporters of veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi who has vigorously condemned any possible election delay.

Mr Tshisekedi's UDPS party denied organising the protests but said it understood the anger of the demonstrators.

"The UDPS has not organised demonstrations today but we know there is a lot of discontent amongst the youth and the people on the streets," party secretary general Remy Masamba said.

The war is supposed to have ended in 2002 but fighting has persisted in the east, involving soldiers who were once rebels backed by Rwanda.

Under the peace deal signed by all the main factions at the end of the war, a power-sharing government was tasked with organising elections. However it does allow for two delays of up to six months each, if approved by parliament.

UN scribe, Kofi Annan said in a report that there were "serious challenges" to holding the election in June.

The UN has also expressed concerns about the logistics of holding an election in a country which is so large yet lacks basic infrastructure, such as roads and railways.

According to the UN's humanitarian chief, Jan Egeland, about 1,000 people are dying every day in DR Congo - many from disease and malnutrition.

Kenya clan clashes claim 9

At least nine people have been killed in clashes between rival Somali clans in north-eastern Kenya.

A police spokesman told the AFP news agency that the attack was in revenge for the killing last week of at least nine people in Mandera district.

The reason for the fighting between the Garre and Murule clans is not clear, although some reports suggest a political motive.

Most of those who died are reported to be women and children.

Extra police officers have been deployed in the region to prevent any further violence, said police spokesman Jasper Ombati.

Trust International

Tsunami: UN demands swift cash

The UN official co-ordinating aid for tsunami survivors has urged donor countries to release cash more quickly for the relief effort.

Speaking at the start of an international meeting in Geneva, Jan Egeland said only one-tenth of aid pledged had so far been received.

The response so far had shown "humanity at its very best", he said.

But he also warned that donor countries must not neglect other humanitarian crises around the world.

The Geneva meeting comes five days after UN Secretary General Kofi Annan chaired a donor conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he issued a call for almost \$1bn in urgent aid.

In other developments, the Indonesian army has directed foreign aid workers in Aceh to register to travel outside Banda Aceh and Meulaboh.

Also, an Aceh man was rescued by an Arab container ship after two weeks drifting at sea following the tsunami.

Tuesday's conference is discussing a practical timetable for delivering aid to the region.

We're seeing humanity at its very best in the beginning of 2005

Delegates representing governments and aid agencies are attending, including US aid chief Andrew Natsios, EU development commissioner Louis Michel and senior ministers from Britain, France and Germany.

Mr Egeland, who is chairing the meeting, said around \$30bn had been committed to projects on the ground in the tsunami-hit region, out of \$3.4bn in formally recorded aid pledges.

"We need very quickly more signed contracts, more cash, more concrete commitments to help keep this massive effort going in the next six months," he said.

But he said that the outbreak of disease and starvation the UN had feared in the wake of the tsunami disaster did not seem to be happening.

The UN co-ordinator listed at least a dozen regions where UN agencies are struggling to meet the basic needs of millions

of people. He pointed out that the Democratic Republic of Congo, where 1,000 people die daily of preventable diseases or because of the conflict there, suffered the equivalent of a tsunami every five months.

Each year, Mr Egeland said, the UN launches an appeal for aid work but actual funds always fall well short of pledges.

Phil Bloomer, head of UK-based charity Oxfam, said this was "crunch time" to make sure the pledges were realised.

"This is not the time for empty rhetoric," he said, quoted by AFP news agency. "The eyes of the world are on this meeting and we want guarantees that the aid will not be diverted from other disasters and other suffering people."



UN emergency relief coordinator Jan Egeland

...moves against aid corruption

The United Nations is adopting new steps in its global tsunami-relief campaign to guard against improprieties like those alleged in the oil-for-food program for Iraq, U.N. officials said.

Among the measures in the works are a way to let the public to track every aid dollar via a Web site and the drafting of new rules to protect U.N. staff whistle-blowers.

The world body is applying lessons learned from the now-defunct humanitarian aid program for Iraq by adopting measures to ensure "greater accountability and transparency" in the effort it is coordinating to provide relief for victims of last month's Indian Ocean tsunami,

Internal audits released over the weekend by an independent commission identified many management lapses during the seven-year life of the \$64 billion oil-for-food program.

But Kennedy dismissed concerns that donors might be worried about possible corruption in the tsunami aid program, noting that more than \$2 billion in donations poured into U.N. coffers last year in response to various humanitarian appeals.

The fatality rate usually surges as producers rush to fill orders for the Lunar New Year, which comes in January or February, Chinese celebrate by setting off billions of firecrackers.

Former Yugoslav leader trial resumes

The trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic has resumed with testimony by a French nurse who worked in Croatia during the Bosnian war.

Mr. Milosevic is defending himself before the tribunal in The Hague, where he faces charges of genocide and other crimes against humanity.

Testifying as a defence witness, nurse Eve Crepin spoke of "the suffering of the Serb people" during the war.

Mr. Milosevic's health problems have delayed the long-running trial.

He questioned Ms Crepin

spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

The United Nations has accepted a no-fee offer from the PricewaterhouseCoopers accounting and consulting firm to help track aid to victims of the giant wave that smashed into Southeast Asian and East African coastlines on Dec. 26, said Kevin Kennedy, a senior official in the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The firm may also be asked to help promptly investigate any allegations of fraud, waste or abuse that might surface in connection with the tsunami relief drive.

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But Kennedy dismissed concerns that donors might be worried about possible corruption in the tsunami aid program, noting that more than \$2 billion in donations poured into U.N. coffers last year in response to various humanitarian appeals.

for two hours on Tuesday about crimes committed by Croats and Bosnian Muslims against Serbs during the 1991-1995 war.

But Judge Patrick Robinson said her testimony was largely irrelevant because she was "merely giving impressions".

"I hope this is not an example of the way your witnesses will testify. It sounds like a conversation over a cup of tea on the verandah and I don't find it very helpful," he told Mr Milosevic.

The defendant argued that Ms Crepin's information was "not second-hand, but what she saw".



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

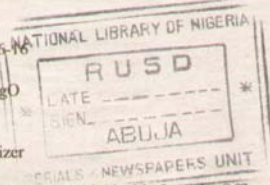
AREA II GARKI, ABUJA

INVITATION TO BID FOR 2005 SEASON FERTILIZER PROCUREMENT

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is planning to procure some assorted fertilizers for distribution to all the 36 States of the Federation including FCT, the Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS), "****" and the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) under the Federal Government Fertilizer Market Stabilization Programme for 2005 wet season farming.

The Ministry therefore invites sealed bids from registered fertilizer producers/suppliers for the supply of the various brands of fertilizers as listed below:≤

- i) Urea 46% N
- ii) NPK 15-15-15/1 6-16-16
- iii) NPK 20-10-10
- iv) NPK 12-12-17 + 2MgO
- v) SSP 18% (P₂O₅)
- vi) Agric-lime
- vii) Micro-nutrient Fertilizer



Bidding documents and other details are obtainable from the Office of the Director Federal Fertilizer Department after payment of a non refundable tender fee of N 250,000.00 only.

The completed bids must be accompanied with:≤

- i) Certificate of Incorporation
 - ii) Current Tax Clearance
 - iii) Value Added Tax (VAT)
 - iv) Company Profile
 - v) Verifiable Evidence of Experience in fertilizer business
 - vi) Evidence of registration with the Ministry
 - vii) Evidence of registration with the Federal Fertilizer Department as a fertilizer company
 - viii) Evidence of operational blending plant or/and intent to set up a fertilizer plant will be an added advantage
 - ix) Payment of N 250,000.00 non-refundable tender fee
- Completed bids must be submitted to the office of the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Area 11 - Garki, Abuja, not later than 31st January, 2005. All prices shall be quoted in naira. Bids shall remain valid for a period of at least sixty (60) days after the date of bid opening.

Time and Place for Submission of Bids

Fully completed bids will be received not later than 2.00pm (local time) on or before 31st January, 2005 at the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Area 11 - Garki Abuja.

Opening of Bids

Bids will be opened at 11.00am (local time) on 1st February, 2005 in the Training Hall of Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Area II - Garki, Abuja and in the presence of Bidders or their representatives who may like to attend the bid opening. Any other information regarding the bid can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working day before the closing date.

Award of Contract

The Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest bid.

SIGNED

Baba Ijo O. O. O. Ogunkua, OON, mni
Permanent Secretary

Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Area II - Garki
Abuja - Nigeria.

Explosion kills 13 in China

Thirteen people were killed and 12 others were injured in two explosions Tuesday while they were making firecrackers, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

The first blast, at the Xianglin firecracker factory in northern Shanxi province, killed 12, Xinhua said. Eleven others were injured. The cause of the explosion was under investigation. The second explosion occurred in Zhendian, a village in eastern Anhui province, where a man was making firecrackers at home, Xinhua said.

The man was killed and his wife seriously injured, it said. Xinhua did not release any more details on the two accidents.

China's fireworks industry suffers hundreds of deaths every year in fires and explosions as thousands of people, often in poor rural areas, do much of the work by hand in illegal or poorly

Trust International

Oil-for-food officials' guilty — report

Officials running the UN's oil-for-food programme for Iraq were guilty of

widespread mismanagement, according to documents newly released. An independent inquiry into corruption in the

\$60bn programme has published dozens of reports by UN auditors. They found inadequate

monitoring of the programme of contractors hired to inspect the flow of oil and goods.

However, the reports do not find evidence of any irregular activities or corruption among UN staff themselves.

The independent commission was set up after US congressional allegations of multi-billion dollar corruption.

The reports compiled by the UN's Office of International Oversight Services identify continuing lapses in supervision.

Contractors are accused of overcharging the programme by hundreds of thousands of dollars for hours that were not actually worked.

The investigating panel said auditors did not properly check oil purchase and humanitarian aid contracts. Had they done so, they could have limited the Iraqi government's ability to generate income by violating UN sanctions.

The reports were released by Paul Volcker, the former chairman of the US Federal Reserve, who was asked by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to investigate the oil-for-food programme.

Ukrainian troops to leave Iraq

The Ukrainian parliament on yesterday called for an immediate withdrawal of the nation's peacekeepers from

Iraq. The vote was non-binding but reflected growing national dismay over the mission. The parliament's call came

two days after eight Ukrainian soldiers died in an explosion at an ammunition dump in Iraq. The blast was reported as an accident, but a top commander later raised suspicions that it could have been a terrorist action.

On Monday, President Leonid Kuchma ordered the foreign and defense ministries to develop a plan for withdrawing Ukraine's troops from Iraq within the first half of 2005.

But the parliament, in a 308-0 vote, called on Kuchma to accelerate the process by issuing an immediate decree on withdrawal.

There was no immediate response from Kuchma to the parliament move. Valeriy Chauly, an analyst with the Kiev-based Razumkov think-tank, said he expected the final decision on a pullout would come only after a new president takes office.

Opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, who also supports a withdrawal, on Monday was declared the winner of the presidential election; it was not clear when he might take office.

Suspected British terrorists to be released

Four Britons held by the US in Guantanamo Bay will be returned to the UK within weeks, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told the Commons on yesterday.

Muazzam Begg, from Birmingham, and Martin Mubanga, Richard Belmar and Feroz Abbasi, from London, have been held by the US for almost three years.

They were detained in the Cuban camp as part of the US-led "war on terror".

Mr. Straw said the US had agreed to release the four after "intensive and complex discussions" over security.

He said the government had been negotiating the return of the detainees since 2003.

All four families have been informed of their return and have been involved in regular discussions with the gov-

ernment, Mr Straw said. But he added: "Once they are back in the UK, the police will consider whether to arrest them under the Terrorism Act 2000 for questioning in connection with possible terrorist activity."

Human rights campaigners have been outraged at the treatment of the detainees in Cuba.

Amnesty International has called Camp Delta a "major human-rights scandal" and an "icon of lawlessness".

Kate Allen, Amnesty's UK director, said the release of the four men was "long, long overdue".

The US has also announced that an Australian man, previously accused of terrorist offences, will be released from Camp Delta.

Odd World

Preacher dies during sermon

A Presbyterian minister collapsed and died in the middle of a sermon after saying "And when I go to heaven..." his colleague said Monday.

The Rev. Jack Arnold, 69, was nearing the end of a sermon Sunday at Covenant Presbyterian Church in this Orlando suburb when he grabbed the podium before falling to the floor, said the Rev. Michael S. Beates, associate pastor at Covenant Presbyterian.

Before collapsing, Arnold quoted the 18th century Bible scholar, John Wesley, who said, "Until my work on this earth is done, I am immortal. But when my work for Christ is done... I go to be with Jesus," Beates said in a telephone interview.

Several members of the congregation with medical backgrounds tried to revive the minister and paramedics were called, but Arnold appeared to die instantly, Beates said.

Arnold had been the senior minister at the church until the late 1990s, when he began traveling to Africa and the Middle East to teach pastors. The cause of death was believed to be cardiac arrest. He had bypass surgery five years earlier.

Beates also recounted Arnold's death in an e-mail he sent to members of the Central Florida Presbytery.

"We were stunned," Beates said. "It was traumatic, but how wonderful it was he died in his own church among the people he loved the most."

Tokyo firm plans underground farm

Tokyo residents are used to going underground to find food at basement supermarkets and restaurants, now one firm is taking the process a step further by planning a subterranean farm.

A 1,000 sq metre former bank vault under an office building in Otsumachi, a central Tokyo business district, has been chosen as the site for a high-tech farm growing lettuce, tomatoes, herbs, strawberries and rice, the national daily Asahi said on Sunday.

The project is aimed at helping the Japanese capital's jobless to train for careers in agriculture, the paper said.

The underground location will allow complete electronic control of the environment with artificial lighting and heating. Plans at the "vegetable factory" will be grown hydroponically, or in a solution of nutrients, rather than soil, the Asahi said.

If the farm is a success after its first harvest in the spring, Kanto



Hajj Bonus! Hajj Bonus!! Hajj Bonus!!!

Saudi German Hospital Group Madinah



General Medical Check Up
With One Day Admission
(100S)

Special Offer
for Nigerian Pilgrims

- THIS IS OUR MESSAGE TO PILGRIMS**
- Make sure you are vaccinated before going on Pilgrimage
 - Do not shave with blades that could lead to injuries on your head.
 - Avoid overcrowdness to guard against Cerebro Spinal Meningitis.
 - Visit our Doctors for free consultation at various Portakabins in the Holy

Madinah - Abur Ali - University St. - In Front Of Saudi Telecom Co. - AlBataij St. Near to the Technical Academy
Tel: 8406000 (250 lines) - Fax: 8407000 - P.O. Box: 15435

For further information in Nigeria, please contact:
S.G.H. Madinah - African Countries Co-ordinator - Alh. Idris S. A.M Mobile No: 08028184700, 08036344479

Trust International

Bombing kills six Iraqi police in Tikrit

Six Iraqi police officers have been killed in a suspected suicide car bombing outside a police station in Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit.

Several other people were injured in the attack, which comes a day after Baghdad's deputy police chief was killed in an ambush.

A group led by al-Qaeda ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi said it carried out the bombing against what it called "cowardly mercenaries" at police headquarters in Tikrit, a Sunni Muslim stronghold in northern Iraq. Eight officers were also wounded.

Shortly after the explosion, gunmen attacked a minibus traveling through Iraq's notorious "Triangle of Death," killing eight people and kidnapping three, police in the area said.

Police said it was not immediately clear who was in the vehicle. Sunni insurgents

regularly target Iraq security forces and Shi'ite pilgrims in the lawless zone of dusty towns, which is regarded as one of the most dangerous parts of Iraq.

In another attack, a bomb killed seven Iraqis and at least two in Samarra.

The roadside bomb in Yussifiyah, 15km south of Baghdad, missed a passing US military convoy and hit a passing minibus instead.

Repeated guerrilla attacks on the Iraqi police and soldiers who will be tasked with protecting polling stations have deepened fears of major bloodletting on the day Iraqis vote in the controversial election.

Violence has been escalating in Iraq ahead of elections due on 30 January.

In recent weeks, insurgents have mounted almost daily attacks on security forces.

Meanwhile, Sunni leaders have threatened to boycott the coming elections unless

the occupying US-led forces are withdrawn from Iraq.

The blast in Tikrit happened in the north of the town at about 0930hrs, the US military said.

The final number of casualties is still being compiled, US military spokesman Maj Neal O'Brien said.

"As the Iraqi police continue to get stronger, and continue to pose a threat to the insurgents and terrorists, they will be targeted," he added.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called newly elected Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas on Tuesday, Palestinian officials said, the first contact between the men since Abbas' landslide victory in presidential elections.

Both men have expressed willingness since Sunday's vote to restart peace efforts.

During the call, Sharon congratulated Abbas on his victory, Palestinian officials said on condition of anonymity. Israeli officials did not immediately comment.

Meanwhile, Mahmoud

Israel's Sharon congratulates Abbas

Abbas has extended a hand of peace to Israel.

During his meeting with international observation teams, Abbas, who wants to resume peace talks with Israel, expressed hopes that his offer would be acceptable to Tel Aviv.

He said: "We are ready to make peace based on justice and we hope that the response will be positive."

But he acknowledged

that there was a lot to do.

"The elections are only the beginning, not the end. We have a programme full of things to do in order to achieve peace," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said on Monday peacemaking could start only with a crackdown on resistance fighters.

"The main focus at this stage should be Palestinian action on terror. He [Abbas] will be tested by the way he battles terror and acts to dismantle its infrastructure," he said.

"The meeting will be within the next two weeks, but no date has been set," Palestinian foreign minister Nabil Shaath said after a meeting in Ramallah with the national security council.

Avi Pazner, a spokesman for Sharon, said the meeting should be held "in the near future" but could not elaborate on an exact date or venue.

Muhammad al-Hindy, a leader in the Islamic Jihad movement, told *Aljazeera*:

"It is imperative for Fatah to pose as a resistance movement and to refrain from responding to the intense pressures that call for solving what Israel and the US describe as the question of terrorism."

Israeli officials have said Sharon, who accused Arafat of instigating violence and refused to deal with him for years, will seek a meeting with Abbas soon.

But Abbas aides said he wanted assurances that it would be more than just a photo opportunity.

On the other hand, US President George Bush, after years of shunning Arafat, wasted no time in contacting Abbas. In a 10-minute telephone call, Bush issued an open invitation to the new Palestinian leader to visit the White House.

The US president told Abbas he was "committed to helping him tackle key issues, like security, terrorism, economic growth and building democratic institutions," said White House spokesman Scott McClellan.

Abbas told Bush he was committed to addressing the Palestinian Authority's security and economic problems and looked forward to going to Washington at some point, McClellan said.

The US president wants both the Israelis and the Palestinians to implement a peace road map backed by the quartet - US, European Union, Russia and the UN.



Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, right, and then-Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen.

Some areas may be unsafe to vote-Iraqi PM

Some areas of Iraq will probably be too unsafe to take part in the Jan. 30 elections, Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said yesterday, and he promised to increase the size of the army in the face of a bloody insurgency, whose latest victims included 13 Iraqis killed by two bombings.

Allawi said the government had allocated \$2.2 billion to expand the army from 100,000 to 150,000 troops and provide it with new weaponry. Iraq's armed forces are poorly trained and often under-equipped, making them an easy target for insurgents who want to scuttle the elections.

He acknowledged that some areas of Iraq likely would be too unsafe to participate in the landmark balloting for a constitutional

assembly. The country's volatile Anbar province west of Baghdad and areas in the north around Mosul have seen little preparation for the vote.

"Hostile forces are trying to hamper this event and to inflict damage and harm on the march and the guarantee for the participation of all in the elections," Allawi said. "Certainly, there will be some pockets that will not be able to participate in the elections for these reasons, but we think that it will not widespread."

Allawi is a candidate in the election and has been increasingly visible in recent days. The news conference was his second in as many days, and he stood before several Iraqi flags and signs that read "Security and Safety First."

Egyptians eye Palestinian poll system

Egyptian reformers have demanded that, like Palestinians, they too should have a chance to choose their leader from a host of candidates.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who has won four presidential terms in referendums where he is the only candidate, earlier congratulated new Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who beat six other candidates.

"The Palestinian people chose their president," said Husain Abd al-Raziq, spokesman for the Egyptian Organisation for Human

Rights (EOHR). "I think the Egyptian people are not naive, and are capable of choosing from among many candidates."

He was speaking at a news conference called to announce that the EOHR would work with six other human rights organisations and four opposition parties in a campaign to change the country's three-decades-old constitution. Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country and a key regional US ally, has come under increased pressure from activists at home and international organisations to carry out political and economic reform.

Suspected Musharraf assailant flees custody

An alleged militant accused of trying to assassinate Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has escaped from custody, the authorities say.

Mushtaq Ahmed was being held by air force police in the city of Rawalpindi.

Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said he was a key suspect in the failed attempt on the president's life on 14 December 2003.

The president survived two attacks within days of each other, both on the road between Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

He has been a target for Islamic militants since joining the US-led "war on terror" following the attacks of 11 September, 2001.

The BBC's correspondent in Islamabad said the escape of a man regarded as a prime suspect in the attacks is a huge embarrassment for the authorities.

The authorities accused Mushtaq Ahmed of belonging to the banned militant group, Jaish-e-Mohammed.

"This criminal escaped from custody and we hope that we will arrest him. He was a key figure in the 14 December, 2003 attack on President Musharraf," Sheikh Rashid Ahmed told the AFP news agency.

He said a huge manhunt was under way.

All airports and other exit points have been put on high alert and Mr Ahmed's photographs have been dispatched to border posts to foil any attempt by him to slip out of the country.

Several low-ranking officers of the air force and army were arrested along with Mr Ahmed and a number of other civilians following the attacks.

It is not clear how or when Mushtaq Ahmed escaped and the government gave no details.

Mr Ahmed and the arrested armed forces officials were being tried by a field court marshal when he somehow managed to escape from custody.

Some reports say he has been on the run since November.

President Musharraf survived the 14 December attack, thanks, apparently, to electronic jamming devices which blocked a signal to a remote-controlled bomb.

The blast destroyed a bridge minutes after his motorcade had passed over it. No one was hurt.

Eleven days later two suicide bombers tried to ram explosive-laden vehicles into the president's limousine, killing 17 people.

Last December, one soldier was sentenced to death and another given a 10-year jail sentence for their role in the first of the attacks on the president.

The two men were convicted by a military court in a trial believed to have been held several weeks earlier.

Iran, EU forge trade ties

Iran and the European Union are to resume talks for a trade and cooperation agreement Wednesday in Brussels, following Iran's suspension of uranium enrichment activities, the European Commission revealed.

The commission said Tuesday that the move follows the verification of Iran's suspension of its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, as confirmed by an International Atomic Energy Agency resolution in November.

"The decision to resume TCA (trade and cooperation agreement) negotiations follows the Paris agreement between Iran and the UK, France and Germany, and the subsequent verification of the suspension of Iran's enrichment and reprocessing activities as confirmed by the IAEA resolution of November 2004," it said.

Negotiations on political dialogue and counter-terrorism will be held in parallel with the trade and cooperation discussion on Thursday, the European Union's executive branch said.

Abbas told Bush he was committed to addressing the Palestinian Authority's security and economic problems and looked forward to going to Washington at some point, McClellan said.

Business Trust

Finance

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air

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

11:00

13:15

17:00

Maiduguri - Abuja 06:50

Abuja - Maid. 17:00

Lagos - Yola 1:00 p.m.

Abuja - Yola 14:30

Yola - Abuja 15:30

Yola - Lagos 4:00 p.m.

Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos - Abuja 8:15a.m.

11:00a.m.

12:10p.m.

4:45p.m.

Kaduna - Lagos 8:30a.m.

P/H - Lagos 9:00a.m.

4:30p.m.

Abuja - Kaduna 2:30p.m.

Kaduna - Abuja 1:30p.m.

IRS Airlines

CBQ - Abuja 8:00 a.m.

Abuja - Lagos 9:45a.m.

Lagos - Kaduna 9:30a.m.

Kano - Lagos 7:30p.m.

Lagos - Kano 11:15a.m.

Kaduna - Lagos 11:00a.m.

Lagos - Abu/MM 2:30p.m.

Abuja - MM 1:45p.m.

MM - Abuja 3:45p.m.

Abuja - CBQ 4:30p.m.

5:15p.m.

Kano - Abuja 1:15p.m.

Abuja - Kano 2:30p.m.

Kano - Lagos 3:45p.m.

Lagos - Kano 6:00p.m.

EAS Airlines

Lagos - Abuja 8:15p.m.

11:45a.m.

5:45p.m.

Abuja - Lagos 10:15a.m.

7:15p.m.

Lagos - Jos 11:45a.m.

Jos - Lagos 2:30p.m.

Dasab Airlines

Auja - Lagos 8:30 a.m.

Lagos - PHC 10:30 a.m.

PHC - Lagos 12:30 a.m.

Lagos - Kano 2:30 p.m.

Kano - Lagos 4:30 p.m.

Lagos - Abuja 6:30pm.

ADC Airline

Lagos - Abuja 7:15 a.m.

12:45 p.m.

Abuja - Lagos 8:55 a.m.

Lagos - Calabar 11:15 a.m.

Calabar - Lagos 7:20 a.m.

P/H - Lagos 9:45 a.m.

Lagos - Sokoto 8:55 am.

Sokoto - Lagos 11:55 am.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

CBN trades N54.4bn treasury bills

Transaction in government securities started on a depressed note this year with N54.478 billion worth of treasury bills traded by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) last week. This is against the N88.195 billion worth of securities sold in the last week of 2004.

As usual, the bulk of the transaction was conducted at the Primary Market Auction (PMA) end of the government securities market where N53.478 billion naira worth of the bills were sold.

There was a slight oversubscription at the PMA last week as total demand from investors was as high as N73.00 worthwhile the apex bank offered just N60.00 billion naira worth.

The first auction of the PMA held on Wednesday recorded N8.678 billion naira worth of the securities as traded.

Bid rates at the auction ranged between 15.24 and 16.30 per cent while the true yield rate for the 182-day tenored instruments traded at the auction is 17.3875 per cent.

Transaction, however, surged at the second auction of the PMA held on Thursday with a total of N45.00 billion worth of treasury bills traded. Range of bids at the auction varied between 12.50 and 14.50 per cent while the true yield rate for the 91-day tenored instruments sold at the auction is 14.5063 per cent.

As usual, the bulk of the transaction was conducted at the Primary Market Auction (PMA) end of the government securities market where N53.478 billion naira worth of the bills were sold.

Also, the National Bank of Nigeria (NBN) management has been directed to go to the capital market to raise fund.

Ogun state governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel

Insurance boss tasks operators on pension regime

The managing director of Capital Express Insurance, Mr. Ony Aletor, has tasked insurers in the country to reposition their operations to enhance their efficiency under the new pension regime.

In an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday in Lagos, Aletor urged insurers to improve their operations in the areas of capitalisation, human capital development and information technology.

He also tasked them to ensure ethical behaviour in providing service as retirement fund administrators, adding that pension and annuity programmes must be presented in a transparent manner and backed with trust and accountability.

Speaking further, Aletor emphasised the need for practitioners to update their knowledge to meet new standards of documentation.

He said that there were still many challenges under the pension Reform Act 2004, including its inability to define the guaranteed minimum pension.

The insurance boss said that the poor performance of the life and pension business in the country also necessitated the need for operators to improve their performance.

Recapitalisation: O'dua states back Wema Bank with N6.25bn

A s banks in the country are struggling to meet up with the N25 billion Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) recapitalization fund, the O'dua State governors have resolved that each of the five states would contribute N1.4 billion to Wema Bank to meet the CBN deadline.

Also, the National Bank of Nigeria (NBN) management has been directed to go to the capital market to raise fund.

Ogun state governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel

From Kayode Ajibola, Correspondent, Abeokuta

disclosed this while addressing newsmen weekend in Abeokuta, after the meeting of the five O'dua states governors with members of the Board of Directors of the O'dua Group in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital.

Governor Daniel said, Wema and National Bank will not merge, explaining that the two banks were very healthy and capable of standing on their own.

He described National Bank as a well endowed bank with numerous assets spread across the country.

The meeting was attended by the Oyo states governor,

Alhaji Resheed Ladoja, his Ondo state counterpart, Dr. Olusegun Agagu and the chief host, Gbenga Daniel.

Otunba Daniel, who disclosed that Wema Bank raised N17 billion from the capital market assured that the five O'dua governors will ensure that the conglomerate is taken to greater height that all Yorubas would be proud of.

He said that Wemabod estate was being repositioned for economic vibrancy, adding that within the next few weeks O'dua would become very efficient and functional as necessary steps were being taken in this direction.



CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA TENDER NOTICE

NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that 91-day Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills amounting to N45,000,000,000 will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 20/01/2005.

Interested Authorized Dealers (Commercial/Merchant Banks, Designated Discount Houses and Brokers) are invited to submit tenders to reach the Issues Office, Central Bank of Nigeria, Lagos, not later than 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 18/01/2005.

Each tender must be in multiple of N1,000 subject to a minimum of N1,000 per tender. Authorized Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A tender may be for own account of Authorized Dealers or made on behalf of interested members of the public, who are advised to apply to their banks or Brokers for the Bills.

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked "TENDER FOR BILLS". The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Wednesday, 19/01/2005. The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Thursday, 20/01/2005. Payment in full for the amount of the accepted tenders must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30 p.m. on the issue date 20/01/2005. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

ISSUES OFFICE
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBU SQUARE
LAGOS

Market Indicators

Nigerian Inter Bank Foreign Exchange (NIFEX) Rates

Quotes as of: 10/01/2005

Bid(\$/-N=)	Offer(\$/-N=)
Spot Fixing 132.742	133.042
Tenor (Days) Swap Points	Forward Fixing
30 1.5842 / 1.5878	134.3259 / 134.6295
60 3.1621 / 3.1692	135.9038 / 136.2109
90 4.7337 / 4.7444	137.4754 / 137.7861
180 9.4111 / 9.4325	142.153 / 142.4742

Nigerian Inter-Bank Offered Rate (NIBOR)

Quotes as of: 10/01/2005	Rates
7 Days	15.2500
30 Days	16.7500
60 Days	16.6250
90 Days	17.3750
180 Days	17.2500
270 Days	0.0000
365 Days	12.1483

Dutch Auction held on 05/01/2005

Rates	US\$
Total Amount Offered	100000000
Total Amount Demanded	163069904.71
Total Amount Sold	138710009.34
Lowest Successful Bid Rate	N 132.85 / 1 US\$
Highest Successful Bid Rate	N 133.2 / 1 US\$
No. of Successful Applicants	859
No. of Unsuccessful Applicants	39

Naira official exchange Rates as of: 07/01/2005

Currency	Buying	Selling	Central
US DOLLAR	131.85	132.85	132.35
POUND STERLING	248.3395	250.223	
EURO	174.5167	175.8403	175.1785
SWISS FRANCS	0	0	0
JAPANESE YEN	1.2627	1.2723	1.2675
CFA FRANCS	0.2568	0.2668	0.2618
WAUUA	200.5221	202.0429	201.2825
SAUDI RIYAL	35.1544	35.421	35.2877

Minimum Rediscount Rate and Export Proceeds

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

Primary Market held on 06/01/2005

Rates	Security NTB
Tenure 91 DAYS	
Maturity Date	07/04/2005
Amount On Offer	N 45000 Million
Total Public Subscription	N 64416 Million
Total Allotment	N 45000 Million
Range of Bid Rates	12.5000% - 14.5000%
Stop Rate	14%
True Yield	14.5042%

Bureau De Change rates as of: 04/01/2005

Location	Buying	Selling	Buying	Selling
Lagos	136.50	137.50	258.00	259.00
Abuja	136.00	137.00	257.50	258.50
Airport	137.00	138.00	259.00	260.00

Business Trust

Energy

Ajaokuta Steel seeks AISA collaboration

The management of Ajaokuta Steel Company has solicited the cooperation of African Iron and Steel Association (AISA) in the effort to revive the plant.

The management led by Mr Ramesh Raina on Monday in Abuja paid a courtesy visit to the Executive secretary of AISA, Dr. Mohammed Sanusi.

Raina said the visit was necessitated by the management's determination to partner with stakeholders in the steel sector to turn around the fortunes of the multi-billion dollar company.

"Achieving meaningful result at the plant will depend on the level of collaboration, assistance and cooperation we enjoy from stakeholders in the nation's steel sector," he said.

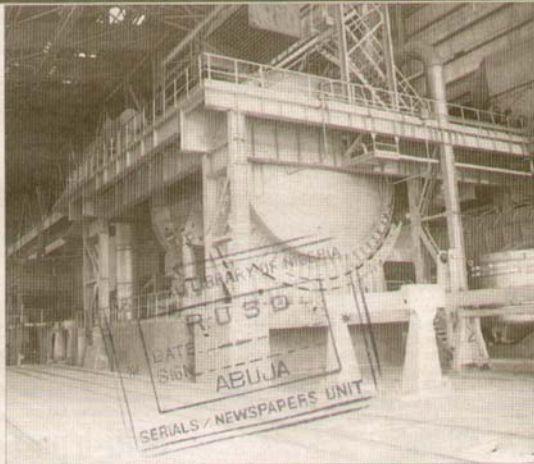
He said that the collaboration would be mostly in the area of technical cooperation.

He called on the management of AISA to undertake a working visit to the plant to ascertain the level of work done and also be in better position to assist.

Responding, Sanusi, an ardent critic of the concessional agreement between government and Solgas Nig. Ltd, former managers of the plant, assured of AISA's readiness to cooperate with the management.

He urged the management to re-evaluate its work plan and ensure it was within achievable limit.

Sanusi, however, said that the plan to produce liquid steel from the plant in the next five months was a hard target.



Machines wasting away at the Ajaokuta Steel Complex. The successful execution of the Ajaokuta project would have provided an effective diversification strategy for the nation's economy.

Oil prices ease to \$45

Oil prices eased to \$45 a barrel yesterday, extending a profit-taking set-back despite a looming cold spell in the eastern United States and global supply outages.

US light crude slid 28 cents to \$45.05 a barrel in afternoon Asian dealing, following an intraday low of \$44.95, as traders locked away more profits after the market hit a near six-week high of \$47.30 on Monday evening.

"People are cautious, they are taking profits now," said Tetsu Emori, chief commodities strategist at Mitsui Bussan Futures in Tokyo. "They want to see what happens with the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting."

The OPEC meets again on January 30 to discuss second-quarter production policy, with some members saying another cut might be necessary if US crude oil falls below \$40 a barrel, effectively setting a higher bar for defending prices.

Prices fell as low as \$40.25 in mid-December but have rallied since then as the cartel implemented its agreed 1 million barrel per day (bpd) supply cut from Jan. 1 and production problems in the US Gulf and Norway's North Sea cut 500,000 bpd of output.

The eastern United States should experience a colder February than normal, with the first sustained cold in the Northeast starting this weekend, private forecasters EarthSat said.

Worries that a colder-than-usual first quarter will boost homeowners' demand for heating oil, the region's main winter fuel, are supporting the energy complex, sending US heating oil to their highest level since December 23, at \$1.35 a gallon on Monday. It was trading at \$1.2829 on Tuesday.

Unseasonably mild weather probably helped inventories narrow a 9 percent year-on-year deficit last week, with distillates stocks, which include heating oil, expected to have risen over the period, a Reuters poll of 10 analysts found on Monday.

Crude stockpiles were expected to have dipped by 1.3 million barrels, but should remain higher than last year.

Prices jumped on Monday after Iraqi oil officials said that sabotage ahead of the country's January 30 elections had paralyzed oil operations in the north of the country, forcing a suspension in refining while export flows remained idle.

Iraq's northern pipeline network has been a constant target of attacks by saboteurs while its larger southern line has been hit only a handful of times since the war nearly two years ago.

Shell to pay \$1m to ex-finance chief

Shell is to pay \$1m (£522,000) to its ex-finance chief who stepped down from her post in April 2004 after the firm over-stated its reserves.

Judy Boynton finally left the firm on 31 December, having spent the intervening time as a special advisor to chief executive Jeroen van der Veer.

In January 2004, Shell told shocked investors that its reserves were 20% smaller than previously thought.

Shell said the pay-off was in line with Ms Boynton's contract.

She was leaving "by mutual agreement to pursue other career opportunities", the firm said in a statement.

The severance package means she keeps long-term share options, but fails to collect on a 2003 incentive plan since the firm has failed to meet the targets included in it.

The revelation that Shell had inflated its reserves led to the resignation of its chairman, Sir Phil Watts, and production chief Walter van der Vijver.

An investigation commissioned by Shell found that Ms Boynton had to share responsibility for the company's behaviour.

Despite receiving an email from Mr Van de Vijver which said the firm had "fooled" the market about its reserves, the investigation said, she did nothing to inquire further.

In all, Shell restated its reserves four times during 2003.

In September, it paid £82.7m in fines to regulators on both sides of the Atlantic for violating market rules in its reporting of its reserves.

Rising energy costs hit world's biggest aluminum company

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor, with agency report

Alcoa Incorporated, the world's biggest aluminum producer, said on Monday its fourth-quarter net profit slipped because of higher energy costs, a weaker dollar and a charge it took for selling some of its businesses.

The numbers were below Wall Street analysts' expectations, despite a 12 percent increase in revenues in the fourth quarter from the same period last

year as aluminum and metals prices in general have been soaring.

Alcoa stock fell slightly in after-hours trading following the announcement.

"US dollar weakness and higher input costs continue to pressure margins," Alcoa chairman and chief executive, Alan Belda said in a statement. He said Alcoa would continue to cut costs and streamline operations.

Pittsburgh-based Alcoa said

...partners Rivers in Niger Delta

From Mohammed Shosanya, Energy Correspondent, Lagos

Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) is partnering the Rivers state government in its quest to develop communities in the Niger Delta area.

The scheme, sustainable community development programme will witness increased emphasis on wooing the presence of national and international agencies to the developmental needs of the area, while also trying to check the pressure on the roads in Port Harcourt.

Managing director of the company, Basil Omiyi announced this when he paid a courtesy visit to the governor of Rivers state, Dr. Peter Odili to formally communicate to him his assumption of office in Port Harcourt.

According to him, his company's movement to Port Harcourt is facilitated by the government's commitment in the area to provide an enabling environment for business to thrive.

This is evident in the fact that the state produced up to 1 million barrels a day this year (2004), the highest

net income fell to \$268 million, or 30 cents a share, in the fourth quarter, compared with \$291 million, or 33 cents a share, a year earlier. However, income from continuing operations rose to \$345 million, or 39 cents per diluted share, up slightly from \$342 million, or 39 cents, in the same quarter last year.

Fourth-quarter revenue rose 12 percent to \$6.0 billion on soaring metal prices, but the cost of producing the goods it sold rose to \$4.9 billion from \$4.3 billion a year earlier.

Analysts on average had expected earnings of 42 cents a share, according to Reuters estimates.

The fourth-quarter results include a \$77 million charge for the company's plan to shed assets that include a small casting operation and its telecommunications businesses.

The results also included a gain of \$37 million, or four cents a share in connection with an agreement with Alumina Limited involving

its Brazilian Juruti bauxite reserves. This, combined with a \$21 million reversal of a valuation reserve for foreign net operating losses, resulted in an effective tax rate for the quarter of 14 percent. The full year tax rate was 25 percent.

Alcoa said it expects to spend about \$2.5 billion on capital projects in 2005, aimed largely at smelters and alumina refineries. The company finished a refinery expansion in Jamaica in 2004, and will complete brownfield projects this year at refineries in Suriname and Pinjarra, West Australia. The company also broke ground at its new Iceland smelter and for an expansion at the Alumar smelter in northern Brazil.

In 2005, it will invest in a new anode plant in Norway, modernization of a Spanish smelter and improvements at the newly-acquired fabricating facilities in Russia.

The company's stock fell in after-hours trading to \$30.12 from the New York Stock Exchange close of \$30.47.

Officials allege sabotage in Iraqi oil system

Sabotage has paralysed oil operations in Iraq's north with refineries suspending all production and export flows remaining idle, oil officials said on Monday.

They said attacks in recent days on oil facilities, including export and domestic pipelines feeding power stations, have virtually brought the system in Iraq's strategic fields to a halt.

"The system is virtually down. We are looking at a week to get the refineries back up and more for exports to resume," said an oil official, who declined to be named.

Oil facilities in the north have a diminished postwar output capacity of 700,000 barrels per day (bpd), including

500,000 bpd of exports through a pipeline that runs to Turkey's Ceyhan port. Flows through the line have been halted since it was attacked on Dec. 18.

Sabotage has escalated over the past month, hampering repair operations, endangering the safety of North Oil Company employees and deepening a fuel and electricity crisis in most of the country.

Oil minister, Thamir al-Ghadhban told Al Arabiya Television over the weekend that "total war" has been declared on Iraq's oil infrastructure by enemies of the pro-US government.

The minister was refer-

ring to mostly Sunni Muslim areas where the insurgency is strongest.

Sabotage has been far less frequent in the mostly Shi'ite south and oil production has been relatively steady, although power cuts have occasionally disrupted exports from offshore Gulf terminals.

Exports were running at 1.9 million barrel per day on Monday, shipping data showed.

The tanker Gogglory Lake was loading at 17,000 barrels per hour from berth one at the Basra terminal. The tanker Star II was loading at 63,000 barrels per hour.

An international shipping agent said bad weather could reduce the loading rates.

Business Trust

Telecom

MTN, Vmobile, NITEL agree on tariff

GSM operators and NITEL have reached an agreement on how to settle the backlog of tariff owed on inter connectivity.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the agreement was reached after several meetings were held to harmonise the figures.

One of the GSM operators, Vmobile, had last year taken NITEL to court over accumulated debt on inter connectivity.

Other operators projected conflicting figures of debts on the pages of newspapers.

The chief executive officer (CEO) of NITEL, Mr Rein Zwolsman, however, told NAN in Abuja that the figures arrived at were far lower than what the operators claimed in the media.

He said that an agreement had been reached by all stakeholders on mode of payment.

Zwolsman, who refused to disclose the figures agreed on by all the parties, said that the meeting had created a peaceful atmosphere for fair competition among players in the telecom industry.

He said that the figures could not be disclosed because it would indicate the performance of each operator against the other.

NAN, however, reports that officials of the NITEL foreign management firm, Pentascope, had last year said that NITEL owed its creditors N14.8 billion, including N3 billion to MTN, N1.5 billion to Vmobile and N10.3 billion to its suppliers.

On the other hand the

officials said that the company was owed N27 billion out of which corporate individuals owed N9 billion and the Private Telecom Operators (PTO) owed N4 billion.

The CEO told NAN that the company had concluded plans to expand its fibre optic backbone, which, he said, would create more room for all operators to expand their services to customers.

He said that the project would be concluded by the end of the year.

"The company is moving forward and we will do a lot this year to benefit all stakeholders," he said.

On the N14 billion loan facility to reposition NITEL, Zwolsman said: "We are finalising discussions with the banks and we hope the money would be released soon for work to start on the targets for the year."



British Telecoms has criticised the post office's new service

British post office eyes telecom market

The British Post Office has set its sights on grabbing a "significant slice" of the home phone market as it returns to the sector after an absence of 24 years.

Launching its new HomePhone residential service, the group said call costs would be almost 20 per cent cheaper than BT's.

The Post Office said it aimed to sign up one million customers - 5% of BT's current residential business - by 2008.

British Telecom (BT) criticised the Post Office's new service, saying it offered poor value for money.

The Post Office is one of the first groups to make use of new laws allowing users to pay line rental to firms other than BT.

"With the launch of Post Office HomePhone, we intend to win a significant slice of the residential telephony market," chief executive David Mills said.

"If customers are looking for good value from the Post Office, frankly they're better off sticking to stamps."

"The consumer stands to make excellent savings and the Post Office stands to develop an important new service into a significant new business stream."

But BT dismissed the Post Office's attempts to steal some of its customers.

"If customers are looking for good value from the Post Office, frankly they're better off sticking to stamps," said Gavin Patterson, group managing director of BT's consumer division.

The Post Office said that its service was the most transparent on the market as a result of its simple tariff and charging structure - as well as the lure of a single bill for both calls and line rental.

Under the new Wholesale Line Rental legislation, customers no longer have to pay a separate bill to BT for their home phone line.

Many companies charge for calls only, which means two phone bills for consumers.

Line rental will cost

£11.50 a month, or £10.50 by direct debit. Customers will be charged by the second and there will be no minimum call charge.

The Post Office added that customers currently on BT's Together Option 1 who switch to HomePhone could save an average of 12% while some households could save up to 20% by changing providers.

The Post Office has a long history in the telecoms industry - as GPO it was responsible for all UK calls from 1912, when a national service was introduced, until BT was spun off in 1981.

However, BT said most telecoms providers were now offering bundles of inclusive minutes.

The HomePhone offer is

not compelling, the Post Office has credibility problems with its existing business... and it has entered the wrong market sector.

"While the rest of the market has followed our lead and produced imitations of our simple, good value, BT Together packages, we're surprised that the Post Office has taken such a backward step with its pence per minute approach," said Mr Patterson.

"All in all it's stuck in the dark ages when it comes to offering value to today's residential phone callers."

BT claimed the Post Office would be up to 10 times more expensive for hour-long off-peak calls and would charge more for 0870 and 0845 numbers.

NITEL engages SSS, EFCC to plug revenue leakages

To check high rate of revenue leakages, Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) management has engaged some undercover officers of the State Security Service (SSS) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to work with a revenue assurance committee to check unscrupulous practices.

The firm also blamed other stakeholders who collaborated with the staff.

Speaking in an interview with the NAN today in Abuja, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the

company, Mr Rein Zwolsman,

confirmed the involvement of SSS and EFCC officers in the revenue mobilisation team set up last year.

He, however, said that the officers were yet to make any arrest.

Apart from the involvement of security agents, Zwolsman told NAN that another consultant on revenue mobilisation, KBMG, had also been hired to work with the committee.

The CEO said the assurance team which started supervising the pioneer telecom company's revenue generation efforts in the last three months, had been able to curb 10 per cent of leakages from the system.

He said the team had already projected that by the middle of the year the unscrupulous practices of some of its staff and other stakeholders would be reduced by 80 per cent.

"100 per cent leak proof does not exist but we are making the system better for the future," he said.

Zwolsman said the company's revenue which had been on the slide for a long time, went up by 14 per cent last year, adding that it would go up by 30 per cent this year.

"We are in a very competitive industry but most people in the company are yet to realise the power of competition," he said.

"The challenge is to change the old mentality and try to get the best out of the system by reducing liability and improving quality," Zwolsman added.

NAN recalls that Nitel last year introduced new products into the market including Internet IP wholesale facility.

It also improved its marketing drive to create awareness on its new billing system.

Nigeria (NAN) recalls that a consultant from South Africa said last year that NITEL was losing N1 billion every month to dishonest staff who manipulated equipment.

The firm also blamed other stakeholders who collaborated with the staff.

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The News Agency of ...thrift society disburses N15m housing loan

The Cooperative Thrift and Credit Society of the Lagos Mainland Territory of NITEL has disbursed loans worth N15 million to its members to enable them build their own houses.

The President of the society, Mr Chris Okafor, who made this known during the annual general meeting (AGM) of the society in Lagos said the action was based on the realisation that most workers in the country live in penury in retirement, following their inability to build houses when in service.

"We can no longer watch our workers retire into penury because of their inability to build their own homes while in active service," Okafor said.

To this end, Okafor said that the society had opened discussions with some mortgage institutions on how the members could access funds from mortgage institutions.

He said the society was also working out plans to make loans available for members to purchase or repair vehicles, pay school fees or house rents, or for any

other pressing need.

He enjoined all workers of NITEL to join the body to benefit from its numerous programmes.

Okafor commended the former manager of the Lagos Mainland Territory of Nitel, Mr Chuka Asouzu, for what he described as the immense support he gave to the society to make it survive the test of time.

The Secretary of the Society, Mr Abudulrasheed Adebayo, said that the society had approved a loan grant of N50,000 to each of the members to buy shares from the capital market.

He assured members of the society that the management of the body would continue to work assiduously to make life better for its members.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that an 11-member management committee was elected during the AGM to run the affairs of the society for the next year.

US' rural telephony coy buys Western Wireless

Attel Corporation, the leading rural telephony company, said on Monday it would buy rural mobile operator Western Wireless Corporation British post office eyes telecom market for about \$4.16 billion in cash and stock to boost its competitive position in the rapidly consolidating US wireless industry.

The deal follows Cingular Wireless' recent \$41 billion purchase of AT&T Wireless and Sprint Corporation's agreement to acquire Nextel Communications Inc. for almost \$35 billion.

Little Rock, Arkansas-based Attel would be the No. 5 U.S. mobile provider after the current spate of consolidation, with a network serving a quarter of the population and half of the country's geographic area.

"It's a great combination that's going to help them compete in a rapidly changing landscape with bigger players," said Roe Equity Research analyst Kevin Roe, who noted that rural U.S. providers have long been expected to consolidate.

Mobile operators in the fiercely competitive US market are combining to cut costs and boost marketing

clout amid falling call prices and a declining number of potential first-time mobile customers.

Attel's Western Wireless deal also involves overseas expansion as it includes an international unit. Attel, which made \$12 billion worth of acquisitions since 1998, said on Monday it could possibly shoulder even more acquisitions.

Attel's offer, which includes \$1 billion in cash, values Western Wireless of Bellevue, Washington, at \$38.49 per share based on Monday afternoon trading. The price reflects a premium of about 7.5 percent over Western's close on Friday.

Attel said it would also assume \$1.5 billion of Western Wireless debt under the agreement. Attel's Chief Executive Officer Scott Ford said at a telephone conference that Attel would not likely need to take on new debt to pay for deal.

Shares of Western Wireless, which operates under the Western Wireless and Cellular One brand names, were up more than 2 percent in afternoon trade on Nasdaq after rallying nearly 40 percent in the last month.

Attel shares were down almost 3 percent on the New York Stock Exchange.

Business Trust

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2005

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
THE OKOMO OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	13	14.90	36,480	466,329.20
PRESCO PLC	24	11.50	57,875	665,631.50
Sector Totals	37		88,355	1,131,960.50
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC	22	1.99	517,214	1,029,255.86
R. T. BRIDGEMAN PLC	2	7.22	33,491	386,233.90
Sector Totals	24		570,709	1,415,489.76
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	8	3.42	115,405	394,685.10
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	21	6.63	36,903	244,666.89
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	6	3.41	10,057,804	34,297,111.64
CHARTERED BANK PLC	109	7.53	12,201,882	42,977,029.67
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC	11	1.29	4,029,400	5,197,926.00
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC	4	0.73	152,250	111,142.50
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	15	2.26	1,009,000	2,280,140.00
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	4	24.80	1,331,280	38,131,646.76
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	23	1.45	395,489	572,040.61
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC	13	11.69	1,200,564	14,034,593.16
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	18	0.96	1,315,401	1,210,169.32
HALLMARK BANK PLC	2	2.06	449,400	925,764.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC	2	0.73	90,657	60,633.04
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	7	1.07	188,631	201,835.15
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	2	7.81	50,765	397,400.00
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC	12	2.04	1,000,000	2,040,000.00
NAL BANK PLC	1	0.73	1,000,000	730,000.00
OCEANIC BANK PLC	9	0.80	1,000,000	800,000.00
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	6	1.81	1,000,000	1,810,000.00
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	13	0.19	1,000,000	190,000.00
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	137	0.99	1,000,000	990,000.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	439	0.60	1,000,000	600,000.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC	25	1.93	1,000,000	1,930,000.00
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	16	15.80	1,000,000	15,800,000.00
WEMA BANK PLC	1	1.672	1,000,000	1,672,000.00
ZENITH BANK PLC	1	1.672	1,000,000	1,672,000.00
Sector Totals	1,672		20,000,000	247,482,778.47
BREWERIES				
CHAMPION BREWERIES PLC	1	4.68	1,000	2,340.00
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC	216	10.00	269,910	62,476,075.10
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC	369	41.90	269,910	41,001,453.18
Sector Totals	586		539,820	103,479,868.48
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	113	23.30	299,650	7,216,156.78
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	19	4.85	176,813	1,260,015.23
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC	40	11.99	249,191	2,987,367.80
Sector Totals	172		725,654	11,463,539.81
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC	41	4.67	196,620	924,758.25
CAP PLC	12	7.15	21,035	150,400.25
D. N. MEYER PLC	7	5.00	6,461	32,305.00
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC	11	4.25	77,194	326,635.70
Sector Totals	66		301,310	1,434,099.20
COMMERCIAL/SERVICES				
TRANS-NATIONWIDE EXPRESS PLC	4	1.00	5,000,000	5,000,000.00
Sector Totals	4		5,000,000	5,000,000.00
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
THOMAS WATTS NIGERIA PLC	5	0.38	1,100,900	422,335.28
TRIPPLE GEL AND COMPANY PLC	1	1.00	1,000	1,000.00
Sector Totals	6		1,101,900	423,335.28
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC	7	1.20	100,813	118,763.13
C. F. A. O. NIGERIA PLC	14	0.93	100,993	733,855.99
JOHN HOLT PLC	196	0.99	33,759	33,759.41
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	19	16.39	1,000,000	24,853,421.41
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC	13	12.03	470,638	5,695,008.77
S. C. O. NIGERIA PLC	5	1.19	4,438	5,281.22
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC	53	14.17	204,333	2,867,958.61
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC	15	1.20	671,352	813,847.22
Sector Totals	375		3,156,456	35,118,951.52
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (N.A.) PLC	3	0.96	2,160	2,003.20
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	7	16.00	18,550	267,905.00
Sector Totals	10		20,710	269,908.20
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC	1	0.86	45,000	38,700.00
Sector Totals	1		45,000	38,700.00
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	24	24.68	102,462	2,459,772.87
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	196	60.50	352,407	21,272,552.35
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	39	16.61	84,420	1,402,218.20
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	7	38.40	153,019	3,954,121.45
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC	121	146.00	250,440	37,025,731.08
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC	1	15.82	1,000	17,006.50
UNION DICON SALT PLC	2	6.62	3,100	18,662.00
Sector Totals	455		945,943	71,150,062.45
FOOTWEAR				
FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES MAN. PLC	1	0.36	15,000	5,400.00
Sector Totals	1		15,000	5,400.00
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	24	3.26	367,831	1,217,512.29
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	4	5.25	81,900	429,975.00
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	0	0.13	0	0.00
NEUMITH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC	13	2.85	39,000	113,870.00
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	56	8.45	66,950	405,862.50
Sector Totals	107		535,681	2,167,219.79
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
EPIC DYNAMICS PLC	1	0.46	1,800	828.00
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC	13	1.08	549,702	584,605.08
B.O.C. GASES PLC	5	3.00	200,960	603,380.00
VITAFORM NIGERIA PLC	36	4.04	207,486	838,243.44
Sector Totals	55		959,948	2,027,056.52
INSURANCE				
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	3	0.60	42,000	25,540.00
AICO INSURANCE PLC	5	1.92	92,071	179,662.32
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC	15	1.26	2,376,100	2,883,040.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	3	1.59	95,332	151,577.88
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.93	500	465.00
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) PLC	2	0.79	134,227	106,118.33
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	2	4.24	11,200	47,256.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC	19	1.10	76,260	98,799.60
UNIC INSURANCE PLC	10	2.80	238,414	259,400.70
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC	16	2.80	124,220	147,240.00
Sector Totals	73		3,146,324	4,100,079.83
MACHINERY(MARKETING)				
BLACKWOOD HODGE (NIGERIA) PLC	2	0.69	8,840	6,099.60
Sector Totals	2		8,840	6,099.60
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC	23	1.68	439,225	724,950.75
Sector Totals	23		439,225	724,950.75
PACKAGING				
AVON CROWNSCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC	3	0.69	21,374	14,748.06
NAMPAC NIGERIA PLC	2	1.10	6,066	34,196.58
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC	2	0.52	15,000	7,800.00
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC	8	2.38	45,238	59,162.44
Sector Totals	15		87,678	115,817.04
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFRIL PLC	18	0.82	897,225	735,724.50
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	136	68.00	2,327,232	19,137,676.11
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC	5	2.32	89,463	207,786.45
MORIL OIL NIGERIA PLC	43	180.00	13,968	2,507,984.82
CONOIL PLC	83	327.50	76,260	9,500,283.20
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC	54	169.00	14,232	2,382,683.20
QANDO PLC	113	182.00	53,642	11,447,240.00
Sector Totals	592		11,521,012	58,099,468.62
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	3	1.57	37,000	58,090.00
Sector Totals	3		37,000	58,090.00
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC	30	8.80	318,700	2,804,981.45
Sector Totals	30		318,700	2,804,981.45
TEXTILES				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC	1	0.51	125	63.75
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC	18	2.38	271,501	645,298.91
Sector Totals	19		271,626	645,362.66
Overall Totals		4,275	17,358,134	549,338,208.86

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
FIRSTBANK	1,531,280.00	38,131,646.76	547
UBA	1,889,415.00	17,658,099.08	117
NAL	2,086,340.00	4,234,059.67	35
CORNERST	2,376,100.00	2,883,040.00	15
UBN	2,465,226.00	51,294,040.51	439
COOPBANK	4,029,400.00	5,197,926.00	11
TRANSEXPR	5,000,000.00	5,000,000.00	4
WEMABANK	6,593,760.00	25,913,476.80	16
ATLANTICBK	10,057,804.00	34,297,111.64	6
CHARTERED	12,201,882.00	42,977,029.67	109

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
TEP	23.51	24.68	+1.17
CADBURY	60.00	60.50	+0.50
BERGER	15.58	16.00	+0.42
NIG-GERMAN	4.05	4.25	+0.20
VITAFORM	3.85	4.04	+0.19
CCNN	7.01	7.19	+0.18
CHARTERED	3.37	3.53	+0.16
CHARTERED	41.74	41.90	+0.16
ETERNAOIL	2.21	2.32	+0.11
UNTL	2.28	2.38	+0.10

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
NESTLE	150.00	146.00	-4.00
TOTAL	185.00	182.00	-3.00
GUINNESS	114.50	113.00	-1.50
NOLCHEM	128.50	127.50	-1.00
ASHAKACEM	24.01	23.30	-0.70
OKOMUOIL	15.50	14.90	-0.60
NSC	99.00	98.40	-0.60
SKBEECHAM	8.87	8.45	-0.42
PZ	12.35	12.03	-0.32
UBA	9.50	9.19	-0.31

FG inaugurates SME

implementation committee

The federal government today in Abuja inaugurated a committee that would implement the resolution of the 15th international conference on Small and Medium Enterprises.

The conference "promoting SMEs for global competitiveness" organised by the World Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) was held in Nigeria in July 2004.

The committee made up of 12 commissioners of commerce and industries from the nation's six geo-political zones drew membership from Ministries of Agriculture, Industry, Women Affairs as well as Labour and productivity.

Other members were drawn from the Ministries of Finance, Inter-governmental Affairs, Culture and Tourism, Youth Development and Special Duties, Central Bank, NAPEP, SMEDAN and the Chief Economic Adviser to the President.

Inaugurating the committee, the minister of industry, Magaji Mohammed, said that the federal government was relying on small and medium enterprises for the nation's rapid economic development.

He said that government had put in place a host of bold policy instruments, programmes, schemes and facilities aimed at revitalising the industrial sector with specific emphasis on the SMEs sub-sector.

"The policy measures, schemes and support systems have started to yield results as witnessed by the increasing capacity utilisation of industries since the year 2000," he added.

Business Trust

Aviation

EU optimistic on Airbus/ Boeing subsidy row

The European Commission hopes for positive developments in the European Union US row over government aid to aircraft manufacturers Airbus and Boeing, a commission

spokeswoman said.

The EU and the United States, in a long-standing dispute, have accused each other of providing subsidies to their respective civil aviation industries that

violate World Trade Organization regulations.

A spokeswoman for EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said she hoped he "will be in a position to (announce) some positive news."

Mandelson was to hold a news conference on Tuesday in Strasbourg.

"There have been intensive talks over the past few days," spokeswoman Claude Veron-Reville said Tuesday.

A European source said US officials were also expected to comment on the dispute in Washington at about the same time.

The EU and the US on December 6 agreed to suspend their request for WTO arbitration while bilateral talks on the question continued.

The head of the EU commission, Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, said Brussels had been looking "for a compromise solution since the beginning."

Meanwhile, the United States said it had agreed with the European Union for the first time to seek an end to subsidies for the Airbus Industries and Boeing Co. plane manufacturers.

"For the first time in this long-standing dispute, the US and the EU have agreed that the goal should be to end subsidies," US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick said Tuesday.

Airport operations resume as visibility improves

Harmattan haze, which for three days resulted in poor visibility, has slightly improved thereby paving way for resumed operations at the Murtala Muhammed airport.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) airport correspondent reported that traffic at the domestic wing was heavy, while the meteorological service at the airport put visibility at 1,000 meters, as against 800 meters required by aircraft to operate.

On Friday and Saturday, visibility was poor with weather forecasts placing it at between 300 and 400 meters, which made it difficult for airline operations.

NAN reported that Sosoliso airline from Lagos, which could not land in Enugu due to poor weather condition, diverted to Port Harcourt airport.

The was also the case with Chanchangi flight, which made a detour to Lagos instead of going to Abuja, its planned destination.

However, as the weather condition improved on Sunday and Monday morning, most domestic airlines were seen battling to cope with the backlog of passengers with passengers jostling for tickets.

Some airline personnel who chose not to be mentioned expressed satisfaction with the level of patronage, explaining that large sums of money were lost within the three days due to poor weather.



Ibrahim Mantu, Amiral-Haji

BA to suspend two Saudi services

The Jeddah and Riyadh routes do not make a profit, says BA British Airways is to halt its flights from London Heathrow to Jeddah and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia from 27 March.

The airline said the decision was a commercial one due to reduced passenger demand for the services.

BA currently operates four flights per week from Heathrow to Jeddah, and three weekly journeys to Riyadh.

It suspended flights to Saudi Arabia for three weeks in autumn 2003 after a government warning about a "threat to UK aviation interests in Saudi Arabia".

"Long history" BA will now suspend the Saudi flights - which it says will remain "under constant review" - from 27 March.

"The decision to suspend flights between the UK and Saudi Arabia is a difficult one to make as we have enjoyed a long history of flying between the two countries," said BA director of commercial planning, Robert Boyle.

"However, the routes

don't currently make a profitable contribution to our business and we are unable to sustain them while this remains the case."

Passengers with flights booked after the suspension date will be contacted by BA for alternative arrangements to be made.

... excludes mothers as pilots

A woman pilot will have to leave the job she loves if British Airways does not allow her to work part-time to look after her daughter, a tribunal heard.

Jessica Starmer, 26, from Wareham in Dorset, is claiming indirect sex discrimination against the airline.

Ms Starmer told the tribunal BA's "family-unfriendly working practices" reinforced male-dominated traditions.

BA refused her request to work 50% part-time but offered her 75% instead, which she said was unacceptable.

Ms Starmer, who is also claiming loss of earnings, wants to work part-time to look after her one-year-old daughter Beth with husband Simon, who is also a BA pilot.

The Oxford graduate told the hearing "I could not look after Beth on any other basis than 50% part-time work".

Ms Starmer, a first officer

with BA, told the hearing in Watford: "I have spent many years flying at every opportunity and have invested a great deal of time and effort working towards being able to earn my living through the activity I love."

She added: "I do not want to have to give up the job I have always wanted to do and worked so hard for."

The co-pilot, who joined BA in May 2001, told the tribunal she and her husband worked "extremely irregular" shift patterns, which made it difficult for them to care for their young daughter.

BA's lack of accommodation for working mothers works to exclude females from its pilots.

She said the work rota was allocated by a computerised "bidding" system based on seniority, meaning it was difficult for the couple to arrange their shifts so someone was always free to care for their child.

Ms Starmer told the



Boeing 717 (above) and Airbus 340 (below): Boeing and Airbus have been in the centre of a subsidy-related controversy.

Nigeria plans total radar coverage of airspace

The completion of the multi-billion naira Total Radar Coverage of Nigerian Airspace (TRACON) will attract more traffic and more revenue into the country, Aviation Minister Isa Yuguda has said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that

the radar contract was awarded in 2003 to Messrs Thales Air Transport Management of France at a cost of 54.4 million Euros (about N85.4 billion).

It was initially awarded at cost of 68.5 million Euros (about N107.54 billion) before it was reviewed to the new amount.

"The Total Radar Coverage of the Nigerian Airspace (TRACON) is progressing satisfactorily with the completion of the equipment for the Lagos Airspace Area.

"The equipment for the Lagos zone of the project was in November, last year inspected, certified and accepted for shipment before being installed in Lagos," Yuguda told NAN in Abuja today.

He said that the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) is currently putting finishing touches on the radar control centre in readiness for the installation of the equipment.

He said that it was envisaged that the Lagos airspace area would achieve total radar coverage in the first quarter of the year.

The minister said that government approved the radar project in 2003 to ensure safety and security of the growing air traffic in

the country.

Yuguda reiterated government's commitment to build a safe, secure and efficient aviation industry that would be free of corruption and be user-friendly in order to make Nigeria the hub of the West African sub-region.

"In order to ensure the realisation of this vision, the ministry has undertaken several reforms and initiatives in all aspects and sectors of the Nigerian aviation industry.

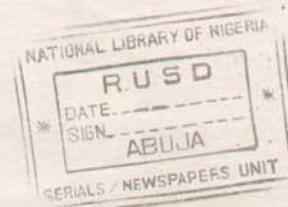
"It is gratifying to note that these measures have started yielding results.

"This has in turn led to a boost in the frequency of flights, tonnage of cargo and passenger traffic," the minister added.

He said government had invested heavily in the procurement, installation and maintenance of navigation aids, adding that all airports in the country had been equipped with efficient navigational aids.

He further said that the radar project would be implemented over a period of three years.

"This will further assure the safety and efficiency of flight operations in the airspace. Our ability to monitor vertical and lateral deviation of aircraft will be enhanced," Yuguda added.



MINISTRY OF FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) UNIT
 MFCT Secretariat, Kapital Road, Area 11, PMB 24, Garki, Abuja Nigeria.
 Tel: (09) 314 1295, 314 2371, Fax: (09) 314 3859

EXTENSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION TO TENDER
FOR PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN DURUMI, KADO, KATAMPE, GWARINPA I
AND MABUSHI DISTRICTS OF FCC, ABUJA, NIGERIA

PREAMBLE

The Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) has completed plans to develop infrastructure and open up five (5) designated Districts of the Federal Capital City (FCC), namely **Durumi, Kado, Katampe, Gwarinpa I and Mabushi Districts.**

The Federal Capital Development Authority, (FCDA) Department of Engineering Services, has provided Engineering Designs for the projects as earmarked in the Abuja Master Plan.

The preferred method of delivery of the projects is through the **Developer-Finance Scheme** in which the developer sources for funds, develops the infrastructure and recoups his investment from payments received from plot allottees.

Accordingly, the MFCT through the FCDA hereby invites experienced developers to submit **pre-qualification** documents for the above mentioned projects.

LOCATION OF SITES AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHEME

1. **Durumi District** is located in the Phase II Area of the FCT Development Plan. The project site covers an area of about **436 hectares.**
2. **Kado District** is also located in the Phase II Area of Abuja. The project site covers an area of about **380 hectares.**
3. **Katampe District** lies within the Phase II Area of Abuja and the project site covers an area of about **777 hectares.**
4. **Gwarinpa I District** lies within the Phase II Area of Abuja and the project site covers an area of about **400 hectares.**
5. **Mabushi District** lies within the Phase II Area of Abuja and the project site covers an area of about **420 hectares.**

Details of the works which shall cover each site include:

- Roads and Bridges
- Storm Water Drainage
- Foul Sewer Drainage
- Water Supply

- Power Supply
- Street Lighting
- Telecommunication

PRE-QUALIFICATION

To be pre-qualified, interested investors must supply the followings [with relevant verifiable evidence] :-

- Profile of the firm or consortium including its/their ownership structure and management team;
- 3 year Audited accounts of the firm and or consortium;
- List of similar investments or projects undertaken by the firm or members of the consortium;
- An outline of the firm or consortium's ability to raise the financial resources to build the facilities;
- Indicative terms and conditions of proposed project structure and agreement.
- Other similar information to facilitate the evaluation of investor's capability, resources and track record.

SUBMISSION

Completed submissions must be delivered in five (5) separate sealed envelopes clearly marked "**Pre-qualification for provision of Engineering Infrastructure of (District Name)**" to the address below, on or before 4.00 pm on Friday, February 18 2005.

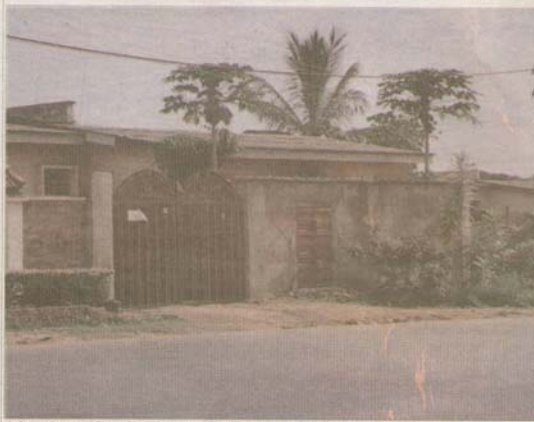
The Pre-qualification documents must be Submitted to:

PPP Unit, Room 335, Minister's Block, MFCT Secretariat, Kapital Road, Area 11, PMB 24 Garki, Abuja-Nigeria. Attention: Mohammed Aliyu.

Note

Those that submitted prequalification documents at the expiration of the last deadline may resubmit new proposals if they wish to change their submissions, if not, the former documents remain valid.

This is not an invitation to tender. Only shortlisted developers will be contacted to tender.



A decent house with neatly erected fence to match, but marked for development.



A stretch of thatch huts adjoining House of Assembly Quarters in the high brow Nyinam, in Makurdi.

Thatch-roofed huts defy

In Benue State, particularly the Tiv speaking areas, substantially populated settlements have existed for decades without a single modern shelter. A drive along the state's few major roads would confirm the veracity of this observation. Visitors would be profoundly shocked at the sight of a seemingly endless stretch of round huts dotting the length and breadth of the landscape.

These settlements are merely villages. Given the fact that these villages are inhabited mostly by peasants who live under a terrible and dehumanising condition which attracts little or no concern from the governments, it is always safer to imagine that all is well.

However, where it is virtually impossible for a concerned visitor not to lose sleep following the growing number of thatch-roofed houses competing for prominence, is in the metropolis of Makurdi, the 28-year-old state capital.

In its several years of existence as a state capital and considering the strategic location it occupies as the commercial gateway between the North and East of Nigeria, Makurdi still wears a look reminiscent of Stone Age. This is so because with a few major streets crisscrossing the small city, Makurdi is still well known for the growing number of primitive shelters built and occupied by a large percentage of the urban population.

Although it is virtually impossible to state numbers here, inquiries have, however, revealed that every street, no matter how short, harbours not

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

less than four plots, strictly of round huts at different spots and, in most cases, at a stretch.

Built simply with red earth, and roofed with bamboo sticks covered with neatly woven spear grass to provide protection against sun rays and rainfall, this traditional African style of shelter are not only still prominent in Makurdi, they are fashionable, just as their number is rising in the same proportion with modern day flats. "There was a time when you could count the number of thatch houses in Makurdi. Now it's impossible as the number continues to rise," said one Emeka Ohi, a resident of Makurdi who added that the negative development began about early 90s when the town's population began to witness serious explosion.

The new layouts of the metropolis namely, Nyinam and Judges Quarters, are daily witnessing development in terms of modern architectural designs, while the initial sections of Wurukum, High Level, Wadata, North Bank and Logo are still far from being part of the present happening, with more huts springing up in a manner that makes a joke of the famous peasant settlements.

At High Level, the heart and, supposedly, most developed section of modern Makurdi, thatch-roofed huts are in alarming figure with major streets like Tafawa Balewa, Iyorkyaa-Ako, Katsina-Ala, Vandekya, Inikpi and Okpoga messed up completely. The section, which is also the com-

mercial nerve centre and the link to any part of the town, has existed for long as Makurdi is known, and yet one can count the number of perfect modern day structures there. In fact, the huts, which constitute nuisance because they are disorderly, are in a way, becoming a main feature of modern day Makurdi.

With a brazen disregard for environmental orderliness and urban development regulations, the owners of these huts have stretched out their buildings in strategic locations of the state capital. Where willing developers would have erected penthouses to perfect on the scenery of the metropolitan centre, notorious owners of these huts have taken over. Unperturbed by the nuisance and embarrassment they constitute in the face of present effort of the state government to give Makurdi a befitting face-lift, owners of the huts are quick to point out to any keen observer that after all, they acquired their plots for development years before 1986 when the state Urban Development Board (UDB) was established. They have always won because the provisions which empower the board to demolish any structure that does not conform with the design of the state capital can not be put into effect in retrospect.

"I got my plot for development in the seventies when the idea for the state urban development board had not been hatched. The thatch-roofed huts on the plot have been there since the early days of 80s and since then I have only been carrying out replacement

of the spear grass and bamboo, waiting for when I will get the money to erect standard houses," said a resident who gave his name as Alagh.

Although Alagh, an elderly man and resident of Tafawa Balewa Crescent, who spoke in Tiv, admitted that his thatched-roofed huts make nonsense of the urbanisation process that has been on for decades now, he refused to admit that he has broken the law. According to him, the laws were made merely for reference purpose and invoked only according to the heart beat of urban law enforcement officers. Alagh recalled how his humble structures have been repeatedly marked for demolition but saved them with gratification to the law enforcement officials.

"The purpose of the establishment of the board has long been defeated. These days, the field officers go about casting fears in the minds of defaulters basically to extract money for their individual pockets. Every body is hungry and so are the laws (law enforcement officials)," said Alagh who insisted that only when the attitude of public office holders and the organised society in general, begin to go with conventions and the law that he too would. "If not it will make it appear as though the laws are made only for a particular segment of the society," he added.

Mr Tion Kon owns a stretch of such huts spanning two plots along Inikpo Street in High Level. He observed that Makurdi is generally a dirty town not because a few poor

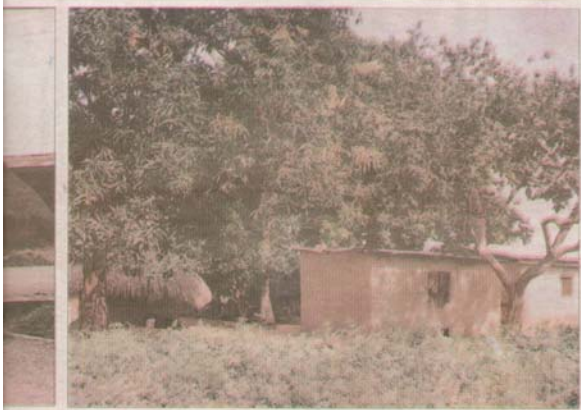
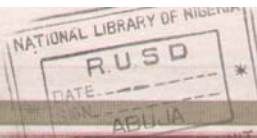
persons have erected houses with grass and bamboo as roofs. Mr Kon said simply that what is currently passing under the name of Urban Development Board (UDB) is only but a semblance of what the military established. This is because, according to him, the law establishing it provided for adequate financial allocation for field work and maintenance of solid waste disposal vehicles, "and yet they don't do anything."

Mr. Kon who, disclosed that he is a security guard in a government establishment, alleged that for several years, the UDB has only been known for arresting wondering livestock, maintaining that the major con-

cern of the board, which is clearing of solid waste, has been left to suffer neglect.

His response is a true testimony of the general situation in the metropolis. The board has continued to go about town arresting wondering livestock with ransoms slammed on them in the name of fines. The other aspects of urban sanitation, which include clearing of bush, maintaining a solid-waste free environment as well as ensuring the orderly layout in buildings, does not so much matter as the once neatly planned state capital now wears a semblance of a peasant settlement with a cluster of huts competing for prominence at various points

With a brazen disregard for urban development regulations, stretched out their buildings in s capital. Where willing develop houses to perfect on the scenery, notorious owners of these huts by the nuisance and embarrassment face of present effort of the state a befitting face-lift, owners of th to any keen observer that after for development years before 19 velopment Board (UDB) was es won because the provisions whi molish any structure that does of the state capital can not be p



An undeveloped plot with huts and bushy environment.



These mud huts are one of the few along Tafawa Balewa Crescent at High Level, the heart of Makurdi. Pic: Hiri Joseph

Urbanisation in Makurdi

which is waste, has neglect. The situation of the board about living conditions of urbanisation is orderly does not once capital with a clustering for points

while the general environment is either water-logged or stuffed with dreadful stench-emitting refuse heaps. Meanwhile, in a swift action, which has rather generated widespread condemnation, the board has risen in recent times, marking standard houses for demolition. The development, which has affected over a hundred houses by the last count, has seen neatly erected fences and some perfect post houses awaiting demolition at various points, while thatched-roofed huts are left untouched. If, therefore, seems safer now in Makurdi to erect a grass and bamboo house as trying one's hands on a modern structure may at-

tract the prying eyes of urban law enforcement officers. While the erecting of more of such huts continue with the board looking the other way as though it is not bothered, the entire vicinity facing Benue State University (BSU), beginning from Wurukum market up to Tilley Gyado Villa, spanning three kms along Gboko road, is completely taken over by an endless stretch of the huts. And guess what, the owners are making brisk business, renting their round structures out to university students who are daily compelled to cough out outrageous sums to their "landlords" in order to beat the ever-rising dearth in hostel accommodation.

An artisan, who gave his names as Tersugh Batur, observed that land owners in Makurdi have discovered that with the rising population of students in the BSU, University of Agriculture (UAM) and College of Advance and Preliminary Studies (CAPS), even in the face of inadequate provision for hostel accommodation, it is more lucrative to construct more mud huts since many students cannot afford standard and decent houses for rent. Naming it in a popular local parlance as "hire," Mr. Batur said rent for standard and decent shelter is far beyond the easy reach of a poor student, "therefore, land owners, not

unaware of that fact, have discovered construction of mud huts a faster business, and they are benefiting." He said the cost of building materials has risen high and owners of undeveloped plots in Makurdi are not ready to spend their earnings to start buildings of approved design only to abandon them at the foundation stage because they have run out of money. Mr. Batur, who also own a stretch of mud huts spanning two plots along a dirty path opposite BSU's first gate, disclosed that he is a military pensioner, lamenting: "My son, these are hard days. Only the big men in government as well as big business people are building houses. In these terribly bad days, when pensions are not even coming, where do you think feeding money will come from, take more of building a standard house?"

When his reaction was sought, Mr Oshiver Afama, the general manager of Urban Development Board (UDB), agreed that indeed, the board has marked several decent houses for demolition while passing over mud huts, but said simply that he is operating only within the limits of the decree establishing the board. Mr. Atama said while the board conveniently demolishes decent houses with unauthorised designs, it would be difficult to lay hands on houses erected with mud and spear grass as well as bamboo as roofs. The simple reason he gave was that the UDB decree cannot be applied in retrospect since the plots of mud huts were acquired before its enactment.

When asked if he was not aware that mud huts are daily springing up in the metropolis, he simply defended the board by saying that the demolition is being done in phases as he disclosed further that the areas with new huts would be visited by bulldozers. Benue State, under one of its former military governors, Group Captain Jonah Jang, received transformation in various ways including township roads, streets and street lights as well as other related features to add aesthetics. There were also telephone booths at various points for people to phone with ease. The Air force officer saved the then fast growing town from chaotic traffic by providing traffic lights at various junctions. Of the mentioned urban features which the military governor provides, only the dual carriage ways and the streets he constructed are now standing legacies al-

for environmental orderliness and neatness, the owners of these huts have huts in strategic locations of the state developers would have erected pent-scenery of the metropolitan centre, huts have taken over. Unperturbed barrassment they constitute in the state government to give Makurdi owners of the huts are quick to point out after all, they acquired their plots before 1986 when the state Urban Development Board was established. They have always huts which empower the board to demolish does not conform with the design to be put into effect in retrospect.

though they are in their worst of state, and currently receiving attention from the incumbent administration. The rest are all faded memories. The phone booths, still visible at few joints, have long been taken over by rodents while the traffic and street lights are not functioning and some of them have even been knocked down by some reckless vehicle drivers. The people of Benue State still remember Jaan as one of the few reformist of the old military era. Many keen observers of Makurdi physical development have continued to praise the giant stride of Jang till this day. However, many still say one area where the administrator could not record a feat was housing. This was not due to his inability. It was due to the feeling of most prominent Benue people who were losing sleep that Jang's urbanisation process in Makurdi was going to deny them the privileged status they were enjoying as the few who afforded decent shelter. The military administration was said to have expressed shock to find out that Makurdi was the only state capital with clusters of mud huts and, therefore, began a process which was to later culminate in demolishing the huts with monetary compensations to enable their owners construct decent houses. This, according to some engineers at the state ministry of works and housing, met a brick wall as the idea of passing huge sums of money to the dregs of society in the name of

compensation, aroused stiff opposition from the then big men of Benue civil service who felt that the implementation was a waste of state funds. Jang was defeated, having been afraid of being petitioned (as was the fashion in Benue) for wasting state funds. That was how the city remained till today, in spite of continues global campaign for good urban governance. In 2000, when the executive director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements also known as Habitat, Mrs Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka visited Nigeria, she asked the question; "how attractive is Nigeria cities to investors?" while also disclosing that her discovery showed that some Nigerian cities denied the common people residing in them the equal access to a clean neighbourhood. She pointed out that Nigeria's cities generated and intensified social exclusion, denying the benefits of urban life to the poor and marginalised groups even as she said the key ingredient of addressing problems of social exclusion is neither money nor technology, but good urban governance. It is therefore pertinent for Benue State government to expedite action on clearing Makurdi of the nuisance and embarrassment of mud and thatched-roofed huts while it continues to open up new layouts for developments as well as the on-going construction of more housing estates to provide its teaming workers the opportunity of living in decent houses.

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PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

Environment ministry inaugurates federal programme advisory c'ttee

The environment ministry has finally inaugurated the federal programme advisory c'ttee (FPAC) for the local empowerment and environmental management project (LEEMP) yesterday Tuesday 11th January 2005, in the conference hall of the federal ministry of environment, Abuja.

At the occasion, the minister of environment, Col. Bala Mande (rt) expressed his gratitude towards the completion of the local empowerment and environmental management project. In his speech he made known that their inability to inaugurate this body before now was due to circumstances beyond their control.

The minister of environment went on to say that this project was designed as a

By Rabi Othman (IT Intern)
means of sustaining the use of the environment as a means of reducing poverty at the rural levels.

To achieve this would require a number of reforms aimed principally at preparing all the relevant stakeholders adequately for the anticipated new role and responsibilities.

These roles and responsibilities emphasise devolving more opportunities to our rural communities in taking charge of their own development agenda. Unspoken in this, also is the need to strengthen existing government agencies, especially at the local level to be able to see themselves as facilitators, rather than implementers.

It was discovered that one

of the key reasons for the low level of rural development in the country can be attributable to, amongst others, the inability of development planners at local levels to appreciate the dependence of rural populations on the environment and natural resource

base for their livelihood.

Consequently, LEEMP was designed within the framework of sustainable natural resources management and good governance, through decentralisation and empowerment of communities.

Thus the overall objective of the project is to reduce poverty by empowering communities to take charge of their own development agenda. In order to achieve this, the project was therefore designed with five major components vis:

- multi-sectoral community driven investment;
- local government capacity building;
- protected areas and bio-diversity management;
- strengthening environmental regulatory and legislative framework; and
- programme management.

In keeping in line with the present administration's emphasis on transparency and due process, an oversight body is required for the project. In this context, a federal programme advisory c'ttee FPAC is to serve as the policy organ with oversight responsibility for project implementation. Similar organs are to be established at the state and local government levels immediately.

Refuse takes over Aba

Aba, the commercial city in Abia, has been taken over by refuse following the non-evacuation of waste by the state's Environmental Sanitation Agency for a week.

Some residents who commented on the situation expressed fears of a possible outbreak of epidemic if urgent steps were not taken to clear the waste.

They complained that refuse bins, which were now overflowing, were last scooped before Christmas.

"Since then, the refuse collection agents have abandoned their job and the result is the heaps that now litter the whole place," Mr Kingsley Ikebundu, a petty trader, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

According to Ikebundu, the situation will further deteriorate if the wastes were not removed immediately now that people were returning from holidays and business activities were picking up.

Austin Chukwu, a student, said: "The situation will soon become intolerable considering the magnitude of industrial, commercial and domestic wastes generated on a daily basis in the city."

The residents appealed to relevant authorities and agencies rescue the people "in order to forestall the outbreak of epidemic and the attendant health hazards."

NAN reports that the refuse bins which were donated to the state by the Niger Delta Development Commission and located at strategic places, have been submerged by wastes.

Survivors of China landslide to get new homes

Victims of the landslide last December in southwest China's Guizhou Province are expected to move into their new homes this March, according to local sources.

"The location for the permanent houses has been set, and by March this year, survivors will be able to move into their new residences," said Gong Xiaonong, the head of the county.

The landslide on December 3 in Zuojiajing, a village in Nayong County of the province, left 44 people dead, 13 locals injured, and 658 other ones or 158 households

homeless. Survivors have been settled in temporary tents with water, power and epidemic prevention facilities. Emergency supplies, including cotton-padded quilts, clothes, rice and medicine have been distributed to them.

Local civil affairs departments have received 4.14 million yuan (560,000 U.S. dollars) of donations.

To help the victims to live through the winter before moving into their new homes, the local government has also decided to provide more relief clothes and food for them.

Ancient granaries found in Egypt

An American excavation team has discovered eight granaries used by ancient Egyptians, said Egyptian Minister of Culture Farouq Abdel-Aziz Hosni.

"Those granaries revealed the agriculture technique and system used by this prehistoric community," Hosni said in a statement.

The granaries were from the Neolithic era that began around 9,000 B.C., when ancient Egyptians were moving from lifestyles of roaming and hunting to an agriculture, said

the statement.

The granaries, believed to be relics from agricultural activities of ancient Egyptians, were found last week in Fayoum, an oasis 80 km southwest of Cairo, added the statement.

Tsunami: 500,000 Indonesians homeless

Nearly 500,000 people were made homeless after tsunami swept Aceh province, in Indonesia on Dec. 26, ministry of information and communication has said.



From left: Honourable Emeka Atama, house committee chairman on environment, I. Martyn-Yellowey, Chairman Senate committee on environmental & ecology, far right: honourable minister of environment Col. Bala Mande at a function...recently.

Bauchi begins New Year sanitation exercise

Residents of Bauchi Metropolis on Thursday started a three-day special sanitation exercise to usher in the New Year.

The exercise is in response to an appeal by the Bauchi State Environmental Protection Agency (BASEPA).

Residents came out in

groups sweeping and clearing drains, while BASEPA provided vehicles for refuse disposal.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the turnout of residents for the voluntary exercise was high.

Meanwhile, the Emir of Bauchi, Alhaji Suleiman Adamu, has returned home

after about two months medical treatment in Germany.

The Emir was received at the Bauchi airstrip by the Emir's officials and a jubilant crowd.



Gov. Adamu Ma'azu

were killed by the tsunami in Indonesia.

A powerful earthquake of 8.7 degrees on Richter scale shocked many parts of the provinces of North Sumatra and Aceh.

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

An environmental analysis of Cyprus

By Abubakar Zimit

Northern Cyprus hosts over 1600 plant species of which 22 are endemic, 350 species of birds, of which 7 are endemic, and 26 different species of reptile and amphibian. The main reason for this amazing diversity is, that Cyprus was not affected by the last ice-age (which wiped out many species from areas further north).

Cyprus forms a resting and nesting station for birds migrating between Africa and Eastern Europe.

Northern Cyprus has an intense Mediterranean climate with the typical seasonal rhythms strongly marked in respect of temperature, rainfall and weather generally. Hot, dry summers from mid-May to mid-October and rainy, rather changeable winters from mid-November to mid-March are separated by short autumn and spring seasons of rapid change in weather conditions. The long narrow Beshparmak mountain range; play an important part in the meteorology of Northern Cyprus. The predominantly clear skies and extensive sunshine give large seasonal and daily differences between temperatures of the sea and the interior of the island which also cause considerable local effects especially near the coast. At Latitude 35 degrees north and Longitude 33 degrees east, Northern Cyprus has a change in day-length from 9.8 hours in December to 14.5 hours in June. In summer the Northern Cyprus is mainly under the influence of a shallow trough of low-pressure extending from the great continental depression centred over southwest Asia. It is a season of high temperatures with almost cloudless skies. Rainfall is negligible but isolated thunderstorms sometimes occur giving rainfall amounting to less than 5% of the total in the average year. In winter, Northern Cyprus is near the track of fairly frequent small depressions which cross the Mediterranean Sea from west to east between the continental anti-cyclone of Eurasia and the generally low pressure belt of North Africa. These depressions give periods of disturbed weather usually lasting for a day or so and produce most of the annual precipitation, the average amount from December to February being nearly two thirds of the year's total. Streams in Cyprus There are not flowing streams on the island. The rivers used to flow both in winter and summer. But now they flow only in rainy winters. Kanlidere and Yeyla are the two important streams in Northern Cyprus. Natural Vegetation is surprisingly variable an arid/semi-arid although Cyprus is a small island. Some parts of the island are without vegetation whereas some are covered with forests. The main reasons are the climate, altitude, soils etc. on mountainous areas where the rate of the rainfall is high land the temperature is cooler, the vegetation is sitch. Where the forest has been destroyed, tall shrub communities of arbutus and rache, pistacia terebinthus, olea europea, quercus coccifera and styrax officinalis may survive, but such maquis is uncommon. Over most of the island untilled ground bears a grazed covering of garigue, largely composed of low bushes of cistus, genista sphaecolata calycotome villosa, lithospermum hispidulum, phaganalon rupestre and, locally, pistacia lentiscus. Where grazing is excessive this covering is soon reduced, and an impoverished batha remains, consisting principally of thymus capitatus, sarcopoterium spinosum, and a few stunted herbs. Northern Cyprus has a variety of natural vegetation. This includes forests of hardwood, evergreen and broad leaved trees such as pinus latensis, cedar, cyprusus and oak. Trees are rare, and the landscape is one off various species of grasses and bulbous plants.

Following the rains in winter the growth starts, but lasts only 2-3 months. In summer and autumn only hardy bushes and thorny plants shows signs of life. Gonnara and Catrez are typical examples. Birds and Animals Northern Cyprus has been endowed with a rich fauna including a large number of endemic birds, reptiles and animals. Because of its position, Northern Cyprus is also a vital stop-over for thousands of migratory birds which find the island an ideal place for both feeding and refuge. Among the animals the moufflon occupies an outstanding position and is considered as one of the natural treasures of the island. The moufflon belongs to the sheep family but this species is unique in the world. This animal has long been in danger of extinction, but today is a fully protected species. Natural Hazards Moderate earthquake activity and droughts. Environmental Issues Water resource problems: no natural reservoir catchments, seasonal disparity in rainfall, sea water intrusion to island's largest aquifer, increased salination in the northern part. Hail and Thunder Hail is reported on an average two or three times a year in the lowlands and probably three times as frequently on the mountains, usually between November and May, in most districts of Cyprus. Months most liable to have hailstorms are December to April but can occur, although rarely, in early summer and autumn, causing considerable damage to fruit crops. Thunder is rare from June to September but in other seasons is heard on average on four or five days per month from October to January and two or three days per month from February to May. Air Temperatures TRNC has a hot summer and mild winter but this generalization must be modified by consideration of altitude, which lowers temperatures by about 5 degrees C per 1,000 metres, and of marine influences which give cooler summers and warmer winters near most of the coastline and especially on the west coast. Fog is infrequent and usually confined to the gale mornings but there are longer periods in the mountains in winter when cloud often envelops the highest peaks. Visibility is generally very good or excellent but on a few

days each spring the atmosphere is very hazy with dust brought from the Arabian and African deserts. Sunshine All parts of TRNC enjoy a very sunny climate. In the central plain and eastern lowlands the average number of hours of bright sunshine for the whole year is 75% of the time that the sun is above the horizon. Over the whole six summer months there is an average of 11.5 hours of bright sunshine per day whilst in winter this is reduced only to 5.5 hours in the cloudiest months, December and January. Even on the mountains the cloudiest winter months have an average of nearly 4 hours of bright sunshine per day and in June and July the figure reaches 11 hours. Winds Over the eastern Mediterranean generally surface winds are mostly westerly or south-westerly in winter and north-westerly or northerly in summer. Usually of light or moderate strength, rarely reaching of that of gale force. Over the island of Cyprus winds are quite variable in direction with orography and local heating effects playing a large part in the determination of local wind direction and strength. Differences of temperature between sea and land which are built up daily in predominant periods of clear skies in summer cause considerable sea and land breezes. Whilst these are most marked near the coasts they regularly penetrate far inland in summer reaching the capital, Lefkosa and often bringing a welcome reduction of temperature and also an increase in humidity. Gales are infrequent over Northern Cyprus but may occur especially on exposed coasts with winter depressions. Small whirlwinds are common in summer appearing mostly near midday as "dust devils" on the hot dry central plain. Very rarely vortices, approaching a diameter of 100 metres or so and with the characteristics of water spouts at sea and of small tornadoes on land, occur in thunder weather.

Localised damage caused by these has been reported on a few occasions but in general Cyprus suffers relatively little wind damage. **Abubakar Zimit contributed this piece from Eastern Mediterranean University, Cyprus.**

for the supply of asphalt to compliment what is being produced at the state owned plant. Already, about 250 tonnes of the essential products have been supplied by the construction firm. In a bid to guide against any shortfall in the supply of asphalt, the state has place other construction company like, Julius Berger, C and C, among others on standby for the supply of the product. Aregbesola hinted further that no federal roads would be rehabilitated during the exercise, except where it is unavoidable, as the state is still reeling from the non payment of about N1.7billion it claimed to have spent on federal roads when all the federal government owned roads was abandoned in the state. It was disclosed that about N500million of the budgeted amount would be paid to about 10 contractors, who would be working alongside the maintenance gangs with each handling a zone. "The agencies to carry out these rehabilitation works include Rivera Resources, Abog Engineering Limited, Tee Pama Nig. Limited, among others. The zones are, one comprises of Agege, Orile-Agege, Iju-Ifako and Ojokoro. Roads slated for rehabilitation are Ipaja, Aganbiade/Alfa Nla/Capitol, Okoko, Dopema, Oba

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1000km Lagos roads to gulp N2.5billion

By Olumide Bajulaiye
Correspondent (Lagos)

Following federal government's efforts in the past months to give federal roads in Lagos State a new lease of life, the over 1,000 kilometre road spread across the city are to wear a new look between now and April this year, as the state government has set aside a whopping sum of N2.5billion for a massive repair designed to bring succour to the residents especially those in the metropolis.

Consequently, between January and the end of March, there is going to be concerted effort to make most of the roads in the state, particularly the critical ones, motorable.

according to the Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Engr. Rauf Aregbesola, the attack is going to be two prolonged, the direct labour approach and the use of reputable contractors.

To effectively cover the state, the state has been divided into 10 zones, with at least, three road maintenance gangs, depending on the number of local governments that make up the zone.

The Commissioner also hinted that three other ministries, Environment, Physical

Planning and Transportation, as well as the Public Works Corporation and the Lagos Area Metropolitan Transport Authority LAMATA, are involved in the exercise, while members of the state executive council have been charged to monitor the progress of work around their areas of jurisdiction.

Besides road maintenance, the exercise will also involve rehabilitation of damaged drainage structures and the clearing of silted or blocked drains.

For a hitch-free exercise, according to Aregbe, the state has sought the assistance of a construction firm, RATCON

for the supply of asphalt to compliment what is being produced at the state owned plant.

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The zones are, one comprises of Agege, Orile-Agege, Iju-Ifako and Ojokoro. Roads slated for rehabilitation are Ipaja, Aganbiade/Alfa Nla/Capitol, Okoko, Dopema, Oba

Gunji, Orile, Oko-Oba/ Agege, Adalemo, Alu street, Oyemekun street, Thomas Salako Street, Olaiyiwola/ Jonathan Coker, Amje Avenue, Adoola/Adelolabi and Oshola Olawale.

Zone two is made up Apapa and Ajeromi/Ilelodon. Some of the roads for rehabilitation are Liverpool, Marine, Park Lane, Central Avenue, Point, Obanta, Ladipo Oluwole, Bombay Crescent, Kofo Abayomi Street, Baale Street, Alayabiagba Street, Olowojunjeje among others.

Zone three has Ojo, Oto Awori, Badagry Central and West as well as Olorunda with Okokomaiko/Aka road, Iyana Era to Shibir, Mosafejo, Ilogbo Eremi Pota, Ajangbadi to Ilogbo Eremi, Akoberu/Sabo Oniba, and others.

Zone four comprises of Eti-Osa East and West, Ikoyi-Obalende, Iru-Victoria Island, Ibeju-Lekki, Epe, Eredo and Ikosi Ejirin with about 32 roads listed for repair in the zone.

Zone six covers Ikeja, Onigbongo, Ojodu, Egbe-Idimu, Egba A kowonjo, Ayobo-Ipaja, Agbado-Oke Odo, Igando-Ikotun and Mosan-Okunola, the zone has about 17 roads to be repaired, while zone seven which comprises of Mainland and Shomolu local governments has 41 roads slated for repair in the zone.

About 49 roads are slated for repair in Zone Eight, and 50 for zone ten.



(L-R) Mrs Oluremi Tinubu, Gov. Bola Tinubu of Lagos State and his deputy Mr. Femi Pedro at the private public participation scheme to develop a sound infrastructure base to improve the road network and Newton infrastructure in Lagos. *PHOTO: Oluwaseun Odeyemi*

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

LASG to demolish illegal structures in six LGs

By Olumide Bajulaiye,
Correspondent (Lagos)

The Federal Government has threatened to demolish all illegal structures on acquired land in Meiran, Abesan, Isheri-Oshun, Amikanle and Ipaja within Agbado-Oke-Odo and Mosan Okunola local government in Lagos State. The Government acquired land since 1976 but resold to unsuspected Lagosians by land vendors had been earmarked for Federal Government's Abesan New Town project Development.

Speaking with journalists in Lagos at the weekend, Mr. S.A. Ajibose, Lagos Liaison Officer of the Federal Housing Authority stated that the acquired land was meant for mass Housing Programme by the government adding that works would have commenced on the project if not for land vendors who are reselling parts of the land.

He said that the Federal Government had shown leniency on owners of the illegal structures by taking them to other areas within the metropolis where there were many government abandoned buildings in order to reduce their sufferings.

Ajibose however accused the Oroja Family led by Oba Tunde Oroja of Meiran of standing as a stumbling block towards making the housing project a reality.

His words: "Whoever plans to disturb this project would be dealt with because the Federal Government had compensated owners of the land to the tune worth several millions of naira. Also, government cannot allow people to live in those shanties within Metropolitan Lagos."

But, the liaison officer urged any landlord who has genuine claims within the stipulated area to forward such to the Ministry of Housing in the Federal capital Territory, saying the ultimatum given landlords in the area to quit has expired last week.

Yankari Park draws more tourists

The number of foreign tourists to the Yankari National Park in Bauchi State climbed from 436 in 2003 to 939 in 2004, officials say.

In a statement, the Bauchi State command of the Nigeria Immigration Service



The 1000 seater valley view auditorium built in eight weeks by the Ogun State government.

2004, difficult year for construction industry -NIESV President

President of the Nigerian Institute of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), Chief Charles Adebisi has said 2004 was a fairly difficult one for the nation generally and the construction industry in particular.

Chief Charles made this pronouncement during an interview attributing the shortcoming to the absence of a linkage between government's reform programme and the citizen aspiration as well as their idea of what the dividends of democracy should be.

The NIESV president in the interview declared that the impact of the full implementation of he deregulation of the downstream sector of the petroleum industry and recurrent labour upheavals was responsible

By Ebenezer John Booro, (IT Intern)

for the dislocation in the economy adding that it was further compounded with anxieties generated by the reform programme.

"The first half of 2004 witnessed an upsurge in activities

as people reacted positively to the new National Housing Policy" Chief Adebisi stated but however regretted that despite an increase in supply side that there was little on the demand area.

Speaking on the implementation of the National

Housing Policy, Chief Charles disclosed that the actual implementation has not started thereby creating a gap, lamenting that the review of the nine laws recommended by the defunct Presidential Technical Committee on Housing and Urban Develop-

ment is being delayed.

"It would be difficult to implement the new policy without first fine-tuning the laws that appears to have done more harm than good to housing provision," Chief Adebisi noted.

He however expressed optimism that when the pension reform policy comes into effect this year that more funds will be made available for Real Estate Investment.

NGO tasks KNSG on desert control

Kano State government has been alerted on the urgent need to employ timely and appropriate proactive devise to tackle the problem of desertification that has ravaged some parts of the state.

The founder of an American-based 'Fight Against Desert Encroachment (FADE) Chief Newton Jibunoh made the call while inspecting hectares of varieties of plants nursed and sponsored by the organisation in Makoda local

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru,
Correspondent (Kano)

government area. He observed that FADE resolved to share the responsibility of planting the trees as part of its crusade for the control and management of desertification which pose a serious threat to agricultural production.

Chief Jibunoh pointed out that FADE had also sponsored the planting of variety of food plants in some

schools with a view to promoting the establishment of small scale cottage food industry.

The FADE founder, however solicited for the support and contribution of the people as well as stakeholders do away with lingering menace of desertification describing such menace as a collective responsibility.

Also speaking at the inspection to or, state deputy governor, Engr. Magaji Abdullahi reiterated government's zeal and readiness to battle the problem.

He noted that desert encroachment is one of the prime problems halting the effective and sufficient agriculture production, saying no stone will be left unturned to quell its spread.

The deputy governor explained that government since its inception, had unmasked series of strategies to bring

lasting solution to the problem, address that a lot of funds were doled out for the successful implementation of the project.

Engr. Abdullahi applauded FADE for its contribution in initiating the scheme which has drastically minimised the growing spate of desertification particularly in the north, just as he pledged governor support for the actualisation of the set goals.



Gov. Ibrahim Shekarau

The NIS said the number of ECOWAS travelling certificates issued by the command rose from 55 in 2003 to 101 in 2004, representing an 84 per cent boom.

About 58 foreign students were registered in 2004 as against 102 registered in 2003.

The command said it issued 1,196 international passports in 2004, as against 3,945 in 2003, while N6 million was raised as passport fees during the period.

Total revenue collection by the command, however, fell from N23.1 million in 2003 to N9.5 million in 2004.

THE ARTS

The world's banker: A story of failed states, financial crises, and the wealth and poverty of nations

The World Bank, which was first created during World War II as a means for economic reconstruction following the war is today a global success story of mammoth proportions. With over 10,000 employees operating in almost 100 countries, the World Bank today is responsible for tens of billions of dollars in aid to the world's poorest nations.

At the helm of this all-important agency is a man of equal importance and stature, James Wolfensohn who, since taking over as president in 1995, has been determined to reinvent this institution that was first founded by U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and his World War II allies amid growing global challenges.

In "The World's Banker, A Story of Failed States, Financial Crises, and the Wealth and Poverty of Nations," Sebastian Mallaby's story of Wolfensohn and the World Bank is an incredible tour through the messy reality of global development. This book is a fascinating and lively account of a man and an institution dealing with some of the major challenges of poverty, development and global politics. Mallaby excels with his illuminating portrait of the larger-than-life figure of Wolfensohn and his presidency of the World Bank and how the bank has tried to meet many of the challenges around the world.

To be sure, Mallaby describes many of Bank's success stories in fascinating detail such as in Bosnia, where the Bank played an important role in brokering a peace deal between Serbs and

By Jeffrey Miller
Feature Writer

Croats or in Uganda, where the bank encouraged a home-grown poverty reduction strategy to remedy the country's poverty. On the other hand, Mallaby is critical of the bank, especially when it comes to describing some of its failures, including overlooking corruption in Indonesia (that was the root cause of many of the country's troubles during the Asian crisis) and that the Bank's timid and lukewarm response to do more to fight AIDS "remains inexcusable."

The author's detailed analysis of the World Bank is equally riveting. At first, Mallaby shows how the Bank has often come across as more of an autocratic institution that knows what is best for the country it is trying to help. While it might seem to some that the World Bank is playing with the fate of countries which need help the most, under Wolfensohn, as Mallaby deftly describes, the Bank has become more sensitive to environmental and cultural issues. There's no question as the author argues, that Wolfensohn's tenure there has radically changed how the Bank operates and how it can continue to do good work around the world.

Mallaby delivers an even-handed assessment of Wolfensohn who comes across as being brilliant, talented and driven, but not without weaknesses. The World Bank provides Wolfensohn with the one opportunity he clearly desires above anything else to improve the plight of millions and to make a difference

around the world. Nonetheless, in today's complex entanglement of politics and international finance and development, Wolfensohn and the Bank continue to face many challenges around the world. Mallaby does a fine job of balancing Wolfensohn's achievements with many of

the setbacks that have dogged him as president. What emerges in the end is both an illuminating portrait of Wolfensohn as well as the World Bank.

Mallaby strikes a delightful balance with his insightful commentary and clear explanations throughout the book of the

challenges the World Bank faces. As for the World Bank and the millions that rely on it, the author's conclusion is not surprising. While the institution has often been mocked and criticized for not doing enough (or in some cases meddling where it should not), in our world today where the disparity

between the haves and the have nots becoming ever greater, one thing remains clear in Mallaby's analysis, the World Bank's role of fostering development and helping the world's poor is more important now than it has ever been.

Called from Book Review

Like 2003's comprehensive exhibit at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum curated by longtime U2 friend Jim Henke, and "U2 Faraway So Close!" by U2 insider BP Fallon before it, "U2 Show" creates its own must-read experience for U2 fans by giving them what they want—enumerable photo essays for each tour including rare and previously unseen photographs, production information from Williams, and interviews with the ultimate U2 insiders—including manager Paul McGuinness, producers Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno, and Island Records founder Chris Blackwell.

The attention to detail in "U2 Show" is stunning. The book is divided by tour and closes with the most complete index of U2 personnel yet. Each section features a history lesson from Williams and photos documenting each tour. Looking over the early years, you are broadsided by the fact that the members of U2 were indeed very young men when they took on the world—still just in their early 20s at their triumphant "Red Rocks" appearance on the "War" tour in 1983—yet they perform with the seasoned confidence of grown men.

As U2 grew in popularity around the world, so did its approach to touring. Each tour grander in size, scale and mission, culminating into what was the band's most sophisticated outing to date—the "Joshua Tree" tour, which utilized the latest in lighting technologies to create the most dramatic effects possible to boldly highlight tracks such as "Where the Streets Have No Name" and "Exit." For her photo inclusions during this period, Scrimgeour offers beautiful still photography from the filming of "Rattle and Hum" and a smattering of black & white LoveTown tour shots with BB King along for the ride. Remembers Williams, "These proved to be exhilarating shows, the relationship between U2 and their audience having developed into an extremely powerful source of energy."

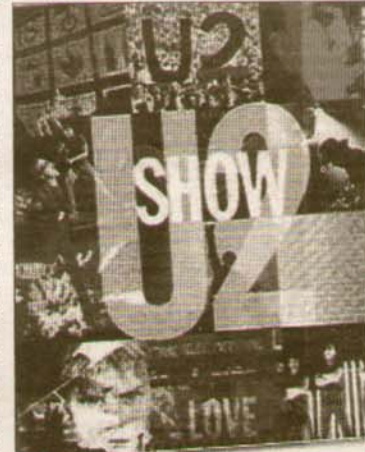
The ZooTV tour found U2 with a sense of humor and a pair of devil horns. Gone were the dour faces of the '80s; the frown was turned upside down as U2 learned

U2 show

By Carrie Alison,
Chief Editor 2005.01

"to lie." ZooTV was all about visual excess, sex and the smell of success, along with some of U2's most brash and daring musical stylings yet, all in a richly hued swath of red, blue, silver and black tones that transfer beautifully on film. The ZooTV section opens with what is one of the most memorably iconic images from the most intentionally iconoclastic of tours—a photo of The Fly's silhouette hilariously dancing in front of a vidi-wall during show opener "Zoo Station." The chosen photos for the book during this period highlight the grand scope of the "Outside Broadcast" leg of the tour—the stage design, the hanging Trabant, the vidi-walls, and Bono's adopted alter-egos—The Mirrorball Man and MacPhisto. "It was all real: from the Trabant to the phone calls to the TV pictures," writes Williams. "We let luck play a part and we took our chances as to what might appear from night to night."

Although it was chaotic and fraught with bad reviews and giant lemons, PopMart gets its due in "U2 Show" by inviting fans and casual observers to take a step back and reassess our thoughts on the tour. Sure, "Pop" the album was arguably a mixed bag, but what break from any mold isn't? In pictures, PopMart grows in stature and gains context; it was ahead of its time in theory and sarcasm, and perhaps that is to U2's credit. Audiences for better or worse were not in on the joke that U2 was making about commerce as art. We were all so swamped by the look of that big golden arch, mammoth LED screen and olive swizzle stick that we couldn't comprehend that U2 was forecasting (and embracing) the pop music revolution that artists like *NSYNC and Britney Spears would come to represent, and the monstrosity of "performance art" that followed them. The images of Bono clad in a boxing robe and muscle shirt, Adam Clayton looking straight out of Woody Allen's "Sleepers,"



The Bank, U2 Show

and The Edge rocking a Space Cowboy ensemble, seem so much more now than when they were current, which is ironic, as pop culture in general is all about what is now. With "U2 Show," PopMart finally gets the respect it deserved.

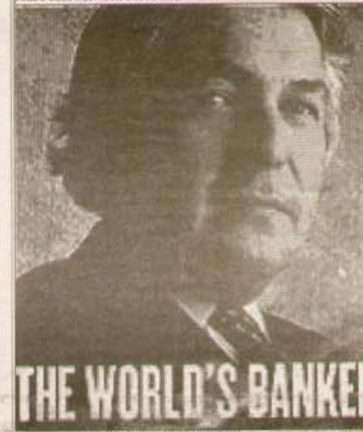
Rounding out the tour retrospective section is a long look at 2001's mega-successful Elevation tour that put U2 firmly back in the populace's hearts and minds, and U2 fans quite literally in U2's "heart" with the use of a heart-shaped ramp as part of the set design. The selected photography highlights the tour's use of the openness of space, the idea that we were all part of the show itself, that it was all about U2 and its adoring audience, and not the past theatrics of ZooTV or PopMart. In his note on the tour, Williams acknowledges that Elevation had to be "a distillation of everything U2 had done to date." Unlike the imagery of past tours, it begged to be treasured, the awesome sight of the members of U2, now in their 40s, in full flight was something to behold and cherish. Quite possibly U2's greatest live endeavor, the Elevation tour grew to personify the meaning of the

album—it truly was all about getting down to beauty of basic essentials, in favor of just singing at the top of your lungs with tens of thousands of others in the raw and magnetic presence of U2.

The final portion of "U2 Show" shines the spotlight on the wheels that keep the U2 machine turning, featuring detailed essays written by band management officials, agents, tour management and personnel, and those involved with album recordings and production.

As a fan, it's easy to get excited about a book like this. But then again, U2 has always had the great foresight to authorize their talented friends to release books about the zoo that is U2—"U2 at the End of the World" by Bill Flanagan, widely regarded as "the U2 bible" amongst fans, and "Stealing Hearts at a Travelling Show" by Irish graphic design powerhouse Four5One. Perhaps one day Lanois, Eno, and producer Steve Lillywhite will join forces to write a book about the U2 recording process, and all bases will have been covered. Until then, "U2 Show" will be the only show in town worth seeing again and again for many years to come.

Called from Book Review



The Book, The World's Banker

THE ARTS THE ARTS THE ARTS

African peoples compared

The African continent comprises thousands of diverse peoples immensely rich in cultures and traditions that have overtime shaped the course of their affairs. The evolution of these cultures and traditions came with a marvellous network of commonness and strikingly interesting sociological backgrounds, cultural and attitudinal similarities as well as classes of various politico-economic recognitions in the eyes of both the Africans – themselves and foreigners. A comparison of these peoples, we believe, will very interestingly feature their divergence and similarities. In this publication, we are – comparing the Fulani and the Massai, the Hausa and the Swahili.

The Hausa and the Swahili

The Hausa are mostly located in northern Republic of Niger, they speak Hausa and their neighbouring peoples are Kanuri, Fulani, Akan peoples, Songhay, Yoruba.

Types of Art: Beautiful indigo-dyed cloth is still produced in the Kano state of northern Nigeria.

Origin myths among the Hausa claim that their founder, Bayajidda, came from the east in an effort to escape his father. He eventually came to Gaya, where he employed some blacksmiths to fashion a knife for him. With his knife he proceeded to Daura where he freed the people from the oppressive nature of a sacred snake who guarded their well and prevented them from getting water six days out of the week. The queen of Daura gave herself in marriage to Bayajidda to show her appreciation. The two gave birth to seven healthy sons, each of whom ruled the seven city states that make up Hausaland. The rise of the Hausa states occurred between 500 and 700 A.D., but it was not until 1200 that they really began to control the region. The history of the area is intricately tied to Islam and the Fulani who wrested political power from the Hausa in the early 1800s through a series of holy wars.

Since the beginning of Hausa history, the seven states of Hausaland divided up production and labor activities in accordance with their location and natural resources. Kano and Rano were known as the "Chiefs of Indigo." Cotton grew readily in the great plains of these states, and they became the primary producers of cloth, weaving and dyeing it before sending it off in caravans to the other states within Hausaland and to extensive regions beyond. Biram was the original seat of government, while Zaria supplied labor and was known as the "Chief of Slaves." Katsina and Daura were the "Chiefs of the Market," as their geographical location accorded them direct access to the caravans coming across the desert from the north. Gobir, located in the west, was the "Chief of War" and was mainly responsible for protecting the empire from the invasive Kingdoms of Ghana and Songhai.

Leadership in the early Hausa states was based on ancestry. Those who could trace their relations back to Bayajidda were considered royal. With the introduction of Islam, many Hausa rulers adopted this new religion while at the same time honoring traditional ways. This position allowed the elite to benefit from the advantages of both systems. The Fulani took over political power in the region in the early 1800s. Their rule lasted for about a century until the British colonized the region in the

early part of the 20th century.

There was an Islamic presence in Hausaland as early as the 11th century. According to tradition, Islam was brought to Hausa territory by Muhammad Al-Maghili, an Islamic cleric, teacher, and missionary, who came from Bornu toward the end of the 15th century. Early Islamization proceeded peacefully, mainly at the hands of prophets, pilgrims, and merchants. In the early days the number of individuals who accepted Islam was small, and among those who did, it was usually practiced along with traditional Hausa religious beliefs. In many cases, the ruling elite were the first to convert to Islam. It was not until the early 1800s that the Fulani began to put pressure on the Hausa to undergo large-scale conversion. Through a series of holy wars (jihad) the northern part of what is today Nigeria was unified in the name of Islam under the auspices of the Fulani empire.

The Swahili are located in Coastal Kenya, Tanzania. They speak Kiswahili (Bantu).

The Neighboring Peoples are Mijikenda, Zigua, Doë, Kwere, Zaramo, Makonde. Types of Art: Swahili art forms are limited to architecture, furniture, and personal adornment. The great carved wooden doors of the coast are displayed as a sign of wealth.

The inhabitants of the coastal areas of Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique share history, language, and cultural traditions, which some Swahili scholars claim date to at least 100 A.D., when an anonymous Greek traveler and author of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* wrote about a place in east Africa, which Arabs frequented to trade with those living on the mainland. This history is closely tied to Indian Ocean trade routes linking India, the Arabian Peninsula, and Africa. Despite the shared history and language of the peoples of the Swahili Coast, it remains difficult to describe a discreet Swahili culture. This is not to suggest that a Swahili culture does not exist, but instead that its boundaries are amorphous, changing whenever necessary to meet the demands of everyday life.

Swahili economy today, as in the past, is intricately linked to the Indian Ocean. For approximately 2,000 years, Swahili merchants have acted as middlemen between eastern and central Africa and the outside world. They played a significant role in the trade of ivory and enslaved peoples which climaxed during the 19th centuries. Trade routes extended across Tanzania into modern day Zaire, along which goods were brought to the coasts and were sold to Arab, Indian, and Portuguese traders. Many slaves sold in Zanzibar ended up in Brazil, which was then a Portuguese colony. Swahili fishermen still rely on the ocean to supply their primary source of income. Fish is sold to their inland neighbors in exchange for products of the interior.

It is difficult to outline a Swahili political system, since they often incorporated the political practices of their neighbors. They are largely Islamic, and as such much of the power within the family rests in the hands of elder male members. Various Swahili empires have existed throughout history. Strongholds included communities centered in Mombassa, Lamu, and Zanzibar. Swahili traders also acted as middlemen between colonial governments and inland ethnic groups.

The Islam practiced by Swahili peoples is often very strict. Most of the requirements of the religion are practiced by most of the people. The economic success of the Swahili throughout the coastal region has encouraged many of their inland neighbors to adopt Islam as well. Most of these people, however, are somewhat less orthodox. Swahili believe in spirits (djinn). Most men wear protective amulets around their necks, which contain verses from the Koran. Divination is practiced through Koroic readings. Often the diviner incorporates writings from the Koran into treatments for certain diseases. On occasion, he instructs a patient to soak a piece of paper containing verses of the Koran in water. With this ink infused water, literally containing the word of Allah, the patient will then wash his body or drink it to cure himself of his affliction. It is only prophets and teachers of Islam who are permitted to become medicine men among the Swahili.

The Fulani and the Massai

The Fulani are located in Guinea-Conakry, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad.

They speak Pular, Fulfulde. The neighboring peoples are Tuareg, Haus and other west and central African tribes.

Fulani are a nomadic peoples who have been influential in regional politics, economics, and histories throughout western Africa for over a thousand years. They played a significant role in the rise and fall of the Mossi states in Burkina and also contributed to the migratory movements of people southward through Niger and Nigeria into Cameroon. They were also responsible for introducing and spreading Islam throughout much of western Africa. The height of the Fulani empire was between the early 1800s and early 1900s. This power was consolidated under Usman dan Fodio and was centered in northern Nigeria. Dan Fodio was a devout Muslim who used religious fervor to ignite his troops



Fulani Group from Niger Republic, during the opening ceremony of inaugural general assembly of committee of the confederation in Africa Organized Pastoral Resolve in Kaduna.

to undertake a series of holy wars. Following the early success of Islamic warriors, non-Islamic Fulani joined ranks with their fellows to form an extensive and powerful empire.

Fulani are mainly nomadic herders and traders. The routes they established in western Africa provided extensive links throughout the region that fostered economic and political ties between otherwise isolated ethnic groups. Dairy products produced from Fulani cattle were traded to sedentary farmers for agricultural products and luxury items. Fulani traders then traded these luxury items between various groups along their nomadic routes. Members of individual Fulani clans often settled down among their sedentary neighbors, intermarrying and establishing trading contacts for future business transactions.

The two most significant factors in Fulani political systems are clientage and competition. In order to gain political office a Fulani man would have to compete among his fellows for the right to rule. He could show his political favor by demonstrating that he had a large following in the form of individuals and families. By agreeing to become the client of a powerful man or family, a subject would offer tribute in the form of gifts and political support in exchange for the security of knowing that a person with political power would be looking out for the interests of the subject.

Fulani religion is largely, if not wholly, Islamic. Although there are varying degrees of orthodoxy exhibited throughout Fulani society, most adhere to at least some of the basic requirements of the religion. It is usually the case that the wealthy and powerful are among the most religious, while those who have fewer resources are less likely to observe their religion so strictly. Islam has been used to justify the holy jihads that brought the northern territories of modern day Nigeria under Fulani leadership. It was not unusual that such political and economic gains would be made for the Fulani empire in the name of Islam.

The Maasai are located in North central Tanzania, southern Kenya. They speak Ol Maa (Nilotic).

Their neighboring peoples are Samburu, Kikuyu, Kamba, Chaga, Meru, Pare, Kaguru, Gogo, Sukuma

Their types of art: Maasai are best known for their beautiful beadwork which plays an essential element in the ornamentation of the body. Beading patterns are determined by each age-set and identify grades. Young men, who often cover their bodies in ochre to enhance their appearance, may spend hours and days working on ornate hairstyles, which are ritually shaved as they pass into the next age-grade.

Maasai are the southernmost Nilotic speakers and are linguistically most directly related to the Turkana and Kalenjin who live near Lake Turkana in west central Kenya. According to Maasai oral history and the archaeological record, they also originated near Lake Turkana. Maasai are pastoralist and have resisted the urging of the Tanzanian and Kenyan governments to adopt a more sedentary lifestyle. They have demanded grazing rights to many of the national parks in both countries and routinely ignore international boundaries as they move their great cattle herds across the open savanna with the changing of the seasons. This resistance has led to a romanticizing of the Maasai way of life that paints them as living at peace with nature.

Cattle are central to Maasai economy. They are rarely killed, but instead are accumulated as a sign of wealth and traded or sold to settle debts. Their traditional grazing lands span from central Kenya into central Tanzania. Young men are responsible for tending to the herds and often live in small camps, moving frequently in the constant search for water and good grazing lands. Maasai are ruthless capitalists and due to past behavior have become notorious as cattle rustlers. At one time young Maasai warriors set off in groups with the express purpose of acquiring illegal cattle. Maasai often travel

into towns and cities to purchase goods and supplies and to sell their cattle at regional markets. Maasai also sell their beautiful beadwork to the tourists with whom they share their grazing land.

Maasai community politics are embedded in age-grade systems which separate young men and prepubescent girls from the elder men and their wives and children. When a young woman reaches puberty she is usually married immediately to an older man. Until this time, however, she may live and have sex with the youthful warriors. Often women maintain close ties, both social and sexual, with their former boyfriends, even after they are married. In order for men to marry they must first acquire wealth, a process that takes time. Women, on the other hand, are married at the onset of puberty to prevent children being born out of wedlock. All children, whether legitimate are not, are recognized as the property of the woman's husband and his family.

The cow is slaughtered as an offering during important ceremonies marking completed passage through one age-grade and movement to the next. When warriors (moron) complete this cycle of life, they exhibit outward signs of sadness, crying over the loss of their youth and adventurous lifestyles. Maasai diviners (laibon) are consulted whenever misfortune arises. They also serve as healers, dispensing their herbal remedies to treat physical ailments and ritual treatments to alleviate social and moral transgressions. In recent years Maasai laibon have earned a reputation as the best healers in Tanzania. Even as western biomedicine gains ground, people also continually search out more traditional remedies. Maasai are often portrayed as people who have not forgotten the importance of the past, and as such their knowledge of traditional healing ways has earned them respect. Laibons are easily found peddling their knowledge and herbs in the urban centers of Tanzania and Kenya.

Called from Arts and Life in Africa Project.

ABUJA TRUST

MFCT, Orphanage at war over babies

In her bid to fully ascertain the mode of operations of Victory Motherless Babies' Home at Idu/Karmo in the Federal Capital Territory, the Executive Secretary, Social Development Secretariat, Ms. Bolande Onagoruwa, on Monday embarked on an assessment tour of the home. This is against the backdrop of the recent squabble between the home and the Ministry of the FCT as well as some philanthropists on the overall standard of the home as a reforming centre.

It would be recalled that trouble started when Ms Sonia Chikelu Agbasi, a London based human rights activist and philanthropist,

Nasir Imam, Reporter & Environment Editor

paid a yuletide visit to the home alongside her colleagues with the aim of assisting the inmates. However, on arrival, Ms. Sonia had alleged that the squalid state she and her colleagues found the home was nothing to write home about. In her comprehensive report on the visit made available to *Abuja Trust*, she alleged that the children were in 'unkept state; they were dirty, unwashed' and 'clear signs of infections on their heads'.

In a follow-up, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Malam Nasir el-Rufa'i, was alerted, upon which he intervened in full force, directing the Social Welfare department to take the sick ones to hospital where they were diagnosed to be suffering from diseases called *marasmus* (acute malnutrition) and *septicaemia* (bacteria infection of blood stream).

In what appeared like dissatisfaction or protocol disorder, the Proprietress of the Victory Motherless Babies' Home, Rv. Mrs. Frances Charity Ibe, petitioned the manner the FCT minister had come to her orphanage home to the presidency. In her petition, she claimed that the unscheduled visit the minister paid to the home on 23rd December 2004 was "a case of armed robbery, child kidnapping, terrorism, obtaining by trick and child trafficking". She also accused members of staff of the MFCT who were on the minister's entourage of stealing her money (about 300 pounds sent to her by the

British Airways) and other vital documents.

Reacting to these allegations before newsmen, the Executive Secretary, Ms. Onagoruwa, said that the allegations of theft could not be justified as the staff who inspected the home were led by the staff of the home, saying that there would have been no room for stealing. She added that the quest of Social Development Secretariat to the operation of the home was far from witch-hunting, rather to identify with the management with a view to helping the less privileged. "We have a responsibility to safeguard the lives of every child." She however charged the proprietress of the home to clarify the huge sum of money often donated to the home by individuals and organisations considering the low standard of the home as well as allegations of financial demands by her (Mrs. Ibe) from parents whose children were in the home before they re-claim them.

Answering questions from newsmen, the Proprietress, Mrs. Ibe, asserted that the work she is doing is charity and God's calling, explaining that times without number, she had called on government to assist her but all to know avail. She revealed that her petition to the presidency was caused by the intimidation from the minister who stormed the home with security details and the press.

On the number of children in the home, she said they were about forty-five, adding, "I started this home in 1998. Children here are either abandoned, or brought to us by fathers whose wives have died. At times, pregnant girls come here, get delivered of their babies and leave the babies for us to train after which they return to collect them. They pay no money but we receive aides from good spirited individuals."

Two policemen, others die in Mabushi fire

Two people, including two policemen, lost their lives in a fire disaster that gutted a residential area in Mabushi village, a shanty town situated behind the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry of Works, Abuja.

The incident, which occurred in the early hours of Saturday at about 3:00 am, destroyed property worth millions of naira.

The fire was said to have started in one of the houses which spread to neighbouring houses within minutes as the hammattan and building materials used by the residents, mainly sacks, newspapers, woods and corrugated zinc did not help matters.

Abuja Trust spoke to some affected residents who said that the situation was hopeless as their source of livelihood had been totally destroyed by the inferno.

One of the residents, Abdullahi Salisu, told *Abuja Trust* that the fire only lasted 30 minute. She also said that the terrain of the area could not allow fire fighters to combat the inferno.

Also speaking to *Abuja Trust* was one Musa Abdullahi, who said that the fire situation has become a recurrent event in the area due to the closeness of their houses and the materials in which the houses were built with.

He blamed the poor economic situation which has turned most ordinary Nigerians beggars in their country to the cause.



One of the inmates of Victory Motherless Babies' Home, Idu/Karmo, currently treated in a private hospital on the order of FCT minister

Tribunal orders retrial of council chairman's case

The chairman of Area Councils Elections Appeal Tribunal sitting in Abuja has ordered the tribunal to retry and admit in evidence the documents rejected as evidence to prove the accusation of misappropriation of funds against the Chairman of Gwagwala area council, Mr. Zakari Angulu.

By Saidat Tella, IT (Intern)
The counsel to the appellant, Chief Karini Tunya, appealed against the judgement on 14 grounds among which is that the election petition tribunal erred in law as it held that the absence of evidence as to either ballot boxes was tempered with from the polling centres to the collation centres, and thereby dis-substantiated the result of the election.

Honourable Justice Salihu Garba gave the order while ruling on the appeal before it challenging the decision of the lower court on whether the (ANPP) chairman of Gwagwala area council, Angulu, was qualified to contest the 2004 March 27 area council election or not.

The upper tribunal stated in its ruling that the documents rejected in evidence by the lower court were relevant to prove the alleged misappropriations of N168, 000 and N200, 000 respectively, which the

Meanwhile, the lower tribunal had earlier rejected the original subject matter file relating to the alleged fraud of N168, 000 and N200, 000 and the report on further investigations on the fraudulent misappropriation of the same amount of money which was tendered by the petitioner.

Chief Tunyan further submitted that tribunal erred in law when it rejected in evidence the certified true copy of a document entitled "Report of further investigation on the fraudulent mis-appropriation of N168, 000 and N200, 000 respectively, belonging to Gwagwala area council and others".

The upper tribunal court held that the respondent be retried by the lower tribunal while it admitted in evidence the certified true copy of the document.

Pregnant mothers complain of vaccine scarcity

Residents in the FCT have complained of scarcity of vaccine, especially the BCG vaccine, administered to infants at births.

Our reporters who went round some FCT hospitals yesterday report that nursing mothers and their infants waited in large numbers to get the vaccine which was said to have finished.

According to one of the nurses who spoke to our reporters, "it is true that the vaccine is not available at the moment, particularly BCG, which is the most significant to the little child". He said the shortage had caused delay to the entire immunisation process.

He added that the scarcity of the BCG vaccine happened as a result of inability of the government to

By Shu'aibu Abubakar and Rabi Othman, IT (Intern)
supply enough that can take care of the inhabitants of the city.

However, the nurses called on the mothers to be patient concerning the scarcity of the BCG vaccine and promised to provide it sufficiently as to meet their demand.

On the other hand, some mothers who came for the BCG, BPC and other vaccines at the Wuse General Hospital expressed their dismay on the shortage of the vaccine.

Mrs. Ngozi told *Daily Trust* that because of the shortage of the vaccine, they were asked to pay N200 before they could get their children immunised.

In the same vein, Aisha Liman Yaro, who is also a mother and was in the hospital for vaccine, shared

the same view. She further said that "we were told the vaccine will be made available by Thursday 13th January, 2005. We have to go and come back on the said date."

Meanwhile, the Executive Secretary, Health and Human Services in the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT), Hajija Amimi Balu Zakari, has attributed the scarcity of vaccines to their non-availability at the National Programme on Immunisation (NPI).

Moreso, Dr. Muhammad who represented the executive secretary in a reaction, said that they had just received the BCG vaccine and they were in the process of retrieving some from the Abuja International Airport. He said all effort is being made to ensure availability of the vaccines in all hospitals within the FCT

Court discharges man over breach of trust

By Benjamin Aita, Crime reporter (Abuja)

An Abuja Senior Magistrates' Court sitting in Jabi has discharged and acquitted one Murtala Aliyu who was charged with criminal breach of trust, cheating and defamation of character.

Magistrate Sadiq struck the matter for lack of diligent prosecution and discharged the accused person.

The accused person, Murtala Aliyu, was early last year charged to court by the police on an allegation of defrauding one Maryam Ndololo of the sum of N1.7m.

According to the police report, Murtala collected the money from Maryam Ndololo to buy a Mercedes Benz "C" class in Lagos for her while she was away in South Africa.

The report also said that the accused had threatened Maryam Ndololo, through his lawyer, requesting the sum of N5million.

Meanwhile, the court had ordered the police to release the property (Honda Prelude) of the accused person with its particulars while the magistrate also ordered Maryam Ndololo to release the accused's passport which is in her possession.

The court at the same time restrained the police commissioner, DPO Garki II Police Station, and Maryam Ndololo from disturbing or depriving Murtala Aliyu of enjoying his right to own movable property under the constitution.

KANO TRUST

N307m expended on inherited projects —Commissioner

Kano State Government has revealed that over N307 million naira was so far spent by the administration on inherited projects of the past administration in the area of building construction.

The commissioner of works and housing, Prof.

7,000 pilgrims flown to Saudi Arabia

Some 7,000 Muslims have so far been flown to Saudi Arabia from the Malam Aminu Kano International Airport for this year's Hajj.

The Co-ordinator of the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs, Kano zone, Alhaji Baffa Chinade, told newsmen in Kano at the weekend that out of some 12,000 pilgrims from the zone, only 5,000 are yet to depart for the holy land.

He explained that those remaining would soon be conveyed and gave an assurance that if everything went as expected, the exercise would be completed by tomorrow, Thursday.

The co-ordinator said the zone had recorded tremendous achievements as the operation was going on smoothly.

He expressed the hope that all the pilgrims would be conveyed to the Holy Land before the closure of Jeddah Airport.

Chinade commended the co-operation of the state pilgrim's boards in the zone and the support of Kano Gov. Ibrahim Shekarau and the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero.

He appealed to the pilgrims to be law-abiding in Saudi Arabia.

By Ahmed Abubakar,
Correspondent (Kano)

Abdu Salihi made the statement to the press and said that so far more than 90 per cent of the abandoned projects of the past administration have been completed at the cost of N306,788,207.01 last year.

Prof. Abdu Salihi disclosed this while on an inspection tour of projects in Dambatta and Dawakin Tofa local government areas of Kano State.

The commissioner however explained that there is no justification in not continuing with the abandoned projects despite the huge resources committed to them and the overwhelming bearing they have on the rural people especially in accessible good roads.

He enjoined the firms handling such projects to be agents of good accountability and probity as always preached by the Shekarau led administration. He explained the essence of the inspection tour was to ascertain the measure of quality and standard of the projects work adopted before accepting and handing them over to the appropriate authorities.

He explained that those remaining would soon be conveyed and gave an assurance that if everything went as expected, the exercise would be completed by tomorrow, Thursday.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of a two-week worship for the intending



Gov Ibrahim Shekarau exchanging greetings with Hon. Dayo Ogunye, chairman, House of Committee on Inter governmental affairs who led members on a fact finding tour of Kano's ecological problems...recently.

Mosque, school construction gulps N4.3m

The Mubi Kofar Nassarawa mosque, Islamiyya school and block of toilet and bathrooms which cost the Kano State government about N4.3 million, has been completed the commissioner in the ministry of works and housing has said.

Speaking during the handing over ceremony of

the keys to the completed buildings to the benefiting communities, the commissioner of works and housing, Professor Abdu Salihi said the completed project was initially started by the community and later government assisted in completing the project.

Represented by the director of administration and

general services in the ministry, the commissioner said government is always ready to identify with projects and services that are geared towards improving the living standard of the people in order to render its help in completing them.

The commissioner also said it is high time for various communities to engage in establishing projects that will help in developing themselves and the entire community adding that communities should change their attitudes of waiting for the government to do every thing for them.

Prof. Salihi also called on both Nassarawa and Mubi

communities to use and maintain the buildings for the purpose which they were built and intended for so as to last long.

Earlier, Mallam Abdulaziz who received the keys of the building on behalf of the communities thanked the state government particularly the ministry for helping them in achieving their set target.

He also said children as leaders of tomorrow would be able to receive proper education and training through the Islamiyya adding that it would also help in changing the attitudes of their children towards a better position.

Dala LG pledges support for pilgrims

Pilgrims to this year's hajj from Dala local government have been assured of adequate support and assistance to facilitate their worship successfully, the council chairman, Alhaji Mahmud Sani Madukun Gini gave the assurance.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of a two-week worship for the intending

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru,
Correspondent (Kano)

pilgrims from the area, the council chairman said appropriate modalities that will halt the possible difficulties that may befall the worshipper before and after pilgrimage were evolved.

He pointed out that these proactive measures give a clear signal that the local government is ready to

salvage the lives of its populace against any inconveniences either home or abroad, saying however that it was a mandate of any reasonable political office holder.

Alhaji Madakin Gini hinted that the hajj committee of the area has recommended ways of overhauling the welfare of the pilgrims, stating that the recommendations are being deliberated for necessary action.

The local government boss however cautioned the pilgrims against misconduct and violation of the regulations of the Saudi Arabian government, warning that defaulters will face the wrath of the law.

Responding the pilgrims centre office of the area, Alhaji Sharif Mustapha applauded the council for its unrelenting support towards a hitch-free and successful pilgrimage.

He advised them to desist from reckless spending and seek the intervention of appropriate officials when problems or uncertainty befalls them.

Don enjoins traders on mgt. strategy

From Jamilah Nuhu Musa, Correspondent (Kano)

Traders in Kano State have been enjoined to avail themselves with information management strategies to boost industrial development in state.

A university don Mallam Ali Mohammed Garba of the department of Business administration, Bayero University Kano, gave the charge in a presentation he made titled "The management revolution and development of private sector initiative during the management day session organised by the British council Kano.

Mallam Ali M. Garba noted that traders have not adequately gained the values of business administration in the state and enjoined them to make conscious effort towards improving industrial activities in the state.

In his words "there are so many traders everywhere in the state but they have not been able to transit from trade to industry."

He therefore emphasized the need for traders to partner with government and NGOs and other authorities for rapid economic gains.

The university don who spoke extensively on private sector reforms, said that training job initiative advocacy, information sharing, social reorientation and consultancy service should be employed for improvement of the sector while government should also be educated through proposals on management for the public sector.

He then decried the attitude of bunglers on and the problem of nepotism which has adversely affected management strategies.



Flash back: Secretary-general of Nigeria Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Association, Alh. M.K. Ahmed receiving his MFR National Honour from President Obasanjo in Abuja.

EKO TRUST

Market association tasks LASG on incessant fire outbreaks

The Chairman of Owonifari Market Association, (electronics), Oshodi, in Lagos Mr. Yissa Ogunkayode has called on the state government to overhaul the various fire service stations in the state.

Speaking against the backdrop of series of fire outbreaks in markets and other institutions, resulting in loss of lives and properties worth billions of naira, the Oshodi traders said the unavailability and weak basic fire fighting equipment for quelling fire outbreaks are responsible for the many misfortunes befalling traders.

Mr. Ogunkayode said that unless an urgent attention was given to the fire service stations by ensuring that they are adequately equipped by upgrading the already worn out vehicles and equipment for their operations, business men and women, private and public institutions would continue to witness such incidents without any help from the organ saddled with the responsibility to combat fire.

The market traders boss regretted that most of the

Stories from Olumide Bajulaiye, Corr. (Lagos)

avoidable fire incidents in the state ended up gutting a whole building or substantial part of major markets as a result of lack of water with which to quell them.

"Many of our traders today, have remained in pains and joblessness because fire that would have been averted, if only fire servicemen called at the initial stage of the fire outbreak had water, is left to escalate until it successfully gutted the whole shops, all because they lacked water to effectively put off the fire", he said.

According to him, both the federal and state government should give priority to the services rendered fire servicemen and equip all stations to enable them tackle the problem instantly.

"A visit to our fire service stations revealed a very sad situation, as some of the buildings are near dilapidation state, while the workers are barely surviving", he lamented.

He also lamented that most residents in the state, especially traders did not

know the relevance of fire extinguishers, saying government should sensitise the citizenry on the importance of having at least one fire extinguisher in their homes or shops in case of fire outbreak.

Ogunkayode however said the money Oshodi traders spent in rebuilding the market when it was consumed by fire some years ago had not been paid until now, he wondered why government did not deem it fit to equip fire stations to enable workers carry out their job more effectively.

He berated the government for the poor performance of fire servicemen and the series of excuses they usually give when called upon.

"How do you expect somebody who risks his life in the course of his duty to N10 as hazard allowance and expect the best of service from such person, is ridiculous and absolutely unheard of".

Professionals launch NGO to assist less privileged

A group of professionals comprising foreign nationals and Nigerians from various states of the country living in Lekki have formed a Non Governmental Organization known as Helping Hand Organization to assist less privileged children in the society.

The Chairman of the group, Mr. Oteri Dafinone said at a news conference jointly addressed by him and Rev. Ezim Gwisa-Annu, the matron in Lekki that the organization would avail the children, unique opportunities to meet political leaders, captains of industries and top chief executives of multinational firms and banks among others, to share their feelings and problems with them.

He said the group would contact religious institutions for names of the less privileged ones among their members and also reach out to the neighbourhood and pick children of drivers, guards and cooks who are working for the rich in Victoria island, Lekki and Ikoyi among others.

His words, "We want to offer a helping hand towards the creation of a new dawn of hope, faith and prosperity for the Nigerian child, especially the poor and the needy."

"The need for a helping hand is compelling, given the rural-urban drift, with the children as victims abandoned in the village in the village or brought to the 'urban jungles' to fend for themselves as street hawkers."

"These children lack basic education or survival skills, but

must eke out a living in a hazardous cities, under difficult circumstances, susceptible to abuse and social vices." He said.

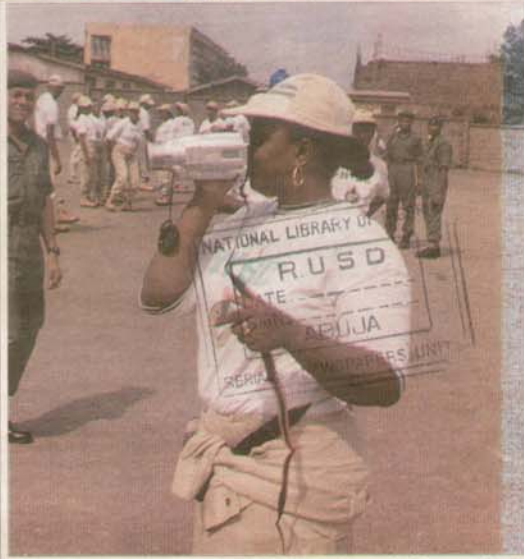
According to Dafinone, some of the strategies to help the children included, facilitating regular meetings between them and major players in the administration of the country at all levels of government and the financial world both in Nigeria and outside the country.

"We want to provide and avail the children with unique opportunities of meeting with political and community leaders, Presidents, Governors, Traditional rulers, Captains of industries, Managing Directors of Multinational companies, Banks executives, Ambassadors, Academicians and religious leaders among others to create momentous events to reshape their destinies," he added.

Chairman of the stated further that with financial and material support and a firm commitment from Government and private corporations, the project would turn around the destinies of the hopeless children.

He said the programmes of events lined up by the group this year would start from Lagos and spread to other parts of the country.

Dafinone, therefore appealed to charitable and God fearing Nigerians to participate in the organization's activities and contribute materially and financially towards reducing poverty among the children.



A youth corps member recording events at the passing out parade of corps members in Lagos... recently. Pic: Oladipupo Odunwala

315 coys indicate interest in car park project

No fewer than 315 corporate firms have so far subscribed to the car park project embarked upon by the Lagos State Government to check indiscriminate parking of vehicles on Victoria island.

The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Tempool Nigeria Limited, consultants to the state government, Mr. Yomi Dada, disclosed this to our correspondent in an interview.

Dada explained that road set back in front of corporate organizations on Victoria Island were earmarked for firms occupying such buildings on first-come-first-serve basis. According to him, each slot

which could only accommodate a car at a time attracted N40,000 per annum while individuals wishing to bring his or her car to Victoria Island paid N20,000 per annum to obtain a sticker which enables him or her park anywhere in the area.

Dada said most corporate firms on Victoria Island had renewed their parking fees for the New Year adding that they were satisfied with the system which he said had reduced traffic congestion in the area.

He said firms were still asked to pay N40,000 per slot which allowed them to park one car while private individuals would still pay

the old rate of N20,000 per annum to purchase a sticker that would enable them to park anywhere on Victoria Island for one year in order to give the scheme, a human face.

He said a wheel clamp had been produced for the purpose of the parking project which would be used to key any vehicle parked illegally in the area.

He also said the Smart Card expected to be used by car owners on Lagos Island when the State Parking Project kicks-off in the area, has been designed by Tempool Nigeria Limited, consultants to the state government on the project.

Dada said the Parking

meters which would work together with the smart cards, are equally ready.

He explained that vehicle owners would no longer patronize touts who currently collect at least N100 per hour from them on the Island the moment the project takes off.

According to him, the card which has various values ranging from N500 to N5,000 would enable a car owner park anywhere on Lagos Island with 15 minutes of grace. He said the moment a car owner parks, he would insert the smart card inside the meter and a slip which would indicate the time he parked and the expected time of departure, would be produced by the machine.

He said, "The Smart cards are in various denominations that would be affordable by the people of the state and any visitor to the state."

"The card would be strictly for parking only. Other use would nullify the purchase and it would be valid for six months from the date of first use and one year from date of purchase," he said.

The Tempool boss said the project would take off immediately the state governor, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu ratifies it.

He expressed optimism that the scheme would be successful because his firm had taken pains to carry out the designs, surveys and provided other necessary technical details.

He said a wheel clamp had been produced for the purpose of the parking project which would be used to key any vehicle parked illegally in the area.



Hon. Dayo Ogunniyi (left) chairman, house committee on inter-governmental affairs listening to Mr. Femi Pedro, deputy governor Lagos State during a visit to Alausa secretariat... recently.

News

Assassination bid on Anambra Rep fails

A member of the House of Representatives representing Nnewi North/South/Ekwusigbo federal constituency of Anambra State, Dr. Harry Oranzezi, has recounted the foiled assassination attempt on his life.

Dr. Oranzezi, who is also the Deputy Chairman Committee on Health, disclosed this at a press briefing yesterday at the National Assembly, where he also said that the assassins numbering six who had been sent to take his life, killed his police aide, one constable Patrick Anugba instead.

He said that the late Anugba was one of two constables who had been sent to his residence in the village by the area commander of

By Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter (Keps)

Nnewi following a letter he wrote to the president and the inspector general of police dated December 8, 2004 in which he alerted them on the alleged assassination plot.

"Sometime in December 7, 2004, I got information from one of the Bakaasi boys that Anambra thugs would be visiting my house with the particular mission to eliminate me. This prompted me to write the IGP, the president and the DG, SSS. On getting home on December 24, 2004, I discovered that two police constables had been posted to my house. They were there throughout activities at my house during the yuletide

period." Dr. Oranzezi disclosed that he returned to Abuja on January 6, 2005 following a call he got to return to town to attend to the on-going strike embarked upon by resident doctors in the country.

"Following my return, my wife called me to tell me that Pat, one of the security policemen was dead. According to her, some people numbering six had invaded my house asking for me, dead or alive."

He said that he called the area commander of the Nnewi area command who investigated the matter, took photographs of the late Pat and deposited his corpse at the mortuary.

Apparently not believing the story of his relatives that Dr. Oranzezi was not around, the assassins allegedly broke a window and forced their way into the house where they encountered the late mobile policeman and engaged him in a shoot-out.

"They shot him straight in the heart and then again on the head. Amazingly, they didn't take anything from my house, according to my sister. Had I succumbed to pressure to stay behind on the 6th, I would have been picked up," Oranzezi said.

Akwa Ibom gov dissolves cabinet

The Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Arch (Obong) Victor Attah, has dissolved his 18 members' cabinet of 16 commissioners and the only two special advisers.

Announcing the cabinet dissolution yesterday, the Secretary to the state government, Efiogbo Essang, after the state executive meeting, said the names of four commissioners and two special advisers were presented to the state House of Assembly for confirmation.

Daily Trust gathered that some of the commissioners whose files were in order will be re-appointed whereas six of them whose names were not disclosed might go.

Reading the names of the new executive council members to the law members, the Speaker of the state's House of Assembly, Chief Nelson Efiogbo, called on the law makers to approve the list without delay. Those whose names were submitted to the Assembly as commissioners include Mr. Parchi Umoh, a former journalist and one time general manager, publica-

From Edet Ekanem (Uyo)

tions, *Champion* newspapers; Donatus Okon, a university lecturer and current chairman, Akwa Ibom State Scholarship Board and Okon Emah, a medical doctor and former president of Mbibo Mkpawwe Ibino.

Those recommended as special advisers include Joe Udobia who hails from Mkpata Enin and Monday Udofa from Ini local government area.

Sokoto urged to purchase farmers' excess grains

The Sokoto State government has been called upon to assist farmers in the state by purchasing the excess grains direct from the farmers to produce enough food.

This call was contained in a communiqué issued at the end of the meeting of All Farmers Apex Association, Sokoto State chapter, signed by its Chairman, Senator Bello Jibrin (*the Sarkin Noman, Sarkin Musulmi*) and made available to *Daily Trust* in Sokoto, recently.

The communiqué further stressed that the state government should come up with

From Abdulfatai Abdulsalam Freelancer in Sokoto

a comprehensive agricultural development for the benefit of farmers in particular and the community as a whole.

They therefore called on the state government to give more priority to agriculture as pledged by the state governor last year during the launching of the fertiliser sales at Goronyo local government area of the state.

The communiqué also called on the state government to complement it provision of NPK fertiliser with other brand such as UREA and SUPER, noting that this will help farmers in the production of different variety of crops.

Emir of Ilorin extols virtues of late Sardauna

The Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Ibrahim Zulu Gambari, has extolled the sterling virtues of late Sardauna of Sokoto and premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello.

Speaking while receiving the National Hijrah Committee led by Alhaji Ahmad Kamal in his palace, the emir recalled the monumental achievements of the late Sardauna of Sokoto towards the growth of Islam in the country and propagating Islam including the founding of Jama'at Nasir (JNi) and the establishment of the world Muslim league.

Alhaji Gambari also

From Abdurrazzaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

emphasised the need for Ilorin indigenes and all Kwarans to always identify themselves with the northern part of the country.

Earlier, Alhaji Kamal, who is the Vice-Chairman of the Hijrah committee, had told the emir that a post humous award shall be conferred on the late Sardauna during this year's Hijrah.

He said this year's Hijrah would also be special as an international conference has been scheduled to hold in Ilorin in which participants would be drawn from Saudi Arabia among other foreign nations.

Deputy gov tasks journalists on politics

Taraba Deputy Governor, Alhaji Armaya'u Abubakar, on Monday in Jalingo urged journalists in the country to participate in politics and seek elective positions.

Declaring the sixth delegates conference of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Taraba chapter, Abubakar said such participation would change the pattern of politics in the country.

Abubakar said that since journalists assisted tremendously in enthroning democracy in the country, they



Police, Alhaji (Dr.) Ibrahim Coomassie, the Sardauna of Katsina (middle), Hajji Katsina Dr. Sani Abubakar Lagga (l) during the presentation ceremony of Licences to private universities held in Abuja... recently. Pic: Kennedy Egbonofe

Security chief in court for alleged assault

The Commandant-General of the Nigerian Peace Corps, Mr Dickson Akor, yesterday appeared in court on a five-count charge, including assault.

Akor, 37, appeared before an Abuja Senior Magistrates' Court for alleged criminal breach of trust, cheating, mischief, intimidation and assault. The accused was said to have collected a Peugeot 406 prestige car valued at N2.6 million, from Priority Motors, Abuja.

Prosecuting police officer, ASP John Udeh, told the judge, Malam Lamido Kabir, that the incident was reported by one Olatoye Peter of the Priority Motors, on Nov. 11, last year.

Udeh said the accused, the head of the organisation, gave the complainant a job order for the supply of the said vehicle.

He said that the organisation promised to pay N1 million within a week while the balance was to be paid after 30 days.

According to the prosecutor, the vehicle had been supplied and no money has

been given to the complainant as promised.

He said that when the complainant pursued his payment at the organisation's office along with two others, the accused ordered his men to beat them up as the result of which their cell phone was damaged.

The accused pleaded not guilty to the charges while the defence counsel, Mr John Oklobo, applied for his bail, arguing that the law presumed the accused to be innocent until the contrary was proved.

Oklobo added that his client would neither impede investigation nor abscond and was ready to provide a reasonable surety to guarantee his presence throughout the trial.

The prosecution however, opposed the bail application on the ground that the accused might jeopardise investigation which was at its early stage.

The Judge, Kabir, ordered the accused to be remanded in police custody and adjourned the case to Jan. 17, for ruling on bail application.

Police arrest couple for duping Okada operator

The Anambra State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu, yesterday, paraded a couple, Mr. and Mrs. Alphonsus Mobi, for allegedly conspiring and duping an unsuspecting commercial motorcycle operator (okada), of a sum of N80,000.00.

According to Mr. Ogbaudu, the couple faked the death and planned burial arrangement for Mrs. Mary Anti Mobi, alleging that she was knocked down by the okada operator last year, along Ugwunagbamkpa street, Onitsha.

Ogbaudu also stated that some of Mrs. Mobi's relatives later apprehended the okada operator, maintaining that the accident victim had died, and demanded the sum of N80,000.00 to cover her burial expenses, but, were given advance payment of N40,000.00.

Ogbaudu further alleged that the couple said the woman was admitted in an undisclosed hospital and discharged after treatment. Displaying an obituary

By Beatrice Ouebukwu, Stringer (Awka)

arrangement, the couples said, "the family of Dr. Mobi Ogbobiolu of Ire village, Abba-Njikoka local government area of Anambra State, regret to announced the death of our daughter, Auntie, Mother, Mrs. Mary Anti Mobi (Nee Tagbo), at the age of 45 years, whose sad event occurred on 30th August, 2004, she is survived by her husband, two children and a brother amongst whom are..."

The obituary also said, "the burial arrangement: Friday: 12th November, 2004. Wake keeping at Dr. Mobi's compound, Abba, Saturday, 13th November, 2004: time, 10.00am., body leaves general hospital, Onitsha to Dr. Mobi's compound, Abba, 4pm. -Interment."

In his reaction, Mr. Mobi however, distanced himself, claiming that one of his in-laws brought the news of his wife's death to his home at Ire, but admitted receiving the sum of N40,000.00 only from the okada operator to offset the burial.

NEWS

Nigeria records reduction in road accidents - FRSC boss

Rakiya A. Muhammad,
Correspondent (Jos)
Jos zonal command headquarters.
Maj. Gen. Hananiya who was represented by the Assistant Corps Marshal (Operations), Engr. Yemi Agoro, attributed the low rate of

accidents to efficient publicity and enlightenment efforts during the 2004 ember months' campaign.
He expressed appreciation to members of the press for giving proper coverage to FRSC activities which he noted had facilitated, to a large extent, the

education of the general public on the need for safety consciousness.
According to him, the multiple effect of the workshop should be a grassroots oriented public awareness campaign and a pro-active approach towards

projecting safety ideas in the various FRSC commands.
Also speaking, the commissioner for Information, Plateau State, who was the special guest at the occasion, commended the efforts of the commission at preventing and reducing road traffic accidents.

Briefs

Minna

The rehabilitation of the multi million naira airport and the construction of Hajj camp in Minna city in the interest of Islam by the state government have been described as a positive development.

Making the statement, the Niger State Commissioner of Agriculture, Alhaji Ahmed Garafin, said these two achievements will go a long way to improve the economic fortune of the state.

FUTY

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mallam Adamu Bello, has donated a tractor to the Federal University of Technology, Yola, in order to enhance the quality of teaching and agricultural research facilities in the University.

The honourable minister who was represented by the General Manager AFCOTT Plc, Yola, Mr. S.S. Sai, said the donation was in response to the call made by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. A.Y. Ribadu, to corporate organisations and illustrious sons of the state to boost agricultural technology education in the university. He further said that Adamawa being an agrarian state is lucky to have a university that offers agricultural courses, as this will go a long way in educating farmers on the different farming techniques for maximum benefit.

NNPC

Following the leadership crisis that rocked the last Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association (IPMAN) Kaduna Depot branch, the authorities of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) have been urged to adhere to court injunction restraining the activities of both former executives of the caretaker committee members of the IPMAN, Kaduna.

The former secretary general of IPMAN, Alhaji Abdullahi Isa, said that despite several correspondences to both the depot manager and the area manager of the Kaduna Depot to stop the activities of IPMAN, the authorities of NNPC had turned deaf ears to the court orders.

He said that the disruption of its AGM last year was caused by agents of an outsider who is bent on taking vengeance on the former chairman, Alhaji Hamisu Maraya, over issues best known to them.

The Corps Marshal and Chief Executive Federal Road Safety Commission, Major General Halidu Hananiya (rtd), has disclosed that accidents were reduced to the barest minimum between September and December last year.

He disclosed this in an address at the FRSC annual workshop for Public Education Officers held at the

Body raises N3.5 trillion for food production

By Hassan Idris, Reporter
(Agriculture) with Agency Report

The Global Crop Diversity Trust (GCDT) based in Italy under the auspices of the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has revealed plans to raise US \$260 million (about N3.5 trillion) to help food security worldwide.

A statement issued by the GCDT said that the goal of the Trust is to raise a US \$260 million endowment from government, foundations and corporations, and to eradicate poverty and sustain our environment through ensuring the conservation of the crop diversity that underpins food security worldwide.

The statement added that the proceeds of the endowment will support the ongoing conservation costs of the world's most important crop diversity collections, many of which are in desperate need of financial assistance.

At the moment, the Trust has received about \$45 million in commitments with another \$70 million under discussion with government, foundations and corporations, the statement said.

According to the statement, problems of poverty and environmental degradation are more complex and more urgent than ever before in history, we can only hope to find solution if we take into account the paramount role that agriculture plays in human development.

NGO to drag herbalists before court

Non-governmental organisation, Anti-drug Abuse International, is set to drag six herbalists to court for violating theethics of homeopathic practice.

The herbalists were alleged to have violated recommendations of the Federal Ministry of Health on the practice of homeopathic medicine.



Governor Adamu Aliero of Kebbi State with Governor Saminu Taraki of Jigawa State at the opening ceremony of the 19th National Qur'anic Recitation Competition held in Birnin Kebbi recently

OBASANJO'S VISIT:

Ekiti begins construction of Presidential Lodge

The Ekiti State government has commenced the construction of a multi-million naira Presidential Lodge in preparation for the visit of President Olusegun Obasanjo to their state in April this year.

The state Governor, Mr. Ayo Fayose, who briefed journalists at the site of the

From Adebolu Oladipo, Correspondent, Ado-Ekiti project located within the government house, Ado-Ekiti, yesterday said the president has written him personally confirming that he will be visiting the state officially between 8th and 9th of April, 2005.

Mr. Fayose who disclosed further that the Presidential Lodge and the official

chalets designed for the president's aides would gulp over N100 million, said effort is being made to provide adequate security within and around the government house in anticipation of the visit.

Meanwhile, the Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to the governor, Mr. Idowu Adoluri, has denied the allegation that the former speaker of the

House of Assembly, Mr. K.I. Adafemi and the former commissioner for finance, Mr. Bayo Aina were locked out of their private residence.

Addressing journalists yesterday, Mr. Adelus explained that the state government has only external gates to secure the government house and provide adequate security for the area.

Police arrest bullion van, raid suspects

The Anambra State Police Command says it has arrested all the major actors in the broad day light robbery of a bullion van last October in Onitsha.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the van was said to be carrying millions of Naira from a First Bank branch and that nine persons lost their lives in the incident.

Speaking to newsmen on Monday in Awka, the State

Commissioner of Police, Mr. Felix Ogbandu said that three policemen were killed during the robbery.

Although Ogbandu did not disclose the amount recovered from the suspects, he also said that another attempted robbery at the Onitsha branch of Afri Bank was stopped by the command and the suspects arrested by the police.

He said that the command was determined to fight criminals to a standstill and

Let states handle pilgrims' accommodation, agency urges

The Secretary, Sokoto State Pilgrims Welfare Agency, Alhaji Mu'azu Madawaki, has appealed to the federal government to allow states to negotiate accommodation for their pilgrims in Medina, Saudi Arabia.

Madawaki said: "We should be allowed to do this just like we do in Mecca."

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Sokoto on Monday that states were in a better position to negotiate desired accommodation, saying this allowed for better coordination.

"Unlike in Mecca, the pilgrims from various states are mixed up in the houses in Medina," he said, explaining that the present arrangement made proper co-ordination and supervision of pilgrims cumbersome.

"The states have been clamouring for this for the past few years. We hope the federal government will soon allow this to enhance the Hajj exercise," Madawaki added.

Dr. Ikechukwu Idimogo, Chairman of the NGO, told newsmen in Onitsha yesterday that those practicing homeopathic were supposed to submit themselves and their credentials for screening.
He said all premises or clinics where homeopaths are practiced should be inspected to ensure they met the minimum standard in terms of equipment and hy-

gienic.
Idimogo alleged that the herbalists employed the services of a lawyer who assisted them to register as homeopathic practitioners without being screened and their premises inspected.
"There are some groups of traditional healers who have cross-carpeted without any training or qualification as approved by the Federal Ministry of Health, as medi-

cal doctors with established specialist hospitals in Onitsha," he said.
Idimogo called on the federal government to implement the 1992 Health Edict 78 amendment decree and recommendation established in 1988. The edict states that herbalists should be separated from homeopathic doctors

News

Fire guts 300 villages in Jigawa

* 19 died in inferno

Fire accidents in Jigawa State in the 2004 has gutted over 300 villages killing 19 people, while thousand of lives stock were roasted as several thousands of people were also displaced according to reports released to *Daily Trust* by officials of the fire department in Dutse.

According to the release made available to our reporters, the incidence occurred in

From Hassan A. Karofi,
Correspondent Dutse

all communities of the state between January 2004 to December same year. The release also revealed that the department received over 51 calls for various cases of accidents from the public.

The release indicates that 58 people were rescued from various fire incidence, while 19 died and 21 rescue calls

were recorded from several people in the state in 2004.

The Director of Fire Service in the state, Alhaji Ali Ahmed Gumel, the department has saved property worth N458m in the over 300 cases of fire incidence that rocked at least over 300 villages in the state.

The department had also revealed that property worth N12m were equally lost in the recorded infernos, even as several thousands of special services ranging from water provision, and others were equally carried out by the department in the year under review.

Alhaji Gumel further revealed that the fire department had spread its activities to various section of the state leading to various live saving abilities that resulted in the drop of casualties being recorded yearly in the state.

Occultism: Don blames Nigerian leaders

Misguided political leaders in Nigeria are to blame for most cases of occultism, says Prof. Suleiman Bogoro of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi.

Bogoro took this stand on Monday at a workshop for local government welfare officers in Bauchi.

He reasoned that fighting occultism would always end in failure, "so long as these same leaders are in charge of the police, the polity and political power".

According to Bogoro: "Occultism is so well-known that the Nigerian society has been forced to enact laws against it in schools and other public places.

"The occultists often engage in vengeance attacks and ritual killings to the utter disgust of the public."

In his view, "the problem can be tackled only with the concerted efforts of every member of the society.

"In that regard, the Nigerian elite have a major role to play." Turning to other matters, Bogoro blamed the rise of drug abuse and "the Yandaba or Area boys syndrome" in the country on "parents, who fail to provide the necessary moral training for their children at the early

stage". Nigerian parents should always provide the required level of socialisation for their children and wards, to prepare them for useful membership of the society, he stressed.

NYSC boss plans better package for staff

The NYSC Director-General, Yusuf Borno, has promised to place a high premium on the welfare of staff of the directorate for the success of the scheme.

A resolution of the NYSC annual management meeting issued today in Abuja, said that the plans would allow an open door administration for an effective running of the scheme.

Borno promised to build a highly motivated workforce for effective service delivery through an open door administration and the involvement of all staff in policy implementation.

He said the scheme would also embrace information technology through archiving and documentation of NYSC activities.

Borno said the scheme had initiated discussions with relevant superior authorities to ensure that the long delayed

promotion results of deserving staff were released.

"Considering the high cost of building materials in the market, we are looking at the possibility of reviewing upward the amount of money given as loan to staff to benefit from the loans," he said.

Borno said there was need to train and retrain staff to be up-to-date with current management skills.

He charged the staff management unit of the directorate to explore avenues such as ASCON and Centre of Management Development for the training of staff.

He said that plans by his office to initiate a forum of the former director-generals and chief executives of the scheme.

Borno said this would enable the management tap from the wealth of experience of the past chief executives.

NBA honours Fawehinmi

Ikeja chapter of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has set aside Jan. 15 of every year as a date to celebrate Lagos-based legal luminary, Chief Gani Fawehinmi.

Mr Adekunle Ojo, the Chairman of the branch, dropped the hint in Ikeja, while briefing on the association's activities to celebrate Fawehinmi's 40th year at the bar.

"January 15 of every year would now be observed in honour of the icon (Fawehinmi)," Ojo said.

He noted that between Jan. 15, 1965, the year Fawehinmi was called to the bar, and now, "he has moved beyond being merely a name or face, but an icon, an institution for social justice in Nigeria.

"Gani Fawehinmi is more than just a lawyer, but a real potent and irreplaceable counter-force against myriad of oppression and misdeeds of



Kano State Governor Malam Ibrahim Shekarau (arrowed) and the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Dr. Ado Bayero inspecting materials displayed during the flagging off ceremony of empowerment programme for Quranic teachers (Almurummas) held at the Sani Abacha Indoor Hall, Kano... recently

Environmentalists marks birthday in desert

An environmental crusader, Chief Newton Jibunoh, at the weekend in Makoda, Kano State, marked his 67th birthday in the desert, where he had planted trees.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalled that Jibunoh had, earlier in the year at a ceremony marking the planting of the trees, said he would mark the birthday there.

An NGO, Fight Against Desert Encroachment (FADE), founded by Jibunoh, is championing the development of tree shelter belts in the 10 desert-prone states.

The birthday ceremony was attended by top government functionaries and other important personalities, in-

cluding the Kano State Deputy Governor, Alhaji Magaji Abdullahi, said a NAN correspondent.

Abdullahi, who represented Gov. Ibrahim Shekarau, at the occasion, said Nigeria needed the type of courage and determination, exhibited by Jibunoh to solve its numerous social, economic and political problems.

He advised Nigerians to appreciate the fact that the country's problems were not insurmountable.

He urged the federal government, the governments of the 10 shelter belt states as well as local and international NGO's to rally round FADE in its crusade against desert encroachment.

He said that the state government would remain committed to FADE's projects since they touched on the peoples' lives.

Also speaking, a community leader, Alhaji Haruna

Makoda, said that the tree belt introduced by FADE was impacting positively on the people of the area.

"Since we are directly and actively involved in this scheme, we see same as our own project and not just as one of those government schemes," he said.

While thanking his guests, Jibunoh said that the tree belt scheme which took off in Kano last year would be extended to Jigawa and Katsina States this year.

Jibunoh said that the project would, over the next three years, cover the remaining seven desert-prone states of Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi and Gombe.

The Kano State government had announced a donation of N2 million towards the promotion of FADE's activities, while each of the 44 local government areas in the state pledged N100, 000.

Kwara to grade traditional rulers

Kwara State Government is set to grade and upgrade traditional rulers to fully tap their support for its projects and programmes, an official has announced.

Haji Nimota Ibrahim, the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, made this known at a forum organised by government for the Omu-Aran council area.

He said government had also committed N40 million to "the welfare of rulers and other material provisions that will improve their living con-

ditions. "Plans are underway by this administration to address the issue of grading and upgrading of our chiefs and obas in the state," Ibrahim said.

She also tasked the royal fathers "to assist government by giving their full support to the Saraki administration for the overall development of the state".

In his comments, the *Oloro of Oro*, Oba Abdulrafiu Ajiboye-Oyelaran, lauded the government's initiative on the grading and upgrading of traditional rulers.

Jigawa police kill four robbers

The Jigawa State police command has crushed a gang of armed robbers believed to have been terrorising communities in the state, killing four as several others ran away after they accosted the gang during an operation along the Gaya-Dutse road.

According to the force public officer ASP, Sunday Digha, the police team under Sergeant Inuwa Idi and six others had earlier trailed the armed robbery gang after a tip up by police intelligence to the point where they mounted a road block and disallowed several commuters of their property.

Among the robbers killed by the police were Idris

From Hassan A. Karofi,
Correspondent Dutse

Mohammad, Usaini Mohammad, Dahiru Mohammad and Isa Maidofoya who are believed to hail from Kano and Jigawa States.

Meanwhile civil organisations in the state have raised an alarm over the allegation that the said armed gangs killed were first arrested before they were killed in extra judicial circumstances.

According to Auwal Ibrahim, a legal practitioner of the police had brought the suspects on Saturday and went round town with them only to turn on Monday with news that they were killed during a shot out.

News

Police arrest suspected killers of minor

The police in Bauchi have arrested the village head (not named) of Gazaki in connection with the murder of a seven-year-old boy, for alleged ritual purposes.

Four other persons were also arrested in connection with the incident, which occurred in Gazaki village in Bogoro local government area.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) learnt that the boy was beaten to death by his captives, who also allegedly removed his genitals and other organs.

The Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Muktar Abbas, confirmed the incident, adding that all the suspects were being interrogated.

He said the suspects were arrested following a tip-off.

Abbas, however, declined to confirm whether or not the boy's body was mutilated.

He said preliminary investigations showed that the

victim was accosted by his assailants on his way from a wedding on a bush path, where he was beaten to death.

Late last year also, a nine-year-old girl was murdered by suspected human parts dealers at Inkil village near Bauchi.

The suspects, currently in police net, allegedly removed the young girl's kidney and intestines.

Also within the same period, a 13-year-old primary school pupil had one of his eyes removed by another gang of suspected human parts dealers operating in Bauchi.

One of the suspects arrested in connection with that crime, Ibrahim Sule, alleged that he was recruited for the deal by a top politician in the state.

Sule was, however, subsequently declared insane by the police.

Jigawa courts treats 19000 cases in 2004

Over 19000 cases were treated by various courts in Jigawa State according to the state's Chief Judge, Justice Tijjani Abubakar, in an interview with newsmen over the activities of the judiciary in 2004.

According to the chief judge, 16000 of the cases were civil which includes divorce, farm conflicts, break of contract agreement and a host of others.

The judiciary, he added, has equally treated over 2600 criminal cases ranging from murder, rape, robbery and other criminal activities even as he disclosed that the cases represent a 25 per cent decrease from those recorded last year.

Justice Tijjani also disclosed that in the year 2004, the courts in the state have recorded a success especially in the areas of quick dispensation of justice, leading to appreciable decongestion of prisons in the state.

He equally added that courts have equally saw the improvement of it's work force through the promotion of 174 staff and the recruitment of over 36 judicial workers lead-

From Hassan A. Karoff, Correspondent (Dutse)

ing to high efficiency and easy dispensation of justice.

The courts, he further explained are braced to ensure quick dispensation of justice and the promotion of the rule of law through a just and fair judgements, even as he commended the state government of the provision of adequate and enhanced welfare to judicial workers in the state.

Justice Tijjani therefore urged judicial workers to contrite, by committing themselves to the upholding of justice by ensuring the speedy dispensation of justice and the establishment of the rule of law.

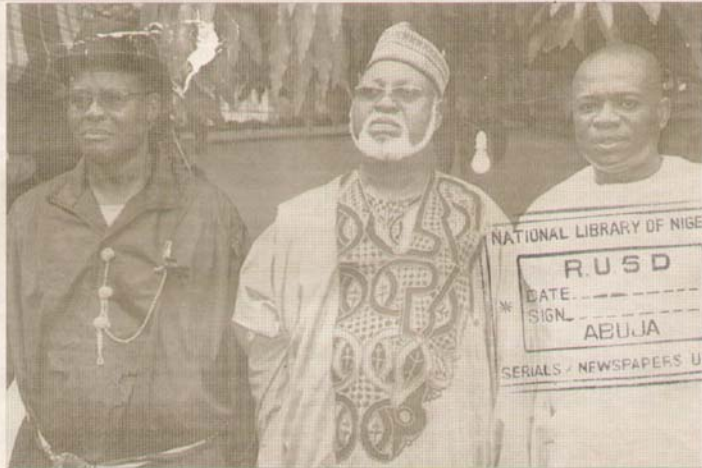
All these achievements, he said, are recorded in courts including the low and high courts and all Sharia Courts in the state.

Akwa Ibom budgets N83.28bn for 2005

The Akwa Ibom State Governor, Arc. Obong Victor Attah, on Thursday presented a budget proposal of N83.28 billion for 2005 financial year.

The governor who made the presentation to the state House of Assembly members said of this amount, N24.08 billion is for recurrent expenditure while N59.20 billion is for capital expenditure.

Obong Attah said the total projected recurrent revenue for 2005 is put at N72.69 billion which according to him represents an increase of N35.92 billion or 97.6 per cent compared with 2004 corresponding estimates of N36.78 billion.



Former Chief of General Staff, comm. Ebitu Ukiwe, former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar and Abia State Governor, Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu at the Uche (traditional retirement) ceremony of Comm. Ukiwe at Abiriba, Abia State... recently.

ECOWAS training course opens in Abuja

A three-week multilateral trade negotiations course for 31 officials from five ECOWAS member states opened on Monday, in Abuja. Participants in the course, which is jointly organised by ECOWAS and the Nigerian government, are drawn from Ghana, Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

"The course is intended to enhance understanding of multilateral issues, especially deepening our understanding and skills on negotiations, including how the sub-region's interest can be better enhanced during negotiations," Ambassador Idris Waziri, Nigeria's Minister of Commerce said in a message to the opening of the programme.

He urged that improving market access and strengthening the rules of trade were not sufficient to achieve the desired growth level in the economies of the countries of the sub-region. He said

that these should be complemented with improvements in human negotiations capacity to enable the countries take advantage of the opportunities provided by increased market access.

"It is on the basis of this realisation that the trade-related capacity building initiative of this nature is a welcome development with the ECOWAS sub-region," he added.

In an earlier speech, the Project Coordinator for the programme, Dr. Douglas Zormelo, said the training was conceived by the ECOWAS Secretariat to satisfy the needs of member states in their trade relations with their partners. This, he also said, is consistent with the Doha Development agenda that placed a high premium on the development of the capacity of developing countries.

Dr. Zormelo, who was represented by another officer in the project, Mr. Andrew Onyekanke, said the programme should equip ECOWAS member states to "participate effectively in shaping the evolving framework of international trade." In addition, this should enable them to contribute to defining the "rules and regulations as well as the environment for international trade."

PUBLIC NOTICE

ALLOCATION OF LOCK-UP-SHOPS AT KWALI CENTRAL MARKET

The general public especially traders are hereby informed that the Kwali Area Council FCT Abuja has built 52 No lock-up shops within the Kwali Central Market.

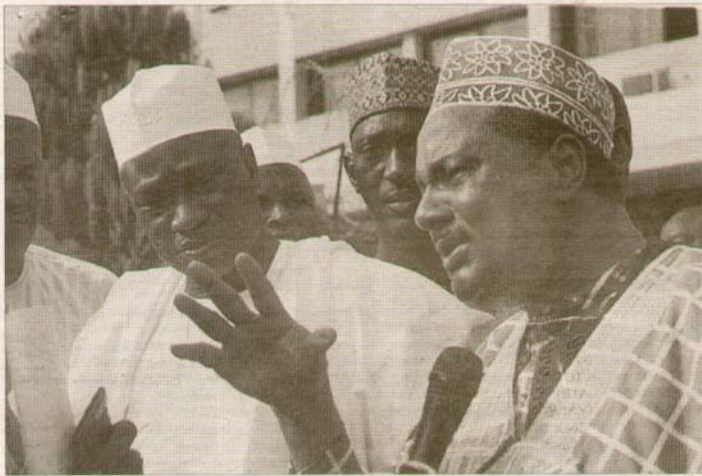
- Interested persons are invited to purchase application forms at the Kwali Area council Revenue Office on payment of N1000 application fee.
- The shops will be allocated within two weeks from the date of this notice on first come first served basis.

Signed,
Management,
Kwali Area Council
FCT, Abuja



Gov. Adamu Aliero

Inside Politics



Alhaji Abubakar Rimi (right) and the former Labour Minister, Alhaji Musa Gwadabe (left), after PDP NEC meeting held in Abuja ...recently.
Pic: Kennedy Egbonodje

Anambra govt sues FG over crisis

Anambra government has filed a motion on notice for interlocutory preservative orders in the Supreme Court against the Federal Government over the crisis in the state.

Deputy Senate Leader, Sen. Jonathan Zwingina, today drew senators' attention to this development while deliberating on the report of the chamber's committee on states and local governments on the crisis.

Citing Order 53 (5) of Senate rules, Zwingina suggested that presentation of the report be stood down since the Senate could not deliberate on an issue that was a subject of litigation.

He pointed out also that both the PDP and the Ohaneze, the Igbo cultural organization had set machineries in motion to resolve the crisis.

Senate Majority Leader Seriki Tafida said the meeting was crucial because "many things are happening in the party and it's the beginning of a new year".

In the suit No. SC/3/2004, dated Dec. 28, 2004, Anambra

government, represented by state Attorney-General, Chief Udechukwu N. Udechukwu (SAN), joined the attorney-general of the federation and the attorneys-general of the other 35 states as defendants.

Anambra government is seeking for an order of interlocutory injunction restraining the Federal Government from declaring a state of emergency in the state "pending the determination of this suit".

It also seeks to restrain the Federal Government from "removing or purporting to remove the Governor of Anambra from office whether as part of a declaration of a state of emergency in Anambra or otherwise law-suoever pending the determination of his suit".

The government, in addition, seeks an order staying further process or proceeding "whether at the Presidency or at the federal Legislature, touching upon any issue in controversy in this suit" pending the determination of the suit.

Deliberation on the report was subsequently stood down. (NAN)

... traders restate support for Ngige

As Gov. Chris Ngige continues to face stiff opposition, traders in Anambra have warned that they would resist any attempt to cause mayhem in the state.

The traders also warned that they would resist any attempt to use them to foment trouble in the State.

The Anambra State Markets Amalgamated Traders Association (ASMATA), an umbrella body of all Traders in the state, gave the warning

in a statement signed by its President, Mr. Sylvester Odife and Secretary, Mr. Mike Uzuagu.

The traders called on all members to be vigilant and avoid being used by enemies of the State to destroy private and public infrastructure.

"It is an incontrovertible fact that these people do not have any investments in the state but only gloat in destroying our commonwealth," the traders said.

A faction of the APGA, led by Chief Victor Umeh, yesterday in Abuja constituted a four-member board of trustees for the party under the leadership of its presidential candidate, Chief Odemegwu Ojukwu.

Other members appointed into the board by the group included Dr Tim Menakaya, Chief John Okam and Amb. Godwin Onyegbule.

Addressing newsmen shortly after a national working committee (NWC) meeting of the faction, Umeh announced that the board would be inaugurated as soon as the South-South, South-West, North-Central, North-East and North-West geo-political zones submitted their nominations.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the non-constitution of the board, national finance, contact and mobilisation as well as national publicity committees, alleged misappropriation of party funds and gross anti-party activities were some of the allegations the group used to suspend the party's national chairman, Chief Chekwes Okorie.

Similarly, Umeh said that the meeting had recommended the expulsion of

APGA faction constitutes Board of Trustees

Okorie and his two deputy national chairmen for South and North, Messrs Maxi Okwu and Alhaji Hassan Bello, respectively, to the party's NEC, besides suing him (Okorie) for alleged financial misdeeds.

He explained that these actions were taken in accordance with the provisions of Article 19 (3) of the party constitution.

According to him, the meeting adopted the appointment of Chief Victor Umeh and Alhaji Sadeeq Masalla as the party's acting national chairman and deputy national chairman (North), respectively, while six other vacant positions would be fielded at an elective national convention scheduled for March 7.

Umeh added that the meeting recommended for the amendment of Article 18(1) of the party's constitution, which referred to Okorie as the founder of the party.

While announcing the withdrawal of Maxi Okwu as CNPP's secretary general, he said a fresh nomination would soon be made to the conference by the party, adding that the meeting had zoned the party's presidential ticket to the South-East contrary to speculations in some quarters.

Umeh assured that APGA would participate in the federal government proposed national dialogue provided that it was not

Tinubu's refusal to re-conduct council elections unconstitutional - Ogunlewe

The refusal of Lagos governor, Chief Bola Tinubu, to re-conduct election in the 20 constitutionally recognised local governments in the state was a violation of the constitution.

The Special Assistant on Legal Matters and Public Affairs to the Minister of Works, Mr. Kole Oyedele, said in a statement yesterday in Abuja, that the governors' refusal negated his agitation for constitutionalism and rule of law.

"Section 197 (1) (b) and section 4 (a) part II (B) Third Schedule 1999 Constitution established and specifically spelt out the powers of State Independent Electoral Commission to organise all elections to local government councils within the state," he said.

He said that the constitution did not give the gover-

nor the power to organise or supervise elections.

Oyedele said that the elections conducted in the 57 local government areas could not stand in view of the Supreme Court's judgment.

He said that the governor's interference in the state's Independent Electoral Commission constituted an impediment to the establishment and development of democracy at the grassroots. (NAN)

Yarima's posters flood Ilorin

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

As the 2007 presidential race gathers momentum, posters of Yarima Ahmed Sani, Governor of Zamfara State have flooded Ilorin, the Kwara state capital.

Daily Trust correspondent reports that the posters with the inscription "Yarima for Presidency" could be found conspicuously around post office area, and Abdulwahab Folarin road in the state capital.

Although no official of the ANPP could explain the brain behind the latest development, it was the third in the series of posters campaigning for the presidency.

The first poster to flood Ilorin was in respect of General Mamman Kontagora followed by that of General Buba Marwa who was in Ilorin in December last year visiting traditional rulers and certain individuals who could influence decisions in the state.



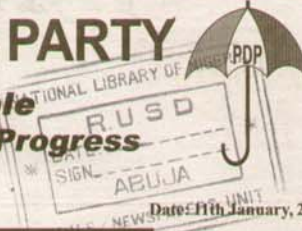
Gov. Peter Odili of Rivers State leading Speaker, House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Masari to the exco chambers of Government House, Port Harcourt during a visit to Rivers State by members of House of Reps. ...recently.



PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Power to The People

Motto: Justice, Unity and Progress



PRESS RELEASE

WE THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE P.D.P. IN KANO STATE WISH TO ISSUE THIS PRESS RELEASE IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESS CONFERENCE HELD ON MONDAY 3RD JANUARY 2005 BY SONIE STOOGES OF FORMER GOVERNOR RABIU MUSA KWANKWASO CLAIMING TO BE CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY OF THE P.D.P. IN KANO STATE RELATING TO DR. MOHAMMED ABUBAKAR RIMI'S ENDORSEMENT OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WHITE PAPER OF THE COMMITTEE THAT INVESTIGATED THE TENURE OF KWANKWASO MAL-ADMINISTRATION IN KANO STATE FROM 1999-2003.

Our attention has been drawn to a desperate attempt made by two stooges of former Governor of Kano State, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso against the person of our esteemed leader, Dr. Mohammed Abubakar Rimi regarding the Kano State Government recently released white paper which indicted the former Governor, now Defence Minister and two others for abuse of office and misappropriation of public funds and corrupt personal enrichment.

The text of the press conference was co-signed by one Uba Jigo, a stark illiterate who can neither read nor write and who claims to be the Kano State P.D.P. Chairman in spite of the fact that no one elected him into that office and another semi-illiterate, Aminu Labaran Baba, widely alleged to be an illegal alien from the Republic of Congo, who claim to be the State Secretary of the party. The so-called Chairman and Secretary were alleged to have been ordered to sign a concocted write-up written by a former lecturer and an aide of the desperate Minister. We all know that there is a serious allegation hanging on the neck of this former lecturer of having made a fortune by selling handouts to poor students and sexually harassing female students when he was a lecturer in one of the Nigerian Universities. As for Aminu Labaran Baba, he is known to be involved in the distribution of siphoned money from Kano State Government coffers in order of natural justice, as well as the freedom of speech contained in Nigeria's national constitution.

Let it be known that Dr. Rimi's Stance on the recommendation of the white paper was based on the undisputed facts contained in it, such as:

1. It is undeniable that N62,689,700 Students Scholarship Allowance was misappropriated illegally;
2. It is also undeniable that N850 million Ecological Fund is found to be missing into thin air;
3. It is also undeniable that N88 million out of N97,524,000 Security fund was disbursed to Kwankwaso's cronies and sycophants to undertake Kwankwaso's re-election campaign as testified by witnesses at the public hearings that revealed the shameful scandal.

These are just a few examples of several indictments and revelations made against the former Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso in the Government white paper. It should also be clear that the so-called conviction of Dr. Rimi by the Babatunde Elegbede Military Tribunal was based on the allegation that the sum of N50,000 (fifty thousand Naira only) was said to have been given to the P.R.P. through the late former Governor Sabo Bakin Zuwo but not to Rimi or Sabo's but to ensure the stage-managed electoral defeat of former House of Representatives Speaker Ghali Umar Na'Abba and some of his former colleagues in the National Assembly, such as Hon. Barau Jibrin and others. This wicked measure led to the subsequent electoral misfortune of our party in the state.

We have noted the assertion made in the Press Conference that Dr. Rimi being a founding member of the P.D.P. and a member of the Board of Trustees is not supposed to have expressed his opinion contrary to the liking of Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso on the released white paper. It is pertinent to state here that the response of Rimi on the white paper is in line with his much cherished ideology and principle of justice and fair play which he has always stood for through out the four decades of his principled political career. This, he has always done no matter the circumstance and no matter whose ox is gored.

As a matter of fact, Dr. Rimi is not attacking his party, the P.D.P. rather he was commenting on the corruption and injustice committed during the defunct Kwankwaso Mal-administration as shown in the white paper. After all, the manifesto of our great party, the P.D.P. is equally against corruption and injustice. Hence Dr. Rimi's principled stand is totally in compliance with the P.D.P. manifesto, and the tenets personal account Compare N50,000 of which Rimi and late Bakin Zuwo were accused of taking for P.R.P. and the nearly one billion, i.e. one thousand million, taken from Kano State Treasury by Kwankwaso for himself. Thus, we draw, the attention of the blind signatories that Dr. Rimi and Alhaji Sabo's so-called conviction wasn't tied to self corrupt enrichment as is the case of Rabiu Kwankwaso and his aides.

Moreover, it was made by a Military Tribunal constituted of Military Judges where the accused had no free access to lawyers of their choice, and no right of appeal, while the proceedings were done in camera which made the whole process completely non-transparent and against the rule of law and natural justice. The Military Tribunal also was constituted under a retroactive military law, which violated fundamental human rights and rule of law. In the contrary, the Judicial Commission of Enquiry which indicted Kwankwaso was properly constituted and operated under the framework of the rule of law as the accused had the latitude to hire lawyers of their choice while the proceedings were open and transparent. Every one accused was invited to come and defend his actions. Why did Kwankwaso refused to use the opportunity to defend his actions? Why is Kwankwaso now secretly pleading with traditional rulers and prominent businessmen in Kano and other places to prevail on Kano State Governor Malam Ibrahim Shekarau for mercy and

stay of action on the recommendations of the white paper? Why did he go to court instead of being bold enough like Dr. Mohammed Abubakar Rimi to face and challenge his accusers and prove them wrong? Why was he the only accused person who runs away from justice? It should be noted that Dr. Rimi Supported Zik in 1983 for the fact that they were contesting under the same party the N.P.P., whereas his support for Falae and Abiola's candidature was based on the endorsement of the Progressive Group within

the defunct SDP. While the support he gave Obasanjo in 1999 was as a result of PDP zoning formula which locked out all northern candidates from the presidential race. Dr. Rimi also supported Rabiu Kwankwaso to become the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives as well as to become the Governor of Kano State in 1999. We hereby challenge Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso or any other person to come forward as alleged in the press statement to provide proof on how much money was paid to Dr. Rimi and by who for the support he gave to any of the people mentioned above. This challenge goes to the ungrateful Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso in particular.

It should also be understood that there is no basis for comparison between Rimi, the hero and Kwankwaso the villain. Whereas Rimi remained popular among the people of this country, particularly his native Kano State, where he always moves around freely interacting with his people without a single police orderly while Kwankwaso was chased out of the state after his unceremonial handover and can only visit Kano State these days with truck loads of soldiers.

Indeed we appreciate the fact that the myopic duo of Uba Jigo and Aminu Labaran Baba have reiterated that they will continue to accord respect to our leaders, but we only hope that they will be steadfast in line with the truth. This is because of the fact that people like Dr. Mohammed Abubakar Rimi will never stray away from the truth. Everybody in Nigeria knows that.

We also believe that 'the PDP in Kano State should be re-organised and re-vitalised so as to effectively face all its future challenges with success. This has always been the tenacious stand of all well-meaning persons in the party such as Dr. Mohammed Abubakar Rimi, Alhaji Musa Gwadabe, Hon. Ghali Umar Na'Abba and Alhaji Gwadabe Satatama. etc. At last, we the undersigned members of Kano State PDP EXCO wish to disassociate ourselves from the press conference that was held in view of the fact that we were not a party to the initial decision to hold it. There were no State Working Committee and State Executive Committee meetings authorising such a press conference as stipulated by the PDP constitution. Moreover, the action of Uba Jigo and Aminu Labaran Baba had grossly violated the PDP constitution and had further jeopardized our effort in resuscitating our party.

Thank you

Long Live the PDP!
Long Live Kano State !!
Long Live Federal Republic of Nigeria!!!

(1)
Haj. Jummai Yar'kaaye
PDP Women Leader
Kano State

(3)
Alh. Usaini Usikifi
PDP Ex-Officio
Kano State

(2)
Alhaji Ya'u Beza
PDP Auditor
Kano State

(4)
Alh. Isa Umar Madaki
PDP Publicity Sec.
Kano State

(5)
Alh. Sallieu S. Abba
PDP Treasurer
Kano State

(6)
Abubakar Mahd Kingibe
PDP Ass. Secretary
Kano State

(7)
Alh. Kasiinu Yala
Ex-Officio
Kano State

Sports

Rooney set for Manchester United recall

Wayne Rooney is set to be recalled following his three-game ban by Sir Alex Ferguson for Manchester United's League Cup semi-final away to Premiership leaders Chelsea on Wednesday.

The Red Devils will be looking to Rooney to help them bounce back from one of their most embarrassing results of recent times.

Last weekend United were held to a goalless draw in front of their own fans by non-league Exeter in the third round of the FA Cup, a result Ferguson said was the club's worst in the competition during his 18 years in charge at Old Trafford.

On Monday United were handed a potential FA Cup fourth round tie away to Middlesbrough, the club managed by Ferguson's

former assistant Steve McClaren, provided they beat Exeter in a replay at the south-west side St James' Park ground.

But in the meantime Chelsea await in a tournament that has often come a poor fourth in leading English teams list of priorities behind the Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup.

However, Blues boss Jose Mourinho is likely to put out a

strong team at Stamford Bridge with Chelsea still in the hunt for an unprecedented quadruple of trophies in the one season.

England striker Rooney has been sidelined following a ban handed down by the FA after he shoved his hand into the face of Bolton defender Tal Ben Haim during a Premier League match last month.

"It is possible Wayne will play on Wednesday," Ferguson said.

"He has missed the last three games but he has been doing well in training, so it is a consideration."

He stressed injuries, rather than tactics, forced him to select an unfamiliar looking side against Exeter.

"I was hamstringing with the number of injuries to the first team squad. That is the reason for choosing the team I did."

"But if I can't play my younger players at home in front of 67,000 people in an FA Cup tie against a non-league team there is something wrong," the Scot added.

Former United striker Lou Macari agreed the club's display against Exeter was shoddy but said the underlying cause was the lack of experienced players now taking part in second team games.

"In years gone by, the reserve team was an excellent

stepping stone because there were usually a few older players in the opposition team and the experience of playing against them was invaluable," Macari said.

"Nowadays, reserve matches virtually resemble youth team games because the sides are so young," the former Celtic and Scotland star added.

"Before Saturday's game I had visions of (United's) Kieran Richardson tipping (Exeter's) Scott Hiley to pieces down the left and Chris Eagles doing the same thing down the right. But they just seemed a bit daunted by the whole thing."

"Roy Keane made a good point a few weeks ago when he said the younger players had not made it just because they had been selected for a first team game."

"Maybe the one positive thing to come out of Saturday's game was that message being rammed home even further."

"These lads haven't forced their way in. They got a chance because the senior players were rested."

"They have to recognise that and make sure they keep working hard on the training ground trying to improve because clearly, they have a long way to go yet."

Axed Lehmann hits back at Arsenal manager

Arsenal goalkeeper Jens Lehmann has hit back at manager Arsene Wenger after being dropped in favour of young Spaniard Manuel Almunia.

The experienced German international told the Sun newspaper on Tuesday that he was surprised by Wenger's decision to turn to Almunia after the Premier League champions had suffered a few disappointing results in October and November. "Of course I was surprised to be dropped," said Lehmann. "I'm sorry but what have I done wrong?"

"At this club every goal is blamed on the goalkeeper but if they can find someone who never, ever makes the smallest mistake they should sign him right away. But it will be very hard to find that person."

Wenger hinted that Lehmann might decide to leave Arsenal after 18 months with the club, despite helping the Londoners win the title in his first season at Highbury.

"It is the second time he has mentioned that and I think everybody in football knows why he does it," Lehmann said.

The 35-year-old Lehmann returned to the Arsenal side for Sunday's FA Cup third-round win over Stoke City but is likely to return to the substitutes' bench for Saturday's Premier League trip to Bolton Wanderers.

Livorno sack coach Colomba, turn to Donadoni

Serie A side Livorno have sacked coach Franco Colomba and replaced him with former AC Milan player Roberto Donadoni.

Sunday's 4-2 defeat to leaders Juventus left Livorno 15th in the 20-team table but the decision comes as a surprise.

The Tuscan team are in their first season in the top flight since 1949 and in a tight mid-table they are only six points behind sixth place AS Roma.

The club said that Donadoni, who worked at the club during their Serie B campaign two seasons ago, had agreed an 18-month contract.

The 41-year-old, who was part of Arrigo Sacchi's Milan team in the late 1980s and early 1990s has also worked as coach of Serie B side Genoa but this will be his first appointment in the top flight.



Donadoni



Manchester United striker, Wayne Rooney is set to return against Chelsea in the League Cup semi-final tonight

Jorge takes charge of Cameroon

Former Portugal and Switzerland coach Artur Jorge is to take charge of Cameroon, authorities in the central African country said on Monday.

The Portuguese coach, who has also had spells at Paris St Germain, CSKA Moscow and Porto, replaces German Winfried Schafer.

"His main assignment will be to qualify the Cameroon national team for the 2006 World Cup and African Cup of Nations," sports minister Philippe Mbarga Mboa said in a statement regarding Jorge's appointment.

Among the more surprising members of Jorge's backroom staff will be former tennis champion Yannick Noah, who has a Cameroonian father and French mother and will act as an adviser.

Jorge is expected to arrive in Cameroon later this week to meet officials and hold a news conference. He was sacked last July from his most recent post as coach of CSKA Moscow.

Cameroon are third behind Ivory Coast and Libya in their World Cup/African Nations Cup qualifying group.

The group winners reach the 2006 World Cup in Germany with the first three going to next year's Nations Cup finals.

The former African Nations Cup winners and World Cup quarter-finalists have players at top clubs around Europe but have put in a series of disappointing performances.

The 'Indomitable Lions' lost to Egypt in a World Cup African Nations Cup qualifier in September and then managed only a draw away to Sudan in their next qualifier in October.

Jorge will therefore be under pressure from supporters and officials to turn the team's fortunes around quickly.

Spanish federation vows to halt rise in racism

Spanish football authorities have said they will do everything possible to halt the rise in racist chanting at matches after the referee reported incidents during Sunday's derby between Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid.

"After the worrying outbreaks of racism by a minority of fans during recent months, the Sports Council, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), the Football League and the Spanish Players Association want to reiterate their condemnation of this type of behaviour," a statement on the RFEF website said on Monday.

"They also want to reaffirm their determination to take tough action against any evidence of racism or xenophobia in Spanish Football."

Referee Alfonso Perez Bernal noted incidents of racist behaviour in his report on the Madrid derby.

"I asked the match delegate to make an announcement on the public address system to ask the fans to stop making monkey noises when certain players had the ball," he said.

"As a result... the noises grew louder."

Racist abuse of black players has been on the rise in Spain recently but not always mentioned in referees' reports. Roberto Carlos was also abused during Real's league match against Barcelona but

Spanish federation vows to halt rise in racism

The incidents were not included in the report so no action was taken against the Catalan club.

The last time an incident was investigated the RFEF fined two Albacete fans 6,000 euros (\$7,865) and banned them from stadiums for five months for taunts directed at Barcelona's Cameroonian striker Samuel Eto'o during a match in December.

UEFA fined Real Madrid 9,780 euros (\$12,820) after racist abuse by their fans during a Champions League match against Bayer Leverkusen in November.

The RFEF is also investigating the behaviour of Spain coach Luis Aragonés following a recommendation by the country's Anti-violence Commission after Aragonés made apparently racist remarks about France striker Thierry Henry in October.

He caused further controversy when he defended his comments before November's friendly against England in which he also criticised that country's colonial past.

The match was marred by racist abuse and chanting directed at England's black players by large sections of the crowd.

Bayern to let Kuffour or Linke leave

Bayern Munich are waiting to see if Newcastle United confirm their interest in hansi defender Sammy Koufoor before finalising their bid for the second half of a season.

"I heard that Kuffour's agent is in discussions with Newcastle," Bayern's commercial manager Uli Gensert told the Munich club's website on Monday.

"If these are successful, Newcastle would contact us."

Bayern have already told left back Tobias Rau he can look for another club and they are prepared to let either Kuffour or fellow centre back Thomas Linke join him on the way out.

"We will let just one of the centre-backs go, either Kuffour or Linke," Bayern coach Felix Magath said.

The 28-year-old Kuffour joined Bayern in 1993 and has won five league titles and the Champions League with the Bavarians. He and 35-year-old Linke, a former German international, are out of contract at the end of the season.

FC Nuremberg are interested in signing Rau, who will have few chances to play following the return of Bayern's Germanies.

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Sports

Bryant shines as Lakers add to Timberwolves' misery

Kobe Bryant poured in a game-high 31 points to spark the Los Angeles Lakers to a 105-96 win over Minnesota Monday, sending the slumping Timberwolves to their sixth loss in seven outings.

Chucky Atkins added 23 points while Chris Mihm notched 14 points and 17 rebounds as the Lakers rallied from a 76-67 third-quarter deficit with a 24-7 run in the fourth to post their fourth victory in

six games. The host Timberwolves received another superb effort from NBA MVP Kevin Garnett, who had 23 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists. Sam Cassell, however, missed his second consecutive game with a strained hamstring.

In Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur scored 23 points, includ-

ing a game-winning shot at the buzzer, as the Utah Jazz broke out of their worst losing streak for more than 20 years with an upset 97-96 triumph over the San Antonio Spurs.

Mired in a nine-game skid, the Jazz were given little chance against the Spurs, a team they had not beaten in 18 meetings stretching back to February 2000.

Winners of 12 of their last 14 games, the Spurs were handed 24 points and 13 rebounds by Tim Duncan but still suffered their eighth loss of the season.

In Boston, the Celtics received double-figure contributions from eight players, led by an 18-point effort by Paul Pierce, to halt a two-game losing skid with a 119-101 victory over the Orlando Magic.

Tony Allen had 16 points while Raef LaFrentz, Ricky Davis and Gary Payton each added 15 points to the cause as the Celtics made sure the Magic stumbled to their seventh straight road defeat.

The Magic, who have allowed a league-high 100 points per game, made a move earlier in the day to bolster their defense by trading

third-highest scorer Cuttino Mobley to the Sacramento Kings for guard Doug Christie.

In Philadelphia, Nick Van Exel totaled a season-high 28 points, including a team record eight three-pointers, as the Portland Trail Blazers won for the first time in five games with a 109-100 victory over the 76ers.

Damon Stoudamire added 22 points for Portland and Zach Randolph 18.

After missing one game with assorted injuries, Allen Iverson, the NBA's leading scorer, was back in action with 21 points, nine rebounds and nine assists for the 76ers.

In Chicago, Otisella Harrington grabbed 20 points and Kirk Hinrich added 14 points, nine assists and six rebounds to help the Bulls beat the Golden State Warriors 94-85.

After opening the season 0-9, the Bulls have won 10 of their last 13, including four in a row.

The Warriors have gone in the opposite direction, losing six games in succession since top scorer Jason Richardson sprained his ankle.



Kobe Bryant scored 31 points for Lakers against Timberwolves

Myskina, Moya beaten in Sydney

Carlos Moya and Anastasia Myskina both slumped out of the Sydney International yesterday, jolting their preparations for next week's Australian Open.

French Open champion Myskina suffered a shock second-round defeat by little-known Chinese qualifier Shuai Peng while Moya was sent packing by Czech Kadek Stepánek.

Shuai, ranked 80th in the world, raced to a 6-1 6-3 triumph as Myskina struggled to cope with the hot and windy conditions at the Olympic tennis centre.

Russia's first female grand slam winner committed a whopping 46 unforced errors to leave her short on match practice heading to Melbourne.

"The conditions were tough but that's no excuse," she said.

"I'm not confident but I have to look forward to the Australian Open. It's one more week so I will have time for some practice."

Moya had flown straight to Sydney after winning the Chennai Open on Sunday and donating his prizemoney to the tsunami relief fund.

The Spanish Davis Cup hero looked to have his first round encounter with Stepánek under control when he won six games on the trot to take the first set before falling 2-6 6-2.

Men's champion Lleyton Hewitt rebounded from his early exit at last week's Australian hardcourt championship in Adelaide to crush Slovak Karol Beck 6-1 6-2 in the first round.

Hewitt cruised to victory in 67 minutes to set up a meeting with Arnaud Clement after the Frenchman beat Czech

Tomas Zib 6-1 6-3.

"That was pretty good. I felt like I moved the ball around well," Hewitt said.

"I've done all the hard work leading into the Australian Open so now it's really just about keeping the confidence levels up."

Australian hardcourt champion Joachim Johansson of Sweden continued his fine form with a 6-4 6-3 win over big-serving Briton Greg Rusedski while Adelaide runner-up, American Taylor Dent, defeated Spaniard Santiago Ventura 7-5 7-6.

Deserving Appleby reaps rich reward in Hawaii

It is difficult to think of a more deserving and popular winner at the weekend than Stuart Appleby, who completed a successful title defence of the Mercedes Championships in Hawaii.

The personable Australian has suffered more than his share of adversity since he turned professional in 1992, and almost had to pull out on the eve of the PGA Tour's season-opening event with a hip injury.

Appleby, who held off a furious late charge by Vijay Singh to win last year's title at Kapalua by a shot, was unable to hit a golf ball two weeks ago because of a sciatic nerve problem in his left

leg.

However, he regained flexibility after a programme of stretching exercises and was able to tee off in Thursday's opening round at the Plantation Course.

Although he was one of just four players in the elite winners-only field of 31 to finish above par on day one, he never looked back after that.

The 33-year-old vaulted into contention with a sparkling nine-under-par 64 in the second round and went on to clinch the sixth PGA Tour title of his career with closing scores of 66 and 67.

However, an added distraction all week for the former Australian Rules Football

player was the impending arrival of his first child.

His wife Ashley is scheduled to give birth in Melbourne on Wednesday, and Appleby was quite prepared to withdraw from the event if a premature delivery had been on the cards.

"I would have left in a heartbeat if it was serious," he told reporters at Kapalua. "But (the baby) had not showed any signs of coming in quickly."

"There were three reasons I came here," he added. "One, the baby did not look like it was to come early."

"Two, physically it looked like I could get better with some treatment over here, and three, I was playing good."

Appleby said: "Look, go over there, have some fun, wish I was there."

Very few people, if any, would begrudge Appleby his rousing start to 2005 — both professionally and domestically.

Just under seven years ago, his first wife Renay was killed in a traffic accident outside a London train station. Appleby had missed the cat in the 1998 British Open at Royal Birkdale and the couple were preparing to go away on holiday.

Hardly surprisingly, his life was totally transformed by Renay's untimely passing. Almost two years later, he was still struggling to come to terms with it.

"At it's worst, it's really,

really tough," he said during a teleconference on the PGA Tour. "Somehow you manage, whether that's an inner strength or something else, I don't know. Other times you don't."

"Sometimes you say flat out: 'Listen, I can't do this. It's just too much for me right now', and you just don't. You take weeks off."

"It's at your own speed. There's no time frame except what is comfortable."

Time passed, though, and the likeable Australian found some solace on the golf course.

He won the 2001 Australian Open and produced his best finish at a major the following year when he tied for second in the British Open at Muirfield, after Ernie Els had won the title in a four-way playoff.

In 2003, Appleby clinched the Las Vegas Invitational before ending the PGA Tour season 12th in the money list with earnings of \$2,662,538.

Most significantly, though, he also found personal happiness and the highlight of that year was his marriage to Ashley.

Two years on, he is poised to become a father for the first time.

"What I'm about to go through this week — having my first child — my life is certainly going to be put in a different light," said Appleby.

"I'm very much looking forward to this year. I think there's certain principle about that that I've taken in my life, knowing that I've always had the mentality that it's one shot at a time, one shot at a time."

Having taken one shot at a time, the richly deserving Appleby could hardly have hoped for a better start to 2005.

Federer calls for tennis to join tsunami relief effort

World number one Roger Federer has led calls for tennis to join other sports in raising money for victims of the south Asian tsunami disaster.

Federer said tennis players should follow the example set by the world's top cricketers, who joined forces for a one-day international in

Melbourne on Monday which raised more than \$A14 million (\$US10.63 million) for the relief effort.

"I straight away was thinking about different options for us to help," the Swiss told reporters at Tuesday's draw for the Kooyong Classic, the traditional warm-up event for next week's Australian Open.

Andre Agassi echoed Federer's comments, saying that the governing bodies of tennis should come together to organise events.

"I think this would be the best opportunity in the world for all of us (players) to come together," said the American.

"Because tennis is an individual sport it would need one of the professional bodies to organise it. But it was a terrible tragedy and I think you'd find all the players happy to do all they can to help those who've been affected."

Thousands of people in south and east Asia were

killed in the giant waves triggered by an undersea earthquake off the Indonesian island of Sumatra on December 26.

Like many tournaments, the Kooyong Classic will be holding daily collections, with the money raised being donated to UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund.

Top seed Federer will open his bid for the title in the eight-man event at Kooyong against French Open champion Gaston Gaudio of Argentina.

Another Argentine, defending champion David Nalbandian, meets Brian T. Henman, Agassi faces Olympic champion Nicolas Pietrangeli of Chile and American Andy Roddick takes on Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand.

The Kooyong Classic begins on Wednesday.

Rogge urges African nations to bid for Games

International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Jacques Rogge urged African countries yesterday to bid for the summer Games.

At the start of a four-day visit to Kenya during his first visit to Africa since he was elected to lead the IOC in 2001, Rogge said he was happy that South Africa was going to stage the 2010 soccer World Cup.

"It is always my dear hope that Africa can stage the Olympic Games in future. At the moment no African country has put in a bid but I sincerely hope and wish that they come forward in the not-too-distant future to stage this prestigious event," Rogge told reporters.

"I am happy that the FIFA World Cup will be staged in

South Africa in 2010. The continent can focus on this huge assignment first then make a move to host the Summer Games in future."

Beijing will stage the 2008 Games and a decision on the 2012 hosts will be made in Singapore on July 6. Paris, London, New York, Madrid and Moscow are the candidates.

Sports

Australian Open celebrates its 100th year

It began at a humble suburban cricket ground, has been played twice in New Zealand and was even once held in a zoo.

The Australian Open turns 100 this year, a remarkable feat for a tournament that has reinvented itself several times as it struggled to cement its place as the fourth grand slam of tennis.

Now billed as "The Grand Slam of Asia/Pacific", the tournament began in 1905 as the Australasian Championships soon after Australian and New Zealand officials formed the Australasian Lawn Tennis Association.

Seventeen men — women did not compete until 1922 — contested the inaugural tournament at the Warehouseman's Cricket Ground at Albert Park in Melbourne.

The Melbourne Cricket Club's Rodney Heath defeated Adelaide doctor Arthur Curtis 4-6-3-6-4-6-4 in the final in front of around 5,000 spectators.

A century later, the Open is Australia's biggest annual sports event, attracting some 500,000 fans for two weeks each year to its state-of-the-art Melbourne Park home.

While the tournament celebrates its centenary year, the January 17-30 event will actually mark the 93rd time it has been staged. The two world wars intervened from 1916-18 and 1941-45.

Despite its aged status in Australia, the Open is a youngster compared with its three grand slam siblings, with Wimbledon more than a quarter of a century older.

While Wimbledon, the French Open and the U.S.

Open have gone from strength to strength, "the Aussie Open" was struggling by the mid-1980s at the quaint but impractical Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club in suburban Melbourne.

Australians had dominated the tournament but the start of the Open era in 1968 took an unexpected toll, with the game's biggest names reluctant to leave their lucrative professional circuits in Europe and the United States for the long trip to Australia.

Coupled with Kooyong's inadequate facilities and no room to expand, the tournament's future was at stake and the decision was taken in 1985 to move.

A new complex with its 15,000-seat main stadium covered by a retractable roof was completed by 1988 and the event has never looked back, even though some still lament the loss of Kooyong's grass for Melbourne Park's Rebound Ace hardcourt surface.

Crowds increased by 90 percent to 266,500 in the first year at Melbourne Park, bringing with them sponsors and financial security.

The move also offered a sense of permanence. In its early years the tournament was shared between Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. Melbourne was made its permanent home in 1972.

Frank Sedgman, who first played the event at Sydney's White City in 1947, remembered it as a far cry from the modern game.

"They played two or three matches at a time on centre court. It was amazing. There were balls all over the court," Sedgman says in a

book celebrating the centenary.

"We didn't sit down at the change of ends — there were no chairs... In comparison to today's matches we played pretty quickly — a five-set match would take under two hours," said Sedgman, who won the event in 1949 and 1950.

The tournament was twice played in New Zealand — in 1906, when it was won by four-time Wimbledon champion and local hero Anthony Wilding, and in 1912 — before New Zealand dropped out of the trans-Tasman partnership in 1922.

Its most bizarre staging was in 1909 on specially constructed courts at Perth zoo, with Wilding again the victor.

Fred Alexander of the United States was the first foreigner to win the men's singles, while Dorothy Round claimed the same honour for Britain when she won the 1935 women's title.

Australians dominated the event up to the Open era. Margaret Smith Court bridged the Open transition with her 11 titles between 1960 and 1973 as she carried on a proud tradition which included six-times winner Nancye Wynne Bolton and Daphne Akhurst (five).

The men were also formidable during Australia's golden era after World War Two, when Ken Rosewall, Lew Hoad, Tony Roche, Rod Laver and John Newcombe followed Sedgman.

Rosewall holds a unique place in the tournament's history as both the youngest and oldest men's singles champion.

He was 18 years and two months old when he won the first of his four titles in 1953 and completed an unlikely comeback when he won in 1972 at the age of 37 years and two months.

Melbourne Park has hosted all the great names of tennis, with Mats Wilander and Stefan Edberg preceding Ivan Lendl and Boris Becker as champions.

Jim Courier led a renewed American charge in 1992 and four-times winner Andre Agassi began his late-blooming love affair with Melbourne in 1995, seven years after his now wife Steffi Graf won the first of her four Australian titles.

Australians, however, have fared poorly in the Open era, with Pat Cash, Pat Rafter, Lleyton Hewitt and Mark Philippoussis all unable to claim their home title.

El Guerrouj targets cross country

Double Olympic champion Hicham El Guerrouj is set to make a rare appearance at the World Cross Country Championships in France.

But the Moroccan, who has not raced over cross country for 15 years, will not decide until two weeks before the event which starts on 19 March.

"If I am to compete in it, it is only if I feel I can win," said the 30-year-old, who is retiring in 2006.

"Otherwise there is not much point in me going."

El Guerrouj achieved a lifetime ambition last August when he clinched his first Olympic titles over 1500m and 5,000m.

But the four-time world 1500m champion is still hungry for more success before calling time on his career.

The 30-year-old has set his sights on clinching the world 5,000m crown in Helsinki this summer.

And he is aiming to break 10,000m Olympic champion Kenenisa Bekele's 5,000m and 10,000m world records.

El Guerrouj could meet

Bekele in March as the Ethiopian is the defending world cross country champion over both the long and short courses.

But the Moroccan will not commit himself to the St Galmier event until he assesses how well his winter training is going.

"The return to training was very difficult because I accepted a lot of invitations these past few months," said El Guerrouj.

Di Canio claims innocence in row

Paulo di Canio has insisted that an apparent fascist salute he made in last week's Rome derby was a misrepresentation by the cameraman.

Di Canio's agent Matteo Roggi told BBC Radio Five Live: "He says, 'I went down to say hello to my supporters'."

"Obviously, if there was a photographer there that's got a camera that takes 100 pictures a minute, he says he just got him with the right hand up there."

Police are still examining photos and video evidence of the incident.

The former West Ham star

appeared to give a straight arm gesture after his team Lazio beat Rome 3-1.

Such an action would have been recognised by the minority of far-right, racist supporters who have given Lazio a bad name over the years.

Lazio has been associated with fascism since the days when Italy's former fascist leader Benito Mussolini was regularly seen in the stands.

Di Canio has also played for Celtic, Sheffield Wednesday, Charlton, Juventus and AC Milan.

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A large motor workshop measuring approx. 150' 100' (or 50x33 metre) and securely enclosed in a 10 feet high wall in Kaduna is available for lease. It is located at Mando, off Lagos/Air Port road, and not far from the NEPA booster station at Mando. It is ideal for use as a motor workshop or for packing of motor vehicles or other mechanical vehicles or machinery. Interested person or parties should please call any of the following numbers for further details and or inspection: 08035031142 or 08034969596

REDEEMER'S HOPE TO ALL NATIONS FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

The general public is hereby informed that the above named Foundation has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for Registration under part 'C' of the companies and Allied Matters Decree of 1990.

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Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General CAC Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
Musa Okwelle Okafar Esq.
Legal Options & Co.

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Signed:
Secretary

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2. ISAAC ONYEMAECHI MOSES

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General CAC Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
Secretary

MISSING DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public especially Abuja Geographic Information Systems (AGIS) that the Original Land Documents belonging to LT. COL HAMEED IBRAHIM ALI (RTD) situated in Wuse A7 District on Plot 521 Covering about 2,000m² within the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja are missing. Please if found return to BWARI, AKUBUO & ASSOCIATES, Plot 35, Area 7 Cornershops, Garki Abuja.

Signed
B.B. Bwari, Esq.

CHANGE OF NAMES

1. MISS NKECHI PEACE OKPARAOCHIA, now wish to be known as MRS NKECHI SALMAH SULEIMAN. All former documents remain valid. Federal Inland Revenue Service Abuja.

1. formerly known and addressed as SHUAIBU JOHN, wish to be known and addressed as MOSES U. JOHN. All former document remain valid. Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps please take note.

1. formerly IBHADE ANGELA AKHIBI, now MRS. IBHADE ANGELA RUSSEL. Former documents remain valid. NYSC note.

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Sports

NFA Secretary General Taiwo Ogunjobi, is to face a three-man administrative panel of inquiry over finances of the association.

NFA chairman Ibrahim Galadima said yesterday at the end of an emergency meeting of its board.

He said that the panel would examine the report of Col. Joro Yablisu committee which conducted an

Ogunjobi: NFA sets up probe panel

By Ismaila Umara Lere, Group Sports Editor

administrative audit of NFA staff and finances.

"The panel will study the report and see if it can establish any guilt or otherwise of any staff of the association in three weeks,"

he said.

Galadima confirmed that the board received a letter of resignation by Ogunjobi, but it could not take any action until the report of the panel was made available.

The panel comprised Dr Sam Sam-Jaja, Sabo Jumba and Chief Gabriel

Chukwuma who were asked to submit a report within three weeks.

With the investigation going on, Ogunjobi and the rest of the management team stand suspended.

The Sports Minister, Col. Masa Mohammed has recently queried the financial

conduct of the NFA management headed by Ogunjobi and alleged financial impropriety against it.

Meanwhile, the newly elected league board headed by Onyuki Obaseki will be sworn in on Tuesday by the football authorities.



Ogunjobi

Polish club blasts Ekwueme

Embattled Super Eagles midfielder Ifeanyi Ekwueme has been branded "a cheat" after signing for two different clubs which could now bag him a two-year ban by FIFA.

Ekwueme has come under fire from the coach of Polish club Lech Poznan, Czeslaw Michniewicz, and one of the team's star players.

No cause for alarm at

Newly-signed defender of reigning CAF Champions League winners Enyimba, Odch Oga, has expressed confidence the team can win the continental trophy for the third year running despite the departure of several top stars.

The former Lobi Stars of Makurdi's captain who recently joined forces with the 'People's Elephant' said "There is nothing God cannot do. By his special grace we are winning this Cup again for Nigeria.

"Enyimba are the team of the moment and they have the capacity to get the best from anywhere and that is what they have done."

Ode added: "We have some of the best players at the moment, and I am happy that Enyimba have maintained this tradition. I wish to assure you that by the time we blend, the sky will be the limit of this team which has some of the most experienced players in the club."

Reflecting on his years at Lobi, the smooth-playing

Michniewicz told KICK OFF what he felt about the former Wisla Plock player: "I'm very disappointed in Ekwueme. He is a cheat, simple as that. But this is his life and he's responsible for his own choices.

"But I'm sure no team in Poland will ever offer him a job.

Even if he finally comes back to Lech, there is no

Enyimba

former national under-23 defender said, "It was both good and bad as we won the FA Cup during my time. We could have retuned that title but for the many matches we were forced to play within a short time by the NFA. This did not give us a chance to rest after our league matches."

place for him in our team. I don't like this player anymore," he added.

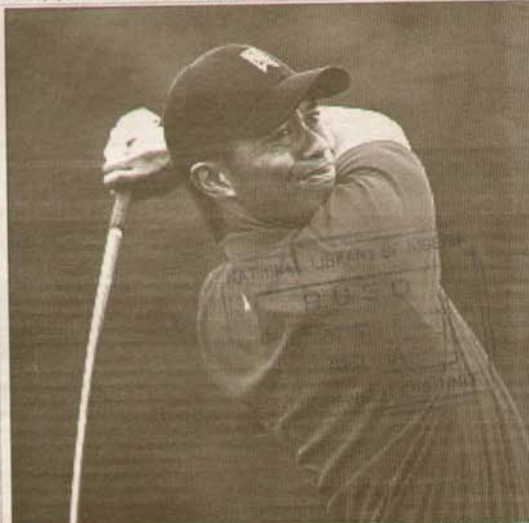
Piotr Swierczewski, one of Lech Poznan's players, also said.

"Ekwueme cheated our club. He told us he wasn't sure if he wanted to join Lech, because of other offers. But he signed with Lech and then escaped to Greece.

"I also got an offer from the United States. But it was after I decided to play for Lech, so I refused to accept the opportunity. But Ekwueme did it the other way - he cheated our club."

Before now, Ekwueme had had a running battle with another Polish club Wisla Plock, who terminated his contract after he over stayed his summer holidays for the second year running.

And as a result he did not kick a ball in the first round of the Polish league.



Tiger Woods tees off the 10th hole during the final round of the Mercedes Championships in Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii on Sunday.

Geremi eager to make Boro switch

Chelsea's Cameroon midfielder Geremi says he wants to leave the club to play first-team football, and would like to return to Middlesbrough.

The 26-year-old has been a fringe player since Jose Mourinho took over and would like to go back to the club where he played on loan in 2002-03.

"I'm not satisfied at Chelsea because I'm not playing," he said.

"I would prefer to leave and the option of Middlesbrough is excellent because I have great memories of my time there."

Geremi cost the Blues

£6.9m when he joined them from Real Madrid but says his international prospects are being harmed by a lack of first-team football.

"Mourinho is not giving me opportunities and I do not like being on the bench," he said.

Wikki Tourists FC of Bauchi has a new management committee following the sacking of the former board after the club performed poorly in the Globacom Premier League last season.

A statement issued by the Bauchi Ministry of Sports, said the new management

Obaseki leads League Board

Insurance of Benin chairman Onyiki Obaseki has been elected boss of the interim league management board while the appointment of an executive secretary will be announced after the board has been inaugurated.

"The appointment of an executive secretary is a knotty issue and when the board comes into being we

will take another look at it," said Sani Usman, one of the newly elected members of the league board.

The first vice-chairman of the board to run the professional league independent of the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) will be Lumumba Adie while the second vice is Jude Ezechukwu.

Six other persons have

League Board

been elected to the board. They are Abdulazeez Mohammed (Ranchers Bees), Sani Usman (Pillars), Emmanuel Zira (Adamawa), Bode Oyewole (3SC) as well as representatives from Sunshine Stars and Niger Tornados.

Former international Felix Owolabi and a representative from the

Stock Exchange were dropped from the list of government nominees while an additional name from this list will also be axed later.

Salihu Abubakar is widely expected to be returned as Executive Secretary of the 15-man board.

Berger ace joins Sudanese club

Julius Berger midfielder Ndubuisi Eze has been cleared by top Sudanese side Al-Hilal.

According to KICK OFF, the former Super Eagles player has been cleared to play for the top Sudanese side who took part in last year's Confederation Cup and played in the same group with Enugu Rangers.

Al-Hilal reportedly paid 40 000 US dollars for the player's clearance.

No further details of Eze's contract were revealed but the player was said to have traveled to Khartoum a few days ago to resume with his new club.

Eze, a member of the Nigerian Super Eagles during the build-up to the 2002 World Cup, has been a key figure in the Julius Berger midfield for about four seasons now.

Stop sacking coaches, club owners urged

Kaduna-based retired soccer referee, Musa Tanko, has appealed to club owners to refrain from indiscriminate sacking of coaches every season.

He said this was necessary to ensure the growth of the game.

Tanko, also a former NFA board member, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja that football managers and owners should sign-on coaches for at least two seasons for the sake of continuity.

"It is disturbing to see coaches being sacked for one reason or the other every season," he said.

He called on government appointees on the NFA board to stay away from the association since "the same government that appointed them has asked them to withdraw."

He also frowned at the controversies between the Sports Ministry and NFA over the recent reforms, saying that soccer would be retarded if government withdrew its sponsorship.

"The private sector has not done well to warrant government's withdrawal from soccer sponsorship," he said.

Bauchi govt fires Wikki mgt

Wikki Tourists FC of Bauchi has a new management committee following the sacking of the former board after the club performed poorly in the Globacom Premier League last season.

A statement issued by the Bauchi Ministry of Sports, said the new management

committee would be headed by Abdullahi Danbo, a member of the state FA.

The statement signed by an Information Officer in the ministry, Rabiu Bello, explained that the new management was mandated to work out strategies for a successful 2005 season.

"The new management committee is expected to

inject new lease of life into the club," Bello said.

Former international Patrick Paschal was named as the vice-chairman of the management committee.

The Wikki won 14 games, drew three and lost 17 matches, bagging 45 points in the 34 games played in the league.

This Space is for Sale

EDITORIAL

Ukraine: Time to move forward

One of the major traits of democracy is its ability—some may say necessity—to accommodate dissent. Another is the presence of a reliable structure through which aggrieved parties can seek redress. In reflecting these attributes during the crisis that surrounded the election of a new president in the last few months, Ukraine has shown the world how her democratic values are deepening.

Ukraine, which became an independent nation in 1991, now has in effect a new president-elect in the person of Viktor Andriyevich Yushchenko, a West-leaning former prime minister and one-time head of the country's apex bank. Though Yushchenko's rival in the gruelling series of elections, the Russia-friendly former Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich who formally resigned on the 5th of January 2005, contested the results in court, since his petitions have been quashed, indications are that Yushchenko would carry the day. In view of the upheaval the Ukrainian people have suffered in the past months, we add our voice to the call for cool heads and urge the nation's leaders to move Ukraine forward.

It is indeed time for Ukraine to signal closure on the presidential election issue for it has been simmering for several weeks and a continuation of uncertainty neither augurs well for Ukraine nor the international community at large. In the first round of voting on October 31, 2004, Yushchenko won 39.9 percent of the vote against Yanukovich's 39.3 percent. In the subsequent runoff on November 21, 2004, Yanukovich won 49.6 percent of the vote while Yushchenko got 46.6 percent in an election that international observers described as bedevilled by "widespread and grossly obvious voter fraud."

While these are times when we should all be circumspect of so-called international observers and their observations, we cannot fail to factor in what positive difference, however minute, should have accrued to Yushchenko on account of his endorsement by Socialist Party leader Alexander Moroz, who had earlier won six percent in the first round of voting. Therefore, the Ukrainian Supreme Court's decision—based on proven cases of electoral malpractices—to cancel the runoff and order fresh elections deserves kudos.

At this juncture, we believe it is only right to extol the people of Ukraine who—in a massive display of where a nation's sovereignty ultimately lies—flooded the main square in the capital city of Kiev, peacefully protesting what they saw as an attempt to rob them of a hard-won electoral victory. As Benjamin Franklin, one of the signatories of the American Declaration of Independence once wrote, "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Ukrainians, through their action in Kiev, showed with fervour that they deserve not only their liberty and safety, but the right to determine who leads them. The lessons therein for Nigeria and Nigerians cannot be overstated.

Further to this point, we commend the Bush administration for supporting the peaceful demonstrators when it mattered most. However, we must caution against their tendency to unilaterally meddle in the internal affairs of other countries. In this regard, we view with great concern the allegations that the USA, through the bilateral investor George Soros and direct White House involvement, channelled millions of dollars in the Yushchenko camp in Ukraine. The undue influence this sort of interference can have on the political processes of Ukraine can only be imagined and the situation must never be tolerated or allowed.

Also, we condemn the resort to guilt and violence in any form during the electorific procedure. While no one has as yet been found guilty of the offence, it has been medically proven that Yushchenko was surreptitiously poisoned with diazin. While he is no longer under danger of imminent death, the severe scars and poxmarks on his face and body resulting from the poisoning would leave him scarred, possibly for life. This sort of carrying-on, whether in Ukraine or elsewhere, is simply unacceptable. We therefore call for a thorough investigation into the matter and full application of the laws of the land where relevant.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call to the leaders of Ukraine to move their nation forward. The December 26, 2004 election witnessed a turn-out of nearly 80 percent of registered voters in the country. Under the careful scrutiny of an extraordinary number of observers—over 12,000 foreign observers and more than 300,000 Ukrainian observers recommended by the two candidates—Yushchenko won 52 percent of the vote to Yanukovich's 43 percent. Surely, though no election can ever be said to be hassle-free, this level of participation and monitoring must count for good. We couldn't agree more with the *Detroit Free Press* which said in its editorial of December 28, 2004 that, "As the United States demonstrated in its 2000 presidential election, democracy can sometimes be messy, but on balance, it works." Furthermore, we are encouraged that Yanukovich, while still going through the processes of challenging the latest results, is already speaking of himself as a tough opposition leader of the hopefully soon-to-be formed Yushchenko government. Tellingly, as we pointed out earlier, opposition should not only be accommodated but is seen by some as a necessity to validate a democracy.

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WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Wednesday, January 12, 2005

Nas: The Man who stayed loyal

By Mohammed Haruna

It is one of those supreme ironies of life that a man once condemned by the Nigerian mass media and pro-democracy organisations as the Goebels of Abacha is in his death being celebrated today as one of the greatest and most credible critics of Olusegun Obasanjo's Imperial Presidency, with a capital I. Paul Joseph Goebels, as we all know, was Adolf Hitler's minister of propaganda who once famously remarked that a lie repeated many times becomes accepted as truth. At the height of General Sani Abacha's venal and brutal dictatorship, Alhaji Wada Nas, first as minister of state for education and then as minister of special duties, became its propaganda chief. In this rather self-appointed job, Nas formed a one-man squad that returned fire for every fire from the opposition mass media and the pro-democracy groups whose umbrella organisation was NADECO, the National Democratic Coalition.

It all started in August 1993 when General Ibrahim Babangida was forced to "step aside"—his own words—as military president after canceling the June 12, 1993 presidential elections on June 23, an election which Chief M.K.O. Abiola seemed set to win. To many peoples' surprise, Babangida left Abacha behind as minister of defence after retiring all the other military chiefs. Abacha was left behind presumably to secure the military front for the interim government Babangida had appointed on stepping aside. This was under Chief Ernest Shonekan, himself, like Chief M.K.O. Abiola, from Abokuta, Ogun State.

Instead of securing the military for Shonekan, Abacha apparently decided to use it to oust the chief from power. First, he convinced the pro-democracy groups and Chief Abiola himself, that he will reinstate June 12. In their naivety, they encouraged him to throw out Chief Shonekan, which he promptly did in November 1993. However, instead of reinstating June 12, he played on the political ambitions and greed of the political class to secure himself in power. Too late, the pro-democracy groups tried to wrestle back power by getting Abiola to declare himself president. He did so by his Epitome Declaration of June 23, 1994, the first anniversary of the cancellation of the June 12 elections. Predictably, Abacha threw him into jail. Abiola never regained his freedom until he died in July 1998, several weeks after Abacha's sudden and mysterious death.

In between August 1994 when he set up a Constituent Assembly (CA) to give the country a new Constitution and his death in June 1998, Abacha consolidated himself in power by squaring or squashing all opposition to his rule. First, he got the CA to change its decision about when he should hand over power to an elected government the same Chief Tony Anenih who, a few weeks earlier, had moved a motion in the CA for a January 1, 1996 deadline for the handover also moved a reverse motion asking Abacha to take his time. The general did so and decided on October 1, 1998.

Soon, former Chief of Staff, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, the man behind the original motion and Anenih's erstwhile political master, and General Obasanjo were charged, along with other senior military officers like Col. Lawal Gwadabab, Abacha's Principal Staff Officer, with plotting to overthrow the regime. Some editors and reporters of *The News*, *Tell*, *TSM* and *Cassique*, along with the human rights activist, Dr. Helen Ransome-Kuti, were also charged as accessories after the fact and sentenced to various terms. The two generals were sentenced to death but later commuted to life. All this was early in 1995. Ken Saro Wiwa, the Ogoni rights activist who had become a thorn in the side of the government, was no so lucky; he was executed in November 1995 for the murder of four prominent pro-government Ogonis.

Meanwhile the NLC and ASUU had been banned. About the same time several opposition newspapers and magazines were either banned, their premises torched, or had their publications seized. Then bombs started exploding all over Lagos for which Chief Olu Falae, a NADECO chief, was arrested. In June 1996, Kodinat, Abiola's activist wife, was murdered on the streets of Lagos. Chiefs Abesham Alesanya, Ayo Adedunjo, Solanke Onasanya and Ganiyu Dawodu, all *Afenifere* chiefs, were accused and briefly detained for the murder. About that time, Chief Alfred Rewane, a financier of pro-democracy groups that was also murdered in his Warri home. Many others like Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enahoro and Senator Bola Tinubu, fleeing assassination, fled into exile.

On the political front, Abacha proceeded to register five political parties in September 1996, after the Constituent Assembly had given him a free hand to decide when to leave. One by one the five parties all declared him their presidential candidate. This was after his Chief Press Secretary, Chief David Attah, had pleaded with Nigerians in a Radio Nigeria interview to put pressure on a presumably reluctant Abacha to succeed himself as civilian president. Many prominent politicians soon fell over themselves to answer Attah's plea. This was climaxed with a two-million-man-march in Abuja ostensibly organised by Youths Forwards Ask for Abacha, YEAA, under one Daniel Kamsu, a U.S.-based political upstart, which told Abacha he had no choice in the matter of succeeding himself. YEAA was not alone in this matter of persuading the general to replace his khaki with a muffi. Others included the National Persuasion and Mobilization Committee, led by Chief Godwin Dabo.

The role of Alhaji Wada Nas in all this to defend Abacha and his administration from attacks by the opposition media and the pro-democracy groups at home and abroad and to also help disrupt any moves against Abacha's self-succession.

Nas, who died on January 3, made such an excellent job of it that he was soon dubbed by the opposition as the Minister of NADECO Affairs.

And then Abacha died suddenly and mysteriously. Just as suddenly but not so mysteriously, the Tony Anenih, the Daniel Kamsu, the Godwin Dabos and other prominent members of the political class who had told the general that Nigeria will collapse without his leadership, turned tail on him. Virtually alone of all those who would bear, see or speak no evil of Abacha, Nas stood by the general in death as he did in life. The only other well-known Abacha faithful to do so was (and is) Professor Sam Aluko, the chairman of the National Economic Intelligence Committee, NEIC, and an economic adviser of sorts to Abacha. Aluko, however, was no politician and he never joined the Abacha *razzavere* bandwagon.

Under normal circumstances Abacha's death and the ushering in of democracy should have ended Nas's public life having decided to remain loyal to the military dictator. Instead in the last five years of Obasanjo's administration, Nas has become, ironically, and of its most respected critics. As a columnist with the *Weekly Trust* and as an active politician with roots in the national Northern Elements Progressive Union, NEPU, of Malam Amina S. Sani, Nas's caustic, though measured, criticisms of Obasanjo, had become so respected that his words were often quoted with approval by the very opposition media that had, once upon a time, condemned him as Abacha's Goebels.

That Nas was able to remain relevant as a politician and as a political pundit by remaining loyal to his dead political master, is a sad, very sad, commentary on the record of Obasanjo's administration in the last five years.

It is today a fact that in spite of the venality and the brutality of the Abacha regime as I have sketched above, many Nigerians today compare it favourably to Obasanjo's government. They see Obasanjo's government as worse not so because as human beings our collective memory tends to be short but also because Obasanjo held so much promise after the six days of military rule that he got back much further than Abacha.

In the last five years, Obasanjo's record on almost all fronts—security, economic policy, human rights, then last—has been so dismal that Nas could, without the dark days of the Abacha regime as he often did in his columns and political statements and still have most Nigerians nodding in agreement.

Abacha's Goebels or no, Nas showed the world clearly that he was no fair-weather friend. He showed the world that he is the kind of person who will stand by his friends when they needed him most. That is, when they are dead and can no longer defend themselves from the criticisms of their madrasas.

May his soul rest in peace.

Tunji Oguni's obsession

When Tunji Oguni (1943-2004) replaced Dr. Doyin Okupe as President Obasanjo's spokesman several years back, I thought prayers were more in order for life—congratulations. This was for the simple reason that his boss was a hard sell on almost all counts. And I did pray for Tunji not only because in my many years of relationship with him I found him such a very likable person but also because he faced the danger of losing his highly impressive professional career and in an anti-climax. For, without doubt Tunji was one of the best journalists this country has produced. As editor at *Merch*, *Sunday Times*, *Voice of Nigeria* and *OPPCNA* and as managing director of the *Daily Trust*, Tunji was obsessed with propriety, professionalism, integrity and accuracy as exemplified by his dogged but, in the end futile, one-man battle as a trustee of the Nigerian Union of Journalists to get the Sanj 2000-Nigeria National Executive Council of the Union to account for a multi-million naira donation by the Babangida administration for building of the union's secretariat in Abuja.

The beauty of his obsessions was that he went about them with characteristic quietness, simplicity and humility.

As President Obasanjo's spokesperson, I feared that Tunji faced the danger of having his fine record rubbish. Mercifully any fears turned out to have been unfounded. However, it was no thanks to some of us, including myself, who must have tormented him by our severe and constant criticisms of his boss.

His patience with my criticisms must have finally snapped in October 2002 when he wrote a well-reasoned and cool-headed response to a series of articles I had written blaming his boss for just about everything that had gone wrong with our fledgling democracy. In the widely published rejoinder he titled "Mohammed Haruna's Obsession", he charged me with wanting to oust his boss from power "at all costs, by any means, especially foul."

Somehow that charge didn't bother me. The one that did, however, was when he said "Mohammed's October 2 column convinced me that he has finally parted ways with rigorous analysis which he has decided to replace with base propaganda." Coming from someone whose intellect and style I held in high regard and who, himself, was simply incapable of indulging in propaganda, Tunji's criticism of my professionalism forced me to tone down my criticisms of the president's policies and actions.

I am not sure Tunji left the Villa a happy man. On at least one occasion, an attempt was made to dramatically end him because some of those who had the president's ears thought he was not aggressive enough with the critics of his boss. He survived that episode of the cloak and dagger game that so much of Villa politics is. But not for long. Eventually he was replaced by Mrs. Bami Oye, herself a highly competent professional, in somewhat hazy circumstances.

I am not sure Tunji recovered fully from the shock of that rather sudden departure. All the same those close to him say he characteristically took it all in stride right up to his last moment on earth. May his soul rest in peace.