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Faruk Mutallab fallout:

Extra search for Nigerian air travellers

• *It's not fair — FG*

AIR passengers traveling to the United States from or through Nigeria must now undergo extra security screening, including full body scans and full-body pat-downs. Their carry-on luggage can also be checked. It was a direct fall-out from the events of Christmas Day last year, when the young Nigerian Umaru Faruk Mutallab allegedly tried to explode a chemical bomb

aboard an airliner as it was about to land at the American city of Detroit. The Federal Government reacted sharply to the new rules yesterday, describing them as unfair

The American Transportation Security Administration, which outlined the new rules in a directive sent to airlines Sunday, also listed Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Iran, Sudan,

Syria, Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, and Somalia as countries from whom passengers will also undergo similar thorough checks.

While four of the countries affected by the new rules are described by the US as "state-sponsors of terrorism," Nigeria falls into the category of the

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The world's tallest building

PHOTO: AFP



THE world's tallest skyscraper in Dubai opened yesterday in a glitzy ceremony. The building was renamed Burj Khalifa after the president of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahayan.

Murder: Jigawa ex-commissioner bags life jail

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

A Jigawa State High Court sitting in Ringim yesterday sentenced former state

Commissioner for Information Alhaji Abba Umar Kukuma and his errand boy, Alhaji Hamza Muhammad to life imprisonment

over the murder of a four year old child, Aminu Bala as well as the murder of a three year old child, Abba Magaji. Alhaji

Abba Kukuma and Alhaji Hamza were convicted on three counts of conspiracy and murder of the two children, offences punishable

by death under sections 97 and 221 of the penal code.

Delivering his judgment, Justice Ahmad Isa said "although the evidence

tendered before the court by the prosecution counsel were circumstantial, but the court was satisfied that

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Yar'adua 'll return alive - Ogbulafor

From Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri

NATIONAL Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Vincent Ogbulafor has

assured Nigerians that President Yar'adua would return to the country alive to continue his job as president. Ogbulafor told newsmen yes-

terday at the third annual Orlu Senatorial District cultural meeting at Ohakpu, Oru West LGA of Imo State that Nigerians should to continue to pray for the recovery

of the president.

He said the president was still in hospital in Saudi Arabia contrary to insinuations that he had left that country. Ogbulafor

described the report that the president could not be traced to the hospital as untrue, urging Nigerians to disregard the rumour in the interest of the country.

PIC: NAN



FROM left: Governor Danbaba Suntai of Taraba State, Governor Babangida Aliyu of Niger State, and Nigeria's former Permanent Representative to the UN, Alhaji Yusuf Maitama Sule, during a condolence visit to Niger State Governor over the death of Maryam Babangida in Minna, yesterday.

Don't carry drugs or abscond, Goje warns Christian pilgrims

From Aliyu M. Hamagam, Gombe

GOVERNOR Danjuma Goje of Gombe State has warned Christian pilgrims not to abscond or carry hard drugs while undertaking the pilgrimage to Israel.

He gave the warning in Gombe yesterday in a farewell address to the state's intending pilgrims, reminding them that pilgrimage was a spiritual journey and neither a business trip nor tourism or adventure, and therefore they should desist from any act capable of violating Israeli laws.

He urged the state contingent to reciprocate the government's gesture by praying for the state and the country, saying he was confident that they would repeat the success story of the previous pilgrimages.

The governor appealed to them to be good ambassadors of the state while in the holy land, by exhibiting exemplary characters during the trip and abiding by the guidelines of movement and adhering to instructions of their guides. He added that the cardinal policy of the present administration was to accommodate all religious groups and interests which was in line with the posture of guaranteeing equal opportunities and fair deal to all segments of the society in the overall interest of promoting unity and harmony in the state.

In his keynote address, the secretary of the state Christian Pilgrimage Board Mr. Jessu Maaaji said out of the 253 intending pilgrims from the state, 60 percent were government sponsored. He assured the state government of a hitch-free pilgrimage.



GOV. Danjuma Goje

Fracas: Police seal Edo Labour Party office

From Vincent Egunyanga, Benin

POLICE in Edo State yesterday sealed off the secretariat of the Labour Party in the state as two factions of the party engaged in a free for all fight in a bid to secure control of the party secretariat.

It would be recalled that the Dr. Ogbeide led interim executive was dissolved by a faction of the party last week which directed the transition committee to take over the affairs of the party and conduct congresses for the party from ward to state level.

However, the Ogbeide executive remained adamant and stayed put at the secretariat until yesterday when members of the interim transition committee chased them out of the secretariat and locked it. The situation at the secretariat was brought under control by policemen who were drafted to forestall a breakdown of law and order.

In a press statement, the Publicity Secretary of the Transition Committee Mr. Tony Erha explained that the com-

mittee took over the party secretariat in accordance with the constitutional requirements of the party to enable it carry out its mandate of conducting congresses within three months of its inauguration.

"We are using this opportunity to call on the former protem executive of Dr. John Ogbeide to formally hand over the property of the party in their possession to the Transition Committee under the leadership of Barr. Eddy Osifo sequel to a notice of handover earlier written to the former protem Chairman", the statement said.

Reacting to the development in the party, Dr. Ogbeide insisted that he was still in charge, alleging that the Transition Committee stole the keys to the secretariat.

When contacted, Edo Police Command spokesman ASP Peter Ogboi said it was the duty of the police to protect lives and property. He said the police would remain in the party office until normalcy returned.

2 shot in Ilorin Stop & Search operation

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

TWO persons were shot by the police for allegedly failing to stop for search along the New Yidi Road in Ilorin Sunday night.

The victims were among six passengers who boarded a commercial taxi with registration number XB 384PTG Sunday night. It was gathered that policemen opened fire on the taxi when the driver failed to stop for search.

"A woman and another passenger died instantly while a baby is at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UITH) receiving treatment", said a witness.

Our correspondent gathered that the driver, Isiaka Rasaki, was also still receiving treatment at the UITH at the time of filing this report.

Meanwhile, the Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the Kwara State Police Command Mr. Dabo Ezekiel (ASP) who confirmed the incident said all four officers on patrol on the day of the incident had been arrested and would be dealt with accordingly if found guilty. He said the driver of the taxi was responding to treatment.

EFCC arraigns, 6 bank officials over N18bn fraud

By Boco Edet

SIX top officials of Intercontinental Bank and five companies were yesterday arraigned before Justice Tijani Abubakar of the Federal High Court Lagos division, by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for diverting over N27 billion depositors' fund.

The accused persons: Akinwumi Solomon Fabunmi, Toyin Odesile, Ayoola Ayinde, Bayo Dada, Oluwatoyin Oyelade

and Ayodele Thomashowever pleaded not guilty to all the 12-count charge bordering on money laundering, illegal transfer of depositors fund, criminal conspiracy, fraudulent conversion and fraudulent withdrawal.

The seventh accused person, Mr. Raymond Obieri, who was a Director of the bank, could not be charged along with them, because the prosecution informed the Court that the suspect was ill. The trial judge thereafter struck out his name so that

he could be arraigned on another date.

The Judge also entered a plea of not guilty for the companies that were arraigned together with the accused persons. The companies are; Regal Investment Ltd, Tropics Securities Ltd, Tropics Properties Ltd, Tropics Finance and Investment Ltd and Bankinson Nig Ltd, all owned by the former managing director of the bank, Mr. Erastus Akingbola. The funds that were allegedly withdrawn from the bank by the accused persons on

the pretence that they were using it to purchase shares, between March and June 2009 stood at over N18 billion.

They were said to have fraudulently transferred \$11.84million on March 12, N2.3billion on May 9, N2.7billion on May 15, N2.8billion on May 15, N3billion on May 21, N10billion on May 11, and N8.6billion between May 27 and June 30, all in 2009. In some of the counts, Akingbola and his wife were mentioned. The accused per-

sons were jointly represented by 11 Lawyers. Prosecution counsel, Mr. A Yusuf had asked the court to remand the accused persons in prison custody, but the defence counsel pleaded with the Judge to remand them in the EFCC custody. Both parties however agreed that application for bail would be heard on Wednesday January 6.

The Judge ordered that the six accused persons be remanded in the EFCC custody while he adjourned the case to January 6.

PIC: YUSHAU ADAMU

Nigeria has 26 million adult

illiterates – Minister

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma

THERE are about 25,618,185 million adult illiterates in the country, Minister of State for Education Hajiya Aishatu Jibril Dukku, has said.

The minister, who stated this at the launching of the 2009 Global Education For All (EFA) week celebration in Gombe, said 9,556,703 out of the number are males while 16,061,482 are female representing about 37.3 percent and 62.7 percent respectively.

Hajiya Dukku said adult literacy is a key to achieving Education For All, stressing that literate adults rarely raise illiterate children.

"Many governments have paid little or insufficient attention to youth and adult learning need. Many countries do not have literacy programmes that capture adults and youths who have not had the opportunity to learn how to read and write," she said.

She stressed that literacy expands people's choices, give youths more control over their lives, increases their ability to participate in society and enhances self-esteem.

The minister also said that the Federal Government is strongly committed to ensuring that no child is denied the opportunity to complete quality primary education because it is one of the basic principles of fundamental human right.

"Nigeria recognizes that the International Agreement of the 2015 target date for achieving Education For All (EFA) will require commitment and political will from all levels of government. International partners and other stakeholders", she said.

In his goodwill message, Executive Secretary of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) Dr Ahmed Modibbo Mohammed, said this year's celebration is coming on the heels of UBEC's continued effort at engaging states and encouraging them to take proactive steps towards taking full advantage of federal government intervention in the basic education sub-sector.

"We are delighted that over the years, UBEC has partnered effectively with the states in the implementation of notable activities geared towards achieving the overall objectives of the Compulsory free Universal Basic Education in Nigeria," he said.

The Global EFA Week celebration is an annual event aimed at marking the anniversary of the World Education Forum of Dakar 2000, where Nigeria joined other world governments to renew their commitments to achieve the six EFA goals by the year 2015.



JIGAWA State ex-commissioner Alhaji Abba Umar Kukuma and Alhaji Hamza Muhammad being escorted by armed mobile police and prison warders, after their sentencing to life imprisonment for the murder in Ringim yesterday.

Fuel scarcity not caused by debt, says NNPC

By Hamisu Muhammad

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) yesterday said the debt being owed contractors by the corporation was not the cause of fuel scarcity in the country.

NNPC's Group General Manager, Public Affairs Division, Dr. Levi Ajuonuma said the corporation's contractors did not suspend importation of products on account of the debt being owed them by the corporation.

"It is not true that our contractors have suspended importation of products on account of debts owed them. NNPC is committed to meeting its financial obligation to them. In fact, as at today arrangement is being made to pay them, and they have assured of their commitment to meet their own side of the product supply contract. So there is no threat whatsoever to the supply side of the business to warrant insinuation of worse times as far as the fuel situation is concerned," Ajuonuma stated.

He said about 18 million litres of pet-

rol is currently being distributed to fuel marketers from Ore Depot, Ondo State, to ensure adequate supply of petrol to motorists.

Dr. Ajuonuma maintained that the corporation has enough stock of petroleum products that could serve the nation for the next 24 days, adding that cargo ships have been scheduled to supply the country with enough products all through the year.

The NNPC spokesman stated that arrangements have been concluded by the corporation to engage 250 trucks to boost the distribution of fuel to retail outlets across the country.

He appealed to Major Oil Marketing Association of Nigeria (MOMAN), Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), the Nigerian Navy, Depot and Petroleum Products Marketers Association (DAPMA) and other stakeholders in the Petroleum industry, to partner with the NNPC to ensure effective distribution of petroleum products across the country. "I have always said that the more the merrier and

so the NNPC supports the active participation of all stakeholders. However, the challenge of distribution is something that cuts across the industry and so the Corporation is soliciting the collaboration of all stakeholders to get products across to the end users because distribution is internal and we must work hand-in-hand to address the situation", Dr. Ajuonuma said.

It is not true that our contractors have suspended importation of products on account of debts owed them.

PIC: KENNEDY EGBONODJE



FROM left, Alhaji Seini Oumarou, former Prime Minister of Niger Republic and current President du Assemblée Nationale being introduced by General Abdulsalami Abubakar to retired Air Vice Marshal Hamza Abdullahi at the Babangida residence in Minna on Saturday. This corrects our wrong photo caption of yesterday, which misidentified the visitor from Niger Republic.

Bomb suspect spent weeks in Ghana before flight

A Nigerian man charged with trying to blow up a U.S. airliner bound for Detroit on Christmas Day spent weeks in Ghana immediately before starting his journey, a Ghanaian official said on Monday.

Ghana was unaware of any security alert on Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 23, when he arrived in the West African country, Deputy Information Minister James Agyenim-Boateng told Reuters.

"He got in and was processed by immigration as any other ECOWAS citizen because we had no knowledge of any security alert on him," Agyenim-Boateng said.

Abdulmutallab arrived in Ghana on Dec. 9 from Dubai and left on Dec. 24 for Lagos, Nigeria,

from where he flew to Amsterdam and then to Detroit.

While in Ghana Abdulmutallab, who gave a Dubai address, did nothing to arouse suspicion, Agyenim-Boateng said.

Ghana has bought full body scanners to be installed at the Kotoka International Airport in Accra as part of measures to tighten security, he said. Explosives were found strapped to Abdulmutallab's leg.

Nigeria and the Netherlands have also said they will introduce full body scanners, Italy will use them on passengers boarding some flights, and Britain's BAA airport operator says it will move quickly to install them at London's Heathrow airport.

NOC Election: Ndanusa accuses Gara Gombe of abusing court process

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin

MINISTER of Sports Engr. Sani Ndanusa has said that the suit challenging his candidacy in the election for the National Olympic Committee (NOC) President position before an Abuja High Court is a flagrant abuse of court process.

Former Chairman of the Gombe State Football Association, Alhaji Gara Shuaibu Gombe filed a motion seeking to serve NOC with the court process where-in he is challeng-

ing the candidacy of the Minister of Sports in the said election.

The court headed by Justice Othman Musa had last week directed that Alh. Gombe's motion be moved yesterday but had to adjourn the matter to January 7, 2010.

In a counter affidavit to the originating summons filed by Gombe, Ndanusa contended that the plaintiff is not an executive member of any sporting organization affiliated to the NOC or a member of

the NOC body for him to have claimed that he has the locus standi to file the suit.

According to him, the subject matter in the suit relates to the activities of the NOC which is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Abuja High Court.

The former chairman of Gombe State Football Association is praying the court for an order of interim injunction restraining the NOC from giving recognition to Ndanusa as candidate in the said election.

Police decry death of traffic wardens

By Misbahu Bashir

THE death of policemen who are being run over by motorists while on traffic duty is alarming, the Federal Capital Territory Commissioner of Police John Haruna has said.

Speaking at a press briefing in Abuja, Haruna said that a number of traffic policemen died after being run over by reckless drivers in Abuja.

"Most of the cases are hit-and-run," he said.

He said the policemen in Abuja face a lot of death threats while on duty, and warned motorists to adhere to speed limit or risk arrest.

He said police will embark of patrols to determine the road to sanitise the roads.

Haruna said policemen in patrol respond to distress call quickly and spend less than five minutes to arrive at crime scene after receiving call, adding that officers are drafted all over Abuja and can be summoned by people who encounter problem. He said policemen are ready to offer assistance to those in need.

The CP said the number of policemen deployed for night patrol in Abuja has been increased and mostly twice the number of policemen on patrol during the day.



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Britain says it passed bombing suspect's data to US

BRITISH intelligence passed on to U.S. authorities information about a Nigerian accused of trying to blow up a Detroit-bound airliner but he was not singled out as a particular risk, Prime Minister Gordon Brown's office said yesterday.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's name was included in a dossier of people who made contact with known extremists in the United

Kingdom but officials believe he was radicalized after he left the country in 2008, according to Brown's spokesman, Simon Lewis.

The disclosure came a day after British security officials said they were aware that Abdulmutallab was in contact with known radicals shortly after he came to the U.K. in 2005 but did not consider him a sufficient threat to single him out and alert U.S. authorities.

Investigators say Abdulmutallab, a 23-year-old Nigerian who studied engineering in London and later went to Yemen, sneaked an explosive device aboard his Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day but was not able to ignite it as planned.

President Barack Obama has said there was a systemic failure to prevent the attack and ordered

a thorough review of security shortcomings. The president has summoned Homeland Security officials to meet with him in the White House on Tuesday.

"Clearly there was security information about this individual's activities, and that was information that was shared with the U.S. authorities," Lewis said. "That is the key point." Associated Press



TOP Intercontinental Bank officials Bayo Dada (left), Ayodele Thomas (middle) and Akinwumi Solomon Fabunmi after EFCC arraigned them at the Federal High Court, Ikoyi, Lagos, yesterday.

Extra search for Nigerian air travellers

Continued from page 1

other 10, described as being "of interest" to the US. The rules went into effect yesterday, but initial reports from several European countries indicated that they were still scrambling to digest and implement them.

Many other passengers who are not from those 14 countries or traveling through them will continue to see additional screening measures, according to a senior TSA official. For instance, in another refinement of measures put in place after the Christmas incident, it is now up to the plane's captain whether to require passengers to put away electronic devices during the flight and to remain seated for the final hour

before landing.

TSA also said that all passengers on U.S.-bound international flights will be subject to random screening and airports were directed to increase "threat-based" screening of passengers acting in a suspicious manner.

Passengers travelling to the US from Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria, countries described by the US as "state sponsors of terrorism," could also be subject to full-body scanning and explosive detection technology as part of their screening. The alleged plane bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab reportedly told U.S. investigators he received training and instructions from al-Qaida operatives in Yemen. If the security measures are not followed, the TSA can

penalize the airlines. The penalties could include warnings, fines and recalcitrant airlines could ultimately be barred from flying to the U.S.

Information and Communications Minister Professor Dora Akunyili, who spoke for the government yesterday, described as "unfair" Nigeria's inclusion alongside Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen on a list of countries whose air travellers will face tighter screening on journeys to the United States. She said Faruk's act was a "one-off" and that it was unfair to punish the rest of the nation as a result.

"Abdulmutallab's behaviour is not reflective of Nigeria and should therefore not be used as a yardstick to judge all Nigeri-

ans. It is unfair to discriminate against over 150 million people because of the behaviour of one person," Akunyili said. "It is unfair to include Nigeria on the U.S. list for tighter screening because Nigerians do not have terrorist tendency," the minister also said.

Mrs Akunyili also said, "Abdulmutallab was a well-behaved child from a responsible family who developed the ugly tendency to do what he tried to do because of the exposure outside the shores of Nigeria. Generally, no Nigerian wants to die. We are a peace-loving and happy people."

The Federal government said last week that it will start using full-body scanners at international airports as a fall-out from the Faruk affair.

Jigawa ex-commissioner bags life jail

Continued from page 1

accused persons were guilty of all the charges levelled against them because neither the accused persons nor their counsel proved their innocence.

"No satisfactory explanation was given to the court by the accused persons and or their counsel that could enable this court to hold that the evidence tendered by the prosecution counsel were weak enough to relay upon to convict the accused persons" the judge said.

In his ruling which lasted over two hours, Justice Ahmad said the prosecution counsel had to prove to the court beyond reasonable doubt that the corpses of the two children were found in the boot of the former commissioner's car, that the two accused persons conspired to evacuate the corpses and dump same along Kano-Birnin-Kudu highway, and also the accused persons concealed facts by not reporting the matter to the police.

The judge said, "In addition to that, the second accused person has failed to defend himself before this court on why he ran to Birnin-Kebbi, Kebbi State shortly after the unfortunate murder of the two children." He said the court was therefore satisfied with evidence tendered before it by the prosecution counsel.

Justice Ahmad said, "After reviewing judgements of similar nature, this honourable court has found the accused persons guilty of the charges levelled against them, but owing to the lack of direct evidence that could link the accused persons to the murder of the two children, the court relied on section 222 of the Penal Code and sentenced the two accused persons to life imprisonment."

While the case lasted, the prosecution counsel called seven witnesses and tendered six exhibits, while the defence counsel tendered four witnesses in the whole case. Speaking to Daily Trust shortly after the judgement, counsel to the two accused persons, Barrister Adamu Abubakar said his clients would file an appeal at Kaduna Division of the Appeal Court within two days.

Also speaking to our correspondent, prosecution counsel, who is also the state Director Public Prosecution, Barrister Sulaiman Umar expressed satisfaction with the judgement, saying "ours is to bring the case to court and follow due processes in presenting and defending the case, but only the court can determine the guilt or otherwise of the accused persons and the court has done its best in this case."

Barrister Sulaiman said the state government is ready to defend the case in any court in case the accused persons decide to appeal. Heavy security was put in place at the premises of the court yesterday as armed mobile policemen were deployed to the court. Thorough search was conducted at the main entrance for anyone going into the premises.

'Army key to survival of Nigeria's democracy'

From Isa Liman, Zaria

THE Provost of the Federal College of Education, Zaria Dr Mouktar Ibrahim Maccido says the Nigerian Army has a key role to play in ensuring the growth and survival of the country's democracy. Speaking at the 2009 Depot Nigerian Army's annual West African Social Activities (WASA) Dr Maccido who was the Guest of Honour said the Nigerian Army had fought gallantly to keep the country as

one indivisible entity.

"The Army in every country, not only in Nigeria, is key to its survival. The role of the Nigerian Army in keeping this country together can therefore not be overemphasized. This daunting task would always be rested on your shoulders as you are key players in the survival of the country's democracy. Activities such as WASA are also critical in keeping the men and officers of the Nigerian Army in the right frame of mind. I am aware that

the WASA dates back to the world wars during which the Nigerian Army fought gallantly under the auspices of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). As an aftermath of the wars, a time-out between the soldiers and their families became necessary and since then WASA became the forum of relaxation. It has become a cultural get together for members of the Nigerian Army and their families", he said.

He added that WASA provided an

opportunity for the men and officers to meet and share experiences with their civilian friends.

Earlier in his welcome address, the Commandant, Depot Nigerian Army Brig Gen Afandi Shehu Bukar Ngorgi said the annual event was not only an opportunity to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the country, but also to bring together families of serving military personnel, thereby enhancing peaceful co-existence in the barracks.

PIC: OLADIPUPO ODUNEWU



EMIR of Mubi Alhaji Abubakar Isa (left), presenting a traditional sword of honour to the President, Adamawa Community in Abuja, Alhaji Abubakar Abdullahi, at a reception in his honour in Mubi over his retirement.

NIPPSS pegs admission

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

THE National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPPSS) is to streamline its admission to permanent secretaries, directors and army colonels or equivalent, the Director General, Professor Danfulani Ahmed, has said.

Professor Ahmed who spoke on a Radio Kwara personality interview programme, 'Playing host', said ahead of the 2011 elections, the institute had drawn up programmes for the political class where issues that have to do with political reforms, violence, intimidation and corruption would be discussed.

Kidnappers take UniBen worker, demand N20m

From Vincent Egunyanga, Benin

SUSPECTED kidnappers Sunday abducted a female member of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Ugbowo area of Benin who was just about to enter the church.

The victim identified as Mrs. Sera Longe, it was learnt, works in the Bursary Department of the University of Benin.

A witness told our correspondent that Mrs. Longe had just arrived the church in her Toyota Camry car when three armed men attacked and took her away.

According to the witness, efforts by the members of the church to stop the suspected kidnappers were unsuccessful as the kidnappers pointed guns at them and threatened to shoot. The men then took Mrs. Longe into a waiting Audi Saloon car and zoomed-off. Mrs Longe's family confirmed the kidnap yesterday, but said they were warned not to involve the police.

Ondo workers resume work, go spiritual

From Leye Adewumi, Akure

CIVIL Servants in Ondo State yesterday converged on the governor's office in Alagbaka, Akure to offer prayers to God for a smooth 2010.

Bishop Felix Adejomo of the Agape Christian Assembly in company of other ministers of God led the prayer session. Gov-

ernor Olusegun Mimiko, his wife Olukemi, the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice Eyi-tayo Jegede and other top government officials were present at the prayer session. Governor Mimiko charged workers in the state to work in line with the desire of God. He warned that any worker caught sabotaging government's

efforts at transforming the state would be shown the way out.

He assured that any decision by his administration would be in the general interest of the people of the state, adding that he would not allow any person or group to sabotage the efforts of the government.

The governor said he had directed the heads of ministries,

departments and agencies of government to re-orientate their staff on government's programmes.

In his message, Bishop Adejumo said there was a need for people, especially civil servants to begin the New Year with God. He charged the workers to be dedicated and contribute their quota to the growth of the state.

Hospital refutes allegation on accident victims

From Aliyu M. Hamagam, Gombe

THE Federal Medical Center (FMC) Gombe has denied reports in some national dailies that it refused to attend to two accident victims because they were not brought in with police escorts.

The Medical Director of the

center Dr. Aliyu Usman El-Nafaty who spoke with our correspondent at the weekend in Gombe said there was a principal medical officer on duty in the Accident and Emergency Department of the hospital on the day the accident victims were brought in, saying there was no way they would not have been

attended to.

He maintained that the hospital was bound by the Federal Government policy which says that all emergency cases must be attended to before any other consideration.

"It is therefore false for anyone to claim that accident

victims were rejected due to absence of police escorts" he said.

It would be recalled that some national dailies had reported that the two persons were victims of an auto crash which took place on December 19, 2009 leaving nine persons dead.

PIC: SANI MAIKATANGA



KANO State judicial staff slaughtering a cow after saying prayers for a way out on their strike yesterday at the Audu Boko Secretariat, Kano.

'Ex-CJN is empowered to swear in successor'

By Boco Edet

MINISTRY of Justice yesterday defended the action of the immediate past Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) Justice Idris Legbo Kutigi to swear in the incumbent Justice Aloysius Iyorgyer Katsina-Alu in the absence of Nigeria's President Umaru Yar'adua.

Solicitor-General of the Federation and Permanent Secretary of the ministry Abdullahi Ahmed said the past CJN was constitutionally empowered to administer oath of allegiance and judicial oath on his successor by the provisions of the Second Schedule of the Oaths Act.

It was widely reported in the media on Monday that Vice President Goodluck Jonathan confessed to be in a state of confusion over the vacuum the CJN's retirement would cause the judiciary in view of the absence of President Yar'adua to swear in a successor.

The Ministry of Justice made available the provisions of the Second Schedule of the Oaths Act which authorised the action to clear doubts in view of various reactions from the public bordering on legality.

According to the Act, either the President or the incumbent Chief Justice of Nigeria is empowered to tender oath of allegiance on the newly appointed CJN.

Also the judicial oath is to be tendered by the President or current CJN on the appointee for the same office.

'Attempted suicide won't tarnish Nigeria's image'

From Ibrahim Chonoko, London

THE alleged attempt to blow up an American airliner by Umar Farouk Mutallab would not adversely tarnish Nigeria's image abroad, President of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organization in Europe (NIDOE) Dr Alistair Soyode has said.

Alistair told the Daily

Trust in London that Nigeria's image "may only be slightly dented" as a result of the incident, explaining that the country was already on the spotlight for other reasons.

"Terrorism is not something associated with Nigeria as a country. Nigerians are not known to even carry guns. The incident was totally unthinkable. Nobody expected it and many people

still can't believe it", he said.

"Nigeria as a country is law-abiding. Nigerians are humble and love to live a good life", he said, adding that as the heartiest people in the world who always want to be happy, Nigerians do not fit the profile of suicide bombers.

He further said international border controls may have more searchlights on Nigerians and may dig out the

names of people they think are extremists and begin to search deep.

Echoing President Obama's laments, Dr Soyode said the global anti terrorism system was flawed. "Something went wrong. The security agencies didn't take the information made available to them by Farouk's father".

"Who should we be asking what went wrong: is it Nigeria,

which has, through his father, informed the agencies, or the international agencies, which allowed this guy to travel through?" he queried.

Investigations must also find out where Farouk found and put on his body the substances that could have blown the plane; whether it was in Nigeria, Ghana, or the Netherlands, where he took a connecting flight to Detroit.

Reps flay US MPs over comment on Farouk

By Nasidi A. Yahaya

THE House of Representatives yesterday said the call by US Congressman Peter King and a member of US House of Representatives, Homeland Security Committee, that Farouk should be tried

in a secret military court is "unfair and unjustifiable."

Chairman of Committee on Diaspora Rep Abike Dabiri (AC Lagos State) who condemned the alleged action of Farouk Umaru AbdulMutallab appealed to Nigerians in Diaspora to

exercise restraint and caution when being subjected to screening at various airports.

She also advised the security agencies globally not to use the event of Dec. 25, 2009 as an excuse to molest and harass innocent Nigerians in Diaspora.

She said: "Having watched with keen interest the investigation being carried out by the security agencies in the US on the alleged bomber, Farouk, the Committee is hereby insisting for an open court trial rather than a military one for the suspected

bomber."

"This is important in order to allow the global community listen to Farouk talk in an open court, understand his motivation and take the necessary learning as individuals and as nations," she added.



JUSTICE Aloysius Katsina-Alu

More suspects questioned over CAC official's murder

By Misbahu Bashir

HOMICIDE detectives in Abuja said they are interrogating more suspects including a woman over the killing of Abubakar Umar Abba, an Assistant Director with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

A police source told *Daily Trust* that more suspects including a woman are being quizzed by the police over the murder of

Abba and the police are getting useful information on the matter. He said the woman who was an eye witness has been in the custody of the police for some time. Another witness was said to have made vital testimonies to the detectives and allowed to go.

The remains of Abba's body were found inside his car along Dan Suleiman Street in Utako, Abuja. Abba who was a special assistant to CAC's Registrar-General Bello Mahmud was shot in the head and set ablaze in his car by unknown gunmen.

The case which was earlier investigated by the Federal Capital Police Command was later transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department of the Force Headquarters (FCID) in Abuja for thorough investigation. Six officials of the CAC were questioned by the FCT police on the matter and were released on bail. The police in Abuja have pledged to conduct painstaking investigation including ascertaining whether or not Abba was shot by hired assassins.

Gov urges declaration of disaster zone in S/East

From Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri

GOVERNOR Ikedi Ohakim of Imo State has renewed the call by the governors of the South East states on the Federal Govern-

ment to declare the zone a disaster area to enable it deal with erosion problem in the zone.

Ohakim who spoke yesterday in Owerri at a state holders' forum said besides visits to erosion sites in the zone by the Sen-

ate Committee of the National Assembly, the zone also made new presentations at the Senate retreat in Enugu on November 2000.

He said of the 460 erosion sites identified in the zone, 73

had been studied and designed with their Bill of Engineering Measurement and Evaluation (BEME) which had been costed and ready for award to competent contractors. He said the state Ministry of Petroleum and

Environment had completed the control of four erosion sites in Nkwo-Mbaa in Isiala Mbano LGA, Ebenator-Ekwe in Isu LGA, Umuorji Mgbidi in Oru West LGA and Okwu Uratta, Owerri North LGA.

Fuel scarcity costs Kano IPMAN N200m

From Jaafar Jaafar, Kano

CHAIRMAN of the Kano State chapter of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) Alhaji Bashir Bello said yesterday that the chapter had lost over N200 million as a result of the fuel scarcity in the country.

Speaking to newsmen in Kano, Alhaji Bello said due to the fact that the products were not easily obtained from the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) the marketers resorted to buying from the major marketers whose prices he said were higher than the NNPC. He said they were recording losses because they got the products from Lagos depots at N63 per litre, noting that the transportation and other logistic costs made them to sell at a loss.

According to him, petrol is sold above the stipulated price of N65 by the marketers in other states, saying only Kano marketers were forced to abide by the regulated price. "In other states, a litre is sold at N90 to 100, and the product is available to motorists," he said. The chairman faulted a statement credited to the Minister of State for Information Alhaji Ikra Aliyu Bilbis on deregulation, saying deregulation of other products like diesel and kerosene had not brought progress to the nation.



GOV. Ibrahim Shekarau



GOVERNOR Sullivan Chime of Enugu State (left) being anointed by the Anglican Bishop of Enugu State, Bishop Emmanuel Chukwuma, during a New Year prayer session in Enugu Government House yesterday.

Kaduna budget not realistic— AC

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

THE Action Congress (AC) has expressed reservation on the N196.7 billion 2010 budget presented by the Kaduna State Governor Namadi Sambo to the state House of Assembly, describing it as unrealistic.

The AC in a statement signed by its state Publicity Secretary Barrister Mohammed Musa Soba said the budget was a carry over and duplication of the failure of the 2009 budget of the state.

The party alleged that the budget had an in-built borrowing mechanism of over N100 billion which he said would give the state governor free hands to borrow funds at the slightest opportunity.

"Under the Namadi administration, every financial year begins and ends with either a loan facility or grant that we all understand to be debts despite denials by the government. Yet, there is nothing on ground to suggest that such huge resources are judiciously spent," he added.

While condemning the moves by the state governor to source for funds through the sale of N20 billion bonds, the party urged the state House of Assembly not to approve the N20 billion bond, saying instead, it

should commence moves to impeach the governor for abuse of budgetary procedures and disrespect for fiscal discipline.

"We cannot continue to live on borrowed resources while our hard earned resources are channelled into private business empires. Kaduna State has had enough of executive lawlessness and financial mismanagement under the present administration," the statement said.

But the Special Adviser to the Governor on Media and Public Affairs Alhaji Umaru Sani while reacting to the statement described it as malicious and unguarded, adding that the budget was conceived with the aim of meeting the yearnings and aspirations of the people of the state. In a telephone interview, the governor's aide described the budget proposal as realizable. He said the budget was all-encompassing and that if passed by the state Assembly, it would go a long way in addressing the problems of the state.

"We cannot waste our time responding to this malicious statement. In the first place, Soba is not the Publicity Secretary of the AC in Kaduna State. Our own concern is to deliver the dividends of democracy to the people who voted for the governor. So we are not going to allow anybody to distract us," he said.

Plateau judiciary workers suspend strike

From Ahmed Mohammed, Jos

THE Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) Plateau State chapter has suspended the two-month old industrial action by judiciary workers all over the country over the non implementation of the consolidated Judiciary Salary Structure by the federal and state governments.

The Chairman of the union Comrade Philip Adik told newsmen in Jos yesterday that it decided to suspend the strike as a result of agreements reached with the state government over the payment of the consolidated salary structure (CONJUSS).

He said at the end of their negotiations, the state government agreed to pay the workers the consolidated salary and appealed to them to resume work since government was committed to fulfil the agreement.

Comrade Adik assured workers that the union was doing everything within its powers to ensure the implementation of the agreement by the government. He said the state chapter of the union had since informed the national secretariat of JUSUN about the development.

Alhaji Bashir Bello said yesterday that the chapter had lost over N200 million as a result of the fuel scarcity in the country. He said they were recording losses because they got the products from Lagos depots at N63 per litre, noting that the transportation and other logistic costs made them to sell at a loss. According to him, petrol is sold above the stipulated price of N65 by the marketers in other states, saying only Kano marketers were forced to abide by the regulated price. "In other states, a litre is sold at N90 to 100, and the product is available to motorists," he said. The chairman faulted a statement credited to the Minister of State for Information Alhaji Ikra Aliyu Bilbis on deregulation, saying deregulation of other products like diesel and kerosene had not brought progress to the nation.

Reps angry with FG over food insecurity

By Nasidi A. Yahaya

THE House of Representatives has expressed displeasure over the inability of Federal Government to address the problem of food insecurity in the country.

Chairman of committee on Agriculture Rep Gbenga Makanjuola told newsmen in Abuja that the country failed to address insecurity in the sector despite the huge investment in the nation's agricultural sector over the past three years.

He however tasked Federal Government to put in place a strategic framework that would enhance quick implementation of agricultural projects in order to ensure adequate food supply to the citizenry.

He said: "There is little or nothing to show for the more than N100 billion invested in the sector in the last three years as many Nigerians are still hungry", adding that the committee would take definite actions this year in the bid to ensure structural transformation of the sector.

Makanjuola explained that the committee during the consideration of the 2010 budget proposal for the ministry, had wanted to suspend allocation of funds to the sector in the 2010 budget, but reversed the decision after consideration of its impact on other sub-sectors.

He said "if we go that way, several sub-sectors within the agricultural sector will suffer some set back and this informed our decision against taking that decision."

The chairman also blamed officials of Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources for the lapses in the implementation of some agricultural programmes which led to the slow pace of development in the agricultural sector.

Pastor, 3 others jailed for fraud

By Boco Edet

A Pastor in Lagos has been sentenced to four years imprisonment by the Lagos High Court for defrauding members of an organisation, Christian Millionaire Club, which he set up for personal gain.

Pastor Michael Spring Inyang was found guilty on all 17 count charges filed against him by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) after his members petitioned him for spending their monies invested in the club.

Inyang used the club to persuade members to part with their resources with an assurance that they would be rewarded.

He also told his victims that his club was affiliated to a popu-

lar Christian body in U.S.A. and as such whatever they contribute would be rewarded at the end of the year, leading many of the victims to sell their properties, while some borrowed money from the banks to invest in the club.

The pastor used the money to move from one room apartment in Egbeda to a duplex in a choice area in Lagos while he bought state of the art cars to complement his new status.

Also convicted of fraud at the end of 2009 are Alli Olumide Monsuru, Benjamin Aniegbo Aifubhekan and Sanusi Olaniyi AbdulWasiu.

Monsuru, a corps member, bagged three years and two months for forgery and possession of counterfeit foreign cheque. He was arrested at the Murtala

Mohammed International Airport, Ikeja when he was about to board a Virgin Nigeria aircraft to South Africa after NDLEA officials at the airport searched his luggage and discovered counterfeit travelers' cheques concealed in three pairs of shoes.

The convict was later handed over to the EFCC and was arraigned before Justice J.E. Shakhro of the Federal High Court Lagos in 2008 on a 23 count and was found guilty on all the counts.

An Ikeja High Court sentenced Aifubhekan to three years imprisonment without option of fine for swindling one Nurudeen Inuwa of millions of naira.

He was arraigned by EFCC on a 40 count charge bordering on conspiracy and obtaining by false pretences.

In addition to his sentence, he was to forfeit as restitution; one million naira recovered from him to be paid to the victim; a pathfinder Nissan jeep with registration Number DU 669 EKY. The convict is also to pay the sum of N20,000 every month to the victim through the EFCC until the outstanding sum of N1.95 million is fully paid.

AbdulWasiu of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye also bagged a 56 year jail term shortly before christmas after Justice Lawal Shuaibu of the Federal High Court, Kaduna found him guilty on all the eight count charges filed against him by the EFCC on October 23, 2008. The convict had been arrested for internet fraud before his arraignment.



FEDERAL Capital Territory Minister Adamu Aliero (middle) addressing residents of Apo Village during his environmental inspection of the area in Abuja recently.

Yar'adua: Buhari, Atiku, Enahoro, others to meet

By Muideen Olaniyi

FORMER Head of State General Muhammadu Buhari, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and Chief Anthony Enahoro are expected to meet and discuss the effect of President Umaru Yar'adua's absence on the country.

Also expected at the proposed talks whose date was yet to be fixed include all chairmen of political parties in the country as well as Chief Olu Falae, Alhaji Balarabe Musa, Dr Tunji Braithwaite, Prof Pat Utomi and Alhaji Lateef Jakande among others.

The Secretary of the Mega Summit Movement (MSM), Olawale Okunniyi, who spoke on the planned meeting yesterday, said the intervention of the political class in the constitutional crisis created by Yar' adua's health is inevitable considering the negative scenario already steering the nation in the face.

He said the Leader of the MSM, Chief Enahoro may be advised to review the ongoing process and summon a special all politicians summit to decide the intervention of the political class over the presidential crisis.

Anambra: Soludo remains PDP's candidate, says Supreme Court

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin

THE Supreme Court yesterday insisted that the former Central Bank of Nigeria Governor Prof. Chukwuma Charles Soludo remains the Anambra State gubernatorial candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for the February 6, 2010 governorship election in the state.

The Justices of the apex court cut short their vacation to hear an application filed by two aggrieved members of the Anambra State PDP, Mr. Valentine Ozigbo and Mrs. Victoria Nwankwo, seeking the reversal of an order of the court which gave Soludo a lifeline having been barred earlier.

The five-member panel of Justices led by

Justice George Oguntade maintained that Prof. Soludo remains the tentative candidate of the PDP in the Anambra State gubernatorial election until the determination of the substantive appeal which he filed against an order of the Court of Appeal which restrained him from parading himself as the party's choice. It also warned the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) against defying its order made on December 17, 2009.

The PDP members led by Valentine Ozigbo and Mrs. Victoria Nwankwo are challenging the emergence of Soludo as the PDP's candidate.

In his short ruling, Justice Oguntade adjourned the matter till January 14, for hearing.

Sokoto govt warns farmers, herdsman

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Sokoto

THE Sokoto State government has called on farmers and herdsman in the state to always channel their grievances to the appropriate quarters for solution instead of taking the laws into their hands.

The Commissioner for Forestry and Animal Health Alhaji Shehu Mohammed Dan Chadi gave the warning yesterday in Sokoto while speaking on

efforts of the state government to check disputes between the two groups.

He disclosed that the ministry received three complaints on disputes between farmers and herdsman in Tureta, Rabah and Tambuwal Local Government Areas of the state.

He however said the disputes were settled amicably with the assistance of traditional rulers in the areas. The commissioner

stated the state government's commitment towards reducing the level of dispute between cattle rearers and farmers in the state. He noted efforts by the ministry to retrieve some grazing reserve which he said would be handed over to their real owners.

This, he said, was to further achieve peace between farmers and herdsman.

Meanwhile, the Chairman

Miyyeti Allah Cattle Rearers Association in Sokoto Alhaji Muhammad Bello Wamakko has said about 60 percent of cattle rearers in the state had migrated to other parts of the country in search of pasture for their animals.

The chairman said many of the cattle rearers migrated due to inadequate grazing reserves in the state. According to him, most of the grazing reserves

provided by the state government have been turned into farmlands and other structures

He underscored the contribution of cattle rearers to the economic development of the state and the nation. He commended the state Ministry of Forestry and Animal Health for ensuring the provision of grazing reserves while calling on farmers and herdsman to always live peacefully for the development of the state.

Aliyu tasks parents on child care

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

GOVERNOR of Niger State Dr Muazu Babangida Aliyu has called on parents to pay more attention to their children as he advised that the attempted plane bombing in the United States by a Nigerian, Umar Faruk Abdulmutallab should serve as warning to parents to ensure close monitoring of their children.

The governor gave the charge in Minna yesterday when Governor Danbaba Suntai of Taraba State paid him a condolence visit over the death of Maryam Babangida.

"Parents should be watchful on the activities of their children as the case of the Nigerian who attempted to bomb a US passenger plane remains a constant reminder of the need for vigilance on what our children do", he said.

Aliyu said one of the sterling qualities Maryam Babangida had as a parent was her ability to give her children the best in moral upbringing, adding that Nigerian parents should advance ways to ensure that their children are trained in line with the fear of God for a better society.

Taraba State Governor Suntai said Nigeria and Africa had lost a great woman in Maryam, as he prayed to God to give the family and country the fortitude to bear the loss. Suntai was accompanied on the visit by the Taraba House of Assembly Speaker Alhaji Ali, some local government chairmen and the state chairman of the PDP.



WORKERS resuming at the Federal Secretariat after the New Year celebration in Abuja yesterday.

FRSC to prosecute traffic light offenders

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

ANY motorist caught violating traffic light rules in Kaduna roundabouts will be prosecuted, the state Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) Mr Harrison Pepple said yesterday.

He told our correspondent that henceforth, any motorist caught would be charged to court.

He said the introduction of the

"zero operation" by the command during the festive period reduced road accidents.

"I cannot give you the statistics because we are still collating the data and as soon as we finish we are forwarding it to our headquarters in Abuja for necessary action. What I can tell you is that we had fewer accidents in 2009 compared to 2008," he said. He called for a holistic change of attitude among

road users, pointing out that most of the accidents on Nigerian roads were preventable. He reiterated the readiness of his command to partner with relevant organisations in the state to reduce accidents.

"We Nigerians pay deaf ears to issues of road safety and that is why we keep recording accidents. Excessive speed is still the major cause of accidents. We

must adhere religiously to the prescribed speed limit of 100 and 80 kilometers per hour for private and commercial motorists respectively," he said.

He also stressed the need for commercial motorcyclists popularly known as okada riders in the state to undergo tests and obtain class A driving license in order to reduce motorcycle accidents.

Muslim students petition Lagos House of Assembly

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

THE Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN), Lagos State Area Unit, has written to the Lagos State House of Assembly, complaining against what it called "the anti-Islamic stance of the state government".

MSSN in a petition dated December 28th, 2009 said the state government under the representation of Mrs. Sarah Sosan, the Deputy Governor, had not only been showing dislike for Islam, but had also been expressing hatred and insensitivity to the plight of the Muslim students.

In the letter jointly signed by its Amiir (president), Mallam AbdulHammeed Bankole and Secretary, Mallam Idris AbdulHameed, MSSN said rather than encouraging the student body, the state government had been creating obstacles to the success of its activities.

Rivers govt dismantles airport roadblock

From Muhammad Bello, Port Harcourt

RIVERS State Governor Chibuike Amaechi has dismantled a road block at the Port Harcourt International Airport Omagwa junction for causing hardship to motorists.

The road block mounted by men of the Swift Operation

Squad (SOS) had constituted serious traffic jam in Port Harcourt during the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Governor Amaechi, who drew the attention of the most senior police officer at the check point, condemned the attitude of subjecting motorists to unnecessary traffic jams.

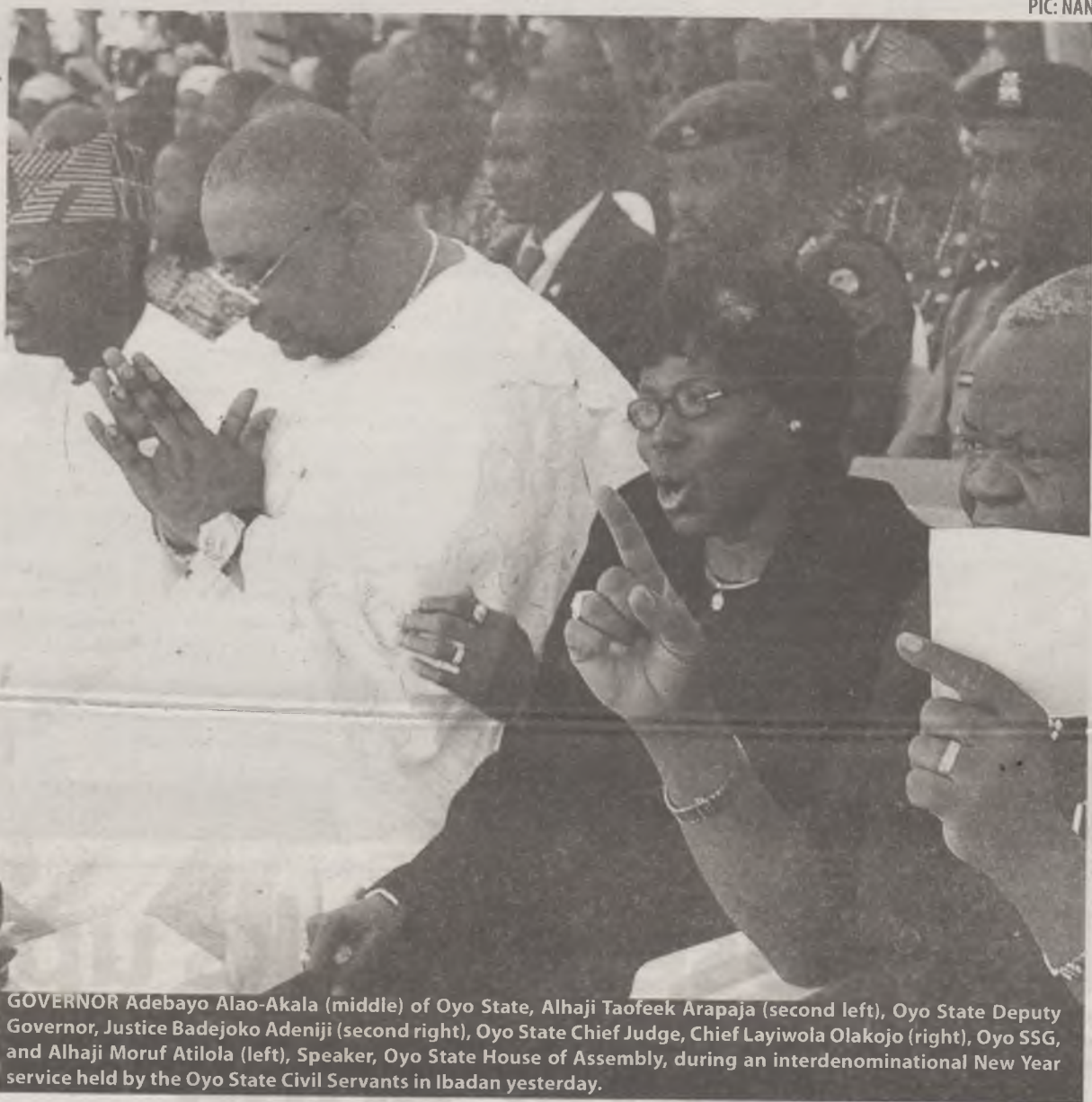
Sen Legogie extols Maryam's virtue

By Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

A former lawmaker, Senator Albert Legogie, yesterday extolled the virtue of the late First Lady Maryam Babangida saying she has left remarkable legacies that should be emulated by all and sundry.

In a condolence message, the former Member of the Parliament said "Hajiya Maryam was a woman of inestimable value whose worth was immeasurable and a role par excellence. In her private life, she was highly devoted housewife, an exceedingly caring mother and a sagacious councilor who was a fountain of support to her husband, family, friends and associates"

Legogie who represented the Edo North Senatorial zone, Edo state in the botched transition from military to civilian rule in 1993 when Gen. Babangida was military president stated that the late Mrs. Babangida had empowered the lives of women and children especially in the rural areas which presently is battling with abject poverty.



GOVERNOR Adebayo Alao-Akala (middle) of Oyo State, Alhaji Taofeek Arapaja (second left), Oyo State Deputy Governor, Justice Badejoko Adeniji (second right), Oyo State Chief Judge, Chief Layiwola Olakojo (right), Oyo SSG, and Alhaji Moruf Atilola (left), Speaker, Oyo State House of Assembly, during an interdenominational New Year service held by the Oyo State Civil Servants in Ibadan yesterday.

Speaker's aide loses mum

By Nasidi A. Yahaya

THE death has occurred of Alhaja Sarat Ajoke Afuape Adebayo. Aged 85 years Alhaja Adebayo died on 31st December 2009 and buried 1st January 2010 according to Muslim rites.

The deceased is the mother of Special Adviser to the Speaker of House of Representatives on Political Matters, Alhaji Afolabi Afuape Moruuf.

Meanwhile the eight days fidau prayer will hold at her residence Elite Road Junction Eight Idi Aba Abeokuta on Friday January 2010 by 10am.

She is also survived by Barrister Olalekan Adebayo, Hajiya Isiwat Akamo and Hajiya Isimot Ogunsola.

Terror attack: Islamic group faults UK's reaction

THE United Kingdom-based Islamic Human Rights Commission said the new security measures are a knee-jerk reaction to the recent failed terrorist attack on flight 253 by suspect Umar Farouk Abdulmutallib.

Gordon Brown has ordered the use of full body scanners as part of new measures to tighten security, which has been described as an invasion of privacy by the European Commission.

IHRC Chair Massoud Shadjareh states: "Apart from the costs of the scans, the body scanners are not an effective tool to deal with the terrorist threat since few countries would have the body scanners and someone with intent to attack can quite obviously do it on the return flight."

"We fear that these measures are just a political stunt to appear tough on security

issues rather than deal with the problems effectively. The new proposed policies of profiling and body scanning mask the real issue which is a gross failure to act on intelligence.

"IHRC is concerned that such measures are counter-productive and ineffective and will result in the further targeting of the Muslim community. Ben Wallace, Conservative MP, involved in the project to test the scanner's effect has stated that the scanners would be unable to detect low density materials like the one used by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallib," it said in a statement sent to *Daily Trust* via email.

IHRC noted that had basic procedure been followed, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallib would not have boarded the plane to the U.S.

Group wants search team launched for Yar'adua

By Lami Sadiq

HUMAN Rights Writers' Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) yesterday urged the National Assembly to order a search team to find out the precise whereabouts of President Umaru Yar'adua and report back to Nigerians with verifiable video evidence.

Coordinator of HURIWA Emmanuel Onwubiko said the search team should include top government officials, National Assembly leaders, the organized civil society, Nigerian Medical Association and the

Nigerian Bar Association (NBA).

The group blamed the uncertainty of the whereabouts and the absence of the president in the last forty days for the unprecedented situation of insecurity across the country and the killing of Nigerian citizens by Cameroonian gendarmes in the Bakassi peninsula.

It urged the National Assembly legislators to resolve the long standing constitutional crisis brewing because of the leadership vacuum that exists in the executive arm of government.

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is pleased to announce its annual prize for Women's Contribution to Development for the year 1431H/2010G



The IDB Prize for Women Contribution in Development was established in 1427H to reward and encourage the accomplishment of outstanding merit that was aimed at or resulted in integrating women in the development process. It recognizes women's contribution to the socioeconomic development of the IDB member countries and the Muslim communities in non-member countries.

The prize, which is awarded on a yearly basis, consists of a cash award of US\$ 50,000 for an individual woman and a cash award of US\$ 100,000 for a non-governmental organization. Each year, the topic of the prize varies. For 1431H/2010G, the topics are as follows:

- ◆ For Individuals: Young Women's Development.
- ◆ For Organizations: Female Youth Development.

The deadline for receiving the completed and documented applications at the IDB Headquarters is 22nd Safar 1431H corresponding to 7th February 2010G.

The prizes will be awarded to the winners during the forthcoming 35th Annual Meeting of the IDB Board of Governors to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan on 11-12 Rajab 1431H)23-24 June 2010G(.

The guidelines, brochures and the application forms are accessible on a dedicated webpage of the IDB website (www.isdb.org).

PIC: FELIX ONIGBINDE



FERRYING banana to the market in Abuja yesterday.

Kano health workers get new pay

From Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, Kano

THE Kano State government is to implement the new medical workers' salaries as reviewed by the Federal Government, the Director General of the state's hospitals management board Dr Ibrahim Yakasai has said.

Yakasai said this when he received members of the Medical and Health Care Workers Union of Nigeria who paid him a courtesy visit in his office yesterday. He said when implemented, the consolidated salary scale would motivate the health personnel in discharging their statutory responsibilities. He urged the health workers not to relent in their responsibilities as they deal with human lives.

The Director, Medical Services of the board Dr Sulaiman Sani Wali said the board was working towards addressing the problems of stagnation, training and re-training of health workers which are the major problems of the personnel. Speaking earlier, the chairman of the health workers union in the state Comrade Kabiru Ado Sani Minjibir who led the delegation commended the board for renovating and equipping health facilities in the state.

Gov's aide faults contract award process

From Isma'il Adebayo, Birnin Kebbi

THE Special Adviser to Kebbi Governor Usman Dakingari on Due Process Barrister Aminu Usman has faulted the contract award process in his state, saying it was one of the problems he had to tackle upon his appointment.

The Adviser who spoke with our correspondent in Birnin Kebbi said the irregularities had grave consequences on the state.

Barrister Usman said, "To tackle the problem, the state government had to come up with a legislation on procurement of construction materials". He noted that the difficulties experienced in the past on goods, services and construction works by governments had resulted in wastages.

Useni seeks update on Yar'adua

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

CHAIRMAN of the Board of Trustees of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) retired General Jerry Useni has asked Federal Government officials to update Nigerians on the health of the president.

Useni who spoke with newsmen in Jos yesterday said government officials were not fair to Nigerians on the issue, giving assurances that the president would soon return to the country.

He said Nigerians did not need assurances but would like to know the true state of his health. Useni maintained that in other civilized democracies, the citizens were constantly updated on their president's health. "Every day they say the president is doing very well and that he will be coming soon. But the "soon"

has become so many that they don't know what to say again. So the government officials are not being fair to Nigerians, they should tell us what is happening to our president", he said.

Useni said it would however be wrong to force the president to resign as some people are now pressurizing, as he said, resignation should come willingly and not enforced, saying the constitution made that very clear.

He said if however the president decides to resign on his own, the constitution has made it clear that the vice president should take over and that it does not matter where the vice president comes from since it is a constitutional matter.

Useni used the opportunity to wish Nigerians well in the New Year, noting that though it might be a campaign year for politicians, politicians should try to eschew politics of bitterness in the interest of the nation.

Niger water board decries wastage

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

THE Niger State Water Board has advised people to desist from wasting water as it may obstruct the board's services.

The message which was contained in a press release signed by the Public Relations Officer of the board Malam Sulaiman Ibrahim yesterday in Minna said the board had been directed to disconnect users who have damaged pipes.

According to the release, disconnected consumers found fixing their pipes without going through appropriate channels

will be fined for illegal connection.

The statement urged consumers to report promptly, any leakage along water pipelines to officers of the board, adding that it would go a long way to ensure better service delivery.

In a related development, residents have decried poor water service, especially at the Dutsen Kura and Ungwar Kaje area of Minna as they complained that they have suffered acute water shortage. Mustapha Aliyu, a resident of Dutsen Kura, said the authorities of the board should intensify commitment to bring succour to the people.

AC faults chieftain on PDP zoning

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

THE North-East zone of the Action Congress (AC) has condemned statements credited to a party chieftain in Gombe State, Alhaji Mohammed Hassan Ibrahim on the zoning arrange-

ment of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), describing it as embarrassing.

The Baraden Gombe had while reacting to the illness of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua said if Vice President Goodluck Jonathan assumes office as the president of the country, he

would be completing the four year tenure of President Yar'adua and that the vice president would come from the North-West zone in order not to distort the zoning of the PDP.

Reacting to his comments in a statement jointly signed by Alhaji Bulama

Abdulkareem and Mr. Ezekiel Duniya, the chairman and secretary respectively, the party described the opinion as personal and that it was not its stand.

"If we may ask, whose zoning formula was he referring to? When has Alhaji Hassan become an advocate

of PDP's zoning formula while still parading himself as a chieftain of an opposition party, the Action Congress?", they party queried.

According to the party, "It is a constitutional issue that is open to every qualified person from the northern part of the country. We

should not be seen to be working against the collective interest of our zone for reasons that are neither reasonable nor persuasive."

They asked the state chapter of the party to immediately take appropriate disciplinary measures against Alhaji Hassan.

Online Reactions

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ON www.dailytrust.com



Demolition: Kagini residents protest defiance of court

THE Minister of FCT must respect the time tested and time honored principle of rule of law and halt the heartless demolition of structures where the poor people live and eke out a living. The FCT administration ought to provide soft landing and palliatives for the hundreds of thousands

of victims of forced evictions because it is inhuman and dehumanizing to evict citizens forcefully without sufficient notice and alternative settlements provided by Government.

From our experiences in the last ten years, successive administrations in Abuja

have competed among themselves to see who would emerge the best and most brutal minister of FCT and the poor people are at the receiving end of this vicious competition among these public office holders in Abuja.

But I ask; why do public office hold-

ers derive joy in unleashing monumental hardship and economic adversities on the urban and rural poor in Nigeria? Why are the poor people in Abuja treated as outcasts in their own country? It's unjust.

Emmanuel Onwubiko
doziebiko@yahoo.com



IGP Ogbonna Onovo

Onovo wants better policing

THE IG should please check the activities of police men at Ikotu and Igando police divisions in this drive to ensure better policing. Some of them have made citizens around these Lagos suburbs to live in fear as their human rights are daily abused in the name of checking points inside their streets.

Kunle
kunle@yahoo.com

Police step up counter terrorism efforts

I think is a good thing to map out strategy to counter terrorism. Nigerian Police should be proactive. They should not allow crime to happen before thinking of how to tackle it.

Abdulsalam Ameen
amisat2004@yahoo.com

Even if the memory of the Apox killing and that of late Mohammed Yusuf's alleged summary execution are now fading from the mind of Nigerians, it's pertinent for the Inspector General of Police to know that he will need to employ serious measures to inculcate discipline and humanity in the Police service before embarking upon the voyage of countering terrorism.

Isa Mariri
isamariri@yahoo.com

Kidnapper nabbed as he collects ransom

KIDNAPPERS should be severely punished to serve as a deterrent to prospective kidnappers.

Abdulsalam Ameen
amisat2004@yahoo.com

Farouk not representative of Nigeria –Obasanjo

IN fact what Obasanjo said is true and I am one hundred percent together with him in this matter. This should not be a reason to judge Nigerians as criminals since this is an action taken by one individual and to serve only his purpose and not that of the country.

Abubakar Chika Maru
abubakarsuleiman2009@yahoo.com

What the former president said is the truth. What are going to benefit by killing innocent people? This is not part of our religion? Did he think there is any for what he intended to do?

Sadiq Ahmad
sadiqsag@yahoo.com

A Nation like Nigeria cannot

be put to condemnation simply by the criminality of one person.

Isa Mariri
isamariri@yahoo.com

While I do not support killing of innocent souls under any guise I will still give Umar the benefit of doubt because we are yet to hear his own side of the story.

Tijjani S Darma
tsdarma@gmail.com

I thank our leaders. We need to understand that our Nigeria is not as great as we pretend it is. We talk of potential, but that is all. If we had a solid, responsive and responsible government, this will not be happening. Our governments lack the potentials to govern.



UMAR Farouk Mutallab

This is an indictment of the Nigerian government and not its people. Think of it...do you trust the Nigerian government to provide security? Why should

the Americans? We need to start holding our government and representatives to account.

E.H. Bwala
bwalaman@yahoo.com

CJN's swearing-in confused me, VP says

I want to use this medium to commend the Vice president on his stewardship so far and pray that God would grant him the



NEW Chief Justice of Federation Katsina-Alu

strength and wisdom he requires to see that things are done properly. I'm not a lawyer, but as far as I'm concerned the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is "complete", therefore when issues like these arise, we should consult the constitution. Period.

Abdulkadir Ali Bage
alizaki001@yahoo.com

It's interesting that the Vice President joined the confusion bandwagon. Thank God he came out of it. However, as he confessed, those involved (the AG) had to face the situation and so came up with the answer. That is what they should have done earlier and all the confusions would have been averted. In this and many similar

issues that will come up with the continued absence of the president, will the No. 2 citizen continue being confused before those the president appointed and who are handsomely paid to do their duties?

Adzu Midlu
adzumails@yahoo.com

Don't worry Mr.VP, more confusion are coming,if a right thing is not done.

It also reveals how our lawyers/judges are bereft of reading culture:imagine, a section of that act could not be mentioned by any lawyer/judges,until at a die minute when the country is heading for a catastrophe.PDP and Govt.official by their action and inaction gave

opposition leakages to lampoon the inefficiency of this Government.

Hamza K.
imanhamza006@yahoo.com

Mr. Vice President, you are not the only one confused...we are all confused. The entire nation is confused and it is the presidency and the party in power who plunged us into this confusion. May God save us.

Usman Katagum
ulimacong@yahoo.com

You are a very good servant Mr Vice President and you will surely get a reward for that.

Jibril
jbally106@yahoo.com

Envoy defends information on Yar'adua's illness

WHAT we Nigerians are worried about is how Mr. President is doing, because we care for him and the country. Our question for Mr. High Commissioner and all government officials is this: "did you see or talk to Mr. President? How is he doing?"

Musa Kalim Muhammad
kalimimam@gmail.com

One thing that appears to be our greatest undoing is that, people tend to be more fascinated about negative news especially about our leaders. It is interesting news to many people when they hear something bad about our leaders. There are a lot of good

things about President Yar'adua which ought to have dominated our public discourse but we closed our eyes to them. I urge Nigerians to be prayerful for President Yar'adua. Nigeria this is a trying



DR. Dalhatu Tafida

time. We should please be positive in all we do.

Badamasi Haiba
badhaiba@yahoo.com

What is wrong if the masses that elected the president want to know about the state of health of the president?

Haliru
haliru9@yahoo.com

The many comments people are making about this issue are uncalled for. We should learn to talk less but pray more for his speedy recovery.

Ayuba Abimiku
abimikutyna@yahoo.com

Funding of education appalling –NIPSS DG

I completely agree with this. As long as the educational sector is left in a coma, the country should forget about any meaningful development. We are a blessed nation in terms of human resources, but more than 90% of Nigerians are not granted the required environment to realize their potentials.

MT Abdullahi
danjuma1973@gmail.com



By Abdulrazaq Bello-Barkindo

It's reckoning time for Adamawa senators

As an indigene of fractured Adamawa State, I shudder whenever I visit it. I have been away to Europe and America, for work and some play and most of the time I felt a terrible sadness for us and what our serving senators have reduced our Sunshine State to. Other states are surging ahead, not without their fair share of troubles, but we seem to be constantly marking time. And if you ask when people are returning to Yola, they ask you "for what?"

As is customary, reality hits you in the face the moment you start your descent into Yola. You become submerged in overpowering sense of backwardness if visit by road. We blame former Vice-president Atiku Abubakar and Boni Haruna for wasting years that would have guaranteed a better life for folks. At the time we

Why is Adamawa always in that 'one step forward three miles backward' position?

had the most competent senators in Nigeria. Professors Jubril Aminu and Iya Abubakar and Dr Jonathan Silas Zwingina were an A-team, but were

ing. It is difficult to point at any tangible achievements of those senators, two of whom have since relinquished their seats, but those still there must be made to account. This view is further embroidered by a remark by Senate President, David Mark, who called on politicians to prepare to account to their electorates.

Since then I had hunted the contributions of our senators. I am talking of Senators Jubril Aminu, who represents Adamawa Central, a ranking Senator and chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Senators Mohammed Mana and Grace Bent, of Adamawa North and South respectively.

All caution has been applied to sharpen my search and I must confess that things seem dismal. As if we are not referring to senators of the federal republic, every statutory requirement for the running a senatorial office has been flagrantly violated by them. It explains why nothing tangible is accomplished.

What were their priorities in 2007? If truth be told, Aminu can be exonerated from probe because of his outstanding past contributions. For example, he helped dislodge the Boni-Atiku cabal whose intention while in power was to perpetuate Adamawa people in their cattle-class citizenship. His was no mean feat. Besides, age has not been on his side and we hear he is preparing to quit.

For political correctness, our issues are with Mana and Bent. Mana is most culpable because he is an indi-

gene of Adamawa, whose legislative interests included the development of rural areas and transportation. Mana's mission in office, according to his bulletin, "is to contribute to my constituency as well as strengthen democracy in the country". But on all of these, Mana is in the non-starter category. In fact, his constituency has retrogressed so much that they are already shopping for his replacement, come 2011.

Stung by this reality, Mana rushed home in panic last November with car gifts to some chieftains of the domain. But instead of cooling tempers, his gesture further injured nerves.

Mana has problems because in the transportation sector, nothing has been done. The Yola airport, the first in the country, remains one of the least busy in the world because business does not come to Yola. Now and then a few flights arrive.

If you trace Senator Grace, Adamawa is only a goldmine. Her legislative interests, according to her bulletin, are the environment, women and youth, poverty alleviation, as she told the *Daily Trust* in October 2007, and international relations. She also wants to be part of moving Nigeria forward. But Adamawa South which she represents has never reversed faster. It has never been poorer and now environmental pollution has no better home. What happens to its sports? The arenas are sickly substandard, even for local ones which Bauchi, our neighbour, has captured. Created along with Gongola State, Bauchi, has one of the best stadia in the country and hosts international competitions but Yola, in spite of its sporting history, hosts nothing.

Why is Adamawa always in that 'one step forward three miles backward' position?

It is because we are taken in by the sweet words of people such as Grace Bent. They say she has a lot of campaign funds; but a fool's prosperity is also his downfall. She may be a senator but she does not appear to understand the problems of her constituency, let alone try to solve them.

In many places, I met dozens of Adamawa people, many of them successful and living decent lives but unhappy being away from the state. Given a choice, they would come home because their hearts beat faster in Yola than in Abuja or Lagos, or cities around the world, but they all know that there is nothing here for them. They know we have reached a depth of decay that our worst enemies could never have wished for us. They are thus too frightened to come home and too sad to stay away. In the end, a god job, money in the bank, a decent neighbourhood, law and order, medical and educational facilities and other mitigating circumstances force their hand. It is sad to see and in almost all conversations the question "Don't you want to come home?" receives the same reply, 'for what?'

Bello-Barkindo is an Abuja-based journalist.



By Abdullahi Garba

The human face in Kaduna budget

No fiscal policy can solve all the economic and social problems of any given society at a go. That is why those who have voiced criticism of Kaduna State budget for 2010 are simply trying to be mischievous. Indeed, budgets provide incremental dividends to the people. It is for this reason that this year promises to be major step forward because this year's budget is designed to boost the socio-economic potentials of Kaduna State. It is also geared towards promoting non-oil sector ventures, poverty alleviation and the social sector. As the state governor, Alhaji Namadi Sambo reeled out a series of bold initiatives in these development sectors, it was like music to the ears of the civil servants, the pensioners as well as the teeming population of youths who will be the main beneficiaries of several projects lined up for execution this year.

In an era of global economic downturn, when social and economic indicators point to harder times ahead and leaner government resources as a result, the Sambo administration has anchored these project initiatives on new partnership ventures with international development agencies and bilateral understanding with some developed nations. The initiatives are aimed at insulating the projects from the looming decline in financial resources, thereby facilitating timely

ance towards positively facilitating the government machinery towards high productivity and impact on the development needs of the people. The Governance and Capacity Building Project a World Bank sponsored initiative which has already commenced work is also expected to impact positively on attainment of set goals.

No less heart-warming are the series of joint venture programmes outlined in the 2010 budget to promote the economic viability of Kaduna State such as the Kaduna State - Japan Initiative for production and export of ginger, cassava, acha and sesame (beniseed); the Kaduna State - Indian Initiative for Cottage Industry Development and Skills Acquisition; the Kaduna State - China Initiative for the Production, Processing and Export of Ginger, Sugarcane, Cassava and the Partnership between Kaduna State and the World Bank, DFID and USAID which took off in 2009.

These projects have the added advantage of creating job opportunities to reduce the pressure on the employment market. The Millennium Village Project which started at Pampaida in Ikara LGA was scaled up to support four additional communities in Ikara Local Government Area. The State and Local Government Project (SLGP) has already commenced its training programmes just as The Partnership for the Transformation of Health Systems (PATHS) between British DFID and the State has commenced effective work in the health sector. Recently DFID supplied the State with 40 containers of drugs and hospital equipment to support the State Health Sector Programme. The State is working closely with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) secretariat in the Presidency to derive benefits from the Debt Relief Fund.

Governor Sambo's emphasis that the new projects and on-going initiatives are aimed at transforming the State by eradicating poverty and enhancing the general well-being of people is understandable, given the growing need of the population. The determination to pursue welfare programmes and projects that impact the people is an indication that the people deserve the best service from a government that they elected. The significance of the 2010 budget in Kaduna lies in the way priorities and strategies it outlined are in tandem with sufficient fiscal allocations to see them through. The centrality of the human factor in virtually all the policy thrusts of the budget lend credence to Sambo's well-known reputation for being a welfare-oriented administrator in the application of state resources. Putting people first is a policy that has become second nature in the state. Thus critics who berate these policy thrusts are merely playing politics; their stance lacks reason or rhyme.

Garba wrote in from Kaduna South L.G.A. of Kaduna State.

The budget contained adequate provisions in the Micro-Credit and Human Development Funds for their welfare in addition to Housing and Car Loans

realisation.

Naturally, the projects of greater interest are those dedicated to promoting the welfare and well-being of the youths, the pensioners and the civil servants. The budget contained adequate provisions in the Micro-Credit and Human Development Funds for their welfare in addition to Housing and Car Loans.

Training and development programmes were allotted 150 million naira while e-Governance and State Internet Backbone got 300 million naira. Personnel Costs is estimated to be N17.741 billion, while Pensions and Gratuities which are paid as and when due received an allocation of N3 billion.

All provisions reflect significant increases from last year's allocation. It is easy to understand why Governor Namadi Sambo has a good rapport with civil servants and pensioners who have not witnessed such motivation in the past dispensation. Civil servants should therefore reciprocate by improved perform-



Adamu Adamu
adamuadamu@dailytrust.com

Mrs. Maryam Babangida (1948 - 2009)

Cont'd. from yesterday.

To the end, for many, Maryam was to remain an enigma. For many years Maryam had arrested elite fashion and set its tone and pace for Nigeria's high society glitterati and even though it was all glamour without indecency, she was later to abandon even this for the more honourable *hijab*.

Once, as deputy editor of the *New NIGERIAN*, I received instructions from her office that she didn't want to be addressed *Hajiya* Maryam Babangida. Henceforth, she was to be known and called Mrs. Maryam Babangida. A small difference, no doubt, but one with a big meaning. As a writer, I knew that, better than any grammarian or terminologist, a person is the best speller of her name. Therefore the newspaper promptly complied but it kept intriguing me why the change had to be made. Was she merely looking for an all-inclusive faith-neutral appellation befitting her new status as the First Lady of a multi-religious polity, or was she trying to avoid the identity suggested by that title?

But it was only after her own stepping aside from First Ladyship that the nation had a chance to see the essential Maryam emerge. At the time when most women in her position would have preferred to settle down to a pampered and spoiled life of embarrassment de richesses as befits the wife of a retired potentate, Maryam developed an inward personal involvement with one of Islam's spiritual orders and spent the rest of her

I received instructions from her office that she didn't want to be addressed *Hajiya* Maryam Babangida. Henceforth, she was to be known and called Mrs. Maryam Babangida

Your Letters

The bombing and fire incidents in media houses

The attempted bombing of a Lagos-based television station, *Superscreen*, by a recuperating bomber who much has not been heard from regarding his mission or on whose behalf he tried, should be condemned by all. The fire incident at the *AIT* which cause is yet to be ascertained is also unfortunate.

For these happenings this time, rightly or wrongly, seems threat to the media. *AIT* has a court brawl with the federal institution which tends to retrieve the media house's national licence.

Before then, rumour milled around that the media house was being hard on the federal government and that may have prompted on the new policy of bidding again for an already granted license which *AIT* is against. And for the inferno at the *AIT* coming at this time could send some thinking in a wrong direction. Mr Bayo Ohu of the *Guardian* was assassinated not quite long ago under unknown circumstance. A piece in the media read recently quoted the wife as saying that Mr Ohu was handling a story that has to do with the new Customs boss. But again for the assassination to happen when it did, could send some thinking in a wrong direction also. It will also be recalled the Abuja based *Fresh Facts* weekly newspaper office and officials were in 2008 brutalized

for promoting yet to be published story on what it perceived to be the looting of the State treasury by government in power.

Recently at the inauguration of a Church Hall at Okun Owa, Ijebu Ogun State in memory of Oshobowale Shobanjo, who died 50 years ago, the President of the Nigeria Guild of Editors said that no intimidation should deter media houses and practitioners from performing their social and professional responsibilities, but I would add that the media houses and professionals should not succumb to compromise by not reporting news as they happen and wonder why what happened at Uyo Stadium during the This Day Peace concert was blacked out by the media.

Eki Umoh, Olusegun Obasanjo Road, Uyo.

Text us on 08 131 8000 30

Not a qualified assessor?

MAY God forgive those who cannot see the handwork of Yariman Bakura in Gusau. Before his election in 1999, Gusau was like a communal village. Gusau was just Tudun Wada, Premier Road, Sabon Gari; that was it. But within two years, the city has blossomed. If you bought a new motorcycle everybody would know someone had arrived. But due to a programme called ZAPA, everybody became a donkey owner, a fertilizer owner, motorcycle owner, car owner, etc. Haba, let us fear God and honour our past leaders.
YAHAYA Damba, 08063672624.

Surprised too

ZAMFARA people would not forget the tremendous achievements recorded by the Yarima administration, which include a new central market in Gusau, construction of Gusau central juma'at

mosque, paying salary on time as well as helping less privilege and the needy.

BELLO Ibrahim, Gusau, 08034248673.

Maryam, a sad loss

MAY Allah grant Gen Babangida the fortitude to bear the loss of his dear wife. May her soul rest in peace. She was a rare gem who contributed to the development of the nation.

NASIRU Musan Sati, Jos, 08035952823.

Gov Sambo

PLEASE consider the repair of our road from Anchau to Dutsen wai as part of your priority projects. The people here are suffering.

IBRAHIM Sule Musa, Anchau, 08084707999.

Eureka!

THE only solution to all of Niger-

ia's problems is...General Muhammadu Buhari; no more, no less.

AHMAD S Zaina, 08038473056.

The fact is...

AS long as 23-year-old brainwashed Americans kill innocent Afghans and Iraqis, there will be 23-year-old international terrorists, because evil begets evil; and for every action there will be a reaction. This is an unchangeable law of nature. Tackling the root cause will be the only permanent solution.

SALEH Yakubu, 08033038468.

Amodu Shuaib is wrong

HIS decision to exclude some in the Eagles camp for Angola is fool-hardy. Martins is a great player, but why take a player who is still recuperating from a shin operation to the Nations' Cup?

ABUBAKAR Ndana, Kaduna, 08068014505.

days engaged in philanthropic social work for Niger rural poor, combining this with dedicated missionary work for the religion.

At the 50th birthday anniversary celebration thrown by Senator Zaynab Kure for her husband, Maryam was there; and she still carried her charm and presence wherever she went; but these were not what impressed most people about her. What did impress them that afternoon was the opening prayer she recited to begin her address. It was given in flawless Arabic diction with the effortless and unforced fluency of a Muslim Mother Superior. Even though Babangida himself once stunned us for outperforming some of the *ulama* at the graveside of a leading Emir who died in 1995 with an impromptu masterful trans-Qur'anic x-ray of intercessory prayer on forgiveness and divine glorification, after that performance by Maryam, it was clear that Babangida might still have had a lot to learn from her. And in that I also got the answer to my question.

MAY Allah accept the good that she had sent forward in His Name and cover her with His mercy and rest her in peace. Our heartfelt condolences to General Babangida on this painful loss—that of a dear wife and friend of 40 years, an affectionate mother of the kids, a companion through thick and thin, a support while in office and a pillar at the home front. With her death, the General is not just a widower; he is today an orphan. May God give him the fortitude to bear it.

Concluded.
Adamu Adamu is a regular columnist.

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

No. 20 P.O.W. Mafemi Crescent, Off Solomon Lar Way,
Utako District, Abuja
09-6726241, 6715364

EFCC's call for special anti-graft court

The long, drawn-out corruption case involving former Delta State governor, Mr James Onanefe Ibori, came to an abrupt end last month when the judge of the High Court in Asaba dismissed all 170 money laundering charges that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) had preferred against him. The judge's decision prompted a call by the EFCC Chairman, Mrs Farida Waziri, to the government to set up a special court to handle corruption-related cases. Mrs Waziri observed that such a court would strengthen the government's fight against the growing menace of corruption among public officers in the country. She added that not only would such a court speed up trials of corruption suspects, but would also lighten the current heavy burden-of-proof that existing laws place on anti-corruption agencies in prosecuting cases in regular courts.

The issue of slow dispensation of cases in courts, and the increasingly successful exploitation of loopholes in the law to evade justice, has been a long-standing challenge for officials of the EFCC. Indeed, a few months ago on a different occasion Mrs Waziri, apparently astonished by the high level of graft among people in high public offices, suggested that it was time all politicians seeking office were subjected to psychiatric evaluation to determine their readiness and suitability. Since then a number prominent Nigerians, most recently Governor Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu of Niger State recommended the death penalty for corrupt public officers. There is no doubt therefore that corruption in public office is agitating Nigerians, and is one of the single most important challenges that the country has with the international community.

The EFCC was created to tackle the problem, along with the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). Mrs Waziri's various reactions in tackling the problem is an indication that, either that corruption is growing in scale and scope, or that the EFCC (along with the ICPC) is incapable of curbing the practice, or both.

Waziri's call for a special court to handle corruption cases is also a thinly-veiled indictment of the regular courts. To date, and since the EFCC began its work, there have been hundreds of corruption cases that it has charged to court; to date, there have not been many successful convictions. What this says of the process is that either prosecution failed, or the courts had been complicit in letting criminals walk away, on flimsy excuse. Either way, the process needs fixing. But the way to go about doing this is not to throw up our hands in frustration, as Mrs Waziri seemed to have done in her call for special court.

There is a bill pending in the National Assembly that if passed, would provide more powers to the EFCC in its quest to bring looters of public treasuries to book. Legislators must put politics and self-interest aside and consider the legislation for passage into law. In addition, we believe that existing rules give sufficient room for diligent prosecution and possible conviction of corrupt public officers. What appears to be the problem militating against the achievement of that goal is the penchant by courts to often dismiss such cases on simple technicalities. Not surprisingly, the appearance of corruption among judges who hear corruption cases only serves to undermine the integrity of the judiciary in the eyes of Nigerians.

The new Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Aloysius Katsina-Alu, should take the matter up as one of his early priority assignments in the New Year. Judges who handle sensitive cases, like those of grafts involving very influential persons, must be seen to be upright and incorruptible. Because of the role of corruption in our national under-development, and in the poverty that afflicts majority of Nigerians, no measure should be spared, including the disciplining of court officials who step out of line, in order to clean up this mess.

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ABDULKADIR ALIYU: Head, Advert

e-mail: dailytrust@dailytrust.com

IBB, Mutallab and the anatomy of pain

In the past one week, few events dominated the news like the death of the former First Lady Dr. Mrs. Maryam Babangida, and the botched attempt to bomb a trans-Atlantic flight for which the scion of the Mutallab family Farouk is due to stand trial in Detroit, Michigan. Both events attracted numerous commentaries from Nigerians at home, and in the Diaspora. While the shower of tributes has been overwhelming and largely favourable in the case of the former First Lady, however, the views expressed on Farouk Abdulmutallab, were mixed and passionate as could be expected giving the gravity of the alleged offence and its implication for Nigerians globally. But others were also indicative of our inherent hypocrisy.

Most of the commentators that lampooned the senior Mutallab for sending his son abroad to school would just have swiftly dispatched their own siblings to Mars if they could afford it and felt they could find better schools there. After all, as parents, the most important obligation to our children is to give them the best education we can, wherever it is available and affordable. The fact that Farouk later ended up in the warm embrace of terrorist masterminds does not detract from that singular obligation in my opinion.

Others like the Information and Communication Minister Dora Akunyili virtually disowned and 'convicted' Farouk apparently in the spirit of the illiterate and ineffective project to 'rebrand' Nigeria. How can anyone effectively rebrand Nigeria without first reforming the PDP, our greedy politician, complicit elites or even the mentality of government apparatchiks at all levels?

Akunyili's imprudent interventions lacked poise. They subjected us to further ridicule, like the unexpected rebuke from Ghanaian aviation authorities over one of her unnecessary claims. The decision by FAAN to introduce body scanners at our international airport when ethical and privacy issues are yet to be addressed also appeared stampered and reactionary. But those are topics for another day.

For now, what concerns me is the excruciating pain in households of the Babangida and Mutallab families presently. After we all have had our say, we cannot deny that the two events were human tragedies of immense proportions. The people at the centre of it are not robots. They are human beings like the rest of us. Therefore, even as we sit in the comfort of our homes and offices to pass judgement on the misfortune of both families, decency demands that we implore the almighty to lessen the pain they feel in their hearts over their bereavement.

And my choice of the word 'bereaved' in the generic sense here was deliberate. To the Mutallab family, what happened to Farouk on that fateful day and subsequent events must be as painful as if he actually died on that day! I shudder to even contemplate their emotions each

Muhammad Al-Ghazali

ghazalism@dailytrust.com,
08052100432 (SMS only)

time his picture is flashed on the international TV channels in relation to the incident.

Physical pain is easier to deal with because our wounds can heal with the passage of time, and the discomfort they cause can abate. Emotional pain however is a different thing altogether. It leaves an indelible mark on our souls. They can inflict deep scars on our psyche and shape our outlook to the world. In extreme circumstances, emotional pain actually produces psychos in search of vendetta. To this day, there are many who believe that the absolute disaster that was the

there for the world to see. And yet the courage of the man was also evident. He may have succumbed to emotion as widely reported in the media, but he never lost his composure or sense of dignity. When I commiserated with him last week, the old charm resurfaced briefly through the agony that enveloped him. He flashed his famous smile while also introducing me to erstwhile Chief of Defence Staff General M. I. Washishi who sat near him. It is the same courage and submission to the will of the almighty he will need as the enormity of his loss begins to take effect.

The Babangida household in particular appear well equipped to cope with their loss. The legacies Maryam left behind are of the highest quality. There is the quality of the institutions she built, and the quality of the home front. Her children are

At about 9.00 pm last Wednesday the very last day of the year, soon after my return from Minna, a gang of daredevil armed robbers jumped me as I drove away from my favourite Suya spot in Abuja

Obasanjo presidency was the outcome of his prison experience and determination to get even with his imaginary adversaries.

I am not a psychologist, but I think I have a fair idea of the potency of the kind of pain currently experienced by both families. I experienced deep pain when I lost my father in 1982 and my younger sister Ramatu, in 2003, after a protracted illness. Watching her gradually loose the battle for life had a profound effect on me and still haunts me from time to time.

Emotional pain interrogates our courage to withstand temporary or permanent adversity. It subjects our character to the maximum test. It robs us of our poise and composure, and, ultimately, it may subject our faith in the almighty to the severest test depending on the gravity of our mental or psychological injury.

Farouk's father Umaru, is yet to make his first public appearance since his son was arrested. For a quiet person who managed to avoid scandals and unnecessary publicity all his life, we can only imagine the anguish the incident and global media attention has caused him. I pray that he recovers from this setback a stronger person and a better role model that he already is.

My prayers are with him. The measured and intelligent press statement issued by the family is indicative of his gradual recovery from what must have been the greatest shock of his life. Regardless of the outcome of his son's trial, the coming days and months will subject his capacity to manage pain to the severest test. How he emerges from his present adversity will also test his courage and faith in his maker.

When IBB returned to the country last week, the pain of his loss was

the epitome of modesty and humility. I should know: last year when I was the guest of her husband in Gusau, I was overwhelmed by the quality of Aisina's warmth and hospitality. In Mohammed, you could hardly meet a finer gentleman. Now, all that IBB and the children need to do is to ensure that her legacies outlive Maryam. We must conquer pain by reacting positively to it. May Allah grant her Aljannat Firdaus.

My close shave with death
At about 9.00 pm last Wednesday the very last day of the year, soon after my return from Minna, a gang of daredevil armed robbers jumped me as I drove away from my favourite Suya spot in Abuja. My first reaction when they rammed two locally made pistols against my body was to resist, but quickly thought the better of it. My caution was justified later by a senior Police Officer who told me that wounds inflicted by those crude pistols are often fatal because the bullet hardly travels in a straight line. These were not ordinary robbers, in any case. They ordered me to drive towards Garki II while also communicating with a fourth accomplice on the phone.

As it were, the accomplice had already taken-up position in a wine shop where they took me. They tied me up along with the shop attendants. Thereafter, they looted the shop of its finest wines and cash using my car as a get-away vehicle. It is yet to be recovered as I write. The armed robbers did not brutalize me in the manner I have often read about their operations. They asked me to cooperate to avoid harm and I did. They took both my GSM handsets and the car keys. They helped themselves to my bulky wallet too. I give thanks to Allah for sparing my life.



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Condolence

INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILLAIHI RAJIUN



Late Hajiya Maryam Babangida

I, Alhaji Saleh Gacha Bade on behalf of myself and my family wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to:

- * General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida GCFR - Husband
- * His Excellency Governor Mamuda Aliyu Shinkafi of Zamfara State - Son in-law
- * Her Excellency Aisha Mamuda Shinkafi - Daughter
- * Muhammed, Al-Amin and Halima - Children

OVER THE DEATH OF HAJIYA MARYAM BABANGIDA

Allah ya jikan Hajiya Maryam Babangida, Allah ya gafarta mata, Allah ya rahamsheta,
Allah ya sa ta huta Allah humma Amin.

Signed ▶ Alhaji Saleh Gacha Bade
Managing Director/CEO
SALBA NIG. LTD.

INTERNATIONAL

Huge tomb found at Egypt's Saqqara pyramid

EGYPTIAN archaeologists have unearthed the largest tomb yet discovered in the ancient Saqqara necropolis, antiquities chief Zahi Hawass said yesterday.

One of two tombs found, which were carved out of stone, consists of a vast chamber that branches off into many alcoves. One alcove contained skeletons and pottery, and led to another chamber with a seven-metre-deep (23-foot) well.

"This is the largest tomb in Saqqara," Hawass told AFP. "It took me two hours to look round all of it."

At the northern end of the tomb, Hawass said archaeologists found another alcove that contained mummified falcons -- symbols of the sky god Horus -- and well-preserved pottery.

However, he said the tomb did appear to have been looted. Pottery was found in the other, much smaller, tomb. "This discovery... confirms that the Saqqara area still contains undiscovered secrets," Hawass said.

Kenya floods kill 22 - Police

FLOODING has killed at least 22 people since Christmas in several parts of Kenya, notably in regions that had been badly hit by drought in recent months, police said yesterday.

"Twenty-two people have died as a result of floods in various parts of the country," a senior police official told AFP on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to speak to the press. The victims include several children. The worst-hit area was the northern region of Turkana, where drought and cholera had already claimed several lives in recent months.

At least 20,000 people were displaced there due to the recent floods, the police officials said.

Kenya Red Cross spokesman Titus Mung'ou also reported that dozens of homes in Nairobi's Kibera slum -- home to almost a million people and one of the largest in Africa -- were destroyed by heavy rainfall and flooding.



KENYAN workers walk home after work, due to a nationwide strike by Matatu (mini-bus) operators in Nairobi, Kenya.

Nairobi buses on strike over police shakedowns

THOUSANDS of Nairobi residents are being forced to walk long distances to work after the owners of privately owned buses that many labourers depend on began a three-day strike yesterday to protest police shakedowns.

Dickson Mbugua, the chairman of an association representing the bus owners and workers, said transport drivers pay police more than \$20 million a year in

bribes. Mbugua says the shakedowns are crippling their businesses and that no action has been taken by the government despite numerous complaints.

"A police officer from the traffic department goes home every day with no less than 5,000 shillings (\$65) in his pockets ... all gained through extortion," Mbugua said.

The average monthly sal-

ary for a Nairobi police officer is about \$200.

The international anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International ranks Kenya's police force as East Africa's most corrupt institution.

National police spokesman Eric Kiraithe said steps have been taken to apprehend police officers demanding bribes from public transport operators.

"Bus operators and the public in general are assured that every possible effort is being made to ensure that traffic police officers are courteous and honest in their dealings with motorists," Kiraithe said in a statement.

The strike was timed to coincide with the first day of business after the holiday season. Mbugua estimated that 51,000 vehicles participated in the strike.

Volcanic lava threatens DR Congo national park

LAVA flows from an erupting volcano in the DR Congo picked up speed yesterday, a volcanologist said, threatening wildlife in a national park that is home to some of the world's last mountain gorillas.

The amount of lava being spewed from Mount Nyamulagira was "roughly double" that of the start of the eruption in the early hours of Saturday, Goma Volcanological Observatory director Karume Katcho told AFP. The lava was also increasing speed as it

hit steeper ground in the Virunga National Park, he said. "The situation is not very good," he said.

The lava trail had grown to become 4.6 kilometres (2.8 miles) long, compared with 1.6 kilometres on Sunday, and was 15 metres wide, he said.

Katcho estimated at the weekend the it had burnt about 10 hectares (25 acres) of the forest. He said Monday the extent of the damage would need to be evaluated by satellite imagery.

Officials have said the erup-

tion was concentrated in a sparsely populated area but wildlife habitats were under threat. "We are not envisaging evacuations because the lava is not flowing towards homes," Katcho said.

The park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is home to around 200 of the world's last 750 mountain gorillas but they are east from the volcano, near the border with Rwanda.

The destruction of the forest by volcanic activity "is part of a natural process, we can't complain too

much," according to Emmanuel de Merode, the director of the Virunga National Park. The worst threat to the park in recent years has come from human beings, in the shape of rebel bands and government troops, who kill wildlife, including endangered species.

The park lies in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo that is still most ridden by conflict between the Congolese army (FARDC), renegade soldiers and rebels from neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda.

International

Zambian leader fires minister

ZAMBIAN President Rupiah Banda has fired a minister in his cabinet, a government official said yesterday, without giving any explanation for his removal.

"President of the Republic of Zambia, Sunday revoked the appointment of Gabriel Namu-

lambe, MP, as Minister of Science, Technology and Vocational Training with immediate effect," said presidential spokesman Dickson Jere in a statement.

It is believed the sacking comes after Namulambe, who is from the same tribe as the late presi-

dent Levy Mwanawasa, recently accused Banda of abandoning the legacy of the late leader by sidelining politicians who hail from the area where Mwanawasa came from. However, Namulambe said that he was not bitter about his removal from the ministerial posi-

tion. "I am not bitter, do I sound bitter? I am sure my removal has brought about smiles to those that have been calling about my resignation."

"I am happy that I served under his administration... I cannot say much but I will issue a statement

at a later stage," Namulambe told AFP. In October Banda told opponents who wanted to challenge his nomination as the presidential candidate for the ruling party Movement for Multiparty Democracy ahead of the 2011 polls to resign.

S/Africa's polygamous Zuma weds for fifth time



SOUTH Africa's President Jacob Zuma (R), wearing leopard skins, sings and dances with his new wife Thobeka Madiba (L) at their wedding ceremony at Zuma's rural homestead of Nkandla, some 400 kilometres north of Durban, South Africa.

WEARING leopard skins and carrying a Zulu shield, South Africa's polygamous President Jacob Zuma yesterday married for the fifth time, in a traditional ceremony in his remote hometown.

The 67-year-old and his new bride Thobeka Madiba, 30 years his junior, danced in an open field at his homestead in Nkandla, a

village deep in the countryside of KwaZulu-Natal province.

The two formally wed when a tribal elder asked Madiba if she accepted to join the Zuma family. When she agreed, he pronounced her Zuma's third current wife.

His first wife, Sizakele Khumalo, whom he married in 1973, attended the ceremony. His second wife Nompumelelo Ntuli

Zuma was at the homestead preparing for the reception in a massive tent, where guests will celebrate through the night.

One of Zuma's earlier wives committed suicide in 2000, while in 1998 he divorced Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who remains in his inner circle and is currently South Africa's home affairs minister.

The guests included South Africa's political and business elite, including Mandla Mandela, a grandson of the nation's first black president Nelson Mandela. Local celebrities and music stars like Yvonne Chaka Chaka also attended the ceremony under overcast skies, with a gentle drizzle seen as a sign of blessing in African culture.

Eritrea says attacked by Ethiopia

ERITREA accused arch-foe Ethiopia yesterday of launching attacks along their disputed border but said its troops had driven off the assault, killing 10 Ethiopian soldiers and capturing two.

The Eritrean foreign affairs ministry said soldiers from Ethiopia's ruling Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) had attacked on Friday in the Zalambesa area. Ethiopian officials denied the claims.

"In the early morning hours of January 1st 2010, TPLF soldiers launched successive attacks in the Zalambesa front and were swiftly driven back," the ministry said in a statement on its website.

Zalambesa lies in the centre of the contested frontier, over which neighbours fought a brutal war in the late 1990s. "Ten of their soldiers (were) killed and two captured, leaving six AK-47 automatic rifles, a machine gun and communication equipment," the statement said. The Ethiopian government denied the claims. "There was never an incursion from our side. It's a diversionary tactic by the Eritrean regime to deflect attention from its domestic problems," spokesman Shimelis Kemal told AFP.

An Eritrean rebel group earlier this week claimed they carried out raids against government positions, while another movement said it was "prepared to launch attacks" after the United Nations imposed an arms embargo and other tough sanctions on Asmara.

"The (Eritrean) government has become internationally outlawed and is bankrupt. The rebel claims indicate growing discontent from within the country," Shimelis added.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's TPLF party is the main member of the ruling coalition and was a close ally of the Eritrean government before it fell out prior to the border war.

About 80,000 people died in the 1998-2000 border conflict, many in brutal World War I-style trench warfare. A UN-backed boundary commission charged with demarcating the border has handed the disputed town of Badme to Eritrea but Addis Ababa has refused to recognise the ruling.

Weed threatens livelihoods in Botswana's delta

THE unique Okavango Delta in northern Botswana is in danger from an invasive weed from Latin America which is threatening the livelihood of the local people dependent on fishing and income from tourism. *Salvinia molesta*, also known as Kariba weed, is believed to have found its way to the world's only major inland delta via the rivers that feed into it from Angola.

The free floating dark green fern covering the water cuts off oxygen for fish and blocks the

delta's channels for the traditional punt-like canoes known as mokoros. Local communities and tourism interests are being encouraged to work together to defeat the menace, while scientists think they have found biological means to keep it under control.

"It is important for members of the community and tour operators to combine forces and fight this weed which is threatening the livelihood of most people in the Okavango region.

"Its effects may not be felt at

the moment but if it spreads further then the fishermen will definitely feel the pinch," said Kethatlogile Masepeling, a fisheries biologist at the University of Botswana. "Fishing is a source of income for most of us in this part of Botswana, and if it means working day and night to destroy this weed which is threatening our fish, then let it be so," said Faosiko Wake, chairman of the Okavango Fishermen's Association.

The delta, teeming with wildlife, attracts thousands of tour-

ists who stay in upmarket safari lodges, many of them accessible only by air, as well as zoologists and other researchers. "Tourists love cruising in the delta and we have to make sure that nothing stands in their way," said Morongoe Ntloedibe, chief executive of the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana.

Salvinia molesta has affected waterways across the world, including Australia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific as well as parts of Africa.

International

Yemen: 2 al-Qaida militants killed in clash

SECURITY forces killed two suspected al-Qaida militants in clashes outside the Yemeni capital yesterday, officials said, as the U.S. and British embassies extended their closure for a second day because of threats of attack by the terror group's offshoot here.

The clashes took place in a region northeast of the capital where last month the government carried out intensified raids against an al-Qaida cell it said was plotting attacks against foreign interests, possibly including embassies.

In that December 17 raid, officials said four would-be suicide bombers were killed.

The US and British embassies closed on Sunday after what US officials said were signs of al-Qaida was planning an attack in Sana, possibly against the diplo-

matic missions.

An officer on duty at the U.S. Embassy in Sana said Monday that the closure remained in force. A State Department spokesman, Fred Lash, said reopening would be assessed day to day, based on the perceived threat to US personnel. The Foreign Office in London said the British were also reviewing the situation.

The French Embassy has been closed to the public since Sunday, though the staff was working, the Foreign Ministry in Paris, and the ambassador urged French nationals in Yemen to avoid all non-essential movement in the country and to exercise vigilance. Spain's embassy in Sana restricted access to the public.

In yesterday's clashes, security forces attacked a group of al-Qaida militants including Nazeeh

al-Hanaq, a senior figure on Yemen's most wanted list, as they moved through the mountainous area of Arhab yesterday, security officials said.

Al-Hanaq escaped, but two fighters with him were killed in the battle, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press. The officials said Monday's raid was not connected to the threats that prompted the embassy closures.

Yemen has carried out a string of raids on al-Qaida hideouts in the past month, part of an intensified effort — backed by the United States — to stamp out the terror group's growing presence in this impoverished, fragmented nation at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula.

President Barack Obama says

al-Qaida's offshoot in Yemen was behind the failed attempt to bomb a U.S. airliner heading to Detroit on Christmas. The United States and Britain have dramatically ramped up counterterrorism aid to Sana, including helping train and fund special units to combat the group.

Al-Qaida has several hundred members in Yemen and is actively planning attacks against US targets, Obama's top counterterrorism adviser, John Brennan, said Sunday.

Washington's aid aims to give the Yemeni government with "the wherewithal" to take down al-Qaida, Brennan said, but he underlined that the administration was not currently planning on sending U.S. troops. "We're not talking about that at this point at all," he said.

Iran university professors denounce crackdown

DOZENS of Tehran University professors appealed yesterday to Iran's supreme leader to halt the ongoing violence against protesters, adding a new and respected voice in support of the opposition.

The government, meanwhile, stepped up its accusations that the West is fomenting Tehran's post-election turmoil, saying that foreign nationals were among those arrested in the most recent clashes between security forces and pro-opposition protesters.

Officials didn't provide the nationalities of the arrested but accused the foreigners of leading a propaganda war and warned they face possible death sentences for seeking to topple the government. The letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, signed by 88 professors and reported by a pro-reform Web site, reflected a daring challenge to the Iran's clerical leadership since it is sure to further arouse the anger of authorities.

Iraqi PM vows justice in Blackwater shooting case

THE Iraqi prime minister vowed yesterday to seek punishment for the Blackwater guards accused of killing 17 people at a busy Baghdad intersection after U.S. courts dropped the case in a decision that outraged many Iraqis. Nouri al-Maliki's comments were his first public reaction since a U.S. judge threw out the case against the five Blackwater guards last week.

The guards were accused of an unprovoked attack that left 17 dead. The killings inflamed anti-American sentiment and solidified many Iraqis' image of U.S. security contractors as above the law.

"We have done what is necessary to protect our citizens and to punish those who committed the crime and we have formed committees and filed a lawsuit against Blackwater security firm either in America or Iraq. We won't abandon our right to punish this firm," al-Maliki said. The prime minister spoke during a visit to the southern city of Najaf to meet with the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who is considered the most influential Shiite cleric in the country.

The case drove a wedge between the U.S. and Iraq, which was perceived powerless to protect its people against the plethora of private security contractors that had sprung up since the Iraq war began.



FORMER Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon remains in a coma.

Ex-Israeli PM still comatose 4 years after stroke

ARIEL Sharon, the tough army general turned premier who shocked his hawkish supporters by pulling Israel out of Gaza in 2005, is still lying unconscious in a hospital bed, friends said yesterday on the fourth anniversary of the massive stroke that put him in a coma. Sharon, 81, led Israel from 2001 until the January 2006 stroke that left him comatose.

Dov Weisglass, a close friend of Sharon and his former spokesman, told The Associated Press on Sunday that Sharon's vital signs

are good but it was not clear if he would ever regain consciousness. Medical experts have said that is most unlikely.

Sharon was a daring army officer who reached the rank of major general in the 1970s, sometimes disobeying orders from his superiors. After leaving the army, Sharon turned to politics, becoming a hawkish lawmaker in the Likud Party and an enthusiastic supporter of the movement to settle the West Bank with Israelis.

He served in several Cabinet

posts, including defense minister. He was the architect of Israel's disastrous war in Lebanon, which began in 1982. The next year he was forced to resign by an Israeli commission of inquiry that found him indirectly responsible for the massacre of around 800 Palestinians at the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps by Lebanese Christian militiamen.

Resurrecting his political career, he was elected Israel's prime minister in 2001. Turning his back on his uncompromising

ideology in 2005, Sharon unilaterally withdrew all Israeli settlers and soldiers from the Gaza Strip, ending Israel's 38-year occupation of the territory and daily clashes between settlers and soldiers with Palestinian militants. Outraged hawkish backers abandoned him, and Sharon created a new centrist party, Kadima, to run in March 2006 elections.

Riding a wave of popularity, Sharon appeared to be well on his way to re-election when he suffered a stroke on Jan. 4, 2006.

International

North Korea tries to bring life to failed trade zone

RECLUSIVE North Korea upgraded the status of a city it has designated as a foreign investment zone, in what may be another in a series of attempts by the destitute state to regain control of the faltering economy.

In the past few weeks, North Korea has redominated its currency and clamped down on the holdings of foreign cash in moves analysts said were aimed at decreasing the power of a burgeoning merchant class and reasserting central government control over the economy.

"The city of Rason has become a special city," the North's KCNA news agency said in a brief dispatch yesterday.

Rason, also known as Rajin-Songbong, was designated by North Korea as a free trade zone in 1991. It is in the northeast and lies near where North Korea, China and Russia converge. Until the recent currency moves, North Korean merchants who work outside the government's centrally planned economy had been gaining ground in trading for goods in China.

Meanwhile the Rason trade project had been an abject failure as foreign investors stayed away due to worries about doing business with the paranoid and mercurial state or being barred from



NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong-il (L) waves during his visit to the Heechon power plant at the undisclosed place in North Korea.

doing business that may be in violation of sanctions banning trade with the global pariah.

But the Rason project was given new life when the North's

official media reported about three weeks ago that leader Kim Jong-il visited the city for the first time since it became a trade zone nearly 20 years ago, and said he

wanted to see it flourish.

North Korea's estimated \$17 billion a year economy was dealt a heavy blow by fresh U.N. sanctions imposed after its nuclear test

in May. The sanctions were aimed at cutting off its trade in weapons, which provide Pyongyang's leaders with up to an estimated \$1.6 billion a year.

Afghan attacks kill 4 US troops, British soldier

A roadside bombing killed four U.S. service members — the first American combat deaths of the year in Afghanistan — while a British soldier died during a foot patrol elsewhere in the volatile south of the country, officials said yesterday.

A statement from NATO's International Security Assistance Force said the explosion that killed the U.S. service members took place Sunday in the south, but did not give further details on

the location or the victims' branch of service.

Afghan insurgents are increasingly turning to improvised explosive devices in their fight against Afghan and international forces. Of the 304 U.S. military deaths in Afghanistan last year, 129 were caused by IEDs, according to a tally by The Associated Press.

The deaths are the first U.S. fatalities from hostile action in Afghanistan this year. One U.S.

service member died of noncombat causes so far in 2010.

The British soldier died while on foot patrol Sunday in Helmand province, the British Ministry of Defense said.

The Afghan Defense Ministry said its soldiers killed 10 Taliban fighters in battles Sunday in northern Kunduz province's Imam Sahib district, which borders Tajikistan.

One soldier was wounded in the clash.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai yesterday ordered parliament to postpone its winter recess until a new list of Cabinet nominees is announced, following last week's stinging rejection of most of his choices.

The rejection by lawmakers of 17 of 24 nominees was a surprising slap and an obstacle to Karzai getting his second term in office into full operation and focusing on badly needed reforms.

Karzai's credibility both at

home and abroad was shaken by the fraud-plagued presidential elections in August.

In the vote on the Cabinet nominees Saturday, lawmakers rejected nominees viewed as Karzai's political cronies, those believed to be under the influence of warlords and others deemed unqualified.

The parliament did approve his retention of incumbents in the key portfolios of defense, interior and finance.

Destructive tsunami crashes over Solomon Islands

A tsunami unleashed by a major earthquake plowed into the Solomon Islands yesterday with the crashing waters devastating at least one village. Initial reports said no one was seriously hurt.

A series of major quakes have rocked the South Pacific region since Sunday, with three powerful temblors striking yesterday,

including a 7.2 magnitude tremor. The Solomon Islands' National Disaster Management Office said reports of the devastation were beginning to filter in late Monday.

The tremors were centered beneath the ocean floor near the town of Gizo, which was badly damaged in April 2007 when a 8.1-magnitude quake sent a tsu-

nami crashing into the coast, killing more than 50 people.

Yesterday's tsunami devastated a village on Rendova Island, some 188 miles (300 kilometers) from the capital Honiara, disaster management official Loti Yates told The Associated Press.

"One report from police was that one village was hit by a 6 to 10

foot (2-3 meter) wall of sea water," Yates said. "It was a total inundation police saw in a fly over."

Rendova is home to about 3,600 people. Yates said in Baniata village on Rendova's coast, 16 houses were destroyed and 32 damaged by the quake and the wave. "It could be several hundred houses have been damaged

... but that is still not verified," said Yates. "There are two to three villages where the situation could be much worse."

Yates said there were no other reports of injuries. "We're lucky that whatever happened happened during the day and people were able to hike up the hills," he said.

International

US suspect in Pakistan defends 'jihad' plans

ONE of five Americans detained in Pakistan said their aim was to go to Afghanistan to wage jihad against Western forces, defending

their intention as justified under Islam.

But he denied any links to al-Qaida or plans to carry out terror-

ist attacks in Pakistan, as alleged by Pakistani authorities.

Monday was the first time the young Muslims from the Wash-

ington, D.C., area have addressed a court after being arrested in early December in the eastern Pakistani city of Sargodha. The

case has spurred fears that Westerners are traveling to Pakistan to join militant groups. Pakistani police have said they plan to seek life sentences for the men under the country's anti-terrorism law.

"We are not terrorists," one of the men, Ramy Zamzam, told The Associated Press as he entered a courtroom in Sargodha yesterday. "We are jihadists, and jihad is not terrorism," he said.

Jihad has several different meanings in Islam, but Zamzam seemed to be referring to the duty to fight against foreign forces viewed as occupying a Muslim country. The men, aged 19 to 25, denied they had ties with al-Qaida or other militant groups during a court appearance Monday in Sargodha, said their attorney, Ameer Abdullah Rokri.

"They told the court that they did not have any plan to carry out any terrorist act inside or outside Pakistan," said Rokri. "They said that they only intended to travel to Afghanistan to help their Muslim brothers who are in trouble, who are bleeding and who are being victimized by Western forces."

The Americans arrived amid tight security. About a dozen police cars escorted the prison van inside the court premises as officers manned the rooftops of surrounding buildings. The men wore handcuffs as they walked into the courthouse for their hearing.



DETAINED American Muslims, center, talk Pakistani police officers as they leave after appearance in an anti terrorist court in Sargodha, Pakistan.

Danish cartoonist defends police who protect him

THE Danish artist whose controversial cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad enraged Muslims around the world said yesterday that police cannot protect him from attackers who act spontaneously.

Kurt Westergaard said in an interview with The Associated Press that he believes he is being targeted by Muslim extremists because he stands by his cartoon and insists he has "not done anything wrong."

The 74-year-old artist said he was shocked by Friday's attack during which a Somali man broke into his home armed with an ax.

Police shot the Somali man in the hand and knee, and he was later charged with attempted murder. The man cannot be identified due to a Danish court ban.

Westergaard said police cannot protect him 100 percent from "the terrorist type" who acts spontaneously and is "not part of

a conspiracy.

Westergaard's drawing of the Prophet Muhammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban was printed in the Jyllands-Posten newspaper in September 2005. The daily had asked Danish cartoonists to draw Muhammad as a challenge to a perceived self-censorship.

In early 2006, Danish and other Western embassies in several Muslim countries were torched by angry protesters who felt the cartoons had profoundly insulted Islam.

"I have not done anything wrong," Westergaard said by telephone on Monday from an undisclosed house where he was kept under police protection. "To me, it was just another day at the office."

Islamic law generally opposes any depiction of the prophet, even favorable, for fear it could lead to idolatry.



DANISH cartoonist Kurt Westergaard.

FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL)
P.M.B 1088, GUSAU, ZAMFARA STATE

Office of the Registrar

Internal and External Advertisement

Applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified candidates for the post of Bursar.

1.0 BURSAR: CONTISS 14

The position of Bursar is a statutory position on tenure appointment for 5 years in the first instance and may be renewed for another 5 year term and no more.

1.1 DUTIES

The bursar shall be the Chief Financial Officer of the College and is responsible to the Provost for the day to day administration and control of the financial affairs of the college.

1.2 QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

Candidate must possess a good honours degree in Accounting or Finance from a recognized institution of Higher learning or equivalent professional accountancy qualification with at least 18 years post evidence of membership of relevant professional body(s).

2.0 METHOD OF APPLICATION

2.0 Interested candidates should forward 15 copies of their typewritten application and detailed curriculum vitae.

2.2 Photocopies of relevant credentials to be attached to each of the copies.

2.3 Candidates are advised to request three (3) of their referees (one of them must be the present employer) to forward reports on them under confidential cover to:

THE REGISTRAR

Federal College of Education (Technical)
P.M.B 1088, Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria

All applications and reference reports on the candidates should reach the registrar not later than six (6) weeks from the date of this publication.

Signed:
REGISTRAR



KWARA STATE GOVERNMENT

Alimi Road, GRA, PMB 1390, Ilorin. Tel: 031-221421

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE KWARA STATE CIVIL SERVICE

In its determination to properly reposition the Civil Service and enhance capacity for more effective and efficient service delivery, the Kwara State Government seeks to recruit performance driven and focused individuals who are interested in making career in the State's Civil Service. The recruitment to fill existing vacancies in the Kwara State Civil Service is to cover all cadres in Ministries, Departments and Agencies under the purview of the Commission

CANDIDATES

Expected Candidates are those who are interested in making career in the Civil Service. Interested candidate must possess Minimum of University Degree or HND from recognized Universities or Polytechnics.

MODE OF APPLICATION

All interested candidates with relevant academic and professional qualification are expected to register at the State Civil Service Commission, along Alimi Road, GRA, Ilorin, Kwara State from **6th to 15th January, 2010**, between **10.00am - 4.00pm** daily. Such Candidates should come along with handwritten application, including photocopies of relevant credential and Curriculum Vitae. All applications are to be addressed to:

The Chairman,
Kwara State Civil Service Commission,
Alimi Road,
Off Ahmadu Bello Way,
Ilorin, KWARA STATE.

REMUNERATION:

Remuneration is as obtainable in the Civil Service.

Signed:

K. S. Amasa

Perm. Sec. Civil Service Commission.



Founded in 1954

SHEHU IDRIS COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES & TECHNOLOGY, MAKARFI, KADUNA STATE.

CONDOLENCE

With deep sense of sorrow and complete submission to the will of Allah, the Governing Council, Management, Staff and Students of Shehu Idris College of Health Sciences and Technology, Makarfi heartily wish to commiserate with His Highness, the Emir of Zazzau, Alh (Dr) Shehu Idris CFR; over the death of four illustrious sons of the Zazzau Emirate:

- Alh Kabir Shehu Idris(Madakin Zazzau and Hakimin Birni da Kewaye)
- Alh Dalhatu Suleiman Kadade(Dan Malikin Zazzau and District Head of Nasarawan Doya).
- Alh Abdulkadir Yamusa(Wan 'yan Zazzau)
- Alh Suleiman Nuhu (Magayakin Zazzau)

The demise of these important personalities has created vacuums that only Allah, the Almighty knows when and how they could be filled. Indeed, their contributions and strong support towards the progress of Zazzau Emirate and the environs will continue to linger in our memories.

We pray that, May Allah (SWT) forgive their shortcomings, have mercy on them and grant them Jannatul Firdaus.

May He also bless their families and give them the fortitude to bear the losses.

SIGNED
SHEHU U.MUHAMMAD
PROVOST.

BUSINESS

0805 1000 536

FG releases N22bn export grant

By Jibrin Abubakar

THE Federal Government has ordered the release of outstanding Export Expansion Grant (EEG) certificates for 2007 amounting to N21,580,405,000 to the exporters.

Minister of State for Finance, Mr. Remi Babalola, gave the directive to the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC) to release the fund, a statement from his media aide Olayinka Akintunde said.

The minister's directive on the release of certificates, which was given in December 2009 to NEPC, is based on the Audit Report of the EEG Scheme carried out by a reputable firm of auditors, PriceWaterHouse-Coopers.

"The directive is a major effort by the Federal Government to step up the operations of the Export Expansion Grant Scheme, towards the realisation of its key objective of stimulating export-oriented activities that would lead to the growth of the non-oil export sector in Nigeria," he added.

The beneficiaries are expected this week to receive their EEG certificates from NEPC.

Babalola, who is the Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Committee of the EEG Scheme, however, warned that the Federal Government would henceforth no longer tolerate inappropriate and frivolous claims by exporters. He disclosed that the government would not hesitate to handover fraudulent claimants to the appropriate law-enforcement and anti-graft agencies, in line with the Administration's avowed commitment to transparency and zero tolerance to corruption.

The minister noted that the EEG scheme would upscale the contributions by the non-oil sector into the national coffers. "The Federal Government believes that with this bold initiative to give vitality to the Scheme, it will not be long before the non-oil sector begins to gain ascendancy in contributing foreign exchange into



MANSUR Muhtar, Minister of Finance

the national coffers.

"This is in line with government's avowed policy of diversification of the national earning base. All stakeholders have to support this Scheme fully, towards making our nation a force to be reckoned with in the world," he said.

The EEG was one of the novel export incentives introduced by the Federal Government through the Export (Incentives and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1986 as amended by the Export (Incentives and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1992.

The objective of the audit exercise was to arrest observed irregularities in the Scheme, such as non-provision of appropriate records to back up claims, poor documentation, and lateness in remitting export proceeds, among others. The Report of the Audit exercise formed the basis of the release of the Grant Certificates to genuine claimants.

The Scheme has gone through some transformations since inception, towards enhancing its capability to contribute significantly to the development of non-oil exports in Nigeria. To benefit from the Scheme, exporters are required to register with the Nigeria Export Promotions Council after meeting certain criteria. These criteria include export growth, investment growth, local content, value addition, employment generation and priority sector.

Thereafter, exporters are entitled to make claims based on the value of export proceeds they receive and duly certified by the Central Bank of Nigeria. The approved claims are paid to exporters by Government through the use of a negotiable instrument known as the Negotiable Duty Credit Certificate (NDCC). The NDCC entitles the exporter to offset part or whole of subsequent Customs and Excise duties payable to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE



Arik Air

PH-Abuja: 08.45, 1212.50, 17.00 (Mon-Fri), 08.45, 17.30 (Sat), 14.40, 17.30 (Sun); Abuja-PH: 07.15, 11.20, 15.30 (Mon-Fri), 07.15, 16.00 (Sat) 14.40, 17.30 (Sun); Lagos-Kano: 12.20pm (Mon-Fri/Sun)
Kano-Lagos: 02.35pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Abuja-Kano: 03:35pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Kano-Abuja: 05:20pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Abuja-Gombe: 11:10am (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun); Gombe-Abuja: 12.30pm (Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun); Lagos-Yola: Lag-Abj 04:50pm, via Abj-Yola 06:45pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Yola-Lagos: Yola-Abj 08:40am, Abj-Lagos 10:20am (Mon-Fri/Sat); Lagos-Maid: Lag-Abj 03:50pm, via Abj-Maid 06:00pm (Mon-Fri/Sun); Maid-Lagos: Miud-Abj 07:30am, via Abj-Lag 09:15am (Mon-Fri/Sat); Abuja-Sokoto: 11:10am (Mon-Fri); Sokoto-Abuja: 12:50pm (Mon-Fri)
Abuja-Akure 02:10pm (Mon, Wed and Fri); Akure-Abuja: 08:50am (Mon, Wed and Fri); Lagos-Kwara: 07:30am, (Mon-Fri) 07.30, 03:50pm Sat 08:00am, 11:45am Sun; Kwara-Lagos: 4:10pm (Mon-Fri), 01:10pm, 05:30pm Sat 09:45am, 05:00pm Sun
Abuja-Kwara: 03:25pm (Mon-Fri); Kwara-Abuja 01.30pm (Mon-Fri); Lagos-Jos: 09:05am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); Jos-Lagos: 11.00am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
ABV-QOW 02:30pm (Mon-Fri), 11:30am Sat 03:20pm Sun; Lagos-Kaduna: 10:20am, 04:10pm (Mon-Fri), 10.20 (Sat/Sun); Kaduna-Lagos: 12:10pm, 06:00pm (Mon-Fri), 12.10 (Sat/Sun); Lagos-Warr: 07:30am (Mon/Fri) 07:30am, 03:50pm (Sat), 08:00am, and 11:45am (Sun)

Aero Contractors

Lagos-Kad: 08.00am (Mon/Fri/Sat/Sun)
Kad-Lagos: 09.40am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-Jos: 11.15am (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Jos-Lagos: 13.15pm (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-Abj: 06.50; 13.30; 16.30; 19.45 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 12.30 (Sun) 16.45 (Sat). Abj-Lagos: 07.30; 13.30; 19.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30, 14.30; 19.30 (Sun) 18.30 (Sat); Lagos-Ben: 07:45; 11:00; 15:30; (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun) 12.30; (Sun); 15.30 (Sat).
Ben-Lagos: 09.15; 12.30; 17.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 17.00 (Sat); 14.00 (Sun); Lagos-Cala: 13.15; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 08.30; 19.00 (Sun); Cala-Lagos: 14.45; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30 (Sun); Lagos-Enu: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 15.00 (Sun); Enu-Lagos: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat) 16.45 (Sun)

Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 10.00, 13.10, 15.30, 17.30
Abj-Lagos: 08.00, 11.45, 13.40, 15.30, 17.00
Lagos-Kad: 10.45, (on Fri), 17.00 (Mon/Fri/sat/Sun)
Kad-Lagos: 07.30 (Mon/Fri), 08.00 (Sat/Sun)
Nigerian Eagles Airlines (Virgin Nigeria)
Abj-Kano: 18.40 (Mon-Fri)/Sun
Kano-Abj: 08.35 (Mon-Fri)/Sat
Abj-Soko: 09:35, (Mon), 10:10 (Fri), 11:20 (Wed/Sun)
Soko-Abj: 11.35 (Mon), 12.00 (Fri), 13:20 (Wed/Sun)
Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 11.40, 14.00, 16.30, 17.00, 17.20; 18.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun), 8.00; 12.40; 13.10; 20:00 (Fri)
Abj-Lagos: 07.00, 09.30, 10.30, 11.15, 16.15; 19.15, 19.25, 19:35 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 14:55; 15:15; 20:45 (Fri); 19:45 (Sun); 11:25, 13:35, 16:25 (Mon)
Lagos-PHC: 07.40, 09.30, 10.00, 12.20, 13.30, 14.00, 16.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); PHC-Lagos: 10.50, 11.20,

CBN EXCHANGE RATES			
	Buying (NGN)	Central (NGN)	Selling (NGN)
CFA	0.3048	0.3148	0.3248
DANISH KRONER	28.4713	28.5681	28.6649
EURO	211.9711	212.6916	213.4121
POUNDS STERLING	238.3167	239.1268	239.9368
RIYAL	39.2267	39.36	39.4933
SDR	230.6087	231.3926	232.1764
SWISS FRANC	144.1592	144.6492	145.1392
US DOLLAR	147.1	147.6	148.1
WAUA	230.0676	230.8496	231.6316
YEN	1.5916	1.5971	1.6025

BUREAU DE CHANGE RATES	
BUYING	
DOLLAR.....	N150
EURO.....	N219
POUNDS.....	N245
SELLING	
DOLLAR.....	N152
EURO.....	N222
POUNDS.....	N247

Stock Market Index	
Date :	Monday, January 4, 2010
Index:	20,838.90
Deals:	3,802
Volume :	129,761,827
Value:	N 699,999,472.80
Cap. :	N 4,992,193,976,766.50

Source: FeatureNet solutions

Business



KASIMU Garba Kurfi



CBN Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi

How CBN policies failed Nigerian economy—Kurfi

By Jibrin Abubakar

MANAGING Director of APT Securities Malam Kasimu Garba Kurfi has pointed out how the Central Bank of Nigeria's policies contributed to the crisis in the economy.

In a paper presented at the 2009 end of year dinner of the banking and finance trade group of Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (KADCCIMA), the stockbroker said the instruction given to banks to raise their capital base to N25 billion by 31st December 2005 made the banks to invade the capital market.

He said: "While the Federal Reserve of United States intervened in the mortgage through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, at the same time in Nigeria we were busy giving instructions to banks to consolidate to a minimum amount net shareholders fund of N25 billion with a proviso that any bank that failed to meet up with the minimum recapitalization by 31st December 2005 will cease to exist.

"Almost all the banks became guests to the Nigerian capital market to meet up with the recapitalization deadline by issuing their own shares, but with no recourse to financial risk and human capacity to manage such funds, anyway.

"At the end of the exercise 89 banks were reduced to only 25 banks while those that failed to meet up with the recapitalization condition were liquidated or winded down. Immediately after the banking consolidation exercise the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) promised banks that any bank that can build up its shareholders funds up to \$1 billion will be given the opportunity to manage some of our foreign reserves.

"This triggered off a second round of consolidation exercise, this time though the compelling condition was not so visible or openly pronounced.

"The banks once more began visiting the capital market in search of additional funds. Some of the banks visited the capital market almost three times between 2005 and 2008."

He said: "Unfortunately, we are not aware that they were required to show proof of how they utilized their previous funds before being cleared for additional funds raising.

"This led to a situation where our Banks found themselves accommodating a lot of funds over and above what they could comfortably manage - even above their immediate requirement: all these in a bid to meet certain criteria that may not even have been part of their strategy of immediate needs.

"Awash with so much funds that were probably not originally planned for, and in the midst of no prying eyes or someone monitoring and ensuring that the purpose for which funds were raised, as specified in the Offer documents were met, the next point of call was easy profit making ventures, risk element cycled into the cooler.

"This is how most banks got involved in margin facilities whereby they invited customers to take up margin loan facilities using the shares bought with such monies as collateral to the loans. Both the banker and customer failed to appreciate or understand the financial risk inherent in such deals. Surprisingly, every other bank followed suit in this new found avenue for a supposedly idle funds. "This exercise saw the sum of N1.5 trillion being invested in the capital market, all in the name of margin facilities. Some banks used their subsidiaries to buy their own shares and also give money to their relatives, directors and associates to play the capital market."

According to him, the reduction of inflation and interest rate to a single digit by the CBN also encouraged bankers to play the capital market with depositor's money.

He said: "By April 2008 the All-Share-Index have reached an ever high level of more than 12,000 basis point while our market capitalisation climaxed to over N12.3 trillion.

"By April 2008, CBN issued a directive to banks to stop margin loan facilities even though they later denied it. At the same time hedge funds managers started withdrawing their investments in order to mitigate the credit crunch that is happening in their home countries. This led to dumping of shares in the stock

exchange and that formed the beginning of the capital market crisis.

"In addition to the stock market crises, the banking crisis actually reared its head in October 2008 but was delayed by the opening of Expanded Discounted Window (EDW) to avoid bank failure as some of the banks were unable to meet up with their daily demand by depositors. Banks misused this opportunity by taking it as a permanent source of funding instead of disposing some of the assets (most of which today has turned toxic), adopt cost-cutting measures and conservation of cash in their day-to-day operations.

"In the process also, there was the sudden devaluation of the Naira by the CBN whereby losses were incurred from 'carry trade' which arose from borrowed U.S. dollar at low interest without looking at the exchange risk and this sent many into default and some of our manufacturing companies were declaring huge losses as a result of devaluation of the Naira.

He added that had there been the usual systematic risk appraisal in banking and financial management where inherent risks are highlighted and mitigating factors subjected to the crucial acid test, such decisions would not have found suitor with banks management.

He said: "The liquidity crises in the economy, particularly banks, which day of reckoning came after it was postponed through the EDW, further aggravated the situation. Bank workers whose envious pay package were considered second in earnings only after the Oil and Gas industry did not only drastically cut down on their staff strength but also effected downward review of salaries and all emoluments by as much as 50% or more. Credit lending suffered as over leveraged world has to find ways to cut debt burdens down to size.

"Regulators who are supposed to be the gate keepers failed to understand all these and proven actions that spur systematic risk failed. Many of them were rather captured by those they were supposed to be regulating."

NDE partners MDG, NAPEP on poverty alleviation

From Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, Kano

THE National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in alliance with Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) have entered into a tripartite collaboration with a view of contributing their quarter in poverty alleviation in the country. The theme of the project is, "in care of our people (COPE)".

Speaking during the pre-training lecture for held in Kano, the state coordinator, NDE Engr. Yakubu Umar Mani said participants are selected from those families that are living below the poverty line. He said the participants will be trained in different fields of their choices aimed at improving the living standards of the families.

Mani said a total of 500 persons selected from 10 local government areas of the state will benefit in the first phase of the programme which commenced immediately.

Also speaking, representative of NAPEP Aminu Ali Dambatta said NAPEP will contribute to the scheme by providing capital for the trainees in order to sustain the programme as well as to make them financially independent.

Dambatta further said NAPEP will also ensure that each household selected has access to primary health care and basic education with a monthly support allowance of N7,000 to each household for the period of one year.

A total of 10 local governments will benefit from the scheme among which are: Dambatta, Madobi, Nassarawa, Madobi, Rogo, Bagwai, Gwarzo, Minjibir, Gaya and Kano Municipal.



MAGNUS Kpakol, NAPEP boss

Business

Finbank shuns FG's warning, sacks 500 staff

From Chris Agabi, Lagos

DESPITE the warnings handed down to banks to stop sacking their staff, Finbank Plc over the weekend sacked about 500 of its workers.

This is coming in spite of the warnings by the two industrial bodies in the financial sector, the

National Union of Banks, Insurance and other Financial Institutions' Employees (NUBIFIE) and the Association of Senior Staff of Banks, Insurance and other Financial Institutions (ASSBIFI) to close down banks over the laying-off of staff.

A source told Daily Trust, "The affected staff simply had

their password to access the bank's computers disabled" before being told they were sacked.

"They were disengaged through the e-approach a day before the new year" he said, adding that, "we are about to log into our systems, the affected staff couldn't log in.

They were later told that their inability to access the computers with their pass words indicate that they have been relieved of their jobs.

After then, they were officially informed of their fate.

"Those who gained access to their computer were basking in the euphoria of still retaining

their jobs. Although still scared of the unknown as the bank is said to be compiling some more names."

When contacted for comment, spokesman of the bank Mr. Ekuma Eze said he was not aware of the sack because he was on vacation and shall be resuming office today.

AIO wants insurance sector to adopt IFRS

From Chris Agabi, Lagos

THE African Insurance Organisation (AIO) is introducing measures to ensure that African insurance companies not only know the workings of International Reporting Standards but henceforth apply it in their book keeping.

Based on this, AIO is organising a two-day capacity building in Doula, Cameroun from 15th to 16th March, 2010.

The seminar with the theme: Global Financial Crisis: Challenges for the African Insurance Industry, according to the Secretary-General of the AIO, Ms Prisca Gbemisola Soares, will facilitate a seamless change in the financial reporting of Africa insurers; Explore the key features

of the Exposure Draft on the main standard on insurance contracts which is scheduled for publication before the end of 2009 and their implications for the system and business of African insurers.

It would also discuss the elements of Enterprise Risk Management and its role in managing uncertainties and related challenges that African insurers face and to discuss options available to African insurers for optimizing cost in the wake of current global economic crisis.

She said the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), KPMG and Standard & Poors are all set to take African Insurance market through Financial Reporting and Risk Management in line with International Financial Reporting Standards at the seminar.

Capital Oil to commission 28-loading arms gantry Feb- MD

The Managing Director, Capital Oil and Gas, Mr Patrick Ubah said the company would inaugurate 28 loading arms gantry next month to ease Nigeria's petroleum distribution problems.

Ubah made this known on Sunday in Lagos at the 2009 End-of-Year luncheon for energy cor-

respondents.

He said that the 28 arms gantry, when operational, would be loading about 55 million litres of petroleum products per day.

He said Capital Oil and Gas has the storage tank facilities for 45 million litres of fuel. (NAN).

Nigeria Pepsi franchise H1 pretax profit up 2 percent

NIGERIAN Pepsi franchise, Seven-Up, said its pre-tax profit rose 2 percent to 1.0 billion naira (\$6.7 million) in the half-year to September 2009. Turnover grew 17 percent to 17.85 billion naira in the period, the company said in a filing to the stock exchange.



A power installation

NACIMMA berates FG over failure on 6,000MW

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

THE Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry Mines and Agriculture (NACIMMA), has expressed concern over the inability of the Federal government to deliver 6,000 megawatts of electricity it promised Nigerians at the end of December last year.

Specifically, the association said the failure of the government to meet the target is a serious threat to industrial growth and capable of castrating the economy.

A statement signed by the President of the association, Simon Okolo and made available to our correspondent weekend said the stalemate in the power sector is a manifestation that the incumbent administration is bereft of political will to nip the nation's industrial problems in the bud.

He said: "Government inability to deliver on 6,000 megawatts of electric power generation has cast a big pall of darkness on its vision 2020 and 7point agenda projections to Nigerians".

He further said government

failure to deliver the target as expected to spell doom for the industrial sector currently under huge energy cost, multiple taxation, delayed infrastructure and inconsistent policies that have given rise to poor capacity utilization for companies in the country.

"Government's failed promises have brought to the fore the gross insensitivity of the ruling class on the plight of Nigerians, urging the leaders to stamp out all forms of corruption in the system which have been at the root of all failed projects in the country.

Star Feature

Neighbours from hell

It is very tough living with difficult neighbour's or impossible co-tenants. It doesn't matter where you live, whether you are a leaseholder or you own the building. They are everywhere and you just have to find a way to live with these tenants from hell, if you can't get them out of the building.

By Lami Sadiq

EVEN though people tend to have issues with the landlord in rented apartments, sometimes it is the co-tenants they live with that pose the greater challenge. Depending on the neighbourhood and architectural design of the building, people from different parts of the world, different orientation, mix together to live amicably or in disarray, depending on their level of tolerance and patience. Tenant who live in slums are more likely to encounter rowdy or noisy neighbours than those who live in urban areas. Even they are not exempted from coming across occupants or neighbour's from hell, who have no regrets when it comes to making your life as miserable as possible. Their aim is simple: to make your life a living hell. But whether they know it or do it on purpose is another issue all together.

Imagine living in a house where you share a bathroom with other residents, who seem to enjoy spending more time than usual in the toilet, not minding who wants to answer the call of nature. Or you are made to hear the sound of someone singing, clapping and shouting in the early hours of the morning, cursing and binding the devil because he wants to ward off so called evil spirits. How about those who just feel convenient in making

the compound or your part of the boundary demarcation, the new rubbish dump? Not forgetting the usual poke nosing and quarrels that go on in the house. Just like the Hausa movie 'gidan haya' (rented apartments) where backbiting, stealing, gossip, quarrels, lack of privacy and some form of nudity issues are highlighted, to affect even the most closely knit neighbours. In real life, living with co-tenants is as challenging and needs as much patience and tolerance.

"It's a pity we don't have the right to choose the kind of neighbours that should live around us" said Angela Amadi, a civil servant living in Mpape, a satellite town in the FCT. Amadi lives in a two bedroom flat and shares a compound with another block of flats, but still has trouble co-relating with her neighbour and co-tenants, whose main door faces the opposite side of Amadi's apartment. Their paths may not necessarily cross, unless they meet at the car lot. "That's the problem" says Amadi, the car lot is spaciouly convenient to take not more than 2 cars and my neighbours who have two (one for her and the other for her husband) feel only they have the right to the car park especially since they have been living in the apartment for a longer period." Her neighbours Mr and Mrs Okoro (not real names) according to Amadi, persisted with their

behavior not minding she had a car and expected her to park hers outside until the day she returned home early, and parked her car inside the compound. "I expected the wife to walk into my house and demand I remove my car, but when nothing happened. I became relaxed until the next morning when I came out in a rush to go to work, it took the Okoro's over 30 minutes to locate the keys to their car which was parked directly behind and blocking my small Honda Civic. The very next day I quietly parked my car outside, and have been doing so for the past one year, thanks to the neighbourhood security guard".

Mrs Joyce Gimba who lives in old Karu, says living with co-tenants can be a disaster, as a co-tenant once taught her to be very observant and trust no one, whether neighbor or friend. "When my family lived in Nyanya, there was a young lady in the compound who almost broke my home. She was never fully dressed whenever my husband was around, always tying a wrapper around her chest and I didn't take it to mean anything, until the fateful day I caught her with my husband". To Mrs Gimba, her world came crashing when she caught the lady knocking on her husband's bathroom door one early morning, and

was flabbergasted when the door opened and the young lady was admitted into the tiny bathroom they shared with another tenant. "It was then that it dawned on me that my husband had been having an affair, and I had been blind all along, because whenever my husband went to the bathroom to take his bath in the morning, after a few minutes, Charity will also carry her bucket of water to go to the bathroom. But then I never suspected anything, since each bathroom was usually occupied by two apartments and she didn't share a bathroom with us".

But on that fateful day, Mr Gimba's phone had been ringing nonstop and being the dutiful wife she was, Joyce Gimba picked the phone and hurriedly took it to her husband in the bathroom, not knowing what awaited her. "It was a scandal, and I later realized everyone in the compound was aware of the affair, except for me"



NEIGHBOURS living in such cramped conditions are bound to have issues.

For Mr John Daniel, a banker living in Mararaba "There was a time a co-tenant poured dirty water over my

“It was a scandal, and I later realized everyone in the compound was aware of the affair, except for me.” For Mr John Daniel, a banker living in Mararaba “There was a time a co-tenant poured dirty water over my body because she was above mine. It was part of the reason I left that house because we were in the habit of throwing all sorts of things, including someone was standing below or not.”



...d to quarrel over space and hygiene.

ound was aware of the affair, Mararaba said "there was a time I was living in an apartment because those living upstairs were throwing garbage, not minding if someone was standing below or not." According to Daniel who now lives in another rented apartment not far from the former, "one morning after dressing for work, I locked my door and stepped down from the passage when this woman who used to live upstairs with her family, suddenly poured water on me, I couldn't believe it. It happened so fast and before I knew it, I was soaked and my

body because she was living in an apartment above mine. It was part of the reason I left that house because those liv-

ing upstairs were in the habit of throwing all sorts of things, including garbage, not minding if someone was standing below or not." According to Daniel who now lives in another rented apartment not far from the former, "one morning after dressing for work, I locked my door and stepped down from the passage when this woman who used to live upstairs with her family, suddenly poured water on me, I couldn't believe it. It happened so fast and before I knew it, I was soaked and my

suit drenched in dirty water. It was not the first time she had done it. In fact, she had been caught on several occasions pouring garbage from upstairs, until the day her washing water splashed on a female co-tenant, and they got into a serious fight."

Just as Daniel left his former apartment, Adama Auwal ran out of hers, only because another co-tenant was meddling into her personal affairs. According to her, "when I cook, she

asks her children to go and spy on what food we cooked in the house, even though we didn't share a kitchen." The alleged intruder will also buy the same cloth bought by her, or insist her husband buys her same, whether he can afford it or not. "It got to the extent that it was like a competition between us, and eventually she started making some threats against me, stressing that I will never have the much needed baby boy my husband and I desired". Having three girls already, the Auwal's wanted a male child, and have had two miscarriages. They have also buried a male infant two weeks after his delivery, so the threat became a big deal. The home people say, is meant to be a place of comfort and solitude one returns to after the hustle and bustle of the days job. But where that peace is being destroyed by people whose values do not coincide with yours, whether through personal hygiene, noise, morality or just meddlingness, and you're sure you haven't got the patience to tolerate some of the short comings, then the suggestion will be to run as if someone were chasing you.. "That was exactly what we did" said Mrs Auwal. We eventually left the house because it was becoming too much, my husband had spoken to her husband. Yet he either did nothing or she just didn't listen to him. We even approached the landlord about it, but he didn't take it seriously. So we left when the tension became too much"

"I pay rent also, so I have the right to blast my music" Shuaibu explained what a co-tenant told him in response to his appeal to reduce her loud music, which he claimed disturbed his sleep late at night. "They forget that their rights end where another man's right begins", he explained. "I had to take a serious stand because if you are the type that avoids confrontation, then neighbours will ride on you or take you for granted." He went further to explain that he shared a common wall, partitioned with ply wood and painted to look like a wall with his neighbour, and so made it impossible for him to endure her bizarre sleeping arrangement." She said she needed the music to sleep, but that's not my problem, all I need is

"I pay rent also, so I have the right to blast my music" Shuaibu explained what a co-tenant told him in response to his appeal to reduce her loud music, which he claimed disturbed his sleep late at night. "They forget that their rights end where another man's right begins", he explained.

to have a sound rest at night when I come back from work".

According to Mohammed Isa "I lived with a bachelor neighbour who I turned the house into a brothel, close to the number and kind of girls he invites to the house." Of course, Isa and other co-tenants hated Mr bachelor's nature which is colour with a violent temper, as the drama of pouring on his girl friend's takes place late at night when his neighbours seem to be asleep. "He is violent with them because there was a time he came knocking on my door sometime around mid night to help him take his pregnant girl friend to the hospital, after he had beaten her unconsciousness".

Mr and Mrs Adams never fail to disappoint their co-tenants and the entire neighbourhood with interesting domestic performances. "It's embarrassing when you hear the kind of insults they pour on each other" says John from the neighbourhood. "My wife and other neighbours in the past used to come out to separate them, when the quarrel turns physical, but now we just let them be" added the neighbour. Mrs Adams, a middle aged plump woman with three children, lives as a co-tenant with three other families in a 'face me I face you' apartment Mararaba. "She is a trader" said John who sells tomatoes and other condiments in Mararaba market. Even though Mr Adams was absent, his wife vehemently refused to talk to the reporter and told her to go meet those that have been feeding her with lies. "Sometimes I hate coming back home because of their noise. When I reported the matter to the landlord, he warned them and threatened them with eviction before things started getting better."

For landlords, not only do they have to contend with maintenance issues and rent collections, but boisterous tenants make life unbearable for the quieter ones, who don't like the noise and congestion as they make their way around. "Most landlords don't really care if your neighbours are blasting music that won't let you sleep, or if a couple's quarrel is disruptive to you, as long as no door is being broken and rents are settled at the right time," says John.

Business/International



PUMPING fuel into a car tank.

Oil hits \$81 on Belarus, cold

OIL rose to \$81 a barrel on Monday, the highest in more than two months, on news that Russia has halted oil supplies to Belarus and on cold weather in the United States.

Russia has halted oil supplies to Belarusian refineries after failing to agree terms for 2010, traders said on Sunday. Russian oil was flowing normally to European Union customers via Belarus on Monday, Belarus' state oil firm said. "There's no scarcity (of

oil). On the physical scale, it does not have any impact on the market, but psychologically this is very important news. Volumes are relatively thin," said Eugen Weinberg, oil analyst at Commerzbank.

U.S. crude for February delivery rose \$1.49 to \$80.85 a barrel by 1226 GMT, after touching \$81.16, the highest since October 26. Brent crude climbed \$1.56 to \$79.49.

The bullish news and hopes for recovery in the U.S.

economy allowed the oil market to continue the run that lifted prices by 78 percent last year, the biggest annual gain in a decade.

Other commodities also rose on Monday, helped by the weakening dollar. Gold rose 2 percent and base metals prices also advanced, with copper hitting a 6-month high.

Weakness in the U.S. currency boosts gold's appeal as an alternative asset, and makes dollar-priced com-

modities such as oil cheaper for other currency holders.

Forecasts by DTN Meteorlogix for freezing temperatures across the U.S. midwest and cold weather in the plains this week may boost heating demand and lend further support to crude prices.

Positive economic data from China and India added to the bullish sentiment.

China's factories cranked up production in December, while the rate of growth in

Indian manufacturing rose for the first time in three months in December, surveys showed.

Investors will take further cues from U.S. manufacturing data later on Monday and from monthly employment figures in the first week of the new year.

On the data front, the main event will be Friday's report from the Labor Department on December U.S. non-farm payrolls. *Reuters.*

China records manufacturing growth boost

CHINESE manufacturing grew by the biggest margin in five years in December, fuelling growth expectations for the world's third-biggest economy.

The purchasing managers index (PMI) from HSBC Holdings and Markit Economics reported the fastest rate of growth since records began in 2004.

The index is based on a survey of more than 400 Chinese manufacturers.

The finding supports the view among some economists that China's economy could grow by as much as 10% this year. But the survey also renews concerns over inflation, with prices rising at their fastest rate in 17 months.

The PMI measure rose to 56.1, up from 55.7 a month earlier. A measure over 50 represents growth in the manufacturing sector.

The figure was also in line with China's official PMI figure, released on 1 January, which showed growth in manufacturing at a 20-month high.

The growth in manufacturing has fuelled expectations that the Chinese economy could return to double-digit growth figures.

While other countries slipped into recession in 2009, China saw its annual GDP growth rate slip to a low of 6.1% in April last year.

Last month, the Chinese government said it was targeting a growth rate of 8%.

However, some economists believe that China is already growing at an annualised rate of at least 10%, with similar growth for 2010 forecasted.

Commenting on the figures, Qu Hongbin, chief China economist at HSBC, said the Chinese authorities' actions to help the economy were clearly working.

"The second-round effect of stimulus measures is filtering through to substantially benefit the manufacturing sector," he said.

At the end of 2008 the Chinese government announced a 4 trillion yuan (\$586bn; £354bn) stimulus plan that pumped money into the economy through spending on public infrastructure projects. *BBC.*

Singapore economy sees contraction

SINGAPORE'S economy shrank for the first time in three quarters in the last three months of 2009.

Weaker manufacturing helped the economy shrink by an annualised rate of 6.8% in the fourth quarter of the year, the island's government said.

That compares with a 14.9% rise in the third quarter,

following Singapore's deepest recession on record.

However, the economy still grew by 3.5% when compared with the same three-month period in 2008.

Speaking last week, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said the economy was still improving after a "volatile" year.

Weakness in the manufacturing sector, which accounts for about a quarter of the economy, contributed to the decline in GDP.

"This decline was mainly due to a contraction in the output of the biomedical manufacturing and transport engineering clusters," the trade ministry said in a statement.

Mariko Oi, the BBC's business correspondent in Singapore, said that some economists had expected a contraction.

"The saviour of Singapore's economy - the pharmaceuticals sector - is very volatile," she said.

"But if you look at export figures, things are picking up.

They rose for the first time in 19 months in November, and as exports account for two-thirds of the economy, that's good news."

She added that the government was continuing to take a cautious approach, and would hold back from tightening monetary policy until later in the year. *BBC.*

Novartis to buy Alcon for \$39 billion

SWISS drugmaker Novartis aims to buy the rest of the world's biggest eye care firm Alcon for \$39.3 billion, including Nestle's majority stake, to help it diversify away from prescription drugs.

Novartis said on Monday it was exercising an option to buy a 52 percent stake in Alcon from Nestle for \$28.1 billion, boosting its holding to 77 percent after it bought an initial 25 percent stake from the world's largest food group in 2008.

Novartis, which was widely expected to snap up the Nestle stake as soon as its option allowed, also aims to buy out the 23

percent held by minority shareholders for \$11.2 billion, ending uncertainty over whether or not it would seek full control.

Novartis and rival drugmakers such as GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi-Aventis are pushing into areas like consumer healthcare and generics as they face the biggest loss of patent protection in history.

To win full control of Alcon, analysts predict Novartis will have to increase its current offer to minorities of 2.80 Novartis shares for each remaining Alcon share, which amounts to just \$153 per share compared with the \$180 agreed with Nestle.

The expected tussle with minority shareholders echoes Roche's fight for full control of U.S. biotech group Genentech, which the Swiss drugmaker finally clinched last year. Alcon was founded in 1945 in Fort Worth, Texas by pharmacists Robert Alexander and William Conner, who combined the first syllables of their surnames for the company name.

Bought by Nestle in 1977 for \$280 million, it is the global leader in ophthalmic surgery products, particularly for cataract operations, and also produces medicines for eye diseases like glaucoma as well as contact lens products. *Reuters.*

Business



BAGS of charcoal for sale

Malam Sani said because of the losses he has been incurring in the business, he now takes the commodity on credit. It was after he has sold it that he pays back and collects another one.

He stated that he was still doing the business because he hasn't any option and he wouldn't want to stay idle without doing anything. He added that before the charcoal business he was a taxi driver.

Further investigation by *Daily Trust* revealed that big households prefer using the firewood or kerosene to the charcoal, the reason being that it was more economical. Charcoal is more economical and faster for small cooking.

A charcoal dealer who wouldn't want his name mentioned said the problem they were facing was from security men at check points. He revealed that on one trip sometimes they pay up to N20,000 to the security men at a check point before they were allowed to pass.

According to him, they were compelled to pay the money by the security men under the guise that the business was an unlawful one. It is unlawful because government has banned the felling of trees for the purpose of burning them to get the charcoal. "They said they are charging us the money because the business is illegal as falling of trees for such purpose is banned by government," he said.

Asked if the securities had ever seized the commodity from them either on the road while transporting it to Kano or in the market when they spread it for buyers, he said there had never been an instance when the commod-

Declining charcoal business in Kano

Charcoal business in Kano, local to Nigeria though, may have hit the diminishing return on the business scale, as marketers are gradually closing shop owing to what environmentalists and law enforcement agencies call the trade that involves illegal felling of trees in Nigeria. Our reporter x-rays these dynamics.

From Halima Musa, Kano

WHEN charcoal business began in Kano about six to seven years ago, many people were happy that a cheaper and more effective alternative source of household fuel has come. Households turned to it and abandoned the kerosene or firewood that was hitherto being used as fuel.

It was a lucrative business for both the big dealers and the petty traders. These dealers travelled to Bauchi, Plateau or Niger States as gathered by *Daily Trust* to buy the charcoal and then transport it back to Kano where it is sold to the petty traders in bags, and they in turn sell it to people buying in small quantity.

Though not up to a decade, this business is declining by the day. Investigation unveils causes of such decline as rise in the price of the charcoal from the main markets in those states and the activities of the securities on the roads.

Malam Siraj Sani is a petty trader selling charcoal along Sabon Titi Street in Gwale local government area. Responding to question posed to him on the charcoal business, he stated that the business was declining and that he was just doing it because he had no option. "The business is dying in Kano. There is no gain, only losses most of the time," he said.

According to him, the main cause of the decline was because of the rise in the price at the charcoal depots.

"The main cause of this decline is the increase in prices. Before we used to buy a sack of charcoal at the cost of N800 but now we buy same bag at N1,000," he said.

He noted that the petty traders could not add anything on the initial price they were selling to buyers despite the increase, saying that has made them to sell on losses instead of making profit.

"We still maintain the former price despite the increase. We are doing so because if we add anything on how we were

selling before, people may not buy it again," he said.

Daily Trust learnt that one mud of charcoal was sold at N50 and with the increase in the main market; it is still sold at same price.



MEASURED charcoal for sale.

ity was seized.

He further stated that it was this additional expenditure on the road that was making the charcoal business unprofitable.

The charcoal dealer however said that people would continue to cut down trees and use it as firewood despite warnings of an imminent desertification in the North by government. The only thing that could stop this practice according to him was for government to provide a more affordable source of household fuel to the less privilege in the society; the main users of firewood and charcoal.

Climate change: Africa records 30% loss in crops

By Tina A. Hassan

THE republic of Chad, Niger and Mauritania are among countries that the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization said have recorded up to a 30 percent loss in farm yield due to insufficient rains.

The biggest drop is witnessed by Chad with drop peaking 34 percent while Benin had predicted an annual crop increase of 45% or 600 in 2009 as against the previous year

but this unfortunately failed partly due to poor storage which contributing up to a 40% loss.

According to reports posted by IRIN, the representative of FAO in Benin Jean Prosper Koyo, efforts need to gear towards food preservation to avoid post harvest losses.

He said, "the same effort we are putting into production is not going into conservation, it is not just enough to produce but the surplus needs to be stockpiled."

He said that the UN food body is financing the con-

struction of metal silos to assist small producers in addition to building three large warehouses throughout Benin for both small and large producers. According to Koyo, FAO is also encouraging farmers to adopt better methods of drying farm produce instead of using sunlight which often leads to parasites infestation if not done correctly.

He urged that using the sunlight is not the best way of drying cereals saying that it also a contributor in the loss of yield after harvest.

Business

Nigeria loses 70% of post harvests – Ruma

MINISTER of Agriculture and Water Resources Sayyadi Abba Ruma met with journalists recently to discuss various issues and interventions of federal government in the agricultural sector.

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

WHAT is the context of your vision for the agricultural sector?

Agriculture is critical to Nigeria's journey to Vision 20:20:20. For an economy that wants to be listed as a leading economy in the next ten years, food security is important; income diversification is important; increased national productivity is equally important; job creation as well. Agriculture offers all of these possibilities. When practiced right and accorded its rightful place, agriculture can be a major driver of growth and development for Nigeria.

You have been talking about privileging commercial agriculture. What exactly do you have in mind?

What we have in mind as an institution is taking agriculture to the market. We want agriculture to be seen, to be studied, to be pursued and to be defined as a business. The aggregate of opinions among stakeholders is that we have not really been pursuing agriculture as a business; but as something else. There are many challenges to agriculture as a viable business proposition: low yields and low quality of yields, limited access to credit, and limited facilities for storage and processing etc. For nearly fifty years, these have accounted for our inability to take agriculture to its bus stop, its final destination, which is the market. Commercial agriculture is the way to go, but until we isolate and overcome these constraints, we won't achieve our potentials in agriculture as a country.

Is this why you are taking what you call the value-chain approach?

Absolutely. We can re-group the issues I mentioned before into very simple terms. We are saying the value chain has constrained our capacity. To sufficiently reposition the capacity of the producers, we need to link them to critical value chain institutions that ultimately will provide market for agricultural commodities. This is the way agriculture can occupy its rightful position, not only as a key GDP player, but also as a major revenue earner, a major contributor to the nation's revenue drive. Over time, we have tended to emphasize more on an aspect of the value chain: production. Let's have more farmers; let's cultivate more lands; let's have more yields. As important as this approach is, it is also limited. So what happens after you produce more? How do you ensure you are not creating a glut in the market?

How do you ensure you have the quality desired by the market? How do you ensure that you add value to what you are producing? How do you access the market? It is this integrated, market-oriented approach that we call the value-chain approach. From our research, there is no economy in history that you can copy, emulate, benchmark that did not adopt an integrated, value-chain approach to agricultural development.

WHAT are the critical components of this chain?

A major value-chain component is storage. Substantial part of what we produce in agriculture, whether crops, livestock, or fisheries, must be stored in one form or the other. For instance if you produce maize, you cannot just bring the maize from the farm as corn flakes. Appropriate technologies must be deployed to the farm first to store the maize, process, and package the maize, and other processes that will link the maize to the market and eventually put it on the table. And so you can see that our numerous producers, the small, medium and large have this constraining capacity. They do not really have sufficient storage. Most of what we produce, we lose. For example, post-harvest loss for tomato is sometimes as high as 70%. Another major component is processing. Imagine how you can prevent losses to perishable produce like tomatoes through processing. Besides, you don't get much money in agriculture from mere production. You get money from value addition. It is when you add value through agro industrialization that you reap the full benefits of your investment. Also, your buyers are looking for good grades of what you produce, and the allied issues of packaging and the rest will come in. And virtually this is the value chain: production, storage, processing, packaging and marketing.

Is commercial agriculture the only way to achieve this?

Not necessarily, but once you begin to look at agriculture as business, you have to think about going to scale. Also, this is the way we can fully tap into existing opportunities. Look at the potential of the domestic market alone. We are talking about the population of over 140 million people who have to be fed. You can see this is even enough as a market. Then we also have to produce to meet the requirement of the export market. The African regional market itself is about \$70 billion. If you look at the African commodity trade and Nigeria's comparative advantage in those commodities, we are talking of

about the potential of the bulk of the \$70 billion dollars coming to Nigeria.

If we also look at some markets that are not so far away from us either by air, sea or land, we have competitive advantage of trading with them. Saudi Arabia and UAE import almost 100 per cent of what they consume. In UAE alone, food import as at 2007/2008 was about 24 billion dirham. This is equivalent to \$14 billion. And 65% percent of this food import is livestock feeds – animal feeds. And what is animal feeds formulation? Maize, Sorghum, cassava, soya beans. 80% of what a composite feed contains is these aggregates in which we have comparative advantage. And so if you look at Nigeria targeting these markets – targeting the African and UAE markets and even Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia imports annually more than 10 million small ruminants goats, rams etc for the annual sacrifice during Hajj. On the average, small ruminant costs at least 500 Riyadh, multiply this by 10 million. So if our people will be devoted to the production of this small ruminant livestock to meet the target market demand, you can see how much we can make from that.

Why are we not taking advantage of all these opportunities?

This takes us back to the value chain. What has been constraining our capacity in reaching to all these markets is the value chain. Of course we produce, but how do we get to the market? The transitional institutions are not there. We need agro-export conditioning centers that will take the tomatoes, condition the tomatoes, the hot chili, and the onions, make them pass through sanitary conditions, and other export processes as required by best practice. Pre-shipment inspection requirement are linked to export market. Nigeria could be an agro-export hub/power house if not for the value chain constraint. You cannot just take your maize from here and say some people want to buy animal feeds in Dubai and you just take it to the sea port, it must pass through some processes. If you look at the global market for cowpea, it is needed all over the world, but the cowpea we produce cannot fit into the market. Why can't we export our own? Because we do not have the silo complexes that will turn it around, that will de-stone, clean, package to best practice and brand it and make it ready for export. We cannot do all these manually; we need technologies for warehousing, processing and packaging. If you don't put all these in place, you cannot get to the market. All our efforts in the past years have been



AGRIC Minister Dr. Sayyadi Abba Ruma

to some extent honestly on the aspect of stimulating production. Providing agro inputs; providing credit support to the farmers, and even agric bank was established for Nigeria. But I realize the fact that you can enhance the farmer's yields, give him credit to produce more, but the kilometers he has to pass through to get to the market is quite a very long journey. So by the time he gets to the market, he cannot make all the money he has spent because nobody will buy at a price that will offset his cost. And so for this, agriculture has become an unattractive business, because of the low returns on the investment.

What is your Ministry doing to remove or lessen these constraints?

On assumption of office, we were compelled to commence a policy reengineering of agriculture that will take us to best practice application. We designed short, medium and long term interventions, with benchmarks, timelines and funding requirements. After a reasonable degree of time, we presented to Mr. President the Commercial Agriculture Development Programme that has the ultimate intention of Raising Agricultural Income in a Sustainable Environment. This we have branded RAISE Nigeria. Based on the constraints that we identified, we developed five steps to food security in Nigeria: evolving appropriate policy framework; securing adequate funding; rehabilitating rural infrastructure; ensuring sustainable management of water resources; and enhancing capacity for increased production, storage, processing and marketing. There are different projects and interventions under each broad category, and most of the projects will come on stream this year and next, with appropriate incentives such as

subsidies, grants and concessionary loans to encourage private sector participation.

For example, we are building 300 agro-input centres in the country. These will be one-stop shops, where farmers will have constant access to quality agro-inputs at reasonable prices: seedlings, fertilizers, tractors, agro-chemicals, extension services, etc. We are building 20 silos all over the country to solve the problem of storage. All the silos will be completed in one year, with a total capacity to store and process more than one million metric tonnes of grains. To provide access to capital, we in conjunction with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) are providing N200 billion concessionary loan for commercial agriculture, N40 billion for small-holder farmers and N160 billion for large scale farmers. We are also building eight livestock estates and eight fish estates to take advantage of our potentials in livestock and fishery sub-sector. We also have an out-growers' scheme.

There are 20 of them, to be built around dormant river basins and designed to incentivize large-scale farming through a contract farming system as is done in places like Israel and aimed at the evolution of a new generation of farmers. We also have four export handling and conditioning centres to ensure that whatever we produce can be competitive in the export market. We are also providing marketing infrastructures like guaranteed minimum price, community tractor hiring scheme, farmers markets, food courts etc. It is a comprehensive, integrated and holistic approach that takes account of the past, interrogates present and connects to the future. It is an approach aimed at not only transforming the agricultural sector, but also at transforming the country as a whole.

Business/Finance



Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) Monday, January 4, 2010

COMPANY Name	No of Deals	Quot. (N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares (N)
2ND-TIER SECURITIES				
CAPITAL OIL PLC	4	0.59	39,120	23,080.80
SECTOR Totals	4		39,120	23,080.80
AGRICULTURE				
FTN COCOA PROC. PLC	3	0.54	950,000	513,000.00
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	2	0.59	100,000	59,000.00
OKOMU OIL PALM COY PLC	2	22.75	845	18,268.90
PRESKO PLC	1	5.60	3,500	20,335.00
SECTOR Totals	8		1,054,345	610,603.90
AIR SERVICES				
NIG. AV. HAND. COY PLC	37	7.18	196,762	1,416,947.57
SECTOR Totals	37		196,762	1,416,947.57
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DNTYRE & RUBBER PLC	11	0.50	1,159,000	579,500.00
INCAR NIGERIA PLC	1	4.12	50,250	207,030.00
R. T. BRISCOE (NIG.) PLC	5	6.15	1,726	10,250.64
SECTOR Totals	17		1,210,976	796,780.64
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	48	7.55	452,952	3,450,468.54
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	46	2.43	2,137,125	5,223,636.16
DIAMOND BANK PLC	43	7.19	2,565,097	18,498,428.48
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	10	10.10	7,743,893	78,213,319.30
F/CITY MON. BANK PLC	25	7.01	962,385	6,761,618.85
FIDELITY BANK PLC	42	2.52	1,971,000	4,931,260.00
FIRST BANK OF NIG. PLC	426	14.00	9,053,003	126,861,055.33
FINBANK PLC	99	0.55	12,190,523	6,398,197.00
GTBANK PLC	251	15.78	12,509,240	194,586,541.34
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	22	7.16	326,410	2,338,696.11
INTERCONT. BANK PLC.	19	1.69	514,024	868,700.56
OCEANIC BANK INT. PLC	45	1.77	1,049,753	1,858,062.81
BANK PHB PLC	54	1.38	1,932,672	2,660,861.48
SKYE BANK PLC.	78	5.48	4,443,764	23,488,759.48
SPRING BANK PLC	4	0.73	337,900	246,667.00
STERLING BANK PLC	32	1.26	3,363,093	4,063,925.08
UNT/BANK FOR AFR. PLC.	94	10.81	1,073,190	11,604,634.86
UN/BANK OF NIG. PLC	93	6.25	1,717,338	10,638,682.16
UNITYBANK PLC	32	0.87	1,270,875	1,089,665.00
WEMA BANK PLC	11	0.97	360,165	349,360.05
ZENITH BANK PLC	188	13.50	2,117,455	28,057,060.37
SECTOR Totals	1,662		68,091,857	532,189,599.96
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	32	11.39	182,005	2,121,977.52
BENUE CEM. COY PLC	10	43.01	67,689	2,925,565.53
CEM. CO. OF N/NIG. PLC	10	13.00	332,760	4,285,907.60
NIGERIAN ROPES PLC.	1	9.14	150	1,303.50
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	37	30.00	556,355	16,631,669.40
SECTOR Totals	90		1,138,959	25,966,423.55
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
CHEM. & ALL. PROD. PLC	2	28.00	1,300	36,400.00
I. P. W. A. PLC	1	1.45	40,000	55,200.00
NIG-GERMAN CHEM. PLC	3	15.04	546	7,802.34
SECTOR Totals	6		41,846	99,402.34
COMMERCIAL/SERV.				
RED STAR EXPRESS PLC	8	2.15	288,881	626,288.20
SECTOR Totals	8		288,881	626,288.20
COMP. & OFFICE EQUIP.				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	3	8.51	6,633	53,986.29
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	15	0.50	1,644,680	822,350.00
TRIP/GEE AND COY PLC	3	4.84	1,530	7,038.00
SECTOR Totals	21		1,652,843	883,374.29
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS (NIG.) PLC	7	2.47	20,723	52,722.33
CHELLARAMS PLC	3	14.13	1,728	23,207.04
JOHN HOLT PLC	2	9.28	556	4,903.92
PZ CUSSONS NIG. PLC	23	25.00	104,843	2,677,149.18
TRANS. CORP. OF NIG. PLC	33	0.52	7,947,950	4,069,286.30
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	13	36.75	63,667	2,342,755.50
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	37	19.00	174,242	3,304,137.57
SECTOR Totals	118		8,313,709	12,474,161.84
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	27	3.80	101,725	399,904.07
G. CAPPA PLC	2	14.46	600	8,244.00
JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC	7	25.79	20,690	507,111.90
MULTIVERSE RES. PLC	2	0.50	20,000	10,000.00
SECTOR Totals	38		143,015	925,259.97
ENGINEERING TECHN.				
CUTIX PLC	4	3.00	93,400	280,200.00
NIG. WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	1	0.97	25,000	24,250.00
SECTOR Totals	5		118,400	304,450.00
FOOD/BEV. & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	1	29.40	500	14,700.00
BIG TREAT PLC	4	0.66	403,920	266,587.20
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	27	10.49	150,793	1,513,664.70
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	69	10.42	1,002,005	10,117,650.74
DANGOTE SUGAR REF. PLC	37	14.90	465,484	6,928,364.50
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	37	36.20	322,337	11,617,994.60
H/WELL FLOUR MILL PLC	2	8.50	3,000	24,240.00
NAT. SALT COY NIG. PLC	18	4.56	956,163	4,351,103.28
NIG. BOTTLING COY PLC	11	22.49	78,444	1,762,671.67

What is Call Option

An option which gives the holder the right, but not the obligation, to buy a fixed amount of a certain stock at a specified price within a specified time. Calls are purchased by investors who expect a price increase.

Google

NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	9	239.50	14,093	3,240,984.85
N/NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC	3	22.94	65,000	1,490,950.00
TANTALIZERS PLC	13	0.75	1,060,000	808,281.12
UTC NIGERIA PLC	2	0.86	30,000	25,800.00
SECTOR Totals	233		4,551,733	42,162,992.66
HEALTHCARE				
EKOCORP PLC	1	5.58	2,562	13,604.22
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	1	1.02	522,000	532,440.00
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	2	1.86	55,000	102,300.00
GLAXOSM. CONS. NIG. PLC	4	22.40	2,587	57,768.80
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	15	3.86	58,510	224,073.10
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	2	12.28	606	7,072.02
NEIMETH INT. PHARM. PLC	11	1.50	273,690	410,535.00
PHARMA-DEKO PLC	2	4.97	25,200	119,196.00
UN/DIAG. & CLIN. SERV. PLC	16	0.64	725,000	462,150.00
SECTOR Totals	54		1,665,155	1,929,139.14
IND//DOMESTIC PROD.				
B. O. C. GASES NIGERIA PLC	2	13.43	2,174	27,848.94
FIRST ALUM. NIGERIA PLC	5	0.50	62,100	31,050.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC	15	5.37	306,783	1,652,301.18
SECTOR Totals	22		371,057	1,711,200.12
INF. & COMM. TECHNOLOGY				
CHAMS PLC	20	0.59	2,106,000	1,219,512.60
IHS NIGERIA PLC	2	4.24	4,000	16,120.00
MASS TEL. INNOV. NIG. PLC.	2	0.50	20,000	10,000.00
STARCOMMS PLC	16	1.80	827,053	1,475,929.61
SECTOR Totals	40		2,957,053	2,721,562.21
INSURANCE				
AFRICAN ALLIANCE INS. PLC	1	0.87	1,200	996.00
AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	29	0.82	958,579	780,993.99
CONTINENTAL REINS. PLC	4	1.15	625,000	690,000.00
C/STONE INSUR. CO. PLC.	11	0.52	1,027,527	547,782.04
CUST. AND ALL. INS. PLC	1	2.86	700	1,904.00
EQUITY ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.50	47,404	23,702.00
G/NIGERIA INSUR. COY PLC	7	0.50	1,634,424	817,212.00
GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	3	0.91	95,566	86,965.06
GUAR. TRUST ASSUR. PLC	2	2.18	188,000	411,090.00
GUINEA INSURANCE PLC.	1	0.50	20,000	10,000.00
INV. AND ALLIED ASS. PLC	1	0.50	18,000	9,000.00
INT. ENERGY INS. COY PLC	49	0.60	5,638,581	3,460,100.25
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	14	0.57	627,071	368,531.89
LAW UNION & ROCK INS. PLC.	12	0.51	3,820,000	1,993,700.00
MUTUAL BEN. ASS. PLC	14	0.64	1,152,190	737,401.60
N.E.M. INS. CO. (NIG.) PLC.	21	0.54	864,805	463,194.70
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	2	0.97	15,500	15,035.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	1	4.00	4,500	17,100.00
REG. ALLIANCE INS. COY PLC	1	0.50	20,000	10,000.00
SOVEREIGN TRUST INS. PLC	1	0.50	10,000	5,000.00
STACO INSURANCE PLC	2	1.19	335,500	399,245.00
STAND. ALLIANCE INS. PLC	5	0.57	302,000	172,140.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	7	1.15	288,700	308,160.00
UNITY KAPITAL ASS. PLC	2	2.38	20,000	45,400.00
UNIV. INSURANCE COY PLC	1	0.50	2,000	1,000.00
INTERCONT. WAPIC INS. PLC	16	1.15	232,022	266,825.30
SECTOR Totals	209		17,949,269	11,642,478.83
MEDIA				
DAAR COMMUNIC. PLC	10	0.58	111,500	64,590.00
SECTOR Totals	10		111,500	64,590.00
MORTGAGE COMPANIES				
ASO SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	9	0.56	451,704	255,723.64
RES. SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	9	0.50	10,190,000	5,091,000.00
UN/HOMESAV. & LOANS PLC	20	0.89	410,140	364,793.36
SECTOR Totals	38		11,051,844	5,711,517.00
OTHER FINANCIAL INST.				
CRUSADER NIGERIA PLC.	5	1.50	258,659	387,988.50
D/CAPIT. MAN. & TRUST PLC	1	2.02	8,000	16,160.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	1	0.66	1,000	630.00
SECTOR Totals	7		267,659	404,778.50
PETROLEUM (MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	31	33.51	101,514	3,260,948.43
BECO PETR.M PROD. PLC	1	2.53	2,500	6,025.00
CHEVRON OIL NIGERIA PLC	6	69.79	6,000	435,046.54
CONOIL PLC	4	27.63	748	21,552.00
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	22	4.74	264,714	1,256,310.59
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	4	98.80	1,480	139,600.00
OANDO PLC	5	93.99	1,080	101,509.20
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	3	149.00	10,000	1,415,500.00
SECTOR Totals	76		388,036	6,636,491.76
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
ACADEMY PRESS PLC.	2	5.40	13,040	71,808.00
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	9	9.03	20,324	188,275.02
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	7	4.97	61,050	292,866.30
SECTOR Totals	18		94,414	552,949.32
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROP. DEV. CO. PLC	8	19.86	21,230	407,843.60
SECTOR Totals	8		21,230	407,843.60
THE FOREIGN LISTINGS				
ECOBANK TRANS. INCORP.	8	15.00	167,185	2,507,781.20
SECTOR Totals	8		167,185	2,507,781.20
OVERALL Totals	3,802		129,761,821	699,999,472.80

GAINERS	
NNFM	1.09
NBC	1.07
CCNN	0.54
UNILEVER	0.50

LOSERS	
ECOBANK	0.53
IBTC	0.31
VITAFOAM	0.28
ETERNAOIL	0.24



Yobe State's Budget of Continuity 2010

Address By His Excellency, Alhaji Ibrahim Gaidam FNCA, CPA On the Occasion of Presentation of 2010 Finance and Appropriation Bills to the Yobe State House of Assembly, on Wednesday 30th December, 2009

Bismillahi-Rahmanir-Rahim Wasallallahu Ala-Nabiyul Karim

Protocols
Ladies and Gentlemen,
ASSALAMU ALAIKUM

It is with great delight and utmost gratitude to the Almighty Allah that I stand here before this Honourable House to deliver the Yobe State 2010 Finance and Appropriation Bills. This onerous responsibility I am about to discharge is in consonance with section 121 (1) and (2) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Let me therefore take this opportunity to commend the Honourable House for the unprecedented level of cooperation it has been extending to us since its inception. While what I am about to present to you today are the highlights of the programme which our administration intends to pursue during the next Fiscal Year, it is worthy of note that this presentation is of immense importance to the political and socio-economic development of our dear state.

It is equally worth noting that your input in the form of legislation which is being sought is essential for the legitimacy of the entire package. It therefore behooves on you to study the submission and give your inputs so that collectively as partners in progress, we will move our State to greater heights.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, you are all aware that in the year 2009, we witnessed unprecedented economic downside which was described in economic terms as global economic meltdown. This scenario had affected all facets of the world economy, particularly mono-cultural economies like ours with its over dependence on crude oil revenue. This regrettably entails a huge reduction in our revenue receipts. As you all know, Yobe is among the States faced with most Herculean challenges of development in the Federation. In spite of the abundant natural potentialities and the efforts made so far, agricultural production, which is the main stay of our State's economy, is still largely at subsistence level.

In our desperate attempt to generate employment, increase productivity, enhance income and promote self-reliance of the people, the State Government has sought and obtained the collaboration of the World Bank, the European Union and other international donor agencies.

It is expected that such drives, combined with our other efforts, would usher in increased investment and commercial activities, thus laying a solid foundation for checking rural-urban drift and creating an enabling environment for the future industrialization of the state.

REVIEW OF THE 2009 BUDGET

During the year under review, we estimated a budget of N51,925,000,000. Information available has indicated that the total revenue actually received from January to November amounted to N38,761,128,520.90 giving us 75% success in the budget performance.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, it is pertinent for me to highlight what we have achieved in terms of our set goals during the year under review. Going by the objectives of the 2009 budget, this administration has made concerted efforts to implement policies and programmes with far reaching impact on the populace. Evidence of this abounds if one takes a cursory glance at the State's landscape, which is bubbling with physical and infrastructural development landmarks. For ease of reference it is necessary to highlight them sector by sector.

ECONOMIC SECTOR

Under the economic sector, we acted as facilitators and a stimulus towards the creation of an enabling environment in order to make the state economy more vibrant. Some of these measures are:

- Purchase of over 700 units of Tractors through the Local Government Joint Accounts and distributing them to the 17 local governments, and another additional 30 units for the State Mechanization Authority
- Procurement of 600 metric tonnes of assorted Fertilizer
- Procurement of assorted grains under our strategic grains reserve programme
- Purchase of assorted animal vaccines, fodder bank and drugs
- Prompt release of monthly subvention to the NEAZDP to ensure sustainability
- Procurement and distribution of assorted tree seedlings
- Setting up of local government environmental sanitation committees
- Release of funds for the continuation of work at the 3-Star hotel in Damaturu
- Purchase of 210 metric tonnes of assorted aluminum raw materials for the Aluminum roofing sheets factory
- Electrification of Kukuwa town
- Payment for license/certificate in respect of pre-stressed concrete poles industry

SOCIAL SECTOR

In the social sector, we have undertaken the following:-

- Construction of 2 and 3 Bedroom Houses, 10 units in each Local Government,
- Award of contract for the construction of 256 Housing estates in Damaturu
- Construction of 100 houses in Damaturu through direct labour in conjunction with Federal Mortgage Bank
- Construction of 12 units of 3 Bedroom legislators' quarters
- Continuation of work at the 300 housing units along Maiduguri road,
- Payment of Land compensation in respect of Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) 330/132/33KVA line, Nayi nawa drainage project among others;
- Furnishing of Pride FM Radio Station and payment of license fee to the National Broadcasting Commission
- Purchase of modern Public Address Van
- Renovation of YTV complex and purchase of micro-wave link
- Renovation of the General Sani Abatcha Specialist Hospital, Damaturu
- Renovation and supply of equipment to other Hospitals across the state and continuation of work on construction of 200 bed capacity Ultra Modern Hospital in Damaturu;
- Supply of drugs for the take off of the free medical services for the vulnerable groups
- Continuation of feeding at designated points during Ramadan Fasting period
- Payment for the construction and renovation of classes, hostels administrative block, staff quarters etc in our educational institutions;
- Effecting payment of SSCE/NECO registration fees, bursary, tuition, and scholarship to our students in tertiary institutions
- Over 300 Science and Mathematics teachers were also trained at the National Mathematical Centre, Abuja;
- We also effected payment to contractors to cover students feeding among others.

REGIONAL SECTOR

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, in the Regional Development sector, some of the projects undertaken during the period under review were:

- Drilling of 48 constituency boreholes,
- Supply of drilling rigs and equipment
- Bulk purchase of pipes and other consumables
- Completion of Damaturu Inner Ring Road and construction of four Round About at the four cardinal points
- Award of contract for the construction of Bukari-Gaidam road
- Construction of Babban-Gida Chirokusko road
- Award of contract for Asphalt Overlaying and rehabilitation of Kallari-Bayamari-Gaidam road
- Access roads were provided for the State House of Assembly and the High Court Complexes
- Continuation of work at the Nguru-Machina road



Gov. Gaidam delivering his budget speech on the floor of the House of Assembly

- Payment for the construction of Gaidam-Maine Soroa road
 - Continuation of work at the Potiskum-Jakusko-Gashua road
- GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**
- In the General Administration sector, we initiated and implemented projects and programmes that have far-reaching bearing on our people. Some of these are:
 - Successful conduct of the 2009 Local Government Elections
 - Purchase of 17 double cab Toyota Hilux for the conduct of the local government elections.
 - Purchase and distribution of 34 brand new vehicles to security operatives to enhance their operational capabilities,
 - Construction of Library and Mini printing press at the State House of Assembly
 - Construction of new Deputy Governors Office Complex
 - Award of contract for the construction of new Office Complex for the SSG and HOS
 - Purchase of utility vehicles, office furniture, equipment and Generator sets among others. Having reviewed, even though in brief, the performance of the budget 2009, it is now time to present the Budget 2010.

BUDGET SIZE

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, for the 2010 budget, we propose to spend the sum of N62,420,341,000 which will be generated from the following sources:

a. Opening Balance	-N5,500,000,000
b. Statutory Allocation	-N29,086,000,000
c. Value Added Tax (VAT)	-N6,226,000,000
d. Locally generated Revenue	-N2,574,000,000
e. External Loans	-N 525,560,000
f. Internal loans	-N6,670,630,000
g. Excess crude oil	-N9,962,000,000
h. Grants	-N1,875,122,000

Out of this amount, the sum of N42,875,960,000 or 69% will be devoted to capital expenditure while N19,544,381,000 or 31% will be earmarked for recurrent expenditure.

SECTORAL ALLOCATION

The sectoral allocations are broadly made as follows:

ESTIMATES 2010

a. Economic sector	-N16,959,000,000 - 40%
b. Social sector	-N11,225,960,000 - 26%
c. Regional Development	-N6,982,000,000 - 16%
d. General Admin	-N7,799,000,000 - 18%
Total	N42,875,960,000 - 100%

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Budget 2010 for us is yet another opportunity to consolidate on the varied and far-reaching gains already made that will further move Yobe to the path of socio-economic greatness. It is a budget, which intends to address poverty as well as complete a number of on-going projects. In short it is a budget that has in stock a lot of goodies for multi-sectoral and grass root development.

The programme of action we have chosen to implement would continue to be those that are people-oriented in the areas of Education, Agriculture, Health Care Delivery, Industry, Commerce, Poverty Reduction, Entrepreneurial Development, Water Supply and provision of Basic Infrastructure.

This, I believe, will address the myriads of problems bedeviling Yobe as well as to make it take its rightful place among its peers in the Federation.

It is for this reason that we have decided to name this year's budget the "BUDGET OF CONTINUITY". Under this banner, we shall continue to mobilize all our people to march forward with renewed vigour, greater commitment, higher confidence, deep patriotism and genuine hope, so that, we can collectively complete all our on-going projects, combat all features of under development and by the special grace of the Almighty Allah, attain a self-re-generating and sustainable development.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable members, the budget 2010, is unique, in the sense that it is the last budget before the budget of the election year. The year 2010 is going to be our final opportunity to consolidate, solidify and give finishing touches to all our efforts in the previous years. It will also enable us focus on the challenges ahead for the next phase of our ANPP administration by the special grace of the Almighty Allah.

POLICY THRUST OF THE YEAR 2010 BUDGET

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, in consonance with our electioneering campaign manifesto and policy statements contained in our inaugural address, the philosophy and thrust of the 2010 Budget shall continue to be poverty alleviation through intensive and integrated urban and rural development. Our administration shall continue to focus on improving the living standard of the people of Yobe. To this end, the 2010 Budget will emphasise the improvement of basic areas of need. In specific terms Government will accord priority to projects that have the potential for:-

- Enhancing educational status of the state.
- Creating employment opportunity for peoples of the state;
- Enhancing multi-sectoral development of Yobe State
- Putting in place effective road networks for enhanced physical mobility between our people and other parts of the country.
- Fostering peaceful co-existence among people of the state and also with our neighbours;
- Encouraging communities to imbibe the spirit of self help as complementary to Government efforts.
- Ensuring continued cooperation and harmony between the State Government and the 17 Local Government Areas in the formulation and implementation of projects of interest. This we believe will reduce unnecessary waste to the barest minimum, if not entirely.

OBJECTIVES OF THE BUDGET

Based on the foregoing, the 2010 Budget will have in focus, the following objectives:-

- Completing all on-going projects that spilled over from 2009;
- Continuing the building up and rebuilding of educational and other social infrastructural facilities on which the rapid, intensive and integrated development of the State highly depends;
- Providing greater job opportunities for our youth and other unemployed citizens;
- Sourcing for appropriate external technical assistance and cooperation programmes for development and programme enhancement
- Pursuing further programme on improved and cleaner environment to ensure a healthier Yobe State.
- Exploring areas of collaboration on Public Private Partnership (PPP) basis.
- Ensuring greater efforts aimed at harnessing the considerable

revenue potentials of the state to ensure collection of higher internally generated revenue in the year 2010, and;

To further promote probity, transparency and accountability in the conduct of Government business.

DISBURSEMENT TO PRIORITY AREAS ECONOMIC SECTOR

You are no doubt aware that since the inception of this administration, in May 2007 we have been pursuing deliberate policies and programmes aimed at enhancing Agriculture, with the main objectives of achieving self-sufficiency and self-reliance in both food and cash crops production for the general socio-economic development of our State. In an effort to realize our objectives, improved seeds, better storage facilities, fertilizer, Chemicals and pesticide will be made available to our farmers.

The State Government shall also fulfill all its obligations by ensuring prompt release of the counterpart fund contributions in respect of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Special Programme on Food Security (SPFS) and Fadama III Project. Other measures that we intend to implement in 2010 include:-

- Modernization of agricultural production, processing and storage through provision of new improved technology, hybrid and seedlings.
 - Development of Farm Centers and expansion of the Youth Empowerment Farm Schemes,
 - Promotion of intermediate technology through purchase of matching bulls, ox-carts, ridgers and inter-row cultivators under the animal traction loan scheme.
 - Encouraging and assisting Farmer Associations to ensure their involvement in the management of various incentives aimed at promotion of agriculture in the State.
 - Procurement of Grains for Yobe State Grains Reserve Programme and;
 - Provision of water pumps, tube wells, wash boreholes to support irrigation farming among others.
- Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, in an effort to enhance our natural endowments and consolidate our position as one of the front line states in livestock and fish production in the country, the Budget 2010 will focus on procurement and distribution of vaccines and construction of veterinary clinics. Similarly, loading ramps will be constructed, while efforts shall be intensified for the completion of the Damaturu Veterinary Clinic. Similarly, efforts will be intensified for cattle fattening and small ruminant breeding, purchase of drugs and vaccine for mass animal vaccination as well as improvement of Guba cattle range and Nguru Livestock Investigation and Breeding Centre (LIBC) among others.

Towards actualizing our goals in the field of fisheries, we shall procure high protein content fish feeds, reactivate the fish hatchery at Gashu'a and award contract for the construction of new fish ponds for research and demonstration. In the same vein, we shall continue to fulfill our obligation by paying the counterpart funds in respect of ECOWAS loan on Accelerated Artisanal Fish Production Project (AAFP).

Mr. Speaker, Honourable members, it is a well-known fact that Yobe is geographically located in a fragile zone that is most often prone to drought, desertification and other environmental hazards. Obviously we should not allow this situation to continue as leaving it unchecked will lead to total loss of our farms as well as the faunal and floral bio diversity on which we depend for our subsistence.

The utter desolation of our environment has continued to impress on us the need to protect and preserve our eco-system from further degradation.

In the year 2010 we shall put additional emphasis on green belt programme for combating desertification, oasis development, poverty reduction through promotion of date palm plantations among others. In the same vein we will not relent in our efforts to ensure the survival of the Kumbadugu Yobe River. Government will purchase heavy-duty machinery and equipment for the Environmental Protection Agency. Similarly, we will purchase motorcycles and vehicles for effective monitoring and impact assessment. Furthermore, more tube wells and hand pumps will be drilled for use in nurturing our plantations in addition to establishment of new nurseries.

Government will equally continue to fund the activities of NEAZDP. In an effort to further derive more benefits from NEAZDP activities, we shall establish linkage with European Union and National Planning Commission to ensure re-commencement of the funding agreement. In the same manner, we will establish linkage with the Federal Ministry of Environment, International Donor Agencies, Multi-lateral Organizations and other stakeholders concerned with the protection and preservation of the environment with a view to benefiting from their services.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES

Our policy thrust in this sub-sector will be geared towards laying a solid commercial and industrial base for the state, in an effort to achieve our objective in this sub-sector, we will continue to provide equity finance for the completion and furnishing of the 3-Star Hotel and the Soda Ash Plant, Yusufari. Government will equally provide working capital, equipment and spare parts for the Hydro-foam block making factory, Sahel Aluminum factory, polythene and woven sack factory, Doforga Spring water bottling plant and the Yobe Fertilizer factory.

We intend to gradually privatize these pioneer industries in order to give these companies the needed financial muscle, managerial acumen, and detach the Government from running these companies. Machine and equipment will be procured for distribution to our people through the Small Scale Credit Board so that they become self-employed. The work on the renovation of Damaturu State Hotel will be completed while contract for the renovation and furnishing of the State Hotels at Potiskum, Gashu'a and Nguru will be awarded. Government will also inject N100 million to recapitalize the Yobe Securities Company Limited.

TRANSPORT AND ENERGY

We have since realized that the much-desired industrial development in our rural areas and some Urban settlements will not be achieved without adequate and reliable power supply. That is why we shall embark on an aggressive electrification policy.

To further realize our objective in this sub-sector, efforts will be intensified in the year 2010 to electrify our towns and villages. In this respect contract will be awarded for the construction of Dakasku, Kortoni and Damaya in addition to construction of ICTTDN at Damakawa and Marma. While all on-going electrification projects will be completed, our major towns will benefit from extension of poles. Furthermore, Solar-Powered street light will be installed along Damaturu ring road as well as road signs at the round about. Another significant reform measure is that, Government will connect the existing diesel powered stations to the National Grid and complete all the on-going electrification projects and ensure continued purchase of equipment.

While in the transport sub-sector we intend to procure more buses to add to the fleet of Yobe Line, more tricycles or KEKE NAPEP will be procured to ease transportation in the major towns.

MINISTRY OF WORKS

The importance attached to the Transportation sector towards the improvement of socio-economic activities of this state in particular and the Nation in general cannot be over emphasized. In realisation of this, the State Government will, in the year 2010, intensify efforts to ensure the completion of the ongoing road projects including asphalt overlaying in respect of Nguru to Machina road, Kallari-Bayamari-Gaidam road and Damaturu Township and Housing Estate roads, including new township roads and drainages. Contracts will also be awarded for the construction of the following: Maiduwa-Gadaka road; Damaturu-Bundigari road, Danchuwa-Garin Bingei road, Nzamma-Mairari-Kanamama road, completion of Karage Bridge and spur road, Gashu'a-Yusufari road, Bunigari-Gulani road, Gashu'a-Dumbari-Dadiger road, Jaji Maji-Karasuwa road, Daya-Fadawa road, ensure completion of Gaidam to Bukari road; asphalt overlaying of Tikau-Jajere road; completion of Gaidam to Maine Soroa road; maintenance of existing roads; completion of Gujba-Mutai-Gabai-Ngotala road; as well as continuation of work on the construction of Gann-Alkali-Jakusko-Potiskum road, Kanamma-Yunusari-Yusufari-Karasuwa-Kumaganam-Mayori Gumshi to Machina road among others.

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Yobe State's Budget of Continuity 2010



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SOCIAL SECTOR

34. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, education always has a pride of place in this administration. We strongly believe that education is the greatest investment a state or a nation can make for the long run development of its economic, physical and human resources. To realize our educational objectives, this sector has the lion share of N11, 566,808,000 to finance its capital programmes and recurrent expenditure. The import of this is to improve literacy level in our state, reduce the gap between us and the educationally advanced states in the Federation and more importantly to empower our people. As a deliberate policy, in the 2010 Budget, emphasis shall be on completion and furnishing of the Yobe-Turkish International College Mamudo, completion of rehabilitation of dilapidated structures in our schools and purchase of Teaching-learning materials like text books, laboratory equipment, computers and furniture. We shall also release funds for the payment of scholarships, bursaries, tuition and registration fees and other grants, student feeding, and payment of counterpart fund contribution. Government shall also effect general improvement of our tertiary institutions through construction of libraries, laboratories, lecture halls, workshops and renovation of existing structures among others.

The existing BEST Centres would be provided with working materials, while new ones will be established at Dapchi, Nangere, Ngetzarma and Nguru.

HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

35. In recognition of the importance of Health Care delivery in the socio-economic development of the state, this administration will continue to accord both the curative and preventive aspects of health care service delivery deserved priority attention. This is aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals target of Health for all by the year 2015.

36. To realize our objectives in the health sector, the hospitals and comprehensive health centres in the state will be rehabilitated, while existing facilities will be expanded and maintained. We shall continue to observe all National Immunization Days against the six killer diseases. Recruitment and training of Health personnel for effective implementation of our health policies and programmes will also be intensified during the 2010 financial year. We shall equally continue to pay our counterpart obligations in respect of Health System Department Fund, African Development Bank and UNICEF Assisted activities while drugs, vaccines, laboratory reagents, and equipment, ambulances and other vehicles, furniture and other vital equipment will be purchased for our health centres and hospitals.

Government will also continue to fund the activities of the Board of Traditional medicine, and render assistance to Guinea Worm, Mass De-worming, Tuberculosis control (TBC) Roll Back Malaria as well as other supportive programmes.

In an effort to give the primary healthcare special focus, our administration will establish Primary Healthcare Management Board in the State.

HOME AFFAIRS, INFORMATION AND CULTURE

37. In the information sub-sector, the Ministry of Home Affairs Information and Culture is charged with the responsibility of disseminating information on the policies and programmes of Government through the various information outlets and periodic publications and bulletins.

38. In order to sustain and further expand on this sub-sector, we intend to complete the Cultural Centre, embark on construction of open air studio for the YTV, purchase more vehicles and award contract for the rehabilitation of the Yobe Broadcasting corporation and purchase of office furniture, equipment, generators and computers for the Ministry, YTV, Yobe Printing Press and YBC among others.

WOMEN AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

39. In the women development sub-sector and in consonance with the objectives of this administration to bring women into the main stream of development process, the Ministry of Women Affairs will continue to be encouraged and supported to mobilize and enlighten women to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic and political development of the State in particular and the Nation at large. In this budget, we will continue to pay attention to the plight of the less privileged and disabled persons in our society with a view to raising their standard of living as well as integrating them into the mainstream of the society through our various programmes, concerned with the provision of working materials and rehabilitation centers. Blind workshops, hand craft, skill acquisition and Home Economic centers.

40. More Home Economics equipment and other working materials will be purchased and distributed to women groups, while Dr (Mrs.) Maryam Sani Abacha Maternal and Childcare Centre will receive further improvement through construction of residential quarters, and a Pharmacy unit. Raw materials will also be provided to the cottage industries.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

41. We also have a responsibility of mobilizing the Youths in order to create a generation of responsible and dedicated youths into whose hands the future of this nation can be entrusted, with the hope that they will be adequately prepared for the task of leadership having imbibed the values of sacrifice.

42. Our Youth will continue to be empowered through provision of more educational and job opportunities as a strategy for poverty alleviation, job creation and self-reliance. In the 2010 financial year, sporting activities will be boosted further so as to enable the State contingents continue to participate in national and international sporting competitions through the development of men and women of healthy minds and bodies. Contract will be awarded for the construction of Community Sports Centre at Geidam, renovation of existing hostels and maintenance of facilities at the August 27 Stadium in addition to purchase of sport equipment, generator set, and furnishing among others. The Youth Empowerment and Training Programme will also receive further boost with a provision for take-off capital and seed money aimed at providing jobs for the unemployed youth, particularly those that have undergone our Youth Training Programmes.

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

43. Mr. Speaker, Honourable members, you may wish to note that the Yobe State Government guided by the spirit of its continuous desire to free its citizens from the vicious circle of poverty and bring about effective and sustainable development in collaboration with the Federal Government has entered into credit agreement with the World Bank in 2001 to Finance the Community Based Poverty Reduction Project (CBPRP).

44. The State Agency for Poverty Reduction from the inception of its activities in January 2002 to 31st March, 2009 has implemented 838 micro projects covering all the 17 Local Government areas of the State at the total cost of N1.7 Billion.

45. As a build up to consolidate on the achievements recorded by the Community Based Agency for Poverty Reduction in the State, the State Government has further expressed its interest to participate in a new project which is referred to as the Community and Social Development Project. The Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) is a new concept and development strategy to meet community demand for social projects. It is on record that the former Agency has been ranked as the best in the implementation of the project among its peers over the years.

May I therefore urge the staff and the management of the agency to collectively rededicate themselves to their duties to maintain this enviable feat throughout the period of the implementation of this project which activities commenced with its launching in the State on 1st September, 2009.

46. On our part, I wish to stress that, the State Government will continue to give the Agency every support and encouragement including prompt release of its funding obligations to achieve the desired objectives. The Agency proposes a budget of N400 million, for the year 2010 out of which the sum of N300 million will come from the World Bank IDA Credit, and the sum of N100 million will be provided by the State Government as its contribution. Furthermore the sum of N320 million or (80%) is earmarked for Community projects while the sum of N80 million or (20%) is earmarked as operation cost.

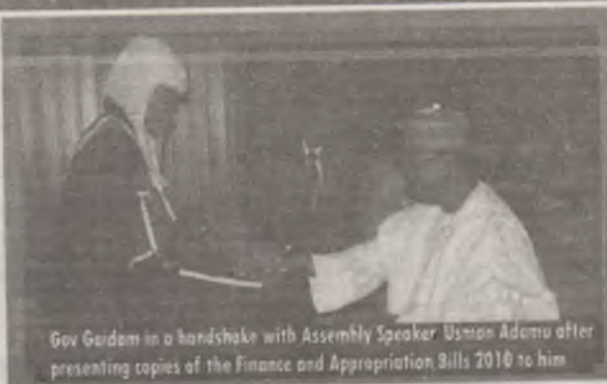
REGIONAL SECTOR

47. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members, the provision of potable water for human and livestock consumption, agricultural activities and industrial use will continue to be given due priority by this administration. In an effort to consolidate on our gains, the exploitation of water resources will continue to be based on the strategies of drilling more boreholes, construction of dams, control gates, refurbishing of dormant boreholes and concrete lined cement wells throughout the State. We will equally continue to procure generating sets, transformers, submersible pumps fuel and lubricants, as well as ensure the maintenance of service rigs, boreholes and other equipment.

48. We will also intensify efforts to ensure completion of work on the construction of the Damaturu regional water project. In this respect, the State Government and benefiting Local Governments will pay their counterpart contributions in respect of that project and the WSSSRP scheme.

LAND AND SURVEY

49. In an effort to achieve our broad based objectives in Land and Survey sub-



Gov Geidam in a handshake with Assembly Speaker Usman Adamu after presenting copies of the Finance and Appropriation Bills 2010 to him

sector, emphasis will be given to the review of the master plan of our major towns in 2010. Similarly, Government will effect payment of compensation for structures acquired for Government projects and other purposes, establish Geological Laboratory as well as ensure purchase of furniture and equipment among others for the Ministry.

HOUSING

50. In the area of housing, Government shall continue to accord top most priority attention to the provision of houses in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals set target on Housing for all by the year 2015. We also ensure that the psychological satisfaction derived from a decent functional house has direct relationship to efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of the workers and generality of the citizenry.

51. In this regard, in the year 2010, emphasis shall be placed on completion of the 300 Housing Units along Maiduguri road including provision of access road, landscaping, water reticulation. We shall also ensure completion and furnishing of Yobe State Government Lodge at Maine-Sorra. Similarly, contract will be awarded for the construction of another 300 Housing units in the year 2010, while work on the construction of 256 Housing Units will be completed. Provision has also been made for the construction of 60 units of 2 bedroom houses by the Yobe State Housing and Property Development Corporation. Furthermore, provision for water, electricity, drainage etc for these estates has been made. I wish to reiterate that we will map out strategies of establishing contacts with the Federal Ministry of Housing and urban Development and the New Nigeria Development Company (NNDC) and other stake holders concerned with the provision and development of housing to enable our state benefit from their services.

INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

52. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry of Integrated Rural Development will continue to play its vital role as catalyst for community development and provision of infrastructure like rural feeder roads, culverts, bridges and provision of matching grants to cooperative societies. In the coming fiscal year, emphasis shall be placed on construction of rural feeder roads to link Dawasa, Chukuriwa, Kukun and Ngelzarma-Koriyel-Mashio, Nguru to Kumagannam. The Ministry's office block will be extended, new plants purchased and old ones repaired.

53. Furthermore, construction of more culverts and bridges will be undertaken. In addition to these, brand new tipers, concrete mixing machines, motor cycles, office equipment will be purchased, while renovation of zonal offices will be undertaken.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

54. The Government House is the seat of Power as well as the pivot of State administration. In consideration of this, I wish to assure this gathering that the Government House will continue to remain open and accessible to all people irrespective of their social status. For the 2010 fiscal year, funds will be allocated to cover recurrent services which include payment of salaries, upkeep of the Government House, Deputy Governor's house and Government Lodges in Damaturu, Lagos, Maiduguri, Kaduna and Abuja.

55. The Governor's Office on the other hand is the nerve centre of government activities and is charged with the responsibility of coordinating the activities of all Ministries, Boards, Parastatals and Departments in the State, as well as liaising with Federal Ministers and foreign organizations. It further monitors the execution of projects and implementation of the policies and programmes of the State Government as well as maintaining amicable relationship with the legislature and judiciary. Together with the other arm under the Head of the State Civil Service, which handles issues relating to staff promotion, appointments, discipline, staff welfare and manpower development the two offices will be strengthened to perform their duties more effectively to ensure enhanced service delivery. In the year 2010, efforts will be geared towards the completion and commissioning of the office complexes now under construction. To tackle the problem of acute shortage of offices for our civil servants, public and political office holders, construction of new offices, renovation and expansion of offices will be carried out. Similarly, furnishing of offices, purchase of Computers, equipment, vehicles and other working materials as well as manpower development will continue to be given due attention.

56. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, in our concerted effort to give our budgetary and planning mechanism the right atmosphere to operate, we will continue to give monitoring aspect special focus owing to the importance we attach to effective planning and budgeting. It is a fact that poor planning has always added to economic woes rather than solving them. We have also realized that our Budgetary provisions cannot be effectively implemented without proper control and monitoring at any given period.

57. In an effort to achieve our objectives and to follow planned programme, we shall intensify efforts to strengthen effective monitoring. In keeping with this, approval for release of funds will continue to be based on budgetary provisions. Efforts will also be geared towards re-directing public sector spending to conform with Due Process principles. This will further instill fiscal transparency, strict compliance with procedures, promote effectiveness and efficiency in costing, prioritization and effective execution of budgeted expenditure items. Our objective is to ensure that Budget and public spending in general were appropriately geared towards realization of the set targets.

58. Furthermore, the overall goal of this Administration shall continue to be the creation of an enabling environment necessary to stimulate sustained growth and development. Having experienced the pangs of the global economic meltdown in the last twelve months or so, Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, it is imperative for government to adopt some re-adjustment measures in its fiscal policy in order to cushion the effect of unstable and even declining government income. To that effect, we intend to take reform measures aimed at reducing over dependence on statutory allocation to achieve fiscal balance and ensure transparency. This also conforms with the resolutions of the decision taken at a meeting of Governors of the 19 Northern States.

59. To achieve this, the Ministry of Finance should henceforth give emphasis on collection of more revenue, rather than concentrating on disbursement.

60. In view of the observed inadequacies, the State Government will from January 2010 take more aggressive measures towards generation of internal revenue. Taking this into consideration, some of the measures that will be taken include: Upward review of tariffs, fees and licenses which will be worked out for implementation in the first quarter of the year.

Establishment and strengthening of the revenue court to try tax defaulters, evaders and violators. Establishment and strengthening of mobile courts to prosecute road users who do not have valid documents.

Strengthening and reinstitution of the management of the Board of Internal Revenue to be responsible and sensitive to the myriad of demands on revenue generation.

Ministries and Agencies are to adopt and enforce measures that will ensure that all revenue collected are remitted into the coffers of the State Government. Accordingly, Accounting Officers in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies will be held responsible for diversion of any revenue funds.

The activities of the Board of Internal Revenue will also be computerized and networked to conform to modern practices.

61. A committee will soon be formed to advise Government on how best to achieve our objective of collecting enhanced internally generated revenue. The Secretary to the State Government is hereby directed to submit proposal on the formation of this advisory committee.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CHIEFTAINCY AFFAIRS

62. The Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs shall continue to play its role of guiding, rendering assistance and support to the Local Governments to perform their functions according to the provisions of the Constitution. Local Governments are supposed to complement the programmes of the State Government in improving the condition and standard of living of the people of their respective areas in a transparent, responsible and accountable

manner. To achieve the desired objective, the Local Government Councils are expected to prepare and submit their budgets for approval soonest.

RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

63. Let me take this opportunity to assure all our citizens that we shall not relent in our efforts towards full implementation of Sharia. As a complete way of life, Shana is all about peace, orderliness in society, unity and harmony where the followers of other religions are allowed to practice their religion without let or hindrance in the spirit of mutual tolerance and respect. For the 2010 fiscal year, the Ministry of Religious Affairs will continue to evolve a policy where large Tsangayas, which are far away from the source of electricity supply, will be provided with solar powered light, shades, classes and other support services. Similarly it will continue with mobilization for Da'awa activities, regulation of preaching to forestall the emergence of miscreants like the Boko Haram as well as monitoring the implementation of Sharia in the state.

64. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen, in the Special Duties sub-sector, we will continue to support the Ministry aimed at mapping out strategies that will ensure poverty reduction in the State. We will equally ensure the State Government's participation in Local Bilateral Committee meetings. Furthermore the Ministry will be provided with working materials like computers, filing cabinets as well as vehicles among others to perform its duties effectively. Similarly, we will continue to support the Emirate Councils to enable them perform their traditional roles effectively and efficiently.

JUSTICE AND JUDICIARY

65. It is a fact that, the foundation and development of democracy and good governance the world over is deeply and firmly rooted in the speedy dispensation of justice and guaranteeing of the fundamental human rights and freedom of all citizens. Taking this into consideration, this Administration shall continue to ensure that judicial services are made accessible and as near to the door steps of the common man as possible. Accordingly, in the 2010 fiscal year, efforts will be made to provide all the requisite working materials, and create conducive atmosphere through construction of courts, residences for state counsels at Potiskum, Nguru, Geidam, provision of law books, computers, payment of allowances and statutory contribution to Body of Benchers, Nigeria Bar Association and Council for Legal Education.

66. In the same manner, we shall continue to support the Judiciary to enable it operate effectively. This administration is appreciative of the fact that a central defining attribute of a modern civilization is the supremacy of the rule of law. It is our firm conviction that, an independent, just and incorruptible judiciary is a sine-qua-non to good governance and democracy, and therefore we shall continue to preserve and respect the independence of the judiciary and ensure observance of the rule of law.

67. We shall continue with the various measures taken to enhance the working conditions of all judicial officers. On the other hand, it is expected that the judiciary will reciprocate this good gesture by ensuring that justice is not only done, but is seen to be done within the shortest possible time for as the saying goes "Justice delayed, is indeed Justice denied".

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDIT

68. In an effort to ensure that full accountability, probity and prudence are maintained at all times in the execution of Government policies and programmes, this administration will continue to ensure accountability in all Government dealings through effective monitoring mechanisms at all levels in the state for the attainment of our developmental objectives. In this regard, the Audit Department shall continue to be given all necessary support and encouragement to perform its duties effectively and efficiently. To show the way, I hereby direct the Auditor General for both State and Local Government Audit departments to complete all audit reports that have not been duly completed. Similarly, the Ministry of Finance must ensure that final accounts of each year that has ended is made ready for auditing not more than six months into the new fiscal year. These directives must be adhered to strictly.

CIVIL SERVICE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE

69. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, we have also noted that, Government cannot successfully carry out its policies and programmes without the full backing of an effective and efficient Civil Service. Efforts shall therefore continue to be made to restructure, sanitize and reinvent the service to further make it more productive, innovative and vibrant.

70. On our part, I wish to assure all our serving and retired civil servants that we shall continue with our welfare packages and regular payment of salaries, pensions and gratuities promptly. We shall also continue to maintain good working relationship with all labour unions. We also expect that labour unions will continue to reciprocate these gestures by always choosing the path of dialogue and understanding in order to ensure success in the implementation of our lofty policies and programmes.

71. To achieve our objectives, both the Civil Service and the Local Government Service Commission will continue to be given all the necessary support through renovation of offices, provision of furniture and equipment among others to enable them discharge their roles effectively.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

72. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is obvious that for the operation of the Presidential system of Government as enshrined in the principles of separation of powers, the legislative arm of Government is a key player in any democratic dispensation. This administration fully appreciates and recognizes the importance of the Legislative Arm of Government as a partner in progress, and therefore shall continue to provide it with necessary facilities and conducive atmosphere to enable the Honourable Members discharge their constitutional responsibilities.

73. Let me emphasize that, I really cherish the good working relationship between the executive and the legislature as well as the judiciary over the past 2 and a half years. It is my fervent hope and prayers that this harmonious and fruitful relationship shall continue to flourish and blossom for the continuous consolidation of democracy and promotion of the well being of the good people of Yobe. In the 2010 Budget, provision has been made for the completion of wall fencing of the Assembly Complex, purchase of utility vehicles, construction of ultra modern committee rooms, renovation and furnishing of existing offices and provision of equipment and other working materials for the Honourable House.

SECURITY

74. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is common knowledge that in the recent years, we have recorded significant improvement in our continuing effort to combat the menace posed by men of the under world. This I believe is as a result of the unprecedented combined efforts of the security operatives and the complementary role of Sarkin Baka Vigilante groups in checking crime in the State. I therefore wish to acknowledge sincerely the crucial contributions of all those involved in these efforts, both civilians and men in uniform. I wish to assure all our citizens that the State Government will continue to be alive to its primary responsibility of protecting the lives and property of the citizens during the next fiscal year and beyond through provision of logistic support, payment of RCA, fuel etc. to our security operatives and the vigilante groups.

75. Let me appeal to our people to continue to live in peace and co-exist harmoniously with one another for the development of our State and in the interest of National unity, cohesion, consolidation and entrenchment of democracy in our country. I wish to reiterate that, if we remain united, peace will not elude us, for from peace comes happiness and with happiness we can win the war against economic under development, social and political degeneration. I wish to also appeal to our Ulama and all men of good will to continue to pray to Allah for peace, harmony, well-being, good health and prosperity for all our people.

CONCLUSION

76. Your Excellency, Mr. Speaker and Hon. Members, Your Royal Highnesses, distinguished invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, the noble intentions we plan for the year 2010 to obtain good results cannot be easily realized without your fullest support and cooperation. You have been exhibiting these qualities since our assumption of office, and this has enabled us to achieve a lot in implementation of the progressive, dynamic and pragmatic policies and programmes that we set for Yobe.

77. I want to take this opportunity to once again thank the entire people of Yobe for their show of ample faith in the policies and programmes of this administration. I salute you all for your continuous loyalty, solidarity, support and cooperation to this administration, without which we could not have achieved what we have achieved so far.

78. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I have brought to the Honourable House these Bills with a strong conviction, optimism and hope that they shall as usual receive meticulous scrutiny, objective assessment, fair deliberations, smooth and speedy passage by the special grace of Allah Subhanahu wata'ala.

79. Finally, it is now my singular honour, duty and privilege to present to you Mr. Speaker, the draft 2010 Appropriation and Finance Bills today Wednesday 30th December, 2009. I wish you Allah's Guidance in your deliberations. Amin.

Wassalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah

DIGEST

'One in six' children have difficulty learning to talk

NEARLY one in six children - and almost one quarter of boys - have difficulty learning to talk, research suggests.

A YouGov online survey of 1,015 parents found only half of children with speech problems received expert help.

The survey, for England's first "Communication Champion" Jean Gross, found some three-year-olds were unable to say a single word.

Ms Gross said the proportion of children with problems is "high" and that getting help early was essential.

"Our ability to communicate is fundamental and underpins everything else. Learning to talk is one of the most important skills a child can master in the 21st Century," she said.

"The proportion of children who have difficulty learning to talk and understand speech is high, particularly among boys.

"It is essential that all children get the help they need from skilled professionals as early as possible." Six out of 10 people questioned for the survey said the ability to talk, listen and understand was the most important skill for children to develop in the early years.

This priority came ahead of



FOUR per cent of children had not said their first word by three

the ability to interact with others (26%), reading skills (11%), numeracy skills (2%) and writing skills (1%).

All those questioned said they looked at picture books with their children, told them stories and sang nursery rhymes with

them - all activities which boost language development. The survey showed that the majority of children (51%) did not enjoy

looking at picture books with their parents until they were over six months old, but 18% enjoyed this at three months or younger.

Children from more affluent families were reported to enjoy looking at picture books, and listening to stories and rhymes, at a younger age than children from less affluent families, researchers said. First words

The most common age for children to say their first word, according to the parents surveyed, was between 10 and 11 months. More girls than boys (34% against 27%) said their first word before they reached nine months.

But 4% of children had not said their first word by the age of three. There were no real social class differences in when children said their first word, the researchers said.

Most parents (95%) could remember what their child's first word was. Among those surveyed, that word was most likely to be "Dadda" (15%) or "Daddy" (13%), with "Mama" (10%) and "Mummy" (8%) trailing a little behind.

Speech experts generally think the "da" sound is easier for babies to say than "m".

Culled from bbc.co.uk

Biological cells reveal brain chemistry secrets



THE cells change colour to reveal specific kinds of neural messages

SCIENTISTS have developed biological cells that can give insight into the chemistry of the brain.

The cells, which change colour when exposed to specific chemicals, have been used to show how a class of schizophrenia drug works.

The researchers hope they will also help shed light on how many other drugs work on the brain.

The study, by the University of California - San Diego, is published in *Nature Neuroscience*.

Schizophrenia is most commonly associated with symptoms

such as delusions and hallucinations. But people with the illness also struggle to sustain attention or recall information.

A class of drugs called atypical neuroleptics has become commonly prescribed, in part because they seem to improve these problems. However, the way they altered brain chemistry was uncertain. It was known that the drugs trigger the release of a large amount of a chemical called acetylcholine, which enables brain cells to communicate with each other.

However, the drugs have also been shown to hobble a receptor on the surface of the receiving cell, which would effectively block the message.

The San Diego team designed biological cells - called CNiFERS - which changed colour when acetylcholine latched onto this particular class of receptors - an event scientists have not previously been able to detect in a living brain.

They implanted the cells into rat brains, then stimulated a deeper part of the brain in a way known to release acetylcholine nearby.

In response, CNiFERS changed colour - proving that they were working. They then gave the rats one of two atypical neuroleptics. In both cases the drug severely depressed the response from the CNiFERS.

This suggested that the drugs' receptor-blocking action over-rides the increase they trigger in acetylcholine.

Researcher Professor David Kleinfeld said the new cells had great potential to reveal the mysteries of chemical action in the brain.

Culled from bbc.co.uk

Leukaemia vaccine being developed

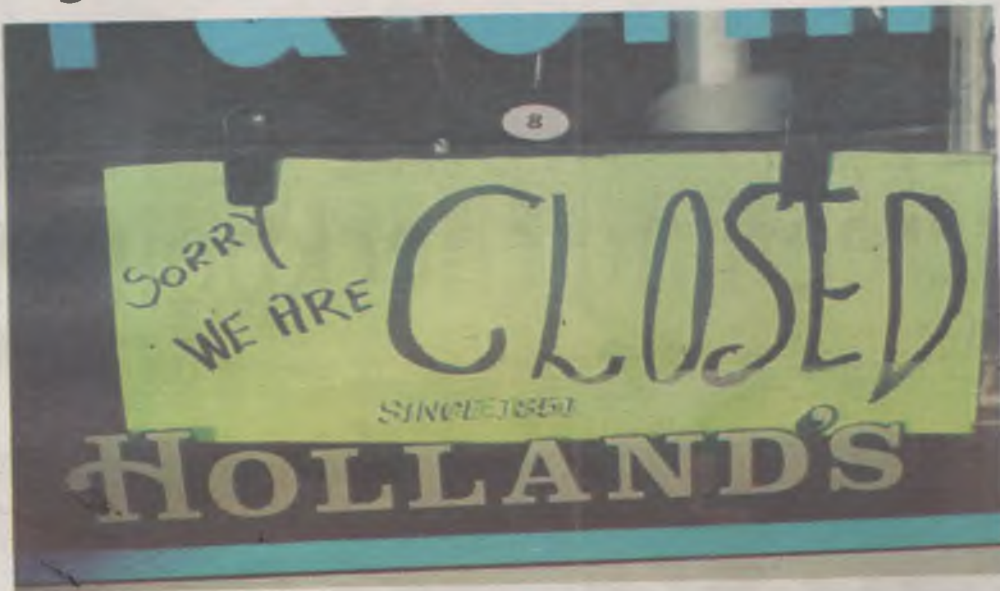
A vaccine for leukaemia is about to be tested on human patients for the first time, in a breakthrough which could offer hope to thousands. British researchers have developed a treatment that can be used to stop the disease returning after chemotherapy or bone marrow transplant.

Eventually it is hoped the drug, which activates the body's own immune system against the leukaemia, could be used to treat other types of cancers. The first patients will be treated in the New Year as part of a small clinical trial at King's College London. The patients in the trial have the form known as Acute myeloid leukaemia (AML), the most common form in adults. Even with aggressive treatment half would usually find the disease returns. The idea behind cancer 'vaccines' is not necessarily to prevent the disease. Instead, once a patient has been diagnosed, the 'vaccine' programmes the immune system to hunt down cancer cells and destroy them. The vaccine then prompts the immune system to recognise leukaemia cells if they return which prevents a relapse of the disease.

The vaccine is created by removing cells from the patient's blood and manipulating them in the laboratory. The cells are given two genes which act as flags to help identify the leukaemia. It effectively focuses and boosts the immune system's ability to seek out and destroy cancer cells. The research is due to be published in the *Journal of Cancer Immunology, Immunotherapy* shortly. Leukaemia is a cancer of the white blood cells and bone marrow and affects around 7,200 patients a year. Around 4,300 die from the disease annually. Treatment comes in two stages - chemotherapy to rid the body of the disease, then to prevent it returning either further chemotherapy or a bone marrow transplant.

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

Sign Language



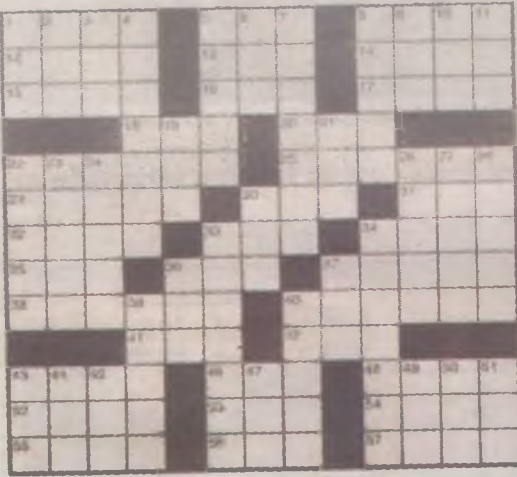
Closed since 1851? What a long-term lay-off!
 Photo location: Fleetwood, Lancashire, by David .H.
 Culled from the telegraph.co.uk

EASY CROSSWORDS

- ACROSS**
- Stage signals
 - Basilica bench
 - Skipped
 - All over again
 - Bullfight cheer
 - Mound
 - Sandwich store
 - League for the Eagles (abbr.)
 - Building extensions
 - Network of "Hemas"
 - Shark feature
 - Overwhelm
 - Church
- DOWN**
- Tables
 - Waterway between islands
 - Aggravate
 - Strike lightly
 - Weeper's droplet
 - Anonymous surname
 - Slang for coffee
 - Corn piece
 - Pointed fastener
 - Actress
 - Mirren
 - Rains icily
 - Carpenter and Black
 - Singer Davis
 - Will Smith boxing role

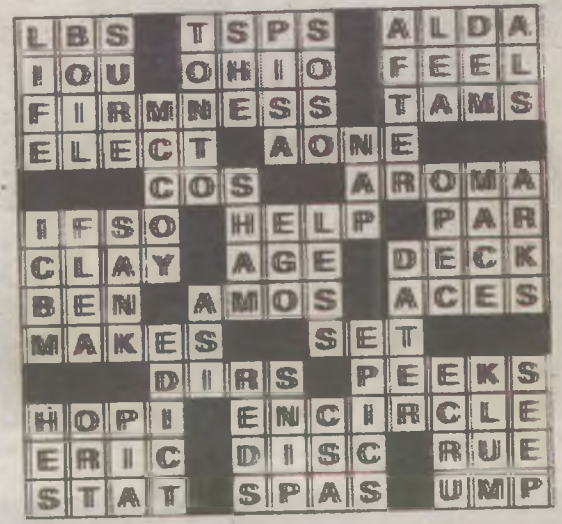
- ACROSS**
- Crab "hand"
 - Indolently
 - Stat for Ryan Howard
 - "___ Hopes"
 - Emeralds, e.g.
 - Gambling cube
 - Behave
- DOWN**
- Rascal
 - One, in French
 - Electric fish
 - One who likes night life
 - Puerto Rican city
 - Santa's assistant
 - Common-weal
 - Used up
 - "___ Abner"
 - Not well
 - "___ Plains"
 - Lunch counter letters
 - Class
 - Nibbles
 - Ryan or Tatum
 - Harsh light
 - Dickens title start (2 wds.)
 - Baltimore athlete
 - Bridges
 - Charged particle
 - Lack of harmony
 - Joshua's battle
 - School group (abbr.)
 - Actor Holbrook
 - Television awards
 - CBS's Courtie
 - Sty dweller
 - Lyric lines
 - Shade tree
 - "X-Files" org.
 - Women's
 - Become old
 - "How come?"

45



Solution to Easy Crosswords

44



SUDOKU

The Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 square grid made up of smaller 3x3 square grids (regions). The numbers already present within the puzzle are "given" - these are there to start you off. The aim is to complete the puzzle by filling the empty cells. Every digit from 1-9 needs to fit in each row, column and region of 9 squares. Each row, column and region must contain just one instance of each number, 1-9.

57

1	6	5			2				
2	4		7	9				5	
	9			1				3	
	3				4				
		1		5		9			
			9					8	
4				3				6	
9				6	5		3	1	
			1				8	4	9

Solution to Sudoku 56

5	9	7	3	4	8	1	6	2
2	1	4	7	9	6	5	3	8
6	8	3	5	2	1	7	9	4
1	6	8	2	3	5	9	4	7
3	4	2	8	7	9	6	1	5
9	7	5	1	6	4	8	2	3
4	3	1	9	5	7	2	8	6
7	2	9	6	8	3	4	5	1
8	5	6	4	1	2	3	7	9

News Extra

Security alert at busy U.S. airport after man dodges screening checkpoint

A security alert at one of America's busiest airports sparked transport chaos after a man walked through a screening checkpoint exit into the secure side of a terminal.

Flights were grounded for hours at Newark Liberty International Airport and passengers - including hundreds of Britons heading home after the holidays - had to be re-screened while air safety officials searched for him.

Travellers were allowed to begin boarding their planes about six hours after the man was seen bypassing security.

The man walked down an exit lane at Terminal C about 5.30pm, Transportation Security Administration spokeswoman Ann Davis said.

Screening was halted while authorities looked at surveillance tapes to try to identify him.

Passengers were then moved from the secure side of the ter-

Also on Sunday, the TSA said passengers flying into the United States from nations regarded as state sponsors of terrorism and countries of interest will be subject to enhanced screening techniques, such as body scans and pat-downs

terminal, which is used primarily by Continental Airline, to the open side to go through screening again, Davis said in a statement.

Passengers were forced to wait in check-in areas.

The terminal was searched to make sure no dangerous objects were in it before the boarding began, the TSA said.

The man wasn't found, but the TSA said its re-screening effort ensured every passenger was fully screened.

Security officers instructed the passengers, who expressed frustration over the situation.

Alison Day, of York, England, was supposed to leave for Manchester, England, at 7.30pm.

She was traveling with a party



PASSENGERS fill the terminal after a security breach shut down Terminal C at Newark Liberty International Airport Sunday night

of seven including an 18-month-old and a 5-year-old.

"I'm not angry that this is happening, but I'm angry that there was a lack of organisation," she said.

She said her party, headed home after a Caribbean cruise, was escorted out of Continental's lounge but given no further instructions.

Continental spokeswoman Susannah Thurston said it was an airport security issue not involving the Houston-based airline.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which runs area airports, assisted the TSA following the possible security breach.

Also on Sunday, the TSA said passengers flying into the United States from nations regarded as state sponsors of terrorism and countries of interest will be subject to enhanced screening techniques, such as body scans and pat-downs.

From yesterday, all passengers on U.S.-bound international flights are subject to random screening.

The Department of State lists Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism. The

other countries whose passengers will face enhanced screening include Afghanistan, Algeria,

Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Yemen.



AUTHORITIES were searching for a man who walked through a screening checkpoint exit into the secure side of a terminal

News Extra



THE destroyed bank in Dinant after two men tried to steal the cash dispenser by using dynamite, killing themselves in the explosion

Two bank robbers have been declared the winners of the Darwin Awards 2009 after they blew themselves up while trying to crack open an ATM machine.

The Belgian pair used so much explosive to get their hands on the cash that they destroyed the whole bank building.

Nobody else was in the building at the time of the attack.

When police arrived at the scene, they found one of them with severe head injuries, and rushed him to hospital.

Investigators initially assumed that his accomplice had managed a getaway, but the second one's body was excavated from the debris twelve hours later.

Wendy Northcutt, the founder of the annual awards, declared them the 2009 winners of the Darwin Awards, given to those 'doing the most to improve the human gene pool by removing

“Doing the most to improve the human gene pool by removing themselves from it.”

themselves from it.

The two bankrobbers had attempted to make a sizeable withdrawal from the ATM, but died when they overestimated the quantity of dynamite needed for the explosion.

The blast demolished the building the bank was housed in.

The first robber was rushed to the hospital with severe head trauma; he died shortly after arrival.

The bank robbers just edged ahead of their main rival Shawn Motero from U.S., who was stuck in a traffic crawl in Florida when

he realised he needed to use the toilet. Without one handy, he got out of the car before jumping over a concrete wall to find a more secluded spot.

Unfortunately, the 30-year-old had not realised he was on a bridge, and fell 65 feet to his death.

Award organisers said the accident proved you should 'look before you leak.'

Police revealed Mr Motero had been drinking at a bar in Pompano Beach before his tragic death, adding: 'He probably thought there was a road, but there wasn't.'

Bank robbers who blew themselves up win Darwin Award

... For 'improving the human gene pool'

His mother said: 'Shawn didn't do a whole lot for a living. He got along on his charm, just like his father.'

In third place was the first ever woman to be nominated for the award.

Rosanne Tippett drove her moped into a flooded river, despite the warning signs.

She was rescued by police, but jumped back into the river in an attempt to recover the two-wheeler.

Four inches of rain had fallen in Greensboro, North Carolina, but the 50-year-old was determined to follow her usual route home.

Before embarking on her final journey she phoned her mother and told her: 'My moped has two rubber wheels, Mom, I'll be fine.'

She then drove through a police road block before losing control of the scooter and falling into a swollen creek.

After being rescued by police she jumped back into the water to rescue her vehicle. Her mum admitted: 'She loved that thing.'

Other nominees for the 2009 awards included an armed robber who, with an alleged accomplice, tried to disguise his face with gold paint as he raided a convenience store. However, Thomas James from South Carolina used spray paint, which released toxic fumes and he collapsed shortly after the robbery.

To add insult to injury, the disguise was ineffective and witnesses had no problem identifying the 23-year-old.

His accomplice was charged with armed robbery.

The only U.K. victim to be nominated was a 41-year-old man from York.

The unnamed father-of-three was trying to demolish a garden shed. He succeeded but the roof collapsed on top of him and he was trapped in a pile of concrete rubble.

Firefighters used hydraulic rams and high pressure air bags to allow paramedics to reach the man after the accident in April, but he was pronounced dead the scene.

Battered Berlusconi back on form

Battered Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi seems to be making a speedy recovery from his attack as he celebrates the birthday of a pretty blonde MP with his People of Freedom Party.

Michaela Biancifiore called charmer Berlusconi, 73, to wish him well and when she reminded him it was her 40th birthday he then decided to invite her to his luxury villa to celebrate.

Knowing his love of practical jokes, Ms Biancifiore had a special cake made with the icing on the cake recreating a famous picture of the two taken in 2005 when he raised his middle finger during a rowdy election rally.

Ms Biancifiore made a 180 mile trip from her home in Bolzano to Berlusconi's home at Arcore near Milan just so she could be with him and was photographed sitting next to him as he proudly wore his bandages. Berlusconi was hit in the face with a metal and plaster statue of Milan's Gothic Cathedral three weeks ago and suffered a fractured nose, two broken teeth and severe cuts to his gums and lips.

He has been ordered to take it easy and had not been seen in public until New Year's Eve but Ms Biancifiore described how he had invited her to his house to celebrate. She said: "I called him to see how he was doing and we had a chat and I told him it was

my birthday. I said I could send him a piece of cake and he said 'I can do better than that come on over for a party.'

"It was a bit of journey from Bolzano to Arcore but if the Prime Minister invited you to his house to celebrate your birthday you don't think twice you go.

"In the end it was well worth it - we had a lovely time and Berlusconi was on top form in though he was still in pain from his injuries - every time he laughed he winced as the stitches hurt."

Ms Biancifiore, who is a minister in the Italian Foreign Office, added: "There was nothing untoward about the evening. It was just a party between friends.

"As always the Prime Minister was very generous and he invited me over and as I say you don't turn down such an invitation.

"The menu was the classic one he always offers penne (pasta) tricolore and roast beef with potatoes.

"Italians should realise what a lovely generous man he is and thankfully the majority do."

Last year Berlusconi was caught up in controversy when it emerged that escort girls had been among guests invited to parties at his official residences in Rome and Sardinia. Yesterday no-one was available for comment at Berlusconi's office in Rome.



PRIME Minister Silvio Berlusconi seems to be getting back to business as usual after his attack as he celebrates the birthday of pretty blonde MP Michaela Biancifiore

News Extra



© AFP/Getty Images
NELSON Mandela addresses the audience during the draw

South Africa: Will the World Cup boost newspaper sales?

The World Cup will be the big event of 2010 – whether it's locals or tourists buying the papers

- By Peter Bruce

Only bulk sales are rising in the South African newspaper industry. The newspapers that publishers give away for free are still allowed, under fabulously lax ABC rules, to count as real sales in order to impress companies who advertise in their products.

The latest ABC figures, for the third quarter of 2009, revealed that of the 50 or so daily and weekly papers only three were up (a bit) on the previous three months and only two could safely be said to have risen on the year (one was up 1% and the other up 0.4%). We can't wait for the World Cup and, especially, the English supporters. Maybe they'll buy us?

South African papers have been slow to get excited about the summer, but it was probably the recent draw in Cape Town that brought home a sense of what is coming our way. "Becks here", screamed posters fixed on to lampposts. It was almost as if the whole English team had arrived.

The immediate press reaction was to wrap itself up in the flag and proclaim that they (pick your title) never doubted our ability to host the

World Cup. The day after the draw, one of Tony O'Reilly's papers, the Johannesburg *Saturday Star*, ran an editorial that said, in part: "it was unfair that many South Africans doubted our country's ability, to do a proper job ... More dismaying was the way that some South Africans, and some media in fact, went out of their way to project an image to the world of a country that was crime-ridden."

Well, few newspapers have fed

as heartily on the crime story in South Africa than the *Saturday Star* but we have put that behind us. We editors are all agreed that we want the World Cup to be a Great Success. As the editor of a financial daily, I suppose we will look at the whole affair from a different angle. But for many of my brother editors, here's a short wish list English fans may be able to help out with. First, get drunk and wander off on your own into Hill-

brow in Johannesburg. Second, do get out of your car and pose with that lion cub in the game park. Its parents are miles away. Third, celebrate the night away in a T-shirt in either Johannesburg or Cape Town's fan parks. That will give us the "Fan killed, eaten or freezes" headlines which, in the possible but highly improbable event that our team fails to lose to France, Uruguay or Mexico, local papers will need to keep the World Cup

on their front pages.

Seriously though, newspaper proprietors are desperate to make money out of the World Cup. But it won't be easy. FIFA will rule with an iron fist and it is already almost impossible to pretend any association with the event without FIFA's say-so. That comes at a price.

A lesson about the attitudes of the people who bring big sports events to this country was learned earlier in the year when the Indian Premier League cricket tournament was played in South Africa. Before it began, the *Sunday Times*, the biggest weekly in the country, ran a story about the IPL boss, Lalit Modi. The IPL demanded a correction but the paper managed to repeat what had irritated Modi in the first place. The paper and all its associates (including *Business Day*) probably missed out on about R3m (£245,040) or R4m worth of advertising as a result.

So how to monetise the World Cup remains a newspaper mystery here. It is unlikely more locals will buy papers, unless our team does miraculously well. That means it'll have to be the English fans who make next year's ABCs look good. And they may not have to buy their papers anyway. Publishers will more than likely give them away and claim them as "bulk sales" or, in a new ploy I have noticed, "travel bulk". I don't know what that is but I'll bet it's a pile of free newspapers dumped in front of your hotel in the morning.

Peter Bruce is the editor of *Business Day*, Johannesburg



DAVID Beckham signs fans' shirts in Cape Town, venue for the World Cup draw in December.

ENVIRONMENT

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Fire guts parts of Kumasi market

FIRE has destroyed parts of one of Africa's biggest markets, at Ghana's second city of Kumasi.

The fire is reported to have lasted for several hours, but so far no casualties have been reported.

A fire officer told local radio station Joy FM the market's haphazard layout made it difficult to

get to the blaze.

The station said it was the second fire at the market in less than a year, and after the last blaze the authorities had promised to redevelop the site.

The fire is believed to have gutted parts of the market occupied by many hide-dealers and shoe-sellers, who told the Ghana News

Agency their businesses had been destroyed.

They said they were hoping the National Disaster Management Organisation (Nadmo) would help them.

The cause of Saturday's fire is not yet known, but deputy police commissioner Patrick Timbillah said an investigation was under

way. Whatever the reason, the overcrowded conditions common in many African markets meant the fire spread easily and was hard to tackle, says the BBC's Caspar Leighton in Accra.

After the last fire, an investigation committee had recommended improving access for the emergency services. But reorgan-

ising markets is fraught with difficulty as resistance from traders is often stiff and well-organised, our correspondent says.

Improving safety inevitably means a reduction in stalls and traders losing out. Profit and politics usually win over prudence, he adds.

-BBC

W/Bank contractor obstructs drainage in Karu

By Nasir Imam

WATER perhaps is the next item to life and good health in human community. It was therefore with a great enthusiasm and joy that the residents of Federal Housing in Karu, referred to as Supreme Court Quarters, welcomed the new project to lay pipes and connect houses to potable water.

This actually came after three years of cutting many of the residents from the water supply pipes by the water authorities.

The new project for water pipes laying and connection is a one of the numerous World Bank assisted projects, this specifically in the FCT, and it is handled by Naston Engineering.

However the implementation of the contract has spelled doom for the residents.

This is because of three large water pipes laid by the contractor, inside a high tension water drainage, which controls sewage from homes, excess rain water and waters gushing out from numerous parts of the several hills around Karu in the FCT.

According to residents of the area, all entiresities for a deep lying of the pipes by the contractor proved abortive. The last three rains brought a lot of waste that made the interrupting pipes to trap and later sediment waste.

This actually resulted in water lock, stench and mosquito breeding.

Other problems caused by the contractor include cutting off of roads within the estate in several places, without tarring back the severed spots. So also digging in many compound were done but the damage areas have not been repaired. Some of the tapes install have even started leaking nonstop.

However, the major crisis is yet to occur. In the subsequent rain falls, the sediment and sand would not allow the amount of water gushing during rain fall to pass, therefore a recipe for flood disaster in Karu.

And if that happens, the annual flood disaster in Kubwa in the FCT would be a child's play. Unless a subsequent action is a taken, by the Federal Capital Territory Administration, FCDA, Federal Housing Authority, FHA and Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB).

The resident of this estate have already written a letter of complaint to the water board, yet nothing has been done. The same latter was copied to Abuja Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Capital Territory Administration, yet no response has come.



THE polluted drainage in Karu

China oil spill hits Yellow River

POLLUTION from a broken oil pipeline in northern China has now reached one of the country's major water sources - the Yellow River, state media say.

Hundreds of workers had battled to contain the oil upstream, but officials discovered traces in the river itself.

The traces were found about 200km (124 miles) upstream from Zhengzhou.

Three counties in neigh-

bouring Shaanxi province have warned people not to take supplies from the river or drink river water.

Correspondents say local towns and cities get some of their water from the river, the rest from underground water sources.

The official Xinhua news agency said: "At present, cities along the river in Henan province have sufficient water resources."

About 150,000 litres of die-

sel poured into the Wei river in Shaanxi province after a construction accident on Wednesday, state media reported.

The leak occurred on the fuel pipeline operated by the state-run China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) that connects Lanzhou in the north-west province of Gansu with Zhengzhou in central Henan province, according to the China Daily newspaper.

Cashew nuts association tasks FG on tree regeneration

THE Cashew Nuts Association of Nigeria (CNAN) has urged the federal government to support its cashew regeneration plan to enhance quality production.

The CNAN President, Mr Tunji Owoye, who made the plea in Lagos on Monday in an interview, said the association was collaborating with cashew farmers nationwide to ensure the cultivation of hybrid seedlings.

Owoye said that cashew regeneration would enhance the nation's commodity trade as well as stamp-out old cashew trees in estate farms and in the wild.

He said that most of the cashew trees in the wild which constituted a high percentage of the nation's production had gone sterile, leading to poor quality production.

Owoye said that most of such trees were planted in the early 1960s, noting that because they

had aged, they yielded poorly and lowered farmers' incomes.

The CNAN chief recalled that government had assisted the cotton and cocoa sectors and

pleaded that similar assistance be extended to cashew farmers.

Owoye noted that the association had embarked on a sensitisation campaign to educate

Owoye noted that the association had embarked on a sensitisation campaign to educate farmers on the essence of regeneration and adopting best farm practices.

farmers on the essence of regeneration and adopting best farm practices.

He urged the Federal Government to distribute cashew seedlings, nuts and nursery plants through the association to credible stakeholders.

The CNAN president noted that the association was unable to achieve its set goals of adopting best farm practices and reducing post-harvest waste in 2009. (NAN)

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ENVIRONMENT

KWSG suspends chainsaw activities

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

THE Kwara State government has announced the suspension of all chainsaw activities in the state.

A statement issued by the State Commissioner for Environment and Forestry, Chief J. U. Ayeni, a copy made available to Daily Trust stated that the order would take effect from Monday this week.

Ayeni advised all registered chainsaw operators to submit their requisite papers of registration and applications for the renewal of their licenses which expired last year.

The Commissioner said the renewal exercise would also put the State government in a position to know the exact number of authentic operators of chainsaw in the State.

Chief Ayeni said, by the new directive it has now become an offence for any chainsaw operator to split wood in any approved or unapproved locations in the State.

The Commissioner also warned that anybody caught flouting the new directive on chainsaw activities would be penalized according to law.

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The Commissioner also warned that anybody caught flouting the new directive on chainsaw activities would be penalized according to law.

The world's most polluted places (5)

FROM lead in the soil to toxins in the water and radioactive fallout in the air, The Blacksmith Institute has created a list of the world's worst ecological disaster areas

La Oroya, Peru

NUMBER of people potentially affected: 35,000

Type of pollutant: Lead, copper, zinc and sulfur dioxide

Source of pollution: Heavy metal mining and processing

Lead is the contaminant that shows up most frequently on Blacksmith's list because the toll it takes on children can be so devastating. In La Oroya, a mining town in the Peruvian Andes, 99% of children have blood levels that exceed acceptable limits, thanks to an American-owned smelter that has been polluting the city since 1922. The average lead level, according to a 1999 survey, was triple the WHO limit. Even after active emissions from the smelter



POLLUTION from the mining and processing operations of Doe Run Peru has led to dangerously high concentrations of lead in children's blood in La Oroya



ZUMA Students Association, clearing refuse at their end of year outing in Gauraka, Tafa LG, Niger State.

Library loses material worth N60m to inferno

THE Kebbi State owned Adamu Augie College of Education located in Argungu, has lost library materials worth N60.1million to inferno.

The chairman of the Governing Board, Prof. Usman Abubakar, told the acting Governor Alhaji Aliyu, in Birnin Kebbi that the lack of a library had affected academic progress in the institution.

He said the urgent sup-

port of the state government, individuals and corporations was required to assist the college own a modern library that would enhance attainment of academic standards.

He said the board had proposed for an appeal fund to enable the institution generate resources and materials to rehabilitate and furnish a library structure.

The acting governor, Alhaji

Ibrahim Aliyu, commended the board for sustaining academic and administrative activities in spite of the hardship faced by the institution.

He said the proposal for an appeal would be studied and gave an assurance that the institution would be accorded assistance, especially as the present regime was interested in raising the standard of education.

Top 10 tips to cut waste:

- Bake own bread
- Grow your own fruit and veg
- Compost vegetable peelings
- Buy only what is needed and avoid non-recyclable or non-reusable packaging
- Take own bags to the supermarket
- Avoid convenience food
- Re-use junk mail envelopes or stop junk mail by e-mailing optout@royalmail.com
- Use fruit punnets as seedling trays
- Turn cereal packaging into sandwich bags
- Re-heat food leftovers or turn them into new meals

Rainstorm victims get N5m relief materials

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

VICTIMS of rainstorm disaster in Asa local government area of Kwara State have received relief materials worth over N5million from the Kwara State Government.

Materials distributed included roofing sheets and nails to victims, whose houses were destroyed by rainstorm in the council area.

Speaking at the ceremony, the State Governor, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki, expressed the determination of his government to continue to be responsive to the yearnings of the people of the State promptly.

Represented by his Special Adviser on Emergency and Relief Services, Alhaji Suleiman Kayode-Yusuf disclosed that the state government had commenced sensitization campaign across the state to further enlighten the people on possible causes of disaster with a view to preventing incessant cases of natural disasters in the state.

France to rethink carbon tax plan

A new carbon tax that was supposed to go into effect in France at New Year has been struck down, delivering a blow to President Nicolas Sarkozy.

France's Constitutional Council, a legal compliance watchdog, said there were too many exemp-

tions for polluters in the tax plan.

The body said 93% of industrial emissions, other than fuel use, would be exempt from the tax.

The tax was set at 17 euros (£15) per tonne of emitted carbon dioxide (CO2).

Prime Minister Francois Fillon

has said the government will now work on a new law taking account of the legal ruling.

The tax was aimed at encouraging consumers to use less oil, gas and coal. It would have meant a rise in the price of fuel for cars, domestic heating and factories.

But it did not apply to the

heavy industries and power firms included in the EU's emissions trading scheme.

Most electricity in France - excluded from the carbon tax - is nuclear-generated.

According to France's Le Monde newspaper, the tax would have generated about 4.3bn euros

(£3.8bn) of revenue annually.

Commenting on the ruling, French government spokesman Luc Chatel said "France has shown that it is a leader in the fight against climate change and it will remain at the forefront by presenting new legislation on 20 Janua

-BBC

ENVIRONMENT

Yankari Games Reserve for upgrading

THE Yankari Games Reserve in Bauchi State is to be upgraded to an international tourist resort this year.

Mr. Steven Haruna, the officer in charge of the reserve, made this known to journalists on Friday in Bauchi.

He said that the reserve had received hundreds of visitors in the last few days.

Haruna said that the visitors, including foreigners, came to enjoy the New Year holiday at the reserve with their friends, spouses and children.

"Hundreds of visitors came to Yankari Games Reserve to celebrate the New Year.

"These visitors came from within and outside the country

and the number of foreigners was encouraging. Therefore, there is the need to upgrade the status of the reserve," he said.

Haruna said that Kabo Air Company brought the tourists to the reserve, adding that an executive of the company, Alhaji Abdulkadir Dan-Kabo, expressed satisfaction

with the reserve's facilities and noted that the tourists enjoyed their stay.

He said that the Bauchi State Government would upgrade the reserve's facilities so international standards. He said that the patronage of foreign tourists would boost the state's economy, while facilitating the listing of the reserve as a

good tourist destination in Africa and in the world in general.

Efforts to revamp the reserve's facilities and structures started during the administration of former Governor Ahmed Muazu.

The current administration of Governor Isa Yuguda has completed some of the rehabilitation projects. (NAN)



FIRE gutting the wheat belt in Western Australia

Post Copenhagen talks for Bonn, Mexico

By Nasir Imam

AFTER the debacle at Copenhagen, the world will be hoping that global leaders can make up for lost time this year.

Meanwhile the official UN process will shuffle on. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), that is in charge of talks, will meet in June in Bonn and again in November in Mexico. It is hoped that progress will be made on the Copenhagen Accord so that it can be made a legal treaty by the end of the year.

Already they are pushing for another meeting of world leaders to sort out the mess as soon as possible. However he is dead set against the UN process that ended in such confusion last time. Instead it is likely that high level meetings, many behind closed doors, will be held throughout the year under the guise of the Major

Economies Forum, G8 and other groupings.

The key sticking point is over how to reduce carbon emissions. Developed countries will be announcing how much they are willing to reduce greenhouse gases by 2020 at the end of January. The EU is willing to increase its target from 20 to 30 per cent by 2020 if other rich nations like the US, Japan and Australia also increase ambition. This horse trading will be a key part of strengthening world action against climate change.

Other points in the Copenhagen Accord that will take immediate action include handing out some of the \$30 billion (£24bn) promised to poor nations by 2012 to help them reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. Work will also start on a scheme to save the rainforests by paying poor nations not to chop down trees.

Residents flee fires in western Australian

RESIDENTS in Western Australia's rural wheat belt have been forced to flee their homes as two out-of-control bush fires with flames higher than rooftops bore down on farms and properties.

Members of the NSW Rural Fire Service battle a blaze on Nutt Road in Londonderry outer western suburbs of Sydney, Australia.

People in the Dandaragan area north of Perth were told to leave immediately as the fast-moving blaze, fanned by "cata-

strophic" conditions in Western Australia, showered embers.

A bushfire emergency warning was also issued for the district of Toodyay.

Several roads were closed as the fires showered embers close to homes and communities.

"Homes will be impacted by fire. People in this area need to relocate now," the state's Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) warned in a statement.

"The bushfire is moving fast in a southeast direction. It is out of control.

Embers are likely to be blown around your home. Flames are higher than rooftops," it added.

More than 100 volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and Bush Fire Service firefighters were on the scene as two waterbombers worked to douse the towering flames.

By 1pm on Tuesday flames from one fire had burned through 150 hectares.

Residents were told to leave their homes, taking refuge in recreational centres as two-metre flames roared near homes.



A red cap, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and representative of President Umaru Yar'Adua; Minister of Environment, Mr. John Odey and Nigerian Ambassador to the Nordic Countries, Dr. Boladei Godknows Igali, at plenary of the last Climate Change Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark

Plateau to replace equipment in water treatment plants

From Ahmed Mohammed, Jos

PLATEAU State Government has reiterated its commitment to improve on water supply in the state as contained in the ten point agenda of the administration of Governor David Jonah Jang.

The State Commissioner for Water Resources, Alhaji Ibrahim

Idi Waziri stated this while commenting on the ongoing rehabilitation work in the three water treatments plants that supplied water to the people of the state.

He said the construction firm has ordered for the manufacturing of the equipments and they will start arriving in to the country in the next three months adding that

"government want to replaced all the old equipments it inherited they are decay because they were used for over thirty years without replacement"

You would recalled that the Plateau State Government had awarded 2.2bn water projects for the rehabilitations of water treatment plants last year in its effort to

provide portable water to Jos and environs last year.

In related development Plateau State Water Board Workers has suspended the industrial action embarked upon by the workers of the union over neglect of staff welfare.

The Chairman of the union comrade Butchet Ezekiel told

newsmen in Jos that they suspended the strike because of the intervention by the Plateau state Governor David Jonah Jang, "he gave us his word and pledged to look in to all our problems we listened to him and we informed the congress we had resumed work for the development of the state".

HEALTH REPORT

Briefs

Key health issues in 2009

IN 2009, the emergence of the new H1N1 influenza virus saw the world brace itself for the first influenza pandemic since 1968. This was with the backdrop of the global financial crisis that could negatively impact spending on health.

Yet 2009 also saw H1N1 vaccines becoming available, global responses under way to support developing countries from the health effects of the financial crisis, and global action for public health being recognized.

WHO and UNICEF launched new plans to tackle the two biggest child killers - pneumonia and diarrhoea, and the number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy in low- and middle-income countries topped four million. Making hospitals safe in emergencies, a new look at women's health, global health risks, and progress towards tackling malaria also made news in 2009.

A Reuter's report

Maryam Babangida: Gbemisola asks FG to develop healthcare

By Onimisi Alao

SENATOR Gbemisola Saraki has urged the Federal Government to develop effective health care services against cancer and other terminal diseases as a way of immortalizing Nigeria's former First Lady, Maryam Babangida who died of cancer of the ovaries penultimate Sunday.

"For us as a people to show that we loved Mrs Babangida the Federal Government should, as a matter of urgency, make the treatment for cancer and other terminal diseases readily available," Gbemisola who represents the Kwara Central Senatorial District in the Senate said in a statement.

Maryam Babangida who reigned as First Lady while her husband, General Ibrahim Babangida ruled the country as military President between 1985 and 1993 died on December 27, 2009 in a hospital in the United States.

Gbemisola emphasised that there was an urgent need for Nigeria to develop programmes aimed at providing world class treatment for terminal illnesses, especially cancer.

The late Maryam Babangida directed her strength towards women empowerment through her Better Life for Rural Women programme throughout the eight years that she was the First Lady.

Gbemisola said the contributions of the former First Lady to the socio-economic growth of the country was immeasurable as millions of women in the grassroots became economically empowered through her activities.

She added, "Mrs. Maryam Babangida did a lot for the country, showing that everyone, including wives of public officers, should have a sense of duty to be their sister's keeper... We can pay her no greater tribute than to collectively fight cancer in our society on her behalf."

Health workers asked to justify cost of healthcare

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

KWARA State Commissioner for Health, Alhaji Ladi Hassan, has charged health personnel in the state to redouble their efforts in justifying government's huge investment in the health sector.

The Commissioner who stated this in a chat with newsmen in his office, said that this year government would do all within it to make life meaningful for the people.

He pledged doorstep health care delivery for the citizenry and said hospitals would be renovated and provided with state-of-the-art equipment for the benefit of the people.

He added, "Government has promised to spend heavily in the health sector and this spending will cover both personnel as well as physical rehabilitation of most of our hospitals. We will equip the hospitals and expand laboratories for people to benefit from."

Slums, climate change & human health in sub-Saharan Africa

URBANIZATION in Sub-Saharan Africa, the least urbanized region in the world, is linked to poverty. Globally, nearly one billion people live in slums, and this number is projected to double to two billion in the next 30 years. In sub-Saharan Africa, 71.8% of urban dwellers live in slums, the highest proportion in the world.

Over the coming decades, the effects of climate change will also be progressively felt across the African continent. Climate change and urbanization will interact with unpredictable effects. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated that "urbanization and climate change may work synergistically to increase disease burdens.

A significant share of ill health in slums stems from poor access to sanitation and clean drinking water. In 2000, 30-50% of African urban dwellers lacked a safe water supply. Even where it is available, access to safe water is often unaffordable for the urban poor. Slum dwellers in cities in east Africa pay 5-7 times more for a litre of water than the average North American.

Across Africa, 45% of the urban population lacked access to improved sanitation in 2000. In eastern Africa in 2006, open defecation was the only sanitation practice available to 33% of the population. This contributes to the contamination of water and land within cities as well as to many of the waterborne diseases



DIRECTOR General, WHO Margaret Chan

prevalent in slums.

Flooded areas and ditches, latrines and septic tanks are key reservoirs that perpetuate cholera, malaria, dengue and yellow fever in urban areas. Infectious disease outbreaks are also precipitated by the high population density found in these areas, with overcrowding triggering epidemic-prone infections like pertussis and influenza.

Children bear a disproportionate burden of disease in slums. In Ethiopia and the Niger, rates of child malnutrition in both urban slums and rural areas are

around 40%. Immunization coverage in slums in the Niger is 35% compared with 86% in non-slum urban areas. In Nairobi, where 60% of the city's population live in slums, child mortality in the slums is 2.5 times greater than in other areas of the city. Droughts are associated with a lack of access to water supplies for consumption and sanitation, as well as with poor agricultural productivity. Water scarcity will increase for both urban and rural populations in Africa over the next century. Climate change is expected to bring more frequent and longer droughts to the region. Drought in rural areas may be a major trigger for in-migration to urban areas, further stressing urban infrastructure. Falling agricultural productivity in the region could place increased strain on local food markets, thus increasing rates of malnutrition in slums.

Urban outdoor pollution in Africa is responsible for an estimated 49,000 premature deaths annually. Slums are often located near factories and busy roadways thus rendering their inhabitants vulnerable to a high burden of respiratory disease. Exposure to elevated concentrations of ozone is associated with increased hospital admissions for pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma as well as with premature mortality. As summer temperatures rise, the concentration of ground-level ozone is increasing in most regions of the world.

Courtesy of WHO website

National Health Insurance: Frequently asked questions

The following are some of the questions people frequently ask about the national health insurance programme and answers provided by the government agency implementing the programme, the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).

WHAT is National Health Insurance Scheme?

National Health Insurance Scheme is a corporate body established under Act 35 of 1999 by the Federal Government of Nigeria to improve the health of all Nigerians at an affordable cost.

What is Social Health Insurance?

Social health insurance is a social security system that guarantees the provision of a Benefit package of health care services paid from funds created by pooling the contributions of participants.

What is Formal Sector Health Insurance Programme?

It is the social health insurance programme for employees of the Public and organized private sector employing ten (10) or more persons. However, extra dependants can be covered by payment of additional contribution.

Of what advantage is the programme to me?

Beneficiaries do not need cash to access treatment when required. Thus problem of converting assets to cash



NHIS Executive Secretary Dr Waziri Dogo-Muhammad

especially in catastrophic illnesses can be avoided. Furthermore, the benefit package is among the most Comprehensive in the world

How many members of my family are covered by my contribution?

Contributor, spouse and four biological children under 18 years of age. However, extra dependant can be covered by payment of additional contribution.

Would a beneficiary continue to access service after retirement?

NHIS has different programmes targeted at various groups such as rural community, Urban self-employed, and the voluntary contributors in which retirees can participate.

How does a beneficiary who falls ill outside his/her station get treated?

Such a beneficiary can access care from any NHIS accredited provider

in the location, who would later be reimbursed by the HMO covering the beneficiary's organization

If I am living apart from my family how would I and my family access health care?

There is provision on the NHIS registration form for alternate primary provider in the case of participants that live apart from their families.

Is there a limit to the medical bills that NHIS will pay?

No limit, as long as the care is within the provision of the benefit package.

Are illnesses like HIV/AIDS covered under the programme?

No Associated opportunistic illnesses/diseases like diarrhoea, tuberculosis etc are included in the benefit package. However, National Action Committee for AIDS (NACA) is handling supply of antiretroviral drugs.

CITY NEWS



HOTLINES: 0803-3493-462 & 0703-8927-513

email: citynews@dailytrust.com

News about your capital city

FCTA repatriates 500 beggars

By Nasir Imam

NO fewer than 500 destitute arrested on the streets of Abuja were at the weekend repatriated by the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Ministerial Task force set up to clean the city of destitute and miscreants.

During one of the taskforce mop-up exercises carried out on January 1 and led by the FCT Secretary for Social Development Secretariat, Barrister Habiba Sani Kalgo, members of the taskforce went through streets in the city centre to pick up the destitute who they claimed have

constituted themselves into nuisances in the city.

The social development secretary accused the destitute of ignoring FCT laws and also said they were violent in some cases and resisted efforts by the FCT Administration to stop them from engaging in their unwholesome activities, which she remarked were detrimental to the environmental master plan of the capital city.

She said FCT Administration will do everything possible to rid the city of social miscreants, so that a befitting city is created, where everyone can go about their lawful

activities without fear of being molested.

Barrister Kalgo hinted further that the administration through the social development secretariat has been making efforts towards addressing the problem of the less privileged in the FCT, adding that the secretariat has already gone into partnership with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to train vulnerable groups in the FCT in skills acquisition.

She recalled that in 2009, the secretariat trained and gave out microcredit and other assistances to the vulnerable groups, of which more of such pro-

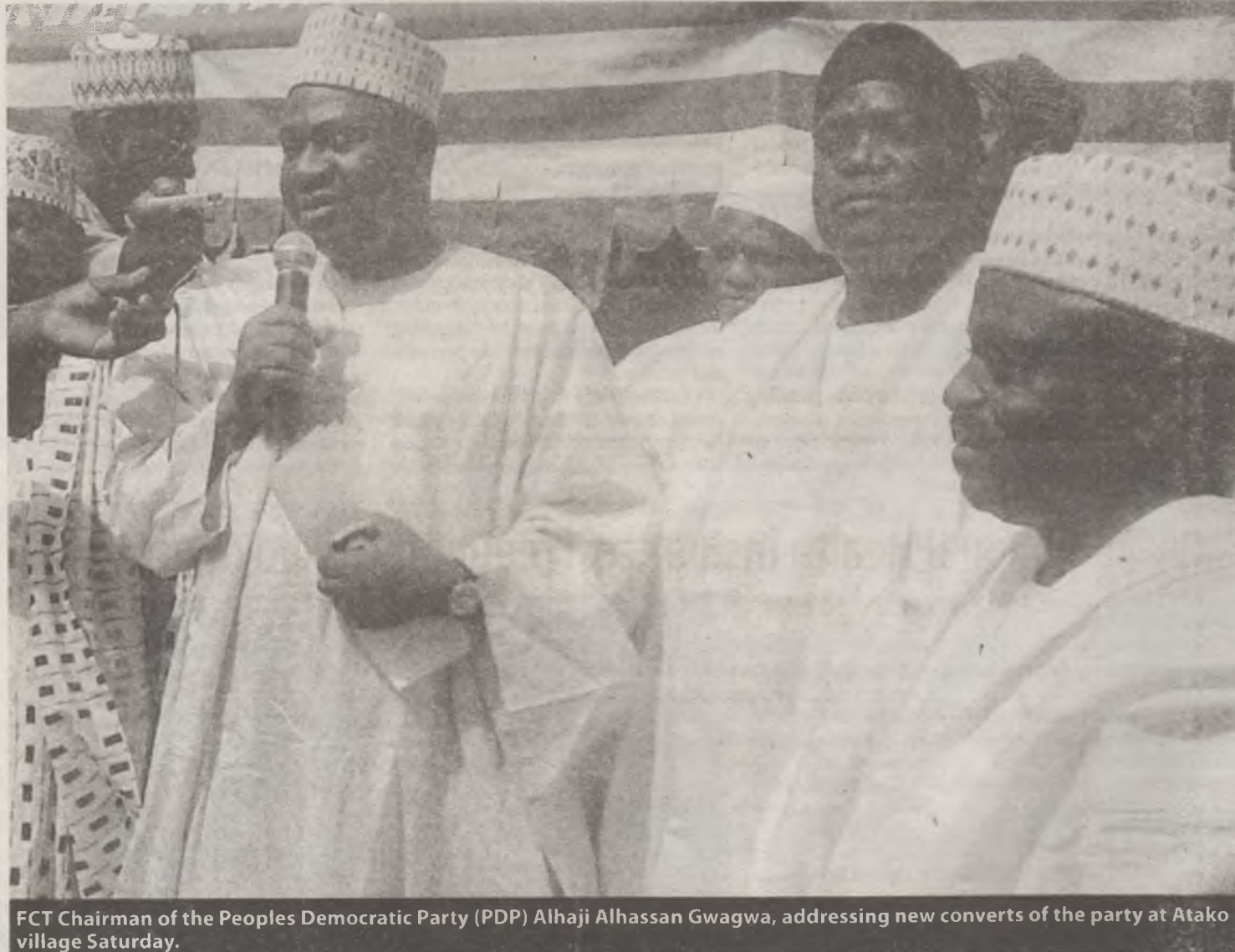
grammes have been packaged this year.

The Secretary however enjoined those interested in benefitting from the facilities to join any recognised cooperative society in the city.

Our reporter learnt that the mop-up exercise carried out by the joint taskforce is in line with the ministerial directive to clear the city of beggars, hawkers, praise singers and other miscreants.

The taskforce is made up of officials from the social development secretariat, police, the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) and VIO.

PIC: ABUBAKAR SADIQ ISAH



FCT Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Alhaji Alhassan Gwagwa, addressing new converts of the party at Atako village Saturday.

Security: Kuje chairman lauds police, civil defense

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

THE Chairman of Kuje Area Council, Mr Danladi Etsu Zhin, Saturday commended men and officers of the Nigerian Police Force, and Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps at Rubochi division for discharging their duties effectively to the public.

Zhin made the commendation while addressing police officers during a courtesy visit he paid to the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Rubochi station, Mr. Polycarp Adamaniya.

He noted that Rubochi town and its neighbouring villages have not witnessed criminal cases or civil unrest in the area, adding that the collaborative efforts of the police and civil defense corps in checking crime have no doubt continued to enhance the security of lives and property of residents of Rubochi and its environs.

The council boss urged the police officers not to relent on their efforts in discharging their duties and he directed the police to deal decisively with any person that causes trouble, irrespective of the political party the person belongs.

Responding, the Rubochi DPO, Mr. Polycarp Adamaniya, commended the council boss for taking his time to interact with policemen.

He noted that the council boss was the only chairman that has ever paid a visit to the station since he was posted to the station as divisional police officer few years ago.

3,000 ANPP members decamp to PDP at Kuje

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

ABOUT 3000 card carrying members of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) with their executives from Atako, Zokutu, Kulo and Toton-Gabiya communities in Kuje, Saturday decamped to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the council area.

Among those that decamped were the ANPP former councillor, ward chairman/secretary; ward youth leader, women leader and the public relations officer.

Addressing the new party members at Atako village, FCT PDP Chairman, Alhaji Alhassan

Gwagwa, commended them for joining the PDP, noting that the party has been providing democratic dividends to people from the grassroots.

He said those that decamped were not enticed by money but through the effort of the Chairman of Kuje, Mr Danladi Etsu Zhin, whom he added has provided meaningful social/infrastructural developments across the entire council, in line with the PDP's manifesto.

He urged the new members to be committed at all times as well as to offer advice where necessary, so that the party will

continue to wax stronger.

The chairman also warned the new members not to engage in anti-party activities.

Speaking on behalf of the new party members, Malam Aliyu Hussaini Atako, said they decided to pitch tents with the PDP because of the developmental works carried out by the council chairman, in providing schools, bore-holes, health centres, road construction and youth/woman empowerment.

"In fact we must confess that the council chairman has done a lot for our communities without any tribal or religious sentiments, despite the fact that we did not

vote him in 2007," he stated.

Malam Atako recalled that it was during Zhin's administration that village heads were given priority attention, in the history of Kuje" he said.

Reacting, Kuje Council Chairman, Danladi Etsu Zhin, promised to provide more dividends of democracy to the people of the council if re-elected for a second term.

Highlights of the occasion were the launching of a vest by Atako youths as well as the commissioning of the chairman's campaign office at Kulo, which was donated by the community's youth.

PIC: ABUBAKAR SADIQ ISAH

Residents lament power outages at Mararaba, Karu

By Abubakar Yakubu & Abbas Jimoh

RESIDENTS of Karu site in Abuja and from Mararaba to New Nyanya in Nasarawa State yesterday lamented the perennial power outages in their communities.

In places like Agwan Jumah, ECWA Church area, Battalion three and around Major Guest Inn up to some areas in New Nyanya, residents had not seen electricity since September 2009.

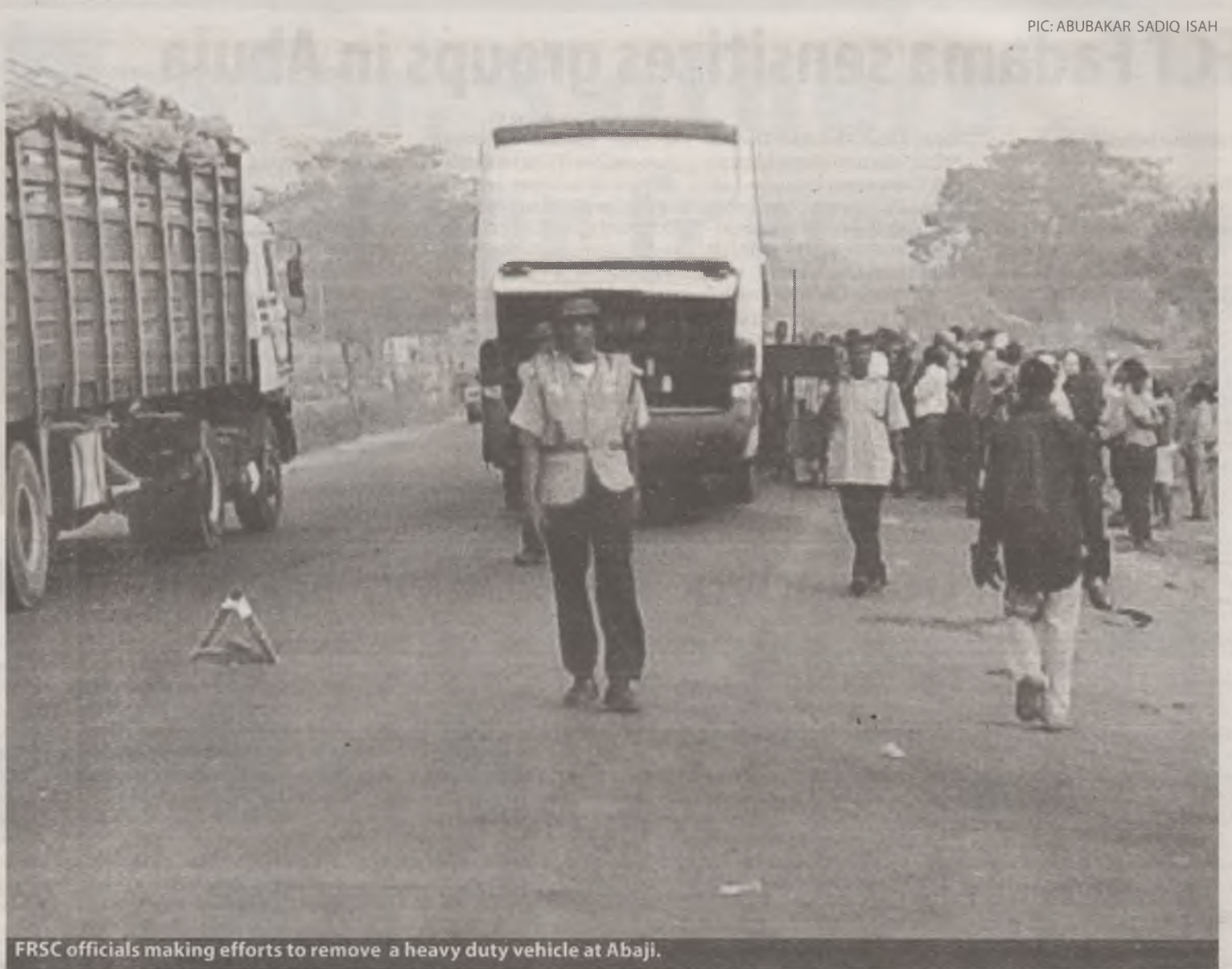
One of the residents said officials of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) told them that they were to get their electricity supply from Keffi axis, which has not been actualised.

He said the PHCN officials accused vandals of removing alternators in transformers that caused the long period of black-outs.

At Karu site, officials of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), State Security Services (SSS) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) recently criticised the shedding formula adopted by PHCN in the area to give electricity to residents of Federal Housing Phase 1.

"They normally give us two days on and one day off, which in most cases are not static as during the time we are to have electricity, they take it for long hours before bringing it," an NIA official said.

He said most apartments in the NIA Estate have no meter, while the agency does not relent in paying bulk amounts for electricity bills monthly.



FRSC officials making efforts to remove a heavy duty vehicle at Abaji.

Butchers may resume work today

By Abubakar Yakubu & Lami Sadiq

BUTCHERS at Nyanya yesterday said they may resume work today because of the resolution reached between their association leaders and officials of the FCT Administration over levies to be paid for slaughtering animals.

The butchers had decided to down tools when each of them was charged N850 instead of N220 previously charged for slaughtering cows, while those that butcher goats were asked to pay N250 rather than N60 charged.

Meat sellers stopped business in markets within the FCT, which made residents depend

more on fish or chicken meat.

A butcher, Mr Emmanuel, said they were briefed by union officials that an agreeable levy fee has been reached between their association and the FCT Administration.

He said most butchers are preparing to return to business today and hoped customers will understand their absence.

In another development, the Butchers Association of Abuja has asked the FCT Administration to provide standard abattoirs with basic facilities and amenities as provided in some major cities around the country if it insists on increasing livestock tariff.

Speaking on behalf of the asso-

ciation, Chukwuma-Chukwu Ume & Co. Law Firm explained that abattoirs in cities like Lagos, Kano, Ibadan, and Onitsha, which the FCT Administration cited as parameters for the increase in tariff, have basic facilities to enhance work.

"They have free transportation system, whereby meat from the abattoirs are carried to market outlets as well as free water for cleanliness of the abattoirs and provision of cold rooms.

He said various state governments have built modern abattoirs as well as share the revenue collected from the tariffs on a reasonable percentage with the butchers' association.

The association implored the FCT minister to shelve the payment of the new tariff in the interest of justice and equity.

"We hereby implore the FCT Administration to shelve the payment of the new tariff as commencement of it will adversely jeopardize the interest of our clients and will not be in the interest of their numerous customers," the lawyer stated.

Earlier, the office of the FCT minister had sent a letter to the abattoir managers approving the new tariff rates, which it said will take effect from 1st January 2010 and was in line with its vision of accelerating and improving its revenue base.

Salesman remanded over misappropriation of money

By Romoke W. Ahmad & Usman Bello

A salesman/ driver with Uche Investment Karu, was recently arraigned before an Abuja Area Court for allegedly misappropriating goods entrusted to him by the company.

The accused, Fredrick Salifu of Phase 1 Jikwoyi, committed the offence that was later discovered by the owner of the

company, Uche Alagboso during stock taking in the store.

Prosecutor Francis Udofia told the court that on December 8, 2009, one Uche Alagboso reported to the police that on February 9, 2009, during the company's weekly routine checking, it was discovered that the accused dishonestly misappropriated the sum of N57,980.

He said the accused also misappropriated 87 crates of different brands of beer valued at N69,600, which he could not account for when queried.

"During police investigation, the accused confessed to the crime that is contrary to Section 308 of the Penal Code Law," the prosecutor stated.

When the charge was read to the accused, he pleaded not guilty and asked for bail,

which was objected to by the prosecutor.

The prosecutor argued in court that the offence is not ordinarily bailable, while the accused does not have a verifiable address nor a reliable surety who can stand for him.

Judge Garba Salisu remanded the accused in prison custody and adjourned the case to January 29, 2010 for further hearing.

FCT Fadama sensitizes groups in Abuja

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

THE FCT Fadama in collaboration with the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) has embarked on sensitization exercises to Fadama User Groups (FUGs) in various communities across the six area councils.

The sensitization workshop, which was held at Yaba /Abaji on Thursday, saw participants that included village extension agents, subject matter specialist, projects facilitators and officials of Fadama Community Associations (FCAs) in attendance.

Fadama III Project Coordi-

nator, Alhaji Abdullahi Danladi Salisu, informed the participants that 'Component IV' under Fadama/ADP is meant to strengthen the capabilities of advisory service providers in order for them to deliver adequate and timely advisory extension services needed by Fadama users, through the provision of technical assistance.

According to him, the objectives of 'Component IV' is to encourage sponsored research activities in the development of technical proposals/recommendation along agricultural value chain, and train facilitators as well as extension agents

to foster Fadama Community Associations (FCAs) and groups demand for advisory services.

This he added will encourage extension agents to conduct farm demonstrations, noting that the sensitization of Component IV stakeholders is to fast track the implementation of Fadama III in the FCT, and in identifying extension activities demanded by Fadama user groups.

He explained further that under the implementation of adaptive technology development and transfer support, extension agents and facilitators receive and categorize needs of

Fadama users during the production/cropping cycle, while technical budget are placed in proper details for inputs, field recording keeping among others.

The project coordinator urged participants to monitor services being provided and access quality/quantity of works done.

He said certificate of satisfactory completion or unsatisfactory performance will be issued by the technical monitoring team, while payment will be made only on the presentation of certificate of satisfactory performance.



SEARCH for potable water at Nyanya recently

Ex-council boss advocates zoning of chairmanship post

By Abubakar sadiq Isah

THE former Chairman of Abaji Area Council, Alhaji Muhammad Angulu Loko, has advocated for the zoning of the council's chairmanship position between people of Abaji Rural Development Area (ARADA), and Abaji main town.

Alhaji Loko made the observation Thursday at a reconciliation meeting organized by a seven-man Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) team at Abaji.

The ex-council boss, who was elected under the platform of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) between 2004 to 2007, before decamping to the PDP in October last year, suggested that zoning of the chairmanship position will enhance lasting peace, progress and the council's development. He said Abaji Rural Development Areas (ARADA) normally win the chairmanship primary elections due to their high numbers of delegates since they con-

trol seven wards, adding that Abaji main town also controls the highest numbers of votes during election proper, despite the three wards it controls.

"As I and my supporters have already pitch tent with the PDP, we don't want to engage in anti-party activities and I am suggesting that Abaji chairmanship position should have a zoning system for lasting peace in the council," he suggested.


Also, one of the PDP chairman-

ship aspirant, who lost out to the incumbent council boss, Alhaji Mohammed Inuwa Ashafa, said there is the need for party leaders, stake-holders and executives to seat on a round table in order to deliberate on how to share key political positions, like that of supervisory councilors and special advisers among the PDP aspirants.


Speaking at the meeting, Alhaji Halidu Usman, a former Vice-Chairman of the ANPP FCT

chapter, who also decamped to PDP, advised that there is the need to zone the FCT PDP chairmanship to Abaji, so that every eligible person can contest, rather than leaving it within AMAC only.

Responding on behalf of the reconciliation team, Alhaji Hamza Liman, expressed happiness with observation raised by the ex-council bosses and members of the PDP and promised to present the issues before the FCT minister for deliberations.



NATIONAL HOSPITAL, ABUJA
(The Presidency)



SCHOOL OF RADIOTHERAPY RADIOGRAPHERS
INTERNAL/EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT

ADMISSION TO POST GRADUATE/DIPLOMA PROGRAMME 2010

Preamble: The National Hospital, Abuja in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Austria with approval of Federal Ministry of Health has established a Post-graduate Diploma programme specifically designed for **Diagnostic Radiographers in Radiotherapy Radiography (Technology)**. The School is affiliated to the University of Abuja under its Continuous Professional Development programme and has been approved by the Radiographers Registration Board of Nigeria.

Applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified candidates for admission into Postgraduate Diploma Programme leading to the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Radiotherapy.

A. Admission Requirements
The Postgraduate Diploma programme is designed for Diagnostic Radiographers in Radiotherapy Radiography Technology and it is open to:

- Candidates possessing B.Sc in Radiotherapy Technology, Diploma of the Society of Radiographers (DSR) or Certificate of Membership of Radiographers or approved equipment professional qualifications from a recognized institution.
- Candidates are also required to submit their transcripts along with their applications.
- Prospective students should be on paid employment as diagnostic radiographers from their parent institutions.


B. Duration of Course
The course which commences on 15th March, 2010 is a full-time non-residential programme, spread over 15 months; that is, 12 months practical on-hand training in National Hospital, Abuja and 3 months academics exercise in the University of Abuja respectively.

C. Course Contents/Facilities
The following programmes/facilities are contained in the core curriculum but not limited to Education and use of Linear Accelerator, Simulator, Treatment Planning Systems, Mould Room, Access to CT and MRI scanning and other Imaging and Computer facilities, Appropriate Dorsimetry and Patient Treatment aids, Radiation Protection Equipment and Services, Equipment for Intra-cavitary Brachitherapy Unit and superficial X-ray Unit Skin Tumours, etc.

D. Method of Application
Application forms are obtained on payment of a non-refundable fee of **Ten Thousand Naira (N10,000)** only in Bank draft made payable to National Hospital, Abuja and drawn on USA overhead account number **0132004000024**

E. Completed Application Forms with relevant enclosure should be returned to:

The Chief Medical Director/CEO
National Hospital, Abuja
P.M.B. 425
Garki - Abuja



THE PRESIDENCY

PANEL OF INVESTIGATION INTO THE JOS CRISIS OF NOVEMBER, 2008
Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation
Plot 22, Merit House, J. T. Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama - Abuja

RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

This is to inform the General Public that the Presidential Panel of Investigation into Jos Crisis of November 2008, will resume Public Sitting at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, on Monday, January 11, 2010.

On resumption, the Panel is expected to receive oral submissions from various interest groups, including but not limited to the following categories of respondents;

- Plateau State Government
- Public Institutions
- Jos North Communities
- Humanitarian Organizations
- Political Parties
- Socio-Cultural Organizations
- Private Entrepreneurs
- Religious Organizations
- Individuals

Members of the Public who wish to attend the Public Hearings are hereby reminded to report to the Secretariat at NIPSS at least one hour before commencement of proceedings, each day. Similarly, accredited respondents and journalists are hereby reminded to come along with their identification cards.

COMMENCEMENT TIME : 10.00 a.m. daily
VENUE: Unity Hall, NIPSS, Kuru

**Secretary
Announcer**

Inside Politics

Will Senator Turaki return to ANPP?

THE immediate past governor of Jigawa State, Senator Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, had decamped to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the run up to the 2007 general elections, but speculations that the former governor is on his way back to the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) has been on the increase lately. Our correspondent analyses the situation in Jigawa State.

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

RUMOURS over alleged plan by the immediate past Governor of Jigawa State, Senator Ibrahim Saminu Turaki to return to his former party, the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) is growing in Jigawa State.

Senator Turaki was originally a card-carrying member of the ANPP. He was elected as governor of Jigawa State in 1999 to 2007 on the platform of ANPP before he abandoned the party for the PDP toward the end of his second tenure.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that the former governor, now Senator, was influenced by former President Olusegun Obasanjo to quit ANPP for PDP. Suggestions in some quarters held that Turaki had agreed to join the PDP and supported the candidature of Sule Lamido in the hope that his administration would not be probed.

But our correspondent learnt that in 2007, shortly after he left office, the former governor made attempts to return to ANPP because political relationship between him and Governor Lamido had broken down. Turaki was said to have summoned one of his political associates, who is also a strong pillar in the present administration to Burkina Faso and directed him to inform all his (Turaki) political allies to prepare a journey back to ANPP.

But instead of conveying the message, the aide in question was said to have leaked the message to Governor Sule Lamido, who in turn took the matter to former President Obasanjo. Though the former President was said to have reconciled them, the relationship between two men kept wobbling due to certain irreconcilable differences, Daily Trust learnt.

Indeed, recent political activities do not seem to suggest that the two men will work as a team in 2011. Senator Turaki had recently held a meeting with his political associates cutting across members of ANPP and PDP in his home town Kazaure. Political issues related to his return to ANPP were allegedly discussed during the meeting, according an insider.

The source said "even though he did not categorically tell us his ambition, from all indications the former governor was preparing ground for a journey back to ANPP."

Turaki, Daily Trust also gathered, had made some attempts through some members of the national executive of the ANPP to rejoin the party. But he has to do so at the grassroots, which is why the former governor is said to be warming himself into the hearts of local ANPP politicians to gain acceptance when he eventually throws in the hat.

Recently, he was alleged to have made some donations to the party at the local government level.

Also, Turaki's refusal to attend PDP or state government functions since he left office has heightened speculation in many quarters that he is certainly uncomfortable with the party and may be headed back to his former party.

Commenting on the issue, Alhaji Nasiru Garba Dantiye, an ANPP stalwart in Jigawa, alleged that Turaki's defection to PDP in the run up to the 2007 elections was meant to cover up the sins he committed as governor.

"Senator Ibrahim Saminu Turaki decamped to PDP just to cover up his political blunders," Dantiye said. He also told Daily Trust that even though he had been told about Turaki's plan to return to ANPP, the former governor has not confronted ANPP's stakeholders with the issue yet.

Asked whether the former governor will be accepted back into the party, Dantiye said "if he follows the right channel in his journey back to ANPP, we will accept him warmly because in ANPP we believe in true democracy."

He however assured that any attempt by the former gov-



SENATOR Ibrahim Saminu Turaki

ernor to return to the party through the back door will be rejected by stakeholders of the party.

Speaking to the Daily Trust over the matter, the acting state chairman of the ANPP, Alhaji Abdullahi Jibo Kirikasamma, said the purported plan of former governor to return to ANPP has not come to their table yet.

Kirikasamma, who is also the party's state secretary, however, said "if Senator Turaki makes up his mind to return to ANPP, the party will welcome him."

"Democracy is always flexible. Situations can change at any given time and a political party always welcomes anything progress. Turaki's coming back will be a plus to the party provided that he will come back through the right channel," the party's scribe said.

When contacted via telephone for comment, the former governor remained noncommittal on the issue of his purported plans to return to the ANPP. He said it is too early to start commenting on the issue.

"We are approaching 2010 local government election; hence, our political activities only focus on the local government poll. When the time comes for comment, I will do so. But for now, we should concentrate on the local government election. I learnt that, the SIEC has fixed February 2010 for the election. I am waiting for the time to come," said Turaki.

"I don't need to tell the people of Jigawa State what they should do because they have been following political activities and they are in the best position to judge," he declared.

Gov Doma gets challenger ahead 2011

From Hir Joseph, Lafia

THE leading opposition member of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly (NSHA), Innocent Lagi has thrown a challenge to Governor Aliyu Akwe Doma for the governorship seat in 2011, saying he will wrestle power from the older politician whom he accused of running the state like a personal estate.

Labour Party's Innocent Lagi who spoke to newsmen about his intention at the weekend did so to coincide with Governor Doma's presentation of the 2010 budget. The only open challenge against Doma so far came at a time when various segments of the population including traditional rulers have given a blanket endorsement to the governor to run for a second term.

Lagi who represents Wamba Constituency said he has concluded consul-

tations towards the race and is hopeful of mass support from the people because they have not benefited from the government which is being run like a family business.

According to him February 2010 has been slated for his formal declaration for the race that is expected to change 2011 politics in the state.

The lawmaker promised that he will run an all inclusive government to reflect all strata and segments of the society, noting particularly that 'neglected' youths will have a good representation in his government.

"My aspiration is to lead a people oriented government where the civil service will be empowered to bring about result and youths given a chance", he said, adding that "there will be no going back on this because I am the people's choice".

'Yobe DPP chairmen not for PDP'

By Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

YOBE State chapter of Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) yesterday refuted a media report credited to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Alhaji Jibrin Maigari that its gubernatorial candidate in 2007, Alhaji Hassan Jawi, alongside 17 local government party chairmen have decamped to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). DPP's National Vice Chairman (North East) Alhaji Abdullahi Bida said the report was a figment of the imagination of the minister,

'a desperate politician who is looking for relevance in the political equation of Yobe State'.

ALHAJI Bida said that DPP leadership is aware that the former governorship candidate had announced his defection to the PDP but none of the 17 local government chairmen of the party went with him.

HE also challenged the minister to tell the world the names of the local chairmen that decamped to the PDP if he was not just misinforming the public in order to create political tension.

Plateau DPP vows to continue case after death of candidate

By Andrew Agbese, Jos

THE Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) in Plateau State has vowed to continue with its House of Assembly case for Langtang South Local Government at the Appeal Court even after the death of its candidate, Kargwak Fazing last week.

Fazing who died last week was the DPP candidate for Langtang South state constituency and had challenged the election of Joyce Ramnap of the PDP as the duly elected member of the state House of Assembly on account of the non inclusion of the name and logo of his party in the 2007 election.

Fazing had secured judgment in his favour in 2007, when the tribunal annulled the election returning Ramnap and ordered fresh polls. But Ramnap challenged the

ruling and the case has been at the Appeal Court until Fazing's death last week.

National chairman of the DPP, Gen J T Useni who expressed dismay with the slow pace of the case said the party will continue to pursue it until justice is done to it by giving it equal opportunity to compete in the election.

Useni said he failed to understand why an appeal would drag for so long in the court, adding that the DPP will continue to insist on the path of democracy and justice. He appealed to the court to hasten the hearing.

Useni said it was painful that Fazing died at the time when the party needed him most but the party will not let him down as it would continue with the case till the cause of justice is served.

Inside Politics

2009: Year of supremacy tussle in N/Assembly

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

NATIONAL Assembly began the year 2009 on a crisis note and ended it in like manner as the two chambers engaged in the fight for supremacy for most part of the year. While the Constitution recognizes the President of the Senate as the presiding officer in a joint sitting of the legislature with the Speaker of the House of Representatives as deputy, the document is silent on the overall hierarchy of members of the two chambers. So while senators prefer to be regarded as senior partners, owing to the size of their constituency and the legislative business, members of the House insist that the Constitution places all lawmakers at par irrespective of other conventional respects accorded senators. And the crisis lingers on.

The year was welcomed with the faceoff that has now come to define the relationship between the two chambers. On January 15, 2009, a supremacy feud ensued between senators and members of the House of Representatives in the defunct National Assembly Joint Committee on Constitution Review (JCCR). The event was a two-day retreat organized in Minna, Niger State, for the 88 members of the JCCR to fashion out modalities of carrying out the constitution review exercise. Shortly before the commencement of the opening session, a discord ensued between representatives and senators over issues that many observers described as trivial, especially in the case of such an assignment that should ordinarily draw out some level of patriotism.

As the venue got set for the event, members of the House of Representatives began to protest the designation addressed to the Deputy Speaker on the events' program. To most people, such an issue would be trivial as to cause disaffection amongst responsible lawmakers, but representatives insisted that the Deputy Speaker, Alhaji Usman Bayero Nafada is a co-chairman of the JCCR and not a vice chairman as he was referred to on the program of event. They later dumped the Minna retreat on account of this dispute.

After the much tantrums over what some described as 'childishness' on the part of the lawmakers, the Constitution review exercise suffered a major setback leading to the collapse of the JCCR. Each of the arms of the National Assembly resolved to conduct the exercise independently. Pursuant to that resolution, each chamber has now completed the crucial stages of collating the views of stakeholders on the various issues slated for amendments in the Constitution and is at the stage of drafting its report.

Shortly after the Constitution review impasse between the two chambers, the Senate engaged in



SENATE President David Mark

another duel with former Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Malam Nasir Ahmed El-Rufai. The former minister had running battles with the Senate during his time in office. And so, his probe by the Senator Sodangli led panel did not surprise many observers. After several days of investigation, Senate adopted the controversial report of its panel which indicted el-Rufai. The panel found Malam el-Rufai guilty of fraud, abuse of power and abuse of court order during his time as minister. The Senate directed the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to investigate the former minister "For economic crimes and abuse of office in revoking and re-allocating lands to his wives and family members even when the lands were on sewer line."

The EFCC has already declared Malam El-Rufai wanted over N32 billion proceed from sale of government houses in Abuja which he was alleged not to have account for. In the same vein, Senate has ordered its Committee on FCT to conduct thorough investigation in order to ascertain the total amount collected by El-Rufai from agencies under him which he is yet to account for. The former minister in turn sued the Senate, accusing it of preparing a premeditated report aimed at hanging him.

But before the EFCC could catch up with el-Rufai, the commission had descended on some members of the National Assembly over alleged embezzlement of public funds. Senator Nicholas Yahaya John Ugbane (PDP Kogi East) and Rep. Ndudi Elumelu

were charged to court by the EFCC over alleged N53 billion fraud at the Rural Electrification Agency. The arrest and arraignment of the lawmakers portrayed the National Assembly as a hub for corrupt politicians. In fact several other senators and some members of the House are facing charges of corruption brought up by anti-graft agencies in the country. Senator Ugbane and Elumelu spent days in detention before being granted bails.

Any little achievement that would have been recorded by the National Assembly in 2009 was eroded by the supremacy tussle and bad blood running between lawmakers in the two chambers. No bill initiated in either of the chambers was concurred by the other, meaning no single piece of legislation scaled due legislative process to become a law in 2009. A bill must be passed by both houses to become and act, but since the Red and the Green chambers have a poor collaboration, bills emanating from either sides are dead on arrival on the other side.

As the show of shame went on, the reverence which the National Assembly enjoys both at home and abroad gradually faded away. There were calls from within the National Assembly and other concerned citizens outside for the country to revert to a unicameral legislative system in order to check the unnecessary rift that has characterized the bi-cameral system. The lack of respect for the legislature was depicted when Senate President David Mark, accompanied by members of the Senate Committee on Defence and Army, were turned back from the Republic Sudan. Senator Mark and his team were on their



HOUSE Speaker Dimeji Bankole

way to visit Nigerian peace keeping troops at the Darfur Region of Sudan. But Sudanese authorities in a show of lack of respect denied landing permit to the plane conveying the Senate officials.

While some senators were thrown out of their seats, some commenced strategy for retaining their positions in 2011. Senator Femi Kila of the PDP was sacked by the Appeal Court and replaced by Senator Olabode Ola of the Action Congress as representative of Ekiti Central. The Appeal Court also ordered rerun election in Osun East Senatorial district after quashing the election of Senator Iyiola Omisore. Senator Ayo Arise representing Ekiti North also had to retest his popularity in a rerun election ordered by the court after his first election was nullified. He won the election and took a fresh oath of office in the Senate.

Some senators have had cause to dump the parties that sponsored their election to the Senate. Senator Satty Davies Gogwim (Plateau Central) originally of the AC decamped to the PDP. It is believed that his move is to strategize for a possible return to the Senate in 2011. Senator Patrick Osakwe also rejoined the PDP which sponsored him to the Senate in 1999 and 2003. He joined the Accord Party in 2007 after losing out in the PDP primaries for Delta North.

The major landmark event in the National Assembly in 2009 is the 'shameful' impasse that occurred between the two chambers over the venue for presentation of the 2010 budget estimates by President Umaru Yar'adua. The event has traditionally been held in the more spacious Green

Chamber of the House of Representatives since 1999. But Senators, claiming to be superior to members of the House, insisted that for the first time, the occasion be shifted to the Senate chamber. On the other side, members of the House insisted on adherence to tradition while senators said the Senate President who will preside had the prerogative to decide the venue. The row lingered and in the end President Umaru Musa Yar'adua could not present the budget estimates to a joint session as usual.

Consequently, for the first time in the ten years history of democracy in the country, Mr. President delegated his aide to present the budget. And in the morning of March 24, 2009 few hours after President Yar'adua was flown out of the country for medical attention in Saudi Arabia, his Special Adviser on National Assembly Matters, Senator Mohammed Abba Aji laid the budget estimates before each chamber of the National Assembly.

Since the essence of the legislature is to initiate laws for the good governance of the society, the National Assembly has done very little to deserve any commendation, many Nigerians have said. Now in its third session, the assembly could be said to have performed dismally as no single legislation that deliberately targets at improving the lives of the common man was passed. For most of the time the priority has been personal aggrandizement and superiority claims amongst lawmakers. According to an observer "that is why they are always going into close door sessions; it is to take care of their personal interests rather than common good."

SPORT

Eagles are
no longer
invincible
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Agali arrested in Amsterdam

By Ismaila Lere, with Agency reports

FORMER Super Eagles striker, Victor Agali, has been arrested at Schiphol airport near Amsterdam for carrying two fake passports, Dutch military police said yesterday.

Agali was in transit at Schiphol on a voyage from Lagos to Athens.

"At passport control, on December 27, he (Agali) was found to be in possession of a fake passport," said gendarmerie spokesman Robert van Kapel.

Agali was in transit at Schiphol on a voyage from Lagos to Athens

Upon further investigation, the 31-year-old ex-international, who plays for Greek club Levadiakos, turned out to have two sets of fake travel documents, said Van Kapel.

"In the one, the page with his personal particulars has been modified, in the other it was the visa," he said.

A judge will decide on Monday whether to extend Agali's provisional detention for further investigation.

Agali has played twelve times for the Super Eagles scoring five goals. He also played for Nigeria



FORMER international Victor Agali was arrested at Schiphol airport in Amsterdam yesterday for carrying two fake passports.

in the 2000 Sydney Olympics but was omitted from the 2002 FIFA World Cup squad

Agali has played for French

teams like Marseille (1996-97), Toulon (1997-98) and Nice (2004-2005), as well as Germany's Schalke 04 (2001-2004) and

Hansa Rostock (1998-2001, 2007-2008).

On Christmas Day, a 23-year-old Nigerian was arrested in the

United States for the botched bombing of a Northwest Airlines plane bound for Detroit from Schiphol.

Amodu drops Eneramo

By Orkula Shaagee

AS announced on Sunday, Coach Shaibu Amodu yesterday retained strikers Obafemi Martins and Chinedu Obasi and instead dropped Esperance of Tunisia attacker, Michael Eneramo from the Angola 2010 squad.

This followed the submission of Nigeria's final of 23-man players for the 27th Orange African Cup of Nations which begins on Sunday.

The Esperance Sportive de Tunis forward was axed after three days of training at the team's Riverside Hotel and Spa in Durban, South Africa.

Eneramo scored for Nigeria

against Republic of Ireland in an international friendly in London in May, 2009 and also Nigeria's second goal against Tunisia in a crucial 2010 World Cup qualifier in Abuja in September. But he has not been able to blend easily with the train.

Amodu said on Sunday from the team's Durban camp that either Martins or Obasi will be dropped from the final list of 23 of players that will represent the country at the biennial soccer event.

Both players are suffering from injuries and there were fears that the former Orlando Pirates of South Africa and BCC Lions of Gboko sweat merchant would look elsewhere for replacements.

But Amodu, who is currently

supervising the team's training camp in South Africa, informed that he has watched the fitness level of the two players in camp and was impressed with it.

The final list

Goalkeepers: Vincent Enyeama, Bamidele Aiyenugba, Austin Ejide

Defenders: Taye Taiwo, Joseph Yobo, Elderson Echiejile, Danny Shittu, Obinna Nwanneri, Onyekachi Apam, Chidi Odiah, Yusuf Mohammed.

Midfielders: Dickson Etuhu, Sani Kaita, Oluwaseyi Olofinjana, Mikel Obi, Nwankwo Kanu, Yusuf Ayila, Kalu Uche.

Strikers: Osaze Odemwingie, Obafemi Martins, Chinedu Obasi, Yakubu Ayegbeni, Obinna Nsofor



ENERAMO

2010 AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS

Eagles are no longer invincible

My team is taking shape
- Amodu

SUPER Eagles coach Shuaibu Amodu has said that his team is taking shape ahead of the Nations Cup after the Super Eagles beat Thanda Zulu Royals 1-0 in a friendly match on Sunday evening in Durban, South Africa.

The lone goal was scored from the penalty spot by Hoffenheim's Chinedu Obasi, who was introduced in the second half. Obasi, who was called into the team as a stop gap for Wolfsburg's shin injury victim Obafemi Martins, has since been dropped due to Martins' return to the side.

Amodu now has a full complement of his invited players in camp and is already working towards perfecting his tactics for the Nations Cup which begins on January 10 in Angola.

"It was just a trial match but I'm very impressed by the performance of the team. The team is gradually getting into shape for the Nations Cup," Amodu told Complete Sports. He gave the entire team a taste of the action during the match so as to make sure of their competition fitness.

Nigeria have been drawn in Group C, where they will face defending champions Egypt, Mozambique and Benin.

Etuhu delighted to be back

NIGERIA midfielder Dickson Etuhu has expressed his delight at returning to the Nigeria squad which will play in the African Nations Cup this month. The Fulham midfielder got a recall from coach Shuaibu Amodu recently after having been frozen out of the team since the departure of former German handler Berti Vogts. "I am very happy to be here with the Super Eagles for the 2010 African Cup of Nations," Etuhu told Complete Sports on his arrival in Durban, where the team is camping ahead of the tournament.

"I am looking forward to the Nations Cup with excitement. I cannot wait for it to start because I believe we are going to do well, to show Nigerians how good we are and how much better we can be.

"When I arrived at the team's camp, I was well received. Everybody welcomed me. That alone lifted my spirit more, and, honestly speaking, I was very happy."

Etuhu will have a lot of competition from Chelsea's John Obi Mikel and Dynamo's Yusuf Ayila for a starting role in the Super Eagles' midfield.

"I am looking forward to getting a starting team shirt. I am working really hard for that, to fight for my place in the team," he said. Etuhu last played for Nigeria at the Nations Cup in Ghana in 2008.

NIGERIA go to Angola knowing they have a great deal to do if they are to prove to the world that they are not a spent force in African football. After enjoying dominance in the 90s, when the Super Eagles qualified for their first World Cup and won a second AFCON trophy in Tunisia, the Nigerians have since suffered a decline in fortunes, missing out on Germany 2006.

Once one of Africa's most feared sides, coaching, managerial and administrative problems have since conspired to render them incompetent at times.

Nigeria's technical deficiencies were exposed during the last AFCON, where they lost to Ivory Coast in the first game, played out a goalless draw with Mali and managed a hard fought 2-0 win over Benin before succumbing to an inspired ten-man Ghana, 2-1, in the quarter-finals.

A once-great team quickly earned itself the derisive appellation 'Super Chickens' among many African football fans after their worst Nations Cup performance since crashing out in the first round in 1982.

Nigeria have since tried to rebuild after the Berti Vogts era by re-engaging the services of local coach Shuaibu Amodu in the German's stead. Winning

“Nigeria's technical deficiencies were exposed during the last AFCON”

nine matches and drawing three during qualification was not enough to calm the nerves of a country hungry for the all-conquering performances of years past, and many have criticised Amodu's tactics.

Nigeria's preparations for Angola have been overshadowed by calls for a new foreign coach to be hired. The Nigeria Football Federation has ordered Amodu to earn at least a semi-final finish if he wants to keep his job for the World Cup in South Africa.

The Super Eagles will play in Group C based in Benguela against back-to-back champions Egypt, Mozambique and Benin. They will face three tricky ties with opponents who play diverse kinds of football.

In Egypt they will encoun-



HALF-FIT Yakubu Aiyegbeni of Everton is looking to hit top form during the championship despite recent injury worries.

ter the organisational ability of North African teams but with Mozambique they will come up against a team that plays with the kind of flair football synonymous with South America. In Benin, Nigeria will come up against another West African side that are always spoiling for a fight and trying to overcome their larger neighbours' overbearing dominance.

The Nigerians will have to find their rhythm and hope that everything works together administratively for them to reach their goals in Angola.

Road To Qualification

Nigeria qualified from Group B of the qualification round ahead of Tunisia and finals group opponents Mozambique. Three wins and three draws made them look ordinary, and they will have a great deal to prove to critics when the tournament kicks off, as they look to show that they are able to hold their own on a continent where there are no longer football minnows.

The Coach

Shuaibu Amodu comes to Angola with an AFCON bronze medal previously won with the Super Eagles at Mali 2002. In his third spell as Nigeria coach, Amodu has become a kind of saviour for the national team. It was he whom the administrators turned to when the Super Eagles faced elimination from qualifying for Japan/South Korea 2002 after the sacking of Dutchman

Johannes Bonfrere.

His successful tinkering of the team ensured that Nigeria made the Asian World Cup party but he was sacked after the team's bronze-medal finish at AFCON 2002. Were he to win the tournament this time around, he would surely make it difficult for his countrymen to end his dream of leading the side to the World Cup in South Africa.

Star Player

Osaze Odemwingie

He has been a consistent, hardworking player in the national team since playing his first tournament in Tunisia six years ago. The Lokomotiv Moscow striker was voted his country's footballer of the year recently for his dedication to the national team and the vigour which he brings to his performances. All things being equal, Odemwingie should emerge as one of the stars of the Nations Cup.

Other big names in the team include Chelsea's John Mikel Obi who has often been accused by Nigerians of having a poor attitude to national team call-ups. He will have a lot to prove during the three weeks of the championship.

Strikers Yakubu Aiyegbeni of Everton and Wolfsburg's Obafemi Martins will also look to hit top form during the championships. They both scored goals in the last match as Nigeria nicked a World Cup place at the

Kasarani Stadium in Kenya. Having both had recent injury worries, Nigerians will expect them

“Eagles do not look like the invincible team that they were in times past”

to deliver the goals again when it matters most.

Objective

Nigeria know exactly what they want out of the tournament, and although a semi-final berth would probably be enough to keep the coach on for the World Cup approach, a title is the main objective in the minds of fans and players.

Prediction

The Super Eagles do not look like the invincible team that they were in times past and will struggle against more attack-minded teams. The team already has an ultimatum set for it: make the semi-final or face a shake up. It does not look like a team capable of winning the tournament but it might yet have some fight in it.

Envoh vows to pick shirt in home-based Eagles

By David Ngobua

AS home based Eagles begin camping in Abuja, a member of the 2009 silver winning Golden Eaglets, Terry Envoh has vowed to tie down a permanent shirt in the team as he aims to give the 'rare opportunity' his best shot.

Speaking to Trustsports on his way to the Home based Eagles camp in Abuja, the Mighty Jets of Jos dazzling winger said even as he is going to compete for one of the positions with much older and more experienced players, he is confident that he would pick one of the shirts.

He said having played in the

The Mighty Jets of Jos player said he has since put behind him the disappointment of the World U-17 Cup finals

just concluded FIFA U-17 World Cup where he gave a good account of himself, he has overcome all traces of fear and would stay focused to play himself into the main stream of the team.

"I am going to Abuja to fight for a permanent shirt in the team. I know I am going to meet bigger and more experienced players but I am not afraid because already I have played the game at the world level so I have overcome stage fright.

"It is not going to be easy but with God all things are possible. I want to prove that at this level, most of us are ripe to play with the

big boys. Although we are much younger, sports, especially football is for those who are physically and mentally fit", he said.

Envoh who played a key role in the Golden Eaglets' impressive run at the 2009 FIFA U-17 championship said he is going to give his best because such an opportunity is hard to get and now that it has come his way, he would not take chances.

"It is important for me and my colleagues who were part of the just concluded FIFA U-17 championship to give our best. Chukwudi, Olarewanju and I see this as a golden opportunity which must be utilized to the fullest. This is a stepping stone and we are not going to disappoint those who considered us good enough to fight for places in this team".

The Mighty Jets of Jos player said he has since put behind him the disappointment of the World U-17 Cup finals in Abuja and is ready to face the challenges ahead.

"There is no need talking or thinking so much about the finals. It is now history and so instead of crying over spilled milk, we have all agreed to put that behind us. What is ahead of us is more important as there are more opportunities which are waiting to serve as compensation for that painful loss".

Envoh hinted that he has his eyes on one of the European clubs but he is not in a hurry to make any move because experience has shown that those who leap without looking very well usually end up in a ditch.

"No doubt I want to play abroad but I have to look well before I leap. When the time comes, it will not be difficult. For now, I want to concentrate on this national assignment before me" he stated.



TERRY Envoh, right, in action during the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Nigeria last November.

Zaria poly to host NIPOGA

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

THE 16th edition of the Nigeria Polytechnic Games Association (NIPOGA) will be hosted by the Nuhu Bamali Polytechnic, Zaria from the 17th to 28 March, this year, rector of the institution, Malam Suleiman Aliyu has said.

The last edition of the games which started in 1976 at the polytechnic of Ibadan was hosted by the Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti in 2008. This year's edition is tagged 'Zaria 2010'.

He said with the granting of hosting right of the games to the polytechnic, the institution will be the fourth state polytechnic in the country to host it. According to him, a total of 50 polytechnics have indicated in interest in participation in the games.

"In the forthcoming games, the sporting events to be competed for include; Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, chess, Handball, Hockey, Scrabble soccer, squash, table tennis, taekwondo and volleyball for both male and female events.

The rector, who is also the president of NIPOGA council, said arrangement is on the top gear to make the events a hitch free one and solicited for the support and cooperation of all the stakeholders in the sporting arena of the country.

Stallion steals show in B'ball Jamz

HISTORY was made on Saturday when the basketball court in the newly renovated Campos Square mini stadium hosted the first edition of Eko-Akete 6-A-Side Basketball Jamz.

The court came alive with top players from the league and some young players battle for the top prize of N100,000.

At the end of the one-day tournament, it was Stallion Blazers that won the top prize after beating Favored Men by 12-11 points in the keenly contested match. Homes United beat Assurances Babes 33-20 points for the third position and the sum of N50,000.

Dignitaries who graced the event were Lagos State Commissioner for Sports, Prince Ademola Adeniji Adele, Lagos State Sports Council's board member, Tayo Popoola, Peter Nelson, the Coordinator for the South West Zone of the National Sports Commission, NSC as well as other personalities in Nigerian sports.

Amateur League season begins Jan 8

THE Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) said yesterday that matches in the season 2009/2010 National Amateur League Division One competition will begin on Jan. 8, 2010.

Mr Emmanuel Adesanya, Head of the NFF's National Amateur League Unit, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja that the competition's week one matches would be played from Jan. 8 to Jan. 11.

"All the fixtures are ready in the competition's four groups of A, B, C and D, and they are for the matches of week one till the end of the season," he said.

Matches had been delayed in the competition since the league secretariat held the draws on Nov. 24, 2009 in Abuja.

This was as a result of the failure of some of the participat-

ing clubs to pick venues for their home matches while a number of them failed to agree with rival

Matches had been delayed in the competition since the league secretariat held the draws on Nov. 24, 2009

clubs on the usage of such facilities.

In Group A which has clubs like Eko United, Union Bank FC, Ila LG FC and FC Ebedie, two

week one matches will hold on Jan. 8, with two others on Jan. 9 and the last one on Jan. 11.

Three of the week one matches in Group B which has such clubs as Enyimba Feeders FC, Bayelsa Feeders FC and Akwa Starlets FC will be played on Jan. 9, with the two others on Jan. 10.

In Group C where former African champions BCC Lions are to slug it out with FRSC FC, VON FC, Keffi United and Sokoto United, two week one matches are for Jan. 9 while the rest two are for Jan. 10.

Only one match will be played on Jan. 9 in Group D which has Yobe Stars, Makwada FC and Jimeta United while two matches each would be played on Jan. 10 and Jan. 11.

Adesanya said the league secretariat was able to find solution

to the match venues' problem after it decided on waiting for the defaulting clubs on the issue.

"We just had to take that option because we felt there was no better way to handle that matter than applying the give-and-take solution," he said.

The NFF official said the move thus paved way for the compilation of fixtures till the end of the competition on June 12, 2010.

"Now we have all the fixtures ready, till week 18 when the competition is to end on May 16 in Group A, week 18 on May 23 in Group C and week 22 on June 12 in Groups B and D," he said.

While Groups B and D of the 2009/2010 National Amateur League Division One has 11 clubs each, Groups A and C have 10 and nine respectively.

SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP!

EUROPEAN soccer finds itself on ice at the moment, both literally – with a solid smattering of snow covering much of the continent – and also in the transfer market.

With the World Cup just a few months away, the early days of the January transfer window have yielded little in the way of meaningful deals, or even some healthy speculation and gossip. However, just as the weather is expected to heat up over the next couple of weeks, so too should the market, depending on a cou-

chester City.

With all its debts having been wiped out, Chelsea is ready to once more splash owner Roman Abramovich's cash, while City's new boss Roberto Mancini has tens of millions of Arabian oil wealth ready to splurge. If those two clubs do their spending early, then that money will filter down and enable some middle- to lower-tier teams to flex some financial muscle of their own.

THE GLORY CHASERS

The English Premier League is enjoying an interesting year, with the race for the fourth Champions League spot especially competitive. Chelsea, Manchester United and Arsenal seem to have the top three positions locked up, but City, Aston Villa and Tottenham Hotspur all have their sights set on fourth place.

They, along with teams like Fulham and Birmingham City (whose ambition will be to get into the Europa League), and clubs like Everton and Bolton Wanderers who need to pull clear of the lower reaches of the table, will be keen to spend their way to better times.

THE BARGAIN BIN

Soccer's financial crisis is, for the most part, ironing itself out at last. But the goalposts have shifted somewhat.

The need for greater fiscal prudence is a big deal in Spain right now, making for a relatively depressed transfer market. As a result, some genuine bargains are to be had and English, Italian and even German clubs could be poised to take advantage.

It is not so much about the big-name superstars but good, strong performers like Zaragoza's Brazilian striker Ewerthon, who would be a steal for just a



EXPECT Chelsea's Carlo Ancelotti, left, and Manchester City's Roberto Mancini to be the biggest spenders in January transfers.

few million dollars.

THE HOT PROSPECTS

The weeks following this summer's World Cup will be full of transfer activity, as always. The biggest stage in soccer is a wonderful way for the game's top prospects to boost their profile – and earning potential.

Having said that, a handful of rising stars could end up in new pastures before the end of this month.

Argentinean youngster

Sergio Aguero is once again on Chelsea's radar, and with Atletico Madrid in urgent need of money, it won't be long before he moves on. Aguero has issued the standard "I'm happy where I am" statement, but don't be fooled. He'll be on his way soon.

Bosnian powerhouse Edin Dzeko has been a sensation for Wolfsburg and won't get to showcase himself at the World Cup. With his stature at an all-time high and the club out of

Bundesliga contention, Wolfsburg could elect to cash in now. Chelsea and Man United would be interested, but don't rule out Barcelona and City.

Benfica winger Angel Di Maria has played only six times for Argentina, but he is likely to be a hot target this January. Manchester United has already had one bid turned down and won't be giving up on trying to acquire the speedy 21-year-old.

The English Premier League is enjoying an interesting year

ple of factors that are needed to open the checkbooks.

Here is what to expect over the next month as Europe's top teams get one final chance to bolster their squads before the end of the campaign.

THE BIG SPENDERS

Real Madrid did its primary business in the summer and Serie A's big hitters are likely to remain stagnant. So, more than anything, a fluid market depends on plenty of activity involving the clubs with the deepest pockets in England – Chelsea and Man-

Inter Milan sign Pandev

SERIE A champion Inter Milan have signed striker Goran Pandev.

The Macedonia international had been with Lazio since 2004 but was a free agent after winning a legal battle against the Rome team to be released from his contract.

Inter said in a statement on Monday that Pandev has signed until June 2014. No financial details about the deal have been released.

The 26-year-old Pandev will be officially presented after Inter plays at Chievo Verona on Wednesday, in the first league match after the winter break. He will provide cover for Samuel Eto'o, who will be away with Cameroon competing in the African Cup of Nations.

Inter leads the Serie A standings with 39 points.

Doumbia to join CSKA Moscow

IVORY Coast forward Seydou Doumbia is joining CSKA Moscow at the end of the season, according to his Swiss club Young Boys.

The Swiss league leader said on its Web site Monday that the 22-year-old Doumbia will sign a five-year contract with the Russian club in July. The transfer fee was not disclosed.

Doumbia was quoted saying that he wanted to end his "fantastic time" with Young Boys by winning the title.

He has scored 16 goals in 13 league matches this season, after getting 20 last season to be voted player of the year in Switzerland.

Doumbia is a contender for selection to the Ivorian squad at the World Cup finals which kicks off in South Africa in June.

Milan offer €25m, Huntelaar for Dzeko

MILAN are ready to leap into the transfer market and offer Wolfsburg €25 million cash and striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar in exchange for Edin Dzeko.

L'Equipe reports the Rossoneri have opened up dialogue with the German side and are ready to throw the dice for the powerful Bosnian striker.

Milan have been chasing Dzeko since early on in last summer's transfer window, and although a move couldn't be agreed before the first September deadline, they now appear confident of clinching a deal. To help facilitate the move, Huntelaar will be used as bait to entice the German outfit into reaching an agreement.



HUNTELAAR

Henin beats Petrova on comeback

BELGIAN Justine Henin won her first match since making her tennis comeback when she upset second seed Russian Nadia Petrova 7-5 7-5 in the first round of the Brisbane International.

The former world number one proved she can still be a force in the women's game as she showed steely determination to defeat Petrova.

While her trademark backhand may have been a little rusty in patches, Henin was able to convert break points at key moments in both sets to clinch victory.

Henin retired from tennis in May 2008 while ranked number one in the world, saying she had lost the desire to compete at the top level.

However, soon after compatriot Kim Clijsters won the 2009 US Open after making her own comeback, Henin announced that she too was coming out of retirement.

Clijsters, also playing in Brisbane, won her first round match on Sunday, and organisers will be delighted that there is still a chance the two Belgian rivals will meet in Saturday's final.

Henin showed no signs of nerves against Petrova as the two players comfortably held their opening service games.

The Belgian had a chance to break at 3-3 but Petrova saved one break point to keep her nose in front.

However at 5-5 Henin brought up two more break points and this time she wasn't to be denied, moving ahead 6-5 then holding serve to love to claim the first set.

The two players traded early breaks in the second before the set settled into a similar pattern to the first, Henin again having a chance at 3-3 before breaking at 5-5 and



JUSTINE Henin made a triumphant return to professional tennis with a 7-5, 7-5 victory over second seed Russian Nadia Petrova in Brisbane, Australia.

holding serve for victory.

She now plays Sesil Karancheva of Kazakhstan in the second round ahead of a probable quarter-final against seventh seeded Hungarian Melinda Czink.

Elsewhere, third seed Ana Ivanovic survived a big scare against Australia's Jelena Dokic to move into the second round.

Ivanovic claimed a tight first set, suffered a huge lapse of concentration in the second, then regained her composure in the third to win 7-5 1-6 6-3 in front of

a large crowd seemingly unsure as to who to support.

Former world number one Ivanovic is using the Brisbane tournament as a stepping stone in her bid to regain her place in the sport's elite following a poor 2009 marred by injury and a loss of form.

She said she started nervously but was happy with her form thereafter.

"I had a really good preparation and that gave me a lot of confidence," she said.

"I thought I was serving a lot

better and moving better since the last match I played, which has been a while.

"In the second set I thought I lost a bit of intensity and started defending more and I stepped back, but then (coach) Sven (Groeneveld) pointed out I had to step up a little more and I tried to do that and dominate -- I was really pleased with the result."

After a gruelling physical conditioning programme in last year's off-season, Ivanovic completely changed her preparation leading

into this Australian summer and said she was reaping the rewards.

"It's my goal to get back to the top 10 and play the championship at the end of the year," she said.

"Last year was a tough year, but I learned a lot from it and I think it helped me a lot to be mentally stronger and to know more what I want and not take anything for granted.

"This has made me appreciate it more and realise I have to work hard for every match and not just expect it to come."

Federer wants to stay top in 2010

NOW that Roger Federer is back atop the world rankings, he intends to stay there in 2010.

Federer, who faces Christophe Rochus of Belgium in the Qatar Open on Tuesday in his first competitive match of 2010, reclaimed the No. 1 ranking last year from Rafael Nadal.

"I would like to stay No. 1 for an obvious reason—getting to No. 1 from No. 2 was very hard work," the 28-year-old, Swiss player said Monday.

"Nadal played so well to stay No. 1. Now, I want to stay No. 1 for as long as possible. I am sure if I stay healthy, I can win tournaments and stay No. 1."

Federer was dethroned at the top of the rankings in August 2008, only a few weeks after losing

an epic five-set Wimbledon final to Nadal. Federer returned to No. 1 after beating Andy Roddick in last year's Wimbledon final.

"I am healthy now," Federer said. "I know I can win many more tournaments than I did last year. Last year was fantastic, but I am looking at one match at a time at each event I play this season. Right now, my focus is on the first match here."

The 15-time Grand Slam champion, who won four tournaments in 2009, said he enjoys the pressure that comes with being arguably the greatest player of all time.

"There's always pressure from one quarter or the other," Federer said. "There's pressure from yourself, pressure from fans, your

team. But I play better under pressure."

Winning tournaments has become easier after a decade on top, he said.

"You go back to your roots," Federer said. "You tell yourself how you became a good player. You enjoy competition. You tell yourself how you have been around for so long. You have to have regard for the hard work you have put in."

Federer, who competed in all 40 Grand Slam tournaments in the last decade, said his technique allowed him to avoid serious injury.

"My movements are very smooth. That has helped me stay injury-free. And if there was a nagging injury, I would listen to



FEDERER

my body. I would listen to signals my body would give me," Federer said.

"You have to look at the larger picture," he added.

Tipsarevic ousts Moya

JANKO Tipsarevic of Serbia has defeated former champion Carlos Moya in the opening round of the Chennai Open. The fourth-seeded Tipsarevic won 6-3, 7-6 (2).

Second-seeded Marin Cilic of Croatia defeated Russia's Igor Kunitsyn 6-2, 6-4 to move into the second round.

In other matches, Santiago Giraldo of Colombia defeated Bjorn Phau of Germany 6-4, 6-7 (6), 6-3 win and Jan Hajek beat Simon Greul of Germany 3-6, 6-2, 6-4.

Meanwhile, French tennis player Richard Gasquet beat Finland's Jarkko Nieminen in the first round of the Brisbane International, battling for just over two hours before overcoming the Finn in three sets 6-3 4-6 6-4.

THE TUESDAY COLUMN

Sanusi Abubakar
sanusiabubakar@dailytrust.com

The Faruk Muatallab saga: Beyond conspiracy theories

Never thought I would return to this topic so soon, especially because nothing new is coming out from Faruk Mutallab's American interrogators; and the Mutallab family has, rightly in my view, decided to keep a very low profile. However, the issue remains topical and the attention of the Nigerian public, and of our journalists and commentators, has remained focused on this unfortunate saga.

Two things prompted me to write on this again. One is my feeling that, in general, we do not seem to appreciate the impact of this unfortunate incidence on the psyche of the American public, and some of us, a small minority I admit, do not seem to even care beyond praying for easy visas and less embarrassment at airports. The other is that some have apparently decided to go into a denial mode.

Let us begin with the denial brigade, mostly conspiracy theorists and their fellow-travellers. One Hamisu Salihu Hadeija, in last Friday's edition of this paper, doubted my qualification to write a regular column in a major newspaper like this one and doubted if at all I had read enough to qualify me to comment on this matter. He then spent half of his piece lecturing me on some conspiracy theories that abound on the Web. Normally I would have simply ignored him. However, the issues at stake are very serious and I think some comments are in order. It may surprise the chap to know that we have more sophisticated and more passionate conspiracy theorists on the Trust Editorial Board who, if they decide to write could rival even Dan Brown. Besides his reference to the 1954 "Operation Suzanna" I fail to see anything else of substance in his narrations. So, maybe Israel had fore knowledge of the September 11 attack on the Twin

Towers and warned some of its people, and undoubtedly the Mossad is capable of launching attacks and implicating someone else. Clearly also, as many writers, documentary makers, politicians and even government officials in the US have pointed out, there was enough intelligence available within the security system which was not acted upon. All these are not enough to make me go to the extreme views of the proponent of these "alternative" theories. Hamisu is surprised that I would "so presumptuously and uncritically accept or, to put it precisely, believe, that the attempted (sic) airliner bombing by Faruk really take (sic) place and was not a hoax." Note that Hamisu himself referred to an "attempted" bombing, not "an alleged attempt" In any case, the information available to us (whose eyes have still not been "opened" to the superior logic of conspiracy theories) alleged that Faruk attempted, very unprofessionally from all indications, to inject something into some substance he had on him to detonate some explosive in an alleged attempt to blow up a plane. A hoax? Then it would be a very elaborate hoax indeed. Perhaps Hamisu could prove that it is a hoax, which would be very helpful to the lawyers who may have to defend the young man. If anyone has read my piece seriously he or she will see clearly that right from the first paragraph I insisted that we must presume the young man innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. May be I should have said "court of competent jurisdiction", since he is likely to be tried in America where the alleged attempt took place.

Hamisu's other angst centres around my implying that there is some relationship between our abdicating our responsibilities for the upbringing of our children and the state of mind and gullibility of these kids. This too is a common escape of ours; how can anyone dare suggest that maybe the way we see or do things have implications that we must own up to and do something about. This collective arrogance is not healthy. Anyway, I stand by my views on this, unless I come across convincing reasons to the contrary.

Which takes me to my friend Dr. Kabir Mato's write up in

last Saturday's *Weekly Trust*. Dr. Mato's take on Faruk is that "the young man is not a villain. Let us hear him first. Faruk to me epitomises courage in young people." He went further to state that he (Kabir Mato) is "convinced that the future of Nigeria is safe and secure because there are still young people who out of conviction can go the extremes in order to realize stated objective of which nation building is a part."

If Hamisu's refusal to face reality is understandable given our penchant to prefer conspiracies and comfortable assumptions about our society, the ideas of Dr. Mato are plain scary. Let us not glorify extremism or suicide bombing. Our kids must know that suicide is not acceptable in Islam, nor is the spilling of innocent blood. Others elsewhere may have their own interpretation of Islam and their justifications for their choice of terror as a tactic. That is their prerogative. There is no denying that the Muslim World, and much of progressive humanity including the Pope, many Americans, Europeans, Asians and even some Israelis are opposed to Zionist atrocities and USA's blanket support for these. Most of the world is opposed to the indiscriminate massive slaughter and "collateral damage" resulting from America's wars for oil and for Israel. Even then, discerning activists have since come to the conclusion that, in the long run, terrorism is detrimental to the objective interests of even its practitioners. Remember Yasser Arafat warning Palestinians to stop celebrating 9/11 bomb attack? Some tactics undermine long-term interests and goals. The attempt to pretend that every American or European is an enemy because his or her government support Israeli crimes or wars against Muslims is the worst far-fetched and most ridiculous notion I ever heard. Wonder what we would be saying if a suicide bomber bombs thousands in a Nigerian football tournament because the ruling class refuses to allow us free and fair elections.

Yes, our kids should be passionate and seriously committed. We would be proud of any of them passionate about learning, about justice, equality and progress for all people. We would admire any of them passionate about ending poverty, creating jobs, expanding educational and health opportunities and access, excelling in science and technology or caring for orphans and widows. Violent political "statements" are acts of desperation. We do not live in isolation and we certainly cannot move forward until we refocus our minds and our efforts. Did the so-called "Young Majors" who decided to go to extremes in January 1966, killing off the cream of our political elites, usher in any great era of nation building? Let us not forget even this recent history.

Whatever happens we should be grateful that no life was lost. The young man's life however, is changed forever, and the family has been traumatized. So, let us not continue to glorify foolhardiness. When all is said and done I still wonder what would have happened had he been arrested in Nigeria. Would he be alive today? Would the security agencies keep him for appropriate debriefing, to find out what motivated him, where and how he was trained, who his contacts and handlers were? Or would he have been despatched to the great beyond, with the explanation that he "attempted to escape"? One conspiracy theory I heard last week was that the Americans deliberately refused to stop him and waited until he was over their airspace so as to embarrass us, and have the justification to attack Yemen. So what did our own security agencies stand to gain by going along with this, if indeed they could be that stupid?

Obama would be hurt badly by this security lapse. The American would not forget easily. The young man, if found guilty, would never be quite the same, even if he survives the American prison system. Let us explore ways of working together to ensure this kind of thing never occurs again.

The young man's life however, is changed forever, and the family has been traumatized. So, let us not continue to glorify foolhardiness.

SPORTS REPORT



NWANKWO Kanu, Super Eagles captain

Eagles line up Zambia friendly

Super Eagles may play Zambia on Tuesday in a friendly as part of their preparations for the Africa Cup of Nations.

Super Eagles Media Coordinator Idah Peterside told KickOff-Nigeria.com that the Zambia FA has been in contact and details of the proposed friendly are being finalized. "Zambian FA President Kalusha Bwalya

got in touch with us when the team landed in South Africa about a friendly match.

"Discussions are taking place between both parties and we expect things to be finalised by Monday."

According to Peterside, the proposed game will be played in Johannesburg, rather than in Durban where the Eagles are camped in preparation for their Nations Cup campaign.



DIDIER Drogba

Drogba: My last Nations Cup

Cote d'Ivoire star Didier Drogba says that the 2010 tournament will in all likelihood be his last Africa Cup of Nations.

The Ivorian will be the key figure for his side in Angola as they seek to claim a first continental title since 1992, and go into the event as many people's pre-competition favourites.

They have been drawn in a tricky Group B along with Ghana, Togo and Burkina Faso, but Drogba hopes his excellent form for English Premiership Chelsea will be carried forward into the Nations Cup.

"I think I'm in great form as we head for my last Nations Cup," he says. "From the bottom of my heart, I'm desirous to come back from Angola with a glorious result to give joy to the Ivorian people. To this end, my teammates and I will be sweating it out as much as we can."