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The Man of the Moment
for a better Tomorrow



KYAN TAFIYA
BAWA WA
IBB
2007

Courtesy: Dr. Haruna Usman Mashegu

COUNT DOWN TO CENSUS 2006
(21 - 25 March)
28 DAYS TO GO
STAY IN YOUR USUAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE.
DO NOT TRAVEL FOR CENSUS.



Courtesy: National Population Commission



ORJI KALU
For
PRESIDENT
2007
For Generational Change

Militants attack oil site in Niger-Delta

Militants holding nine foreign hostages in the Niger Delta have destroyed an oil pipeline yesterday and blew up a boat in violence that has cut about 20 percent of crude production in the country.

By Jibril Abubakar,
with Agency report

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta said it attacked a Shell-operated oil-pipeline switch-

ing station known as a "manifold" and a military houseboat in the oil-rich southern region. "Both were destroyed with explosives," the group said in an e-mail.

Shell Spokeswoman Lisa

Givert confirmed the oil-pipeline attack and said the houseboat was abandoned when the attackers blew it up. It was unclear who owned the boat.

The militants announced no casualties, and said the

sailors fled when the assailants attacked the boat aboard which sailors based in the region live. Military officials in the region could not be reached for comment.

This is coming after weekend attacks in which militants blasted oil and gas pipelines and sabotaged a key oil load-

ing terminal belonging to Royal Dutch Shell. That and an earlier attack has forced the company to halt the flow of about 455,000 barrels a day—about one-fifth of daily output in Africa's top crude producer.

The weekend violence
Cont. on Pg. 2



Oil workers at the Idu Agip flow station in Niger-Delta. Militants said they blew up a military houseboat and an oil pipeline... yesterday.
Reuters/George Esiri.

Curfew imposed in Bauchi

A dusk to dawn curfew has been imposed in Bauchi where a religious dispute in a secondary school spilled into town and turned violent.

In a swift reaction, the

From Tashikalmah Hallah,
Correspondent (Bauchi)

state government yesterday approved the deployment of military personnel to guard mosques and churches.

The Commissioner of Information, Alhaji Ibrahim Zakari, said the military would also patrol the streets.

At least three people are

confirmed dead while over twenty others sustained various degree of injuries with property whose worth is yet

Cont. on Pg. 2

Hisbah leaders

arraigned in Abuja

Two leaders of the Hisbah Board, Kano, arrested last week and brought to Abuja were yesterday charged to court for subversion and belonging to an outlawed organization.

The Chairman and Commander General of the Hisbah Corps, Yahaya Faruk Chedi and his deputy, Abubakar

By Ruby Rabiu,
Senior Reporter

Rabo Abdulkareem, were charged before Justice Babs Kuewuum of the Federal High Court, Abuja.

The suspects were alleged to have conspired to subvert and promote the sub-

Cont. on Pg. 2

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Kano, Benue, Niger stage boycott

●It's for 3rd term - Chukwumerije

Kano and Benue states have announced they will not participate in the public hearings being organized by the National Assembly on the amendment of the 1999 constitution scheduled to begin tomorrow.

The Kano state Commissioner for Information, Dr. Tijanni Naniya, announced the boycott of the public hearings while the Speaker, Benue State House of Assembly, Mr. Nazenda Iho, disclosed the state's position in a state-wide broadcast yesterday.

Dr. Naniya said no official of the Kano state government will attend the public hearing. He however said delegates to the national confab interested in attending the hearings are free to do so.

"Kano state government will not be there to present any position paper because our position on constitutional amendment has been made clear by His Excellency, Gov-

ernor Ibrahim Shekarau," he said.

Governor Shekarau had earlier said he stands by the decision of the northern governors on power shift to the north.

Speaker, Benue State House of Assembly, Mr. Iho, in the state-wide broadcast in Makurdi, described the public hearings as "illegal and ill-motivated."

He said the decision to boycott the public hearings is based on the resolution of the State House of Assembly.

Mr. Iho said before the decision to boycott the public hearings was reached, Governor George Akume, had given the Assembly the mandate to decide whether or not

Cont. on Pg. 2

SARDAUNA
2007



Alh. Jamilu Isiyaku Gwamna
(Sardaunan Gombe)
Nagari Nakowa

Courtesy: Gombe Palatine Group

2007
Sal Kuyul Insha Allah!



Courtesy: Yerima Solidarity Association

News

Militants *Cont. from pg. 1*

sent crude prices higher in international markets.

April Brent crude futures rose \$1.47 to \$61.36 a barrel on London's ICE Futures exchange. Trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange was closed for the Presidents Day holiday. Oil prices had jumped more than \$1 and settled near \$60 a barrel Friday over supply concerns.

The militants claiming the attacks say they have kidnapped nine foreign oil workers and threatened to spread the violence further across the restive south, and said they would kill President Olusegun Obasanjo if he entered the region.

"We are going to continue with the destruction of oil facilities in Delta State while concluding arrangements for our wider attacks on the entire region," the group said. "We are declaring a war on Obasanjo. We will attack and kill him should he venture into the Niger Delta for any reason."

Violence and sabotage of oil operations have been common in the oil-rich Niger Delta for the past 15 years amid demands by the region's impoverished communities for a greater share of the oil revenue flowing from their land.

The militants, who say they are fighting for the same cause and the freedom of imprisoned ethnic Ijaw leaders, launched a series of pre-dawn attacks Saturday that shook the nation's volatile oil industry.

In one assault in the swampy delta's Forcados estuary, dozens of armed militants seized nine foreigners after storming a barge belonging to the Houston-based oil services company Willbros Group Inc., which was laying pipeline for Shell.

The hostages include three Americans, two Egyptians, two Thais, one Briton and one Filipino, militants and Willbros officials said.

Responding to local rumors they planned to execute the hostages, militants said in an e-mail to AP they had not decided what to do with them.

Nigeria is Africa's leading oil exporter and the United States' fifth-largest supplier, usually exporting 2.5 million barrels daily. Hostage takings are also a common occurrence in the volatile delta, but most are released unharmed. Last month, militants held four foreigners for 19 days before releasing them unscathed.

Curfew *Cont. from pg. 1*

to be estimated destroyed, Monday, during a protest over the seizure of a copy of the Holy Qur'an by a school teacher.

The incident which has paralysed socio-economic activities in the ancient city, *Daily Trust* learnt, happened at the Government Day Secondary School, Army Barracks, when a female school teacher reportedly seized a copy of the Qur'an from a female student during her class.

Although the said class teacher was said to have handed back the seized copy of the Holy Book to the student, however, trouble broke out when the student told a group of friends that the teacher mutilated the book.

Consequently, said a witness, the students began to protest and hurled some objects at the teacher, but they were driven out from the 33 Field Artillery Brigade where their school is situated.

"They continued with their protests and blocked the NITEL roundabout preventing motorists and other road users from plying the Jos-Gombe road," said Musa Abdullahi, a newspaper vendor who operates in the area.

It was when the protests left the barracks that some people suspected to be *Yandaba* hijacked it and started setting bonfire on the streets with others carrying cutlasses and machetes.

Immediately, schools were closed and business premises were shut. The popular Wunti market was also closed to traffic, but *Daily Trust* learnt that the situation become worse when it was alleged that the police shot dead one of the protesters on Kobi street.

Our correspondent who went round the town reports that five shops were burnt at Jahun while two vehicles and a Prado jeep were vandalized

along Wunti street.

Alhaji Adamu Abubakar, the Secretary, Nigeria Red Cross Society, told *Daily Trust* that three people were killed and twenty others sustained injuries and are receiving treatment at the Bauchi Specialist Hospital.

"As at now, the situation is still delicate. Everybody is running seeking for where to hide himself. And there are some number of casualties. There are lots of people who got injured as a result of machete cut; there are hoodlums going round with machetes cutting and slashing whosoever they meet and making bonfires on the road. As at now, three people have been confirmed dead, while over twenty people are receiving treatment at the hospital."

When contacted, Mr. Ibiyinka Kayode, the Bauchi State Commissioner of police, who personally monitored the deployment of his men to the major flash points in the town, said it was too early for him to make any comments. "Until the situation is calm and I receive reports from the Area Commander, I think it's too early for me to say anything. I hope you have heard how it happened?", he asked.



Gov. Adamu Mu'azu

Police strike flops

The proposed police strike slated for yesterday did not hold nationwide.

Our correspondents across the country who went round found the police performing their duties.

In an interview yesterday, the Inspector General of Police, Sunday Ehindero, said the planned strike was illegal as government is working to improve the welfare of policemen in the country.

The IG said already, the new welfare is before the Minister of Police Affairs and the Wages and Salaries Commission; just as he admitted that the take-home pay of the police is too low.

The IG said an instruction has been passed to all police commands in the country to open registers and take the names of absentees.

He added that the statutory law establishing the police prohibited it from forming a union.

The registers, signed by all the policemen that reported for duty yesterday, were said to have been taken to his office for inspection by 10 a.m. yesterday and the CP was satisfied that all

By Shehu Abubakar, in Abuja & Kayode Ajibola, in Abeokuta

those that were were to be on duty had reported.

When this reporter visited Life Camp, Kwali, Maitama, Bwari and Asokoro police stations in the FCT, it was business as usual. At the FCT police command and the force headquarters, there was no sign of any strike as all officers and men were seen performing their normal duties.

Similarly, policemen assigned to most of the banks visited by this reporter in the FCT, the National Assembly and the patrol teams were seen on duty.

A police inspector who joined the same lift with this reporter at the force headquarters said there was no need for any strike action since they were convinced that a lot was being done to assist in addressing their problems.

At the magistrate court in Wuse Zone 6, a police constable that was smartly dressed in his uniform as early as 7.48 a.m., told this reporter that he does not subscribe to the idea of going on

strike because "I have a duty first to my country, Nigeria, the tax payers and my bosses. So, when you say strike, I don't know what you are talking about."

At the office of the FCT police commissioner, a female police officer told this reporter that she does not believe in the agitation for strike because it is not realistic.

She said when the police force was in a hopeless situation, nobody said they should go on strike, "is it now that people are appreciating us and we are beginning to know the value of our duty to the society that some one will come and say we should go on strike?"

"The monetization they were talking about was all false. It was not true that the military have been monetized. I have my friends and classmates in the military. They said they have not been monetized. Anybody who says he or she wants to go on strike is on his own," she said.

Most of the policemen who spoke to this reporter over the strike were very hopeful that their problems, ranging from

poor salary package, poor welfare and bad conditions of service will be addressed in due course.

The police rank and file of the Ogun state police command have also shelved their initial plan to go on strike on Monday.

Impeccable source revealed to *Daily Trust* in Abeokuta that they had resolved to join their counterparts across the country on Monday, but suddenly made a U-turn around 8:05 am.

It was alleged that most of them that resumed at their various stations were offered N200 to return to their duty post.

Sources revealed that one of the rank and file officers expressed surprise when the N200 was handed over to him as his transport fare to his duty post.

As early as 6:00 am, men of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps had gathered at the parade ground of the state command, Oke-mosan, Abeokuta, poised for the day's work.

The Commandant General, Civil Defence Corps, Dr. Olu Abolurin, had directed all the state commands throughout the federation to be ready to take over some vital duty posts controlled by the Police should they go on strike.

Some of the Civil Defence Corps, sent out to hold fort for the police officers, at the Governor's office, Oke-mosan and the Presidential Lodge Ibara, Abeokuta, were however sent back to their command.

One of the officer's of the Defence Corps who pleaded anonymity said that they were harassed by the police officer in charge of the Governor's office and the Presidential lodge respectively.

He was quoted as saying that, "Na wa for you people, you think you can overthrow us, never. Who told you say we dey on strike? You people dey for Baba, referring to President Obasanjo, we dey for Governor Daniel, I say go back to your office," he commanded.

The Ogun State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Joseph Apapa, said there was any strike in Ogun state.

According to him, his men are disciplined officers, adding that they know the repercussions of uniformed men going on strike because they know that they will face the consequences.

He said those calling for the strike by the Nigeria Police are faceless people that are not bold.

Public hearings *Cont. from pg. 1*

to take part in the public hearings.

Earlier, the Niger State House of Assembly had made its position known that the hearings will not hold in the state.

Meanwhile, the Katsina state government says it will go ahead with the planned North-Western zonal public hearing on the amendment of the constitution scheduled to hold in Katsina in spite of the widespread protests against the event.

The state's Deputy Governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Garba Aminchi, announced this at a meeting with selected *Ulama's* shortly after the religious violence which rocked the state capital at the weekend.

Alhaji Aminchi said Katsina state is part of Nigeria and since the National Assembly that has the constitutional right to amend the constitution chose the state as venue for the public hearings, the state has no choice but to host the event.

He said only God can determine the issue of third term, who will rule and at what time, adding that even if the entire people of the state resist the scheduled hearing, the hearings will still go on.

The deputy governor said the hearings is an opportunity for the people to express their views, particularly on the entrenchment of the Islamic legal code in the constitution.

He said the state has taken adequate security measures to ensure the scheduled hearing goes ahead as planned.

The National Assembly members opposed to tenure extension have described it as a "rogue proposal" and warned Nigerians to be wary of the ongoing public hearings for the review of the constitution because it is targeted at achieving the third term agenda.

Senator Uche Chukwumerije, leader of the anti-third term group of lawmakers called the "2007 Movement," gave the warning at the National Assembly complex in

Abuja yesterday flanked by three members of the group including the Alliance for Democracy (AD), leader in the House of Representatives, Hon. Wunmi Bewaji, who doubles as a member of the constitution review committee of the National Assembly headed by Senator Ibrahim Mantu.

A statement read by Chukwumerije said, "observers suspect that a major goal of the current public hearing is to provide a new window for the proper entry of this rogue proposal into the list of desired constitutional amendments. The fear is fuelled by rumours that many social fronts are being fabricated in friendly zones to act as postmen of the new proposal."

The statement said also that the list of lawmakers drafted for the public hearings was predetermined because loyalists have been assigned to manipulate the hearings to achieve the third term agenda. "The list has already been compiled and sealed even before the committee gave the leadership the mandate to manage the public hearing as they deem fit. The second was the prepared appointment of persons to head the six zonal panels.... Many of the appointed chairmen are known apologists of the third term agenda."

The statement said as law abiding citizens, members of the group have gone to court to challenge the legality of the public hearing, saying that "once parties have submitted their grievances before a court of law and the processes have been served, it is incumbent upon all the parties to the action to refrain from taking any action capable of frustrating the judicial process or making a mockery of the court. This means that the public hearings will have to be suspended immediately."

The statement also said last weekend's demonstrations against the pro-third term public hearings in some parts of the country and the

attendant loss of lives "is a manifestation of the mood of the nation which the National Assembly cannot afford to ignore."

However, the PDP said it is yet to take any position on the constitutional amendment process until its National Executive Committee (NEC), meets on the matter. The NEC is billed to meet next week.

The national publicity secretary of the party, Mr. John Odey, told *Daily Trust* that the party will only support any constitutional amendment process that is legal and constitutional.

Meanwhile, a group called Obasanjo Solidarity Forum, has in a statement addressed to Senator Uche Chukwumerije signed by the national secretary, Rowland Bassie, asked Chukwumerije to, within 24 hours, disclose the identity of those accused of offering bribe to lawmakers to approve the third term agenda. The Forum threatened to head for the court if the request is not heeded.

Hisbah *Cont. from pg. 1*

version of the government by managing, assisting in the management and membership of an unlawful society known as *Hisbah* Board Organization.

They pleaded not guilty to the charges while Justice Kuewumi ordered that they be remanded in prison custody until March 2, when their lawyer, Yusuf Ali (SAN), would open arguments for their release on bail.

At yesterday's proceedings, Ali told the court that the arraignment of his clients was without any notice, saying that he rushed to court when he got wind that they were being arraigned.

He explained that the office of the Attorney General is yet to serve him a copy of the charge sheet which would enable him prepare his defence.

Though Ali pleaded with Kuewumi that the accused persons be remanded in police custody, the Judge ruled otherwise, saying that they

should be remanded in prison custody for security reasons.

The accused persons had earlier filed a motion for the enforcement of their fundamental rights claiming N10 million for alleged illegal arrest and detention.

Justice Kuewumi fixed March 1, for the hearing of the motion.

Kano state government last week instituted a suit against the federal government at the Supreme Court challenging the recent ban of the *Hisbah* Board which helped to maintain peace, order and good government in Kano state.

The Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Gabriel Ehindero had characterised the activities of Bakkasi Boys in Abia state and *Hisbah* in Kano as illegal and a contravention of the 1999 constitution.

The police boss announced that he intends to clamp down massively on both outfits.

News

MAIDUGURI DISTURBANCES

ACF appeals for calm, calls for thorough investigation

Following the weekend disturbances in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital in which fifteen people were reportedly killed and property worth millions of naira destroyed, the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), has appealed for calm and called for a thorough investigation of the incident.

The ACF in a statement issued yesterday in Abuja by its chairman, Chief Sunday Awoniyi, said the disturbances allegedly linked with a Danish newspaper cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), are condemnable, adding that both Moslems and Christians alike had described the cartoons as "provocative, thoughtless and insensitive".

According to the Forum, "The Maiduguri disturbances of Saturday February 18, 2006, which resulted in the loss of at least a dozen lives and the burning of many churches, are most despicable, thoroughly condemnable and totally unacceptable. They are completely inexcusable and must be detested in the extreme."

"From general indications available thus far, and from unbiased, non-sectarian and responsible residents of Maiduguri, anti-Christian feelings were NOT the origin of the violence. The Danish cartoons of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), which was the excuse for the mayhem, had been condemned by Christians and Moslems alike as provocative, thoughtless

By Sufuyan Ojeifo
(Special Correspondent)

and insensitive".

The Forum appealed to all its members as well as Christians and Moslems alike and other organisations, religious and non-religious, and "indeed to the entire Nigerian citizens, wherever they may be, to use their influence to ensure peace and calm all over the country."

"These are dangerous and volatile times for this our potentially great but fragile country of diverse peoples and religions. We appeal to all those who love her to exert their influence at all levels on the side of mutual respect and accommodation

to strengthen our internal cohesion and harmony.

"While our federal and state authorities are busy with the post-mortem of events, it is pertinent to ask once again: Where have the old governmental anti-provocative skills gone? They used to enable government to identify not only local or indigenous flash points but also to predict the ripple effects of distant events in our country".

The Forum stated further, "As violent demonstrations against the cartoons by Moslem populations spread from Europe to the Middle East and into South East Asia, it should have been clear to our governments that Nigeria was unlikely to be spared.

Following the discovery in commercial quantities of tantalite, columbite, gemstone and gold in Kaduna state, the federal government will soon commence the exploitation and export of gold from Birnin Gwari according to the Minister of Solid Mineral Development, Mrs Obiageli Ezekwesili.

The minister disclosed yesterday during a courtesy visit to Kaduna state governor that her ministry would soon embark on the commercial exploitation of the minerals, even as she called on the governor to scrap the state's Ministry of Solid Minerals in line with the directive of President Olusegun Obasanjo who is seeking to unify solid minerals authority under the federal government.

"Kaduna state is blessed with many mineral resources like tantalite, columbite, gemstone and gold. We believe that the export of gold should start from Kaduna soon. I will visit Birnin Gwari where gold is

FG to start exporting gold from Kaduna

discovered in large quantity in order to carry out an on-the-spot assessment of the deposit.

"Though state governments have been directed by Mr. President to stop the dualisation of solid minerals authority, Kaduna and some other states have so far refused to yield. Solid minerals is a jurisdiction of the federal government, states and local government are allowed to contribute only through their membership of solid mineral state evaluation committee. This is important in order to stop state illegalities in issuing out licenses, rights, titles and other leases."

In order to meet up with the demands of investors and international bodies, she said the geological survey department is being equipped and revamped to

From AbdulRaheem Aodu,
Correspondent (Kaduna)

enable it generate required geological data for mining.

"The ministry is undergoing reformation and privatisation to enable it live up to expectations and attract foreign direct investment. Despite the over 34 minerals found in over 450 locations in Nigeria, the ministry contributes insignificantly to the nation's wealth, thus the restructuring.

"The restructuring which is modelled after other successful mineral exporting countries like Brazil, Ghana, Argentina, Mali and Peru, has seen us rationalise the ministry to four technical departments and one support service department. We are also developing a new national policy on solid minerals mining that would allow the private sector to be the owner manager while government regulate and administer as well as control leases."

Arrest of leader: OPC gives FG 7 days ultimatum

By Shakirat Abdulmajeed,
Lagos

The Obasanjo led administration may soon face another crisis from the South West as the ethnic militia from the area-the Oodua Peoples Congress, yesterday issued a seven day ultimatum to the federal government to release its national president, Fredrick Fasheun and its national coordinator, Gani Adams and other members of the group who have been in custody since October 22 2005.

Chairman, national publicity committee of the group. Lateef Kopagogo, who disclosed this yesterday in a press statement made available to Daily Trust in Lagos, warned that failure to release the men at the expiration of the ultimatum will make the group to report the Obasanjo led administration to the United Nations, European Union and various International Civil Rights Organizations and agencies.

Lateef who lamented the continued detention of the OPC leaders, said the duo were charged for murder and possession of arms and ammunitions, adding however that a Lagos high court late last year illegal freed them for lack of evidence to prosecute them.

He noted further that the federal government later re-arrested them and has since kept them incommunicado, while filing fresh charges against them at the federal high court.

"We want to make it clear that the over 5 million OPC members in the South West not to talk of those in other parts of the country know what to do to correct the gross injustice being meted out to our leaders and members in various detention centres but we do not want to be seen in the same light," he stressed.

He recalled that when some powerful forces wanted to impeach President Obasanjo in 2002, Dr Fasheun called out OPC members to stage a pro-Obasanjo rally in Lagos.

Obasanjo tasks pension commission on efficiency

By Joe Oroye

President Olusegun Obasanjo has urged the operators of the National Pension Commission to live up to expectations as the commission would not hesitate to withdraw any operator that breaches any condition of the commission.

He stated this during the presentation ceremony of licences to seventeen operators held at the banquet hall of the presidential villa in Abuja yesterday.

According to the president, "the era of sharp business practices is over in this country and therefore, you must learn to be good players by acting according to the rules, he said.

Government, President Obasanjo added, is absolutely committed to the success of the industry and consistent with its cardinal policy of transparency and accountability, and no individual or corporate body shall be spared in this regard.

The president however expressed happiness that the entry of the operators into the market has generated what he called "upsurge of activities at the economic front, as it is in the telecommunications sector through the introduction of GSM operators".

One of the salutary effects of their entry into the economy is enhancing employment opportunities, with the absorption of considerable numbers of school leavers from the labour market expressing hope that the country will benefit more from the operators activities.



From left, Alhaji Wada Maida, former Managing Director, NAN, Malam Ishaq Ajibola the Executive Director Operations of the Media Trust and Mr. Barnabas Omali head, Investment Sigma Vaughan Sterlings Limited. During the presentations of licences to the Pension Operators held at the State House, Abuja ...yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye.

More soldiers, police deployed in Maiduguri

More soldiers and mobile policemen have been deployed around Maiduguri, the Borno state capital, to undertake patrols and ensure the maintenance of law and order.

The measure followed

From Abdullahi Bego,
Assistant Editor (Maiduguri)

last weekend's civil disturbances which disrupted social and commercial activities and led to loss of lives and property.

The state governor,

Alhaji Ali Modu Sheriff, told newsmen yesterday that the measure to increase the presence of securitymen around Maiduguri became necessary to increase people's confidence and quicken the normalisation of business and social activities.

Already, a number of security personnel have been stationed at key public places to ensure that there is no breach of the peace.

Daily Trust reports that social and business activities is gradually returning to normalcy in Maiduguri but many Igbo traders have refused to open their shops for business.

Meanwhile, members of the National Assembly from Borno state have visited the Borno state governor and the areas affected by the weekend disturbance where they expressed their sympathy and called on all the people of the state to continue to live peacefully.

Their spokesman, Senator Mohammed Abba Aji, said that they will table motions to call on the federal government to assist the efforts made by the state government to rehabilitate those affected by the crisis.

Bashir Dalhatu arrested by EFCC

Former Minister of Power and Steel, Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu, has been arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), for alleged financial malpractices.

Family sources told Daily Trust that he was moved to the EFCC, Lagos office on Okotie Eboh street, Ikoyi. They also insist that the former minister, who served in late General Sani Abacha's government, was arrested

By Emmanuel Bello,
Political Editor

because of his political affiliation, observing that he was detained to keep him out of circulation.

Commenting on the charge against Dalhatu, family members also said that a court had declared him innocent of charges of embezzlement, observing that the former minister is a victim of political persecution.

It would be recalled that the former minister was arraigned by the federal government on account of his possession of part of the Abacha loot. The case, however, was squashed when Alhaji Dalhatu won.

A check on the issue met a brick wall when EFCC spokesperson, Osita Nwajah, said that he cannot confirm the arrest. "I have not been briefed on the matter and cannot comment on it," he said.

News

POLICE STRIKE

Group wants Ehindero removed

The Vindication for Rights Group (VRG) has called on the federal government to remove the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Gabriel Ehindero over the perpetual state of insecurity in the country.

National co-ordinator of the group, Mr. Bashir Wali who made the demand yesterday in Katsina said Ehindero should be replaced with a more effective officer who will address the state of insecurity in the country.

"Nigeria under this present administration has been a slaughter house with various dignitaries such as Bola Ige, Harry Marshal, Chuba Okadigbo, and Hajia Sa'adatu Rimi being victims of the nation's insecurity" adding that "looking after peoples lives and properties is very much important than taking over traffic control from Hisba.

He said considering the state of insecurity of the nation, government should

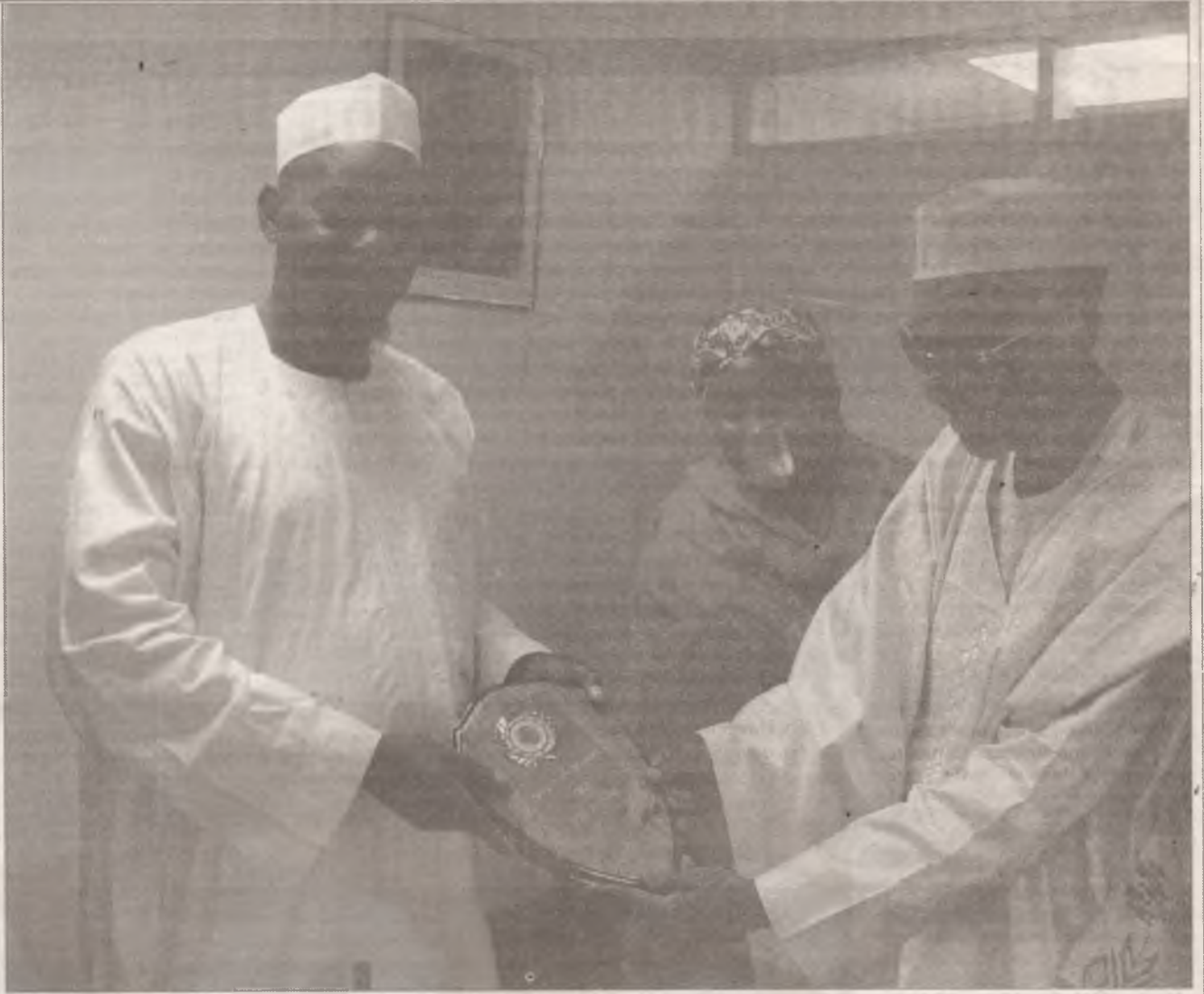
By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim,
Correspondent Katsina

find a capable replacement who can address the menace.

On the murder of Abubakar Rimi's wife, the group challenged the government and the police not to only produce the suspects but also prosecute them according to the law."

The VRG boss, speaking on the recent arrest of the Kano Hisbah leaders, Shiekh Yahaya Faruq Chedi and his deputy, said the government should release the two men as there is no law warranting their arrest.

The federal government and the police, he said, should tender a written apology to the Kano State government and the Kano State Emirate council for the unconstitutional arrest of the two Hisbah officials.



Member House of Representatives, Hon. Aline Shehu Kajiji (left) receiving Community Services Award from Deputy Director NDE International Collaboration branch, Alhaji Muhammad Yakasai (right), in the centre is Hajiya Hadiza Bulama during the ceremony held at the Federal Secretariat in Abuja...weekend. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Scrap police ministry, Tinubu urges FG

From Olumide Bajulaiye,
Correspondent, Lagos

Alausa, Ikeja, the governor accused the Federal Government of creating too many bureaucracies.

"We are the cause of our own problem. Scrap the Ministry of Police Affairs and allow the Inspector General of Police to be autonomous and wait for efficiency. What is the usefulness of the ministry, when all what they do is to sit down and wait for the police fund to be released and get their own share of it, leaving the police to bear the brunt by themselves.

"Let the Inspector General

be a member of the Security Council and receive the police fund directly, rather than the Police Affairs Ministry getting the police fund and spending it on behalf of the police, thereby leaving them with little or nothing to take home."

He berated the Federal Government for the non-provisions of welfare and logistics for the police, while expecting them to shun corruption and other vices, and called for state, local government and community police.

"Police is under-funded. Federal Government has refused to provide necessary logistics and welfare for the police. Can you imagine where a police Sergeant goes home with N13,000 salary, housing allowance inclusive, yet you want them to perform maximally and shun corruption.

"You don't provide necessary welfare for these people, yet you give them gun loaded with bullets. Tell me, what you expect them to do with these guns.

"Because of the political, religious and multi ethnic diversity of the country, we need state or community police. We have been

clamouring on the creation of state police but rather than getting this done by enacting a law backing it up, Federal Government is complaining of fear of the governors using them to perpetrate evil. If the state government would use their state police for their selfish reasons, the Federal Government is doing the same.

"The only free and fair election this country has witnessed so far, apart from 1993, is the 1999, where General Abdulsalam Abubakar conducted the election without any interference of the police and other security agencies. What did we witness during 2003; we were harassed and intimidated. If today, there is a law backing creation of state police, I will not hesitate in getting my state a very good one.

"I will start the creation of the state police immediately and provide all the logistics needed for them. Starting from their salary and their logistics, they will stand out from that of the Federal Government. I'm sure that other state governors would do same. All

these would be done for the effective policing of our state and country", the governor stated.

Strike did not hold in Gombe

From Muhammad
Abubakar, Gombe

The proposed police strike slated for yesterday did not hold in Gombe state.

Our correspondent reports that police men were seen discharging their duties.

Commissioner of police in the state, Alhaji Yusuf Atiku Kafur had promised the state governor that his men would not participate in the strike scheduled to commence yesterday.

Governor Muhammad Danjuma Goje who was at the command at the weekend promised to continue to give the police all necessary assistance to ensure peace and stability in the state.

In a chat with our correspondent, the state police public relation officer, Mr. Kingsley Omarigie had warned that any police officer who took part in the strike will be charged for mutiny.



Sunday Ehindero, IGP

'We shunned strike for fear of dismissal.—Kano Police

The police in Kano State said they resolved to shun the planned nationwide for fear of being dismissed from service.

The policemen, who spoke to *Daily Trust* on the condition of anonymity, alleged that they were issued with threat letters warning that anyone caught taking part in the speculated strike should consider himself sacked.

According to the aggrieved policemen, they were totally in support of the proposed strike, to force the federal government to meet their demands.

One of the policemen, alleged that their superior officers warned them to desist from any strike as it contra-

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru
and Yusha'u Adamu
Ibrahim, Correspondents, Kano

dicts the ethnic and rules of the force.

He argued that both the federal government and superior officers are fully aware of the sufferings of the rank and file in the police force but have refused to take redress their plight, adding that "we

suffer financial neglect, promotion and non-payment of allowance."

When contacted, the police public relations officer (PPRO) at the zonal headquarters, a deputy superintendent of Police (DSP) Gambo Mohammed denied knowledge of the strike.

According to him, the issue was a mere speculation created by the media.

...Benue command takes roll call

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

by officers on special duties including security details to political office holders.

The Command public relations officer (PPRO), Mr. Samuel Jimadu confirmed

that yesterday's routine roll call showed that there was no strike in the Benue police command.

He however denied knowledge of any special roll call as directive by the inspector general, Mr. Sunday Ehindero.

LOSS OF DOCUMENTS

RIGHT OF OCCUPANCY

This is to inform the general public that the original certificate of Right of Occupancy No. NE 888 granted Abba Baba-Gana Anas of the property measuring approximately 1.415 acres with beacon Nos. 3800, 3799, 3664, 3663, and shown on land survey sheet 44, computation plan number L.P. NE 2 is missing. All effort to trace the said documents proved abortive.

If found please contact:

The Solicitors,
2nd floor
Fidelity Bank Plc Building
Plot 267, Tafawa Balewa Way,
Central Business District, Abuja.
Tel: 09-2342909

NEWS PUBLIC HEARINGS

Constitution needs to be amended-Prof Aminu

Chairman, Senate committee on foreign Affairs Professor Jubril Aminu, said that going by the glaring structural defects that characterised the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, there is need to amend it so that the document can effectively accommodate the wishes and aspirations of Nigerians.

Senator Jibril Aminu made this position known in a chat with reporters in Yola yesterday, where he noted that unlike the "sacred Books", the constitution, being the map that regulates the activities of a country should always be amenable to change in line with the complexities of time.

Professor Aminu who threw

From Hamza Idris, Correspondent (Yola)

his weight in support of the proposed public hearings on the amendment of the constitution.

faulted the 1999 constitution where he asserted that its conveners were in a hurry to come out with 'just a document' and therefore overlooked several vital issues of national importance.

Group wants constitution review delayed

A group of former senior public servants, academics and businessmen in Borno state called Community Enlightenment Development Association (CEDA) has called on the federal government and the National Assembly, to defer action on the review of the 1999 constitution until after the next general elections in 2007.

In a release signed by its chairman, Alhaji Kyan Sandabe made available to Daily Trust in Maiduguri, CEDA observed that a review of the constitution is "belated" for the Obasanjo administration, considering the fact that it is in the concluding part of its tenure and is already engaged in other serious national programmes like the conduct of the 2006 census, review of voters' register etc, which require a lot of attention and resources to execute successfully.

The group added that while

From Abdullahi Bego, Asst. Editor (Maiduguri)

the review of the constitution is a good idea in itself, it is better left to political parties to pursue in a democratic manner after elections are conducted in 2007.

"Let the review of the constitution be part of the manifesto of political parties willing to undertake the review. After elections, the review can be undertaken as mandated by the electorate," the release said.

The group also called for the retention of the provisions of the 1999 constitution on tenure for all categories of electoral posts, including local government council positions, in any review of the constitution, adding that two terms of four years each for the president and governors is enough as obtained in many other democracies around the world.



Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, (R) discussing with Prince Ngozi Nreezie, General Manager, Oceanic Bank and Dr. Cecilia Ibru, M-D of Oceanic Bank during the presentation of licences to the Pension Operators held at the State House, Abuja...yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye

Protests won't stop public hearings - Mantu

Chairman of the National Assembly Joint Constitution Review Committee, Senator Ibrahim Mantu, yesterday said the planned public hearings will kick off tomorrow despite riots in Katsina and Maiduguri.

Civil disturbances at the weekend rocked Maiduguri and Katsina, two of the six public hearing venues, fuelling reports that the exercise may be called off because of security concerns. In Katsina, centre for the North-west, more people reported to be shot dead.

A select group of journalists yesterday in his office. Mantu said his committee would go ahead, the violence notwithstanding.

"Let me say this. Katsina remains the centre for the North-western zone. The public hearings will take place in Katsina on Wednesday and Thursday. For the North-eastern zone, Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state remains the centre and take place simultaneously on Wednesday and Thursday, 22nd and 23rd. These are the two days for the public hearing in all the zones of the federation. And there is no change at all in spite of the disturbance that happened in some of the centres connected to this very important assignment... I want to assure the general public that adequate security arrangements have been made by the respective state governments and indeed, all security operators in the country. I have been assured that everybody will be able to go and make his or her presentation without any harassment from anybody."

Mantu also lashed out at lawmakers ganging up against the hearings because of concerns over the third term agenda, saying the legislators exhibited "ignorance" by "jumping the gun".

About 100 senators and members of the House of Representatives closed ranks, accusing Mantu of manipulating the constitution review process for third term. Some of them have gone to court asking that the process be stopped.

"The truth is that it's most unfortunate that members of the National Assembly who are supposed to know the greatest ignorance that this country has ever witnessed. As members of the National Assembly, they ought to know when they can actually express their opinion. This work will come back to the two chambers of the National Assembly and as members of the two chambers, the time will come when they can express their views as to whether or not they support a particular position. Now for them to begin to come out with pre-emptive actions, it means Nigerians cannot expect

By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Assistant Political Editor

objectivity from them, as they have already taken a position and they are not supposed to be so, at this point in time they are supposed to listen to their constituents. They have not gone back to their constituents to find out from them which way they will vote on each item. For example, right now, I don't have a position because at this point in time, I am playing the role of a referee....

"These people who are now jumping the gun, they are doing it with ulterior motives and other ulterior interests. I think they are allowing themselves to really be used by certain external forces. I think that they should respectfully behave as honourable members and wait for the time for them to express their opinions on the floor of the two chambers. So why are they jumping the gun? That's the big question. If you have a position, the time is going to come when you can express that position. Why are

you now trying to mould opinions unnecessarily, negative opinions against something that's supposed to be a positive assignment? We as legislators have a constitutional responsibility to carry out this assignment." Asked whether he was served with a court order against the hearings, Mantu said, "as I told

you last Friday, I haven't received any court injunction from any court of law in Nigeria. As a lawmaker, I can't be a law breaker. If I had received anything, I would have obeyed it even if it is amounting to abuse of the court process, I will still obey it. I have not seen anything. Therefore, the exercise continues as originally scheduled."

North-East leaders condemn hearings

as Dansadou pulls out

Former delegates to the defunct National Confab from the North-East have condemned the planned public hearings scheduled for the 22 to 23rd February, even as they called on legislators and governors of the North-Eastern states to distance themselves from the exercise which they believe will foster tenure-extension for the president.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, leader of the group, Professor Ibrahim Tahir,

By Emmanuel Bello, Political Editor

said that the hearings are designed to create distractions with the aim of introducing clauses that will ease the third term. "We have been forced to hold this press conference because we have suddenly discovered that the worst fears of Nigerians are founded upon the intentions of the joint committee of the National Assembly on the amendment of the constitution."

Tahir, referring to an advertorial carried on page 10 of the Sunday Sun newspaper of 19th February, 2006, said that the intention of the Mantu committee is to have a new constitution with the implication of giving the President and all political office holders a fresh start. "The very title of that document reads: 'invitation for the public presentations and submissions by citizens of Nigeria to the Development of a New CONSTITUTION' (emphasis ours). The first sentence on the body of the document state quite clearly that the intention of the committee is not to amend the 1999 constitution but to produce a new constitution. We repeat to produce a new constitution."

He noted that the new constitution will foster the extension of tenure. "The implication of this constitutional amendment is that the incumbent president will be in power for the remainder of his active natural life. The 36 state governors will also rule for a further 12 years from 2007 resulting therefore that some of them will be in power for over 20 years. We invite all of you in this country to picture your state and to think hard and contemplate your incumbent governor ruling your state in his current style for another 12 years or more. Thus if you are 35, you will be 50 years old when the governor's term will end. We have looked for reasons why in a plural multi-religions country of our size, population and history of vigorous political activism, we should agree to crown 36 kings in the states and an emperor at the centre for the next 20 years!"

He said that the court injunction restraining the Mantu Committee from holding the hearings should be obeyed, observing that to go ahead with the event is a travesty of the nation's judicial system. "We are dismayed that under a constitution which makes the court the final arbiter on such matters, the committee is proceeding regardless and is hell bent with their plans to carry on as if the courts do not matter under the existing constitution. This is a very dangerous action which portends evil for the future of this country."

The meeting was attended by

some ex-delegates of the defunct National Confab from the North East: Professor Audu Idris, Prof. Narul Alkali, Usman Farouk, former governor of Borno state, Mohammed Goni, Sen. Ibrahim Yakubu Lame, Tanko Bobboi and Boss Mustapha.

Meanwhile, secretary to the Northern Senator's Forum and one of the leaders of the National Assembly billed to attend the hearings in the South-South zone, Senator Saidu Dansadou said he is opting out of the team.

In an exclusive chat with Daily Trust, the Senator from Zamfara State said that he wants to opt out because of the real intention of the public hearings, which, according to him, is to pave way for the third term. "I decided to boycott the public hearings because my candid opinion is that the event will not serve the best interest of this country. It was designed to serve the wishes of the third termers and extend the terms of the incumbents," he said.

Observing further that the 1999 constitution does not recognise zones as the basis for representations, the ANPP lawmaker said that the exercise was unconstitutional. "In the first place, the 1999 constitution does not recognise zones. Therefore, in an effort to amend the constitution, we should conduct such hearings at the state levels, that is all the states headquarters and the FCT."

He said that states, rather than zonal hearings will provide the greatest opportunity for Nigerians to express their views. "When you restrict public hearings to the zones, you are denying the majority the opportunity to make their input. It is a paradox for the joint committee on the review of the constitution of the National Assembly to say that they want to produce a constitution that will stand the test of time and one coming from the people, and yet to exclude such people. It makes no sense."

Sen. Dansadou opting out from the public hearings is coming against the background of wide spread protests by groups opposed to the event. Only last weekend, anti-third term riots erupted in Maiduguri, Borno state.

We want 3rd term for Obasanjo - PDP

Whereas the National headquarters of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has repeatedly described the third term issue as insinuations, the national vice chairman of the PDP, north-east, Senator Paul Wampana, has revealed that the PDP seeks a third term for President Olusegun Obasanjo ahead of the public hearing on the controversial constitutional amendments scheduled to start tomorrow.

Wampana made this known at the weekend in Damaturu during an exclusive interview with Daily Trust, shortly after he chaired the Yobe state PDP reconciliation meeting.

The national vice chairman said, "what we are saying, we in the PDP, is that Obasanjo has performed and if he can have another term, it is welcomed. There is no reason why we should not do justice to ourselves and may let there be three terms for four years for President Olusegun Obasanjo, and any governor who has performed. The tenure extension is not going to be imposed. We are going for a public hearing. You reserve the right to speak against or support the tenure extension."

Senator Wampana described the moves by the PDP in this regard as democratic, saying the views of people would be entered into the constitution.

From Isa Umar Gusau, Correspondent (Damaturu)

to determining that suitability or other wise of the extension. Asked if the public hearing will not be manipulated in favour of the PDP, the national vice chairman said, "well, I don't know what things have been manipulated and not manipulated in this country. But we in the PDP believe Obasanjo has performed."

Senator Paul Wampana also likened the public hearings to an election to test popularity of the PDP and the third term for the president, maintaining that should the PDP fail through the public hearing, it becomes clear to the party that a democratic procedure was followed.

Asked if the third term agitation by the PDP would not tarnish the image of African leaders who are perceived to be "sit tight leaders" the national vice chairman said he does not consider the agitation as an imposition since democratic ways would be followed to consider the viability or otherwise of amending the constitution to pave way for the third term, noting that even when the constitution is amended to that effect, Nigerians will still decide on the fate of President Obasanjo through a general election in 2007.

Earlier, Senator Wampana had spoken at a reconciliation meeting in the Yobe Peoples Democratic Party, during which the minister for cooperation and integration in Africa, Lawan Gana Guba, the state's 2003 gubernatorial candidate of the PDP in Yobe, Alhaji Adamu Maina Waziri, were publicly reconciled as part of the party's decision to work towards winning the 2007 elections in the state.

The Yobe PDP had also established three committees: reconciliation, discipline and contacts, with members drawn from party supporter across the state to perform various functions aimed at brightening the party's chances in future elections.

Inaugurating the committees, the national vice chairman, PDP, North-east, Senator Paul Wampana, charged members of the three committee to work towards the progress of the PDP, noting that with the reconciliation of the minister and Waziri, a major breakthrough has so far been achieved by the Yobe PDP.

Wampana noted that those inaugurated into the committees were carefully chosen as committee party members whose roles in the PDP have indicated their love for the party.

He called on the committees to be fair to all members, and urge party supporters to give their maximum cooperation to the committees' members with a view to establishing a PDP government in Yobe come 2007.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Court grants Mbadinuju bail

Former governor of Anambra state, Dr. Chimaroke Mbadinuju, standing trial in connection with the murder of NBA chairman, Onitsha branch, Mr Barnabas Igwe and his wife, Blessing, was yesterday released on bail by

From Beatrice Owuchukwu, Correspondent, Akwa
an Onitsha high court.

The murder took place in 2002 when Mbadinuju was a governor and therefore enjoyed immunity. He was charged to court last year with one other and held in

prison custody until yesterday.

Justice Nwachi, in his ruling after a short break to reconsider the submissions of both the prosecution and the accused counsel, dismissed the objection of the prosecution counsel.

He released Mbadinuju on bail in the sum of N1 million with two sureties, one of whom must possess a certificate of occupancy and landed property.

Justice Nwadi ordered the DPP and the Anambra state ministry of justice to file the

charges against Mbadinuju within 21 days as the court is not ready to accept the slow pace of the ministry of Justice. He also noted the ill-health of the accused person.

"It is difficult to say how a magistrate court can only remand persons under its

terms where it does not have the jurisdictional competence to try the substantive charge, knowing it has no jurisdiction as was done by the chief magistrate can only act as a prelude to the striking out of the case and cannot be considered a necessary part of the procedure for making a remand order," he said.

He cited section 31 of the criminal code, saying that "Neither the Nigeria constitution nor any other law in force in Nigeria provides for a holding charge.

Thus, a holding charge is unconstitutional. In the instant case, the chief magistrate was bound to let the appellant go from police cell in the absence of facts which the prosecution was duty bound to supply justifying the appellant's detention.

The police have not by section 32 (1) (c) of the 1979 constitution been given power to deprive citizens of their liberty while the case against them is still being investigated."

He gave the police three weeks to produce incriminating information against the accused and tender them before the court.

Nwadi said, "this case cannot wait for the police indefinitely. He therefore granted bail to the accused in the sum of N1 million with two sureties.



Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju stepping out of the Abuja chief magistrate court shortly after he was first arraigned...recently.

Pix: Shehu Abubakar.

Two in court for drug trafficking

Two suspects were arraigned at the federal high court, Abuja, for allegedly trafficking in hard drugs. The suspects, Kenneth Okezie and Nnamdi Amah, appeared before Justice Stephen Adah, on a one count charge of being in possession of cocaine which they pleaded not guilty.

The charge sheet made available to *Daily Trust* revealed that the first accused, Kenneth Okezie, was arrested on November 30, 2005 with one kilogramme of cocaine.

The prosecution counsel, Mrs Oby Ahaji, told the

By Ruby Rabiu, Senior Reporter

court that they were ready to proceed with the trial as investigation into the case has been completed.

She urged that the accused person be remanded in police custody because of the gravity of the offence.

Counsel to the accused person, Dawud Suleiman, moved an application for his bail but the application was opposed by the prosecution, saying it would file a counter affidavit.

The prosecution also urged the court to take into cognisance the seriousness

of the offence.

Moving his application for bail, Dawud Suleiman told the court the his client suffers from asthma and other ailments which needs medical attention which he is not likely to get if he is remanded.

He said his application is supported by an eight paragraph affidavit deposed to by a litigation secretary from the chambers of J.O. Oluwole and CO.

He emphasized that his client will provide reasonable surety if granted bail and will not interfere with police investigations.

stressing that since the prosecution is yet to file a counter affidavit, the court should exercise its discretion in favour of the accused.

Justice Stephen Adah, giving his ruling on the bail application, said that he was not satisfied that the court could grant bail in such a case.

Adah said, "bail is refused and the accused is to be remanded in custody pending the trial."

He ordered that the prison authorities should ensure that the suspect gets medical attention and

adjourned the case to March 29, for hearing.

The second accused person, Nnamdi Amah, was also charged for being in possession of 1.2 kilogramme of cocaine. He was arrested at the airport with the substance, which he pleaded not guilty.

Justice Adah, in his ruling on bail said that the main issue is whether the suspect will jump bail, adding that although he has taken into consideration the fact that the suspect has a physical defect as he is said to be blind, that is not sufficient grounds to grant bail.

Adah explained that the offence is a serious one and ordered the remand of the suspect and adjourned the case to March 29.



Sunday Ehindero, IGP of Police

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

RIMI'S WIFE

Babba Dan Agundi sues IG

A prominent Kano businessman and traditional title holder, Alhaji Aminu Babba Dan Agundi and two others now in detention in connection with the murder of Hajia Sa'adatu Abubakar Rimi, have dragged the Inspector-General of Police to court for alleged violation of their fundamental human rights.

Alhaji Aminu Babba, Malam Mansur Dan Bello and Malam Salisu Ibrahim, yesterday filed a motion before the federal high court, Abuja, for leave to enforce their fundamental human rights pursuant to Order 1 Rule 2(1) and 3 of the fundamental human rights procedure.

The plaintiffs are seeking relief's as follows: an order enforcing their fundamental human rights as contained in section 35 sub-section 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the 1999 constitution;

A declaration that their continued detention by the police is illegal and unconstitutional;

An order directing the police to release them forthwith.

And order directing the police to issue a public apology to them for illegal detention and incarceration for almost three weeks with

By Benjamin Auta, Reporter

out arraigning them before a court of law or allowing them access to a counsel and without reasonable grounds for suspecting their involvement in the murder of Rimi's wife.

And an order granting compensation to them for this detention and gross violation of their rights to the tune of N10 million to the first plaintiff and N1 million to the two plaintiffs each.

The plaintiffs brought the application on the grounds that the police do not have the constitutional right to detain and incarcerate them for a period of three weeks without arraigning them before a court of law and without access to legal counsel.

They said their detention is illegal, prejudicial and unconstitutional to their rights to fair hearing as contained in chapter IV of the constitution.

However, the police through their counsel DSP Ibrahim Bako, prayed the court for an adjournment to enable them file a counter affidavit on the motion.

Justice A. I. Chikwe adjourned the case to Friday to enable the police file their counter affidavit.



Policemen carried out their routine work as the proposed strike flopped yesterday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodeje.

Armed robber 'Bishop', others arrested

By Benjamin Auta, Reporter

The police in Abuja have arrested three armed robbery suspects including one who claims to be a "Bishop."

They are Toduwe Stephen, Enejo Sunday (Bishop) and Ikechukwu Njoku.

The suspects, all residents of Mabushi, Abuja, were arrested at about 9 p.m. at the Mabushi bus stop in possession of a locally made pistol.

Answering questions from *Daily Trust*, Toduwe, alias Bala said he came to Abuja from Benue state in 2002 and worked as a laundryman while living with one Vincent, a police Sergeant in Mabushi.

Toduwe claimed that one Jugunu introduced him to armed robbery but that he only engaged in snatching handsets and wrist watches.

He denied that he owned the pistol as Bishop (Enejo Sunday), allegedly told the police.

"Bishop is just implicating everybody about the gun. He had earlier lied to the police that a policeman gave him the gun he confessed," Toduwe said.

He said Bishop was not a musician "it is a lie. Bishop is not a musician. He only goes from one club to another in the town".

Giving his own side of the story, Enejo Sunday alias "Bishop", insisted that he is a musician.

He said he goes round clubs in the city singing songs of artistes like Tu-face, Celine Deon etc.

He said on the fateful day he was arrested with Ikechukwu Njoku, he had gone to Ikechukwu's house whom he described as a dancer to call him for a show at Millennium Park.

But Toduwe, met him at Ikechukwu's house and pleaded with him to carry a pistol for him into the show since he will be allowed to enter the show as a musician.

"He said I should help him carry the 'Awka' made pistol to the show at the Millennium Park," Enejo said.

He said when he asked him what he was going to do with the gun, Toduwe said,

"I will go and press the gun on the big men children."

Enejo said that luck however ran out on them as a policeman at Mabushi junction arrested them at the bus stop as they waited for a commercial motorcycle to transport them to the venue.

On how close they are with Toduwe, Enejo said "I know him at Mabushi for long, he is a robber. He has friends whom they engage in robbery operation together not only in Abuja alone."

He said he knows one Ahmed, stranger, Richard and another fat boy that he

could not remember as members of Toduwe's gang.

On his part, Ikechukwu Njoku, told *Daily Trust*, that before he came to Mabushi, he used to stay in Suleja, Niger state where he sells wrist watches and sunglasses at road junctions in Abuja.

He said he came to Mabushi on the invitation of his friend, one Sunday who left Mabushi when his property was confiscated and had no place to live.

Ikechukwu added that when Sunday left Mabushi he moved in with a prostitute known as Grace.

On his involvement in the present case he said, "when I came out of the bathroom, I

saw Toduwe and Enejo discussing but I did not know what they were saying.

He alleged that "It was Toduwe that gave Enejo the gun."

He however denied being involved with the two suspects.

The police told *Daily Trust* that after their arrest, detectives went back to Mabushi to round up the remaining members of the gang but that when they arrested one, he stabbed a police constable Kabiru twice on his hand and then escaped.

The suspects, the police said, would be charged to court as soon as investigations was completed.

Police raise alarm over attempts to rob bank

By Shehu Abubakar, Reporter

The Delta state commissioner of police, Mr. Udom Ekpoudom, has raised alarm that suspected armed robbers collaborating with some staff of the United Bank for Africa (UBA), Asaba branch, have been making frantic efforts to rob the bank.

Mr. Ekpoudom, in a two page intelligence report to the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero on the matter, said three attempts were made to rob the bank and on each attempt, black magic otherwise known as "Juju" were used.

Sequel to three consecutive attempts made by yet to be identified hoodlums to rob the United Bank for Africa Plc, Asaba branch and the strong suspicious that some staff of the bank are always linked to this nefarious activity, there is an urgent need to bring to the notice of the Inspector General of Police those unwholesome developments to enable the IG inform the headquarters of the UBA accordingly," the report read in part.

The Delta police boss told the IG in the report that the first attempt to rob the bank was on September 4th, 2005, when unknown persons gained entrance into the bank after removing the burglary proof and window louvers.

Ekpoudom said when the branch manger of the bank, Mr. Anthony Garba, reported the incident to him, the

detectives that visited the bank reported that though the suspected robbers could not have access into the strong room of the bank, Juju was round planted in front of the strong room.

"Not quite long after that first robbery attempt at the bank, on the 21st of November, 2005, the branch manager of the bank reported that there was another attempt by some hoodlums to break into the strong-room of the bank though the entrance into the bank after removing the burglary proofs and some window louvers.

"While investigation into these incidents were going on, the branch manger on the 19th of December, 2005, less than one month after the second robbery attempt at the bank, reported that he sent the duty officer of the bank, Mr. Anthony Umoh Idorenyim, to the bank on that day to collect for him some gift items meant for some retiring staff of the bank. He further stated that when the officer opened the garage door, he found two gas cylinders, cartridges, sticks of candles, iron bars and some used match sticks which were kept in the garage by some hoodlums in connivance with some yet to be identified bank staff to be

used in breaking into the bank vault," the letter reads in part.

"Which is an indication that some insiders in the bank are involved in these criminal attempts to break into the bank vault and steal huge sums of money.

"In all the three robbery attempts at the bank, it is very clear that some staff of the bank are working in connivance with some bank robbers to break into the bank vault and steal some money," the letter confirmed.

Confirming the development, force public relations officer (FPRO), Mr. Haz Iwendi, a deputy commissioner of police, said the IG has advised the headquarters of the bank in Lagos to transfer all the staff of the bank in Asaba branch as an immediate measure to avoid any form of robbery by insiders.

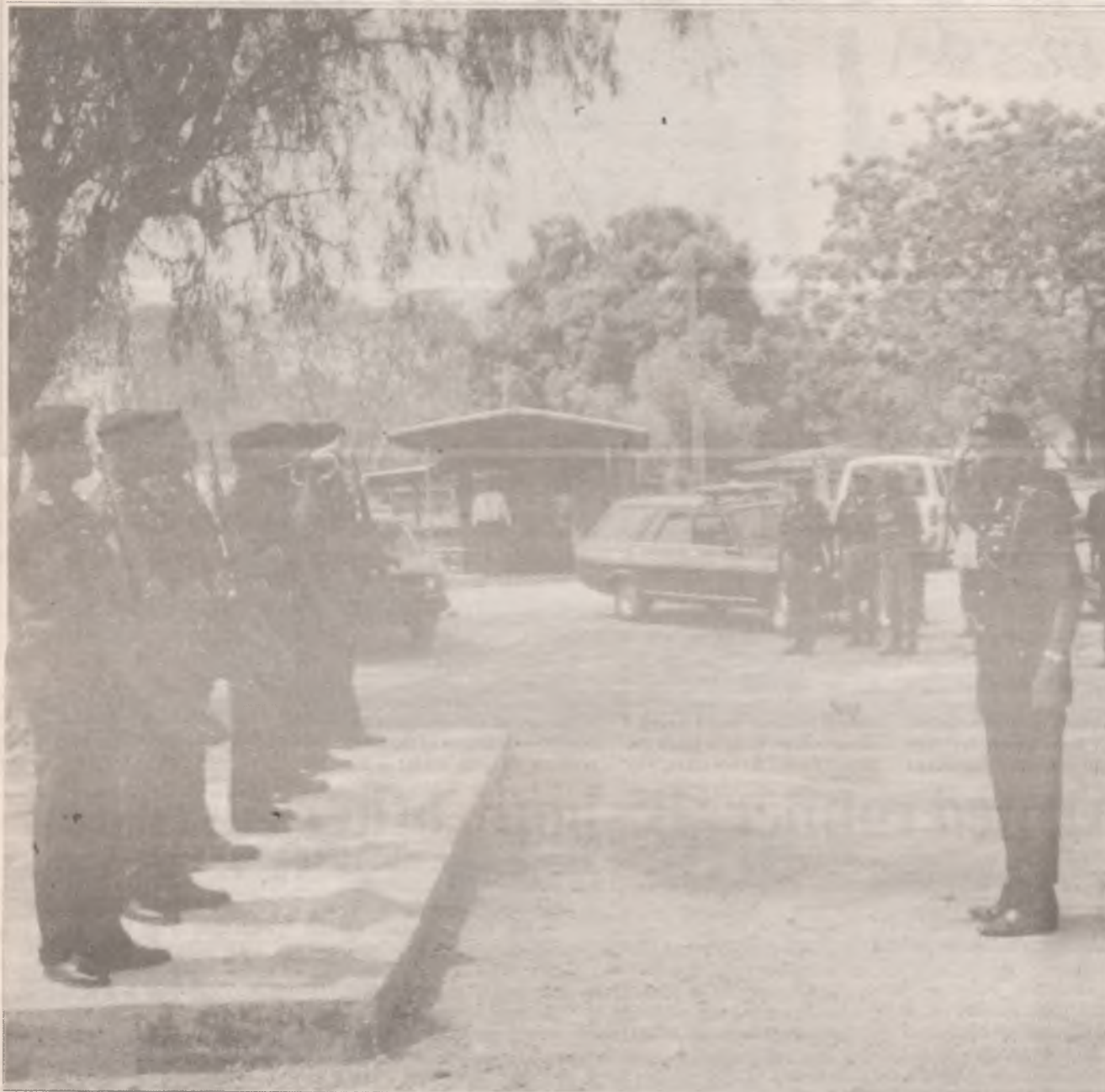
Iwendi also said that the police will soon open a data bank for all bank staff in the country where detail information about them and their finger prints will be obtained and saved.

"We have been saying it. That for every successful bank robbery, there must be an insider. The thing is becoming too much now. The banking profession is becoming another ghost of its own self now," Iwendi said.

POLICE COMMISSIONERS TELEPHONE NUMBERS

1. Abia State	088-222868, 088-220073
2. Adamawa State	075-674012, 624012
3. Akwa Ibom State	085-200008, 201711
4. Anambra State	048-550022
5. Bauchi State	077-6542621
6. Bayelsa State	089-490060, 490132
7. Benue State	044-532962, 044-553015
8. Borno State	076-232915, 232043 ≤
9. Cross River State	087-231101, 230663
0. Delta State	956-281485, 280441≤
11. Ebonyi State	043-25134, 20325
12. Edo State	052-253798, 253520
13. Ekiti State	030-250000, 250709
14. Enugu State	042-250335, 042-256257
15. Gombe State	072-223135, 224158
16. Imo State	083-233343, 083-2307113
17. Jigawa State	064-721138, 721128
18. Kaduna State	062-249762, 062-245653
19. Ka no State	064-645862, 646469
20. Katsina State	065-431703, 430914
21. Kebbi State	068-321585, 320254
22. Kog i State	058-220999, 250709
23. Kwara State	031-221612
24. Lagos State	01-4960200, 4962157
25. Nasarawa State	047-221349
26. Niger State	066-221496, 066-221903
27. Ogun State	039-241500, 243117
28. Ondo State	034-240109
29. Osun State	035-243363, 240330
30. Oyo State	02-2412824, 2412322
31. Plateau State	073-457969, 073-451968
32. Rivers State	084-23347, 236471
33. Sokoto State	060-232896, 2335375 080-34228561
34. Ta raba State	079-222550, 223124
35. Yobe State	076-522141, 522145
36. Zamfara State	063-202603
37. FCT Abuja	09-2341800

CRIME & PUNISHMENT



FCT Police Commissioner, Lawrence Alobi inspecting a quarter guard mounted in his honour by policemen during one of his "Do-not-go-on-strike" tours in Abuja...recently.
Pix: Shehu Abubakar.

Gambian tailor alleges threat to life

By Shehu Abubakar,
Reporter

A Gambian tailor who was charged to court for alleged theft of a sewing machine and a CD radio player by his employer is alleging that people suspected to be staff of a government ministry are after his life.

Alhaji Dabo who had earlier alleged that his former employer, one Hajija Miryam, forcefully confiscated his properties worth millions of naira and got him charged to court for alleged theft, is said that unknown persons in a Peugeot 406 car with government plate number had visited his former residence looking for him.

"I was told that people numbering about four went to the former house I was staying, in a 406 car with MFCT official registration number asking for me. They were said to have searched the house and when they couldn't find me, they told people to tell me that they will trace me and deal with me. They were in the house on Friday at about 2.30 p.m.

"I was also told that another group of unknown persons came to the house again. But this time around, only one of them came to ask of me from the security man in the house while his other companions hid nearby. I was told that the two groups were desperate to see me," he said.

Though Alhaji Dabo said the two groups that called looking for him were not seen with arms, he was however

warned by his former co-tenants and neighbours who saw them that he should keep away from those groups as their mission may not mean well for him.

When this reporter visited Alhaji Dabo's former residence at Parakou Crescent at Wuse II, Abuja, residents of the area confirmed the incident.

The residents who are senior officials of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), secretariat, said they were embarrassed by the unknown callers and expressed fears for their security too.

Alhaji Dabo had earlier petitioned the FCT police command over his security and fundamental human rights which he alleged were trampled upon by policemen from Wuse Central Police station.

The FCT police commissioner, Mr. Lawrence Alobi, referred Alhaji Dabo back to the Wuse Central Police station where he alleged he was detained for 65 days without trial over alleged theft.

When contacted for comment over the allegation, the Special Assistant to the FCT minister on publicity, Aminu Salihu, promised to investigate the allegation that the callers in the 406 car were MFCT staff and that she would brief this reporter later.

Police foil robbery attempt at GTB, Ilorin

The Kwara state police command over the week foiled an attempt by about 30 armed bandits to rob the Guaranty Trust bank, Ilorin.

Though the attempts to break the bank's vault failed,

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo,
Correspondent (Ilorin)

a police corporal, Amuda Kayode who was riding a motorcycle in mufti ran into the operation and was hit by a stray bullet while an

Inspector was injured.

Briefing newsmen on the incident, the spokesman of the command, DSP Gideon Marcus said "we got a distress call at about 11.45 p.m. that armed bandits were attacking the bank and we

immediately dispatched a police team there.

He said the exchange of fire between the police and the armed bandits lasted until about 2 a.m. Monday morning.

DSP Marcus said the armed bandits recorded casualties too as blood stains were found in the bank's premises. He said they came with gas cylinders and welding tools which they used in breaking into the hall.

He said the bullet proof glasses and doors prevented them from breaking in, hence, they resorted to the use of gas cylinders to break in after switching off the security lights at the rear of the building and the banking hall.

The police spokesman said the bandits had earlier blocked all entry points leading to the bank's location on Unity Road before firing sporadically to scare people away.

They escaped from the area when the police started gaining the upper hand.

Among items recovered from the area were a gas cylinder, bullet shells and one empty magazine while the armed bandits reportedly escaped with one unidentified Audi 80 car.

Anti-riot policemen were still keeping vigil at the bank when *Daily Trust* called for enquires which were rebuffed by the branch manager.

JIGAWA MURDER

18 suspects appear in court

Eighteen suspects have been arraigned before the Dutse senior magistrate court on a three count charge of culpable homicide, public incitement and criminal conspiracy.

The suspects are accused of killing a political figure in Jigawa state during a two million man march organised in Dutse to rally support for Governor Turaki.

According to the first

From Hassan A. Karofi,
in Dutse

information report read in court by the prosecuting police officer, Corporal Danladi Usman, the accused conspired to kill one Ibrahim Dambaja, a prominent politician in Jigawa.

The suspects are being charged under section 114, 96 and 221 of the penal code.

The case is being heard

by Senior Magistrate Ado Yusuf.

When the case was mentioned, all the 18 accused pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Earlier, the accused had asked the court to grant them bail. However, the prosecution objected to their bail application.

Senior magistrate Ado Yusuf adjourned the case to 24th of February for the continuation of the case.

Robbers attack business centre, kill security man

Suspected robbers yesterday attacked Dansarari Plaza at Wuse II, Abuja, killing a guard and looting stores located in the plaza.

The dead guard was said to have been killed when he tried to prevent the robbers from gaining entrance into the plaza.

Briefing newsmen in his

By Shehu Abubakar,
Reporter

office, FCT Commissioner of Police, Mr. Lawrence Alobi, said 18 pieces of astral water generators, video compact disks (VCDs), jewellerys and several other property were carted from the stores.

Detectives, he said have been mobilised to hunt the

robbers, adding that a suspect, Monday David, has been arrested in connection with the attack.

Mr. Alobi said David assisted the police to arrest two other members of the gang, Andrew Anthony and Paul Yahaya.

He said investigations into the matter continues.



Justice Muhammadu Lawal Uwais, Chief Justice of Nigeria

Opinion

Police strike in an un-policed state

By Charles Dickson

I smiled as I read the conversation; it was in one of the national dailies. The first man claimed that he knew why the policemen chose February 20th for their planned strike. Why, the other man asked. The first man answered, "They want to show us that they have a great sense of humour." "How?" asked the other fellow. The response was "They have a special fascination for 20, especially N20."

After all the usual *bragadoism* (noise without action), the failed (?) police strike has again brought to the front-burner the failure that the present administration is. The president met with top police chiefs for over two hours in a closed-door meeting. The issues discussed for yet another time ranged from welfare, recruitment, promotion, training, reorientation and corruption. One cannot be fooled that the primary reason of the meeting was actually to see how serious the junior officers calling for the police action were and also to seek out measures to contain it. The president as usual was raking at no one in particular, as one could say conclusively that after six years, he had not made any significant improvement in the policing of this nation.

The Inspector-General of Police called the strike "a figment of the imagination of those who fermented it," while the National Union of Policemen, the group of junior policemen behind the strike tagged it the "Mother of all strikes." Before now, the IG maintained that the threat of the strike was not real but the meeting with Baba Sege gave a different storyline. Funny is it not that the policemen are even coming under an umbrella to

press for change...

This I must state is the second time that the police would plan to go on an industrial action; and before the man at the Villa packs out or is chased out, I am sure children would also go on strike.

Though our leaders maintained that the threat of the strike was someone's crazy imagination; it is also important to note that serious underground efforts were made to avert the same imagination. Even as Ehindero, the police chief, warned that anyone who participated would face arrest and prosecution, yet I stand to be corrected that the government must have met to see how it could meet the demands of the junior officers. This same kind of meeting had been held times without count. We even have a presidential committee on police.

On welfare, last week in a barracks in one of the formations of the Nigeria Police, they celebrated nine months without electricity. With mosquitoes on permanent night patrol duty, officers are companions of malaria; and as such, a visit to the police station makes a citizen to be treated like mosquitoes. I honestly am not moved about police welfare because of the general apathy for the police in the nation; however, it is sad to note that the Nigeria Police is the least paid among service personnel. These days, a young recruit buys his uniform, buys batteries for his torch, buys fuel for his patrol van, and they may even be required to source for arms and ammunition from the open black market.

A typical barracks is an example of where not to live, and where everything called rot finds habitation. The buildings

are like leftovers of the Kosovo war. The poor welfare and remuneration of the police have made it deadly impossible for the N20 bribe to be eradicated.

Somewhere between Kaduna/Jos boundaries recently, a mild drama occurred when a policeman shot at the tyre of a long vehicle because the driver refused to part with N50. The driver insisted that he could only part with N20. The policeman refused. On shooting the tyre, the driver in turn barricaded the entire road with his vehicle, blocking traffic from both ends of the road and insisting that the policeman must buy him a new tyre. His colleagues also joined in adding to the already tense atmosphere through the support services they provided. Innocent travellers were turned victims as over seven hours went without any compromise; commuters had to resort to contributing money, which they gave to the trailer driver for a new tyre before he moved.

The Nigerian policeman is a poor man, but what difference would the shelved strike have made...when most Nigerians have resorted to fate because trusting the Nigeria Police is like entrusting one's vegetable garden to a goat? Without the strike, robbers are having a field day; with the strike, it would have been Uhuru. The Obasanjo adventure is one in pacesetting so, therefore, this is yet another episode in his all-round failure called reforms. After the first strike, if the one they called off had sailed through, no matter how partially, it would have been difficult for any other president to break Baba's record.

I told someone that a hungry policeman is not an angry policeman but a thieving

policeman and this is one thing that our leaders do not know. They just sit up there and loot the national treasury even to the point of public disdain, because after all, what can the citizenry? Nothing! A visit to any police station would be an experience in the learning curve of human existence; a place of anything and everything goes. Whether you are a suspect, complainant or witness, you will need to part with money for plain sheets and ink to scribble your statements, and you'll pay for bail. And then if you smile too much, you may be arrested and asked to pay for breaching public peace at the police station.

I paid a visit to a police station recently and I heard a senior officer 'scold' a junior one thus: "Wait, I do not know why the impatience. Your time to 'wack' (to thief, collect bribe on a large scale; time that he will partake in sharing of money meant for routine expenses; sharing of exhibit items) will come."

What manner of reorientation can such a junior officer get? Reorientation indeed when in most cases, the junior officers' collection of roadside N20 toll is at the express command and permission of a superior officer who gets his own share.

Police promotions are an exercise in black magic as there are no set guidelines; they are simply based on who you know and the pay for your rank style; where the officer seeking promotion must gratify superior officers. Even after the promotion and the salary are reflected, the police accounts department does its own voodoo, as the more intensely you look, the less probability of understanding anything.

I have vowed to disown any family member that puts on the

black uniform of the police even in a movie production.

I know of a case where a policeman was recruited with a church baptismal certificate. There are cases of policemen among the rank and file that do not know who the present Inspector-General of Police is and yet the picture is supposedly in place everywhere that has the sign 'police station.' Area boys, street urchins and touts are recruited into the police and we expect them to deliver utopia. Like the Indians say 'Nehi,' meaning No!

When you recruit policemen with Intelligence Quotient of minus 100, it is clearly exhibited in the lack of knowledge of the common rudiments of the art of policing. A complainant in the twinkle of an eye could suddenly become the accused; a witness could become a suspect depending on who is willing to play the ball faster and better.

When we recruit buffoons, we get the kind of police we have now - a police that lacks the capability to settle two neighbours fighting without complicating matters and demanding gratification.

It is no surprise that apart from Obasanjo, the Nigeria Police rates among Nigerians' top five hate lists. When the men in black shoot innocent citizens under the guise of being trigger-happy and then run when they see the real robbers, what then do they expect from the police? Even the former labour fighter, Adams Oshiomhole, who as far as I am concerned has lost steam, begged the junior officers not to go on strike but to dialogue...funny how times change.

It seems almost natural that

as soon as one wears the black police uniform, the soul, spirit and body of the individual becomes black in thought and action. The orientation in the police is faulty; it is dirty; it is simply a continuation of the old colonial police with their shorts and short-fused brains. Ever seen a policeman ask for gratification at a checkpoint? He barks like a dog on the loose. I have learnt not to argue with them for fear of being accidentally sent to my forebears at the wrong time for the wrong reasons by the wrong persons.

Some years back, a group of policemen from the bomb disposal unit went on training and came back the same way they went, after chopping estate codes in plenty dollars. They could barely defuse a Christmas knockout, much more tell the difference between a red, blue and white wire device.

The present I-G is a lawyer; however, he has been an affiant to the same law. Under his watch, the police continue to abuse citizens under every available flimsy excuse. I have requested that the Guantanamo Bay inmates be brought down to the Nigeria Police and they would stop complaining after 24 hours at Alagbon police station.

The strike that the police officers planned and failed to go on tells so much about the value our government places on the security of the lives and property of her citizens, which is why local vigilante groups are given more respect than the taxpayers' funded police. The only area in which the Nigeria Police has succeeded in is being used as willing tools by selfish politicians... May Almighty Allah come to our rescue if there is hope.

Prince Charles Dickson resides in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria (pcdbooks@yahoo.com).

Kwankwaso: Where Ibrahim Ado Gwagwarwa is wrong

By Abu Isa Kofarmata

"Ba Haushe baka da zuciya, ka sha kunya nan duniya. Ba Haushe ba ka da aiki daga gorin asali sai gorin dukiya" - Mu'azu Hadejia

As the popular saying goes, wonders shall never end. It is funny and smacks of ignorance to read a piece of article by one Ibrahim Ado Gwagwarwa raining abuses on the person of Mallam Ujudud Shariff, a respected journalist, media consultant and a columnist with the Daily Trust newspaper.

The recent attack by the former director, Press Affairs, Government House, Kano during Kwankwaso's maladministration in the Daily Trust of Vol. 13 No. 22 of Tuesday, February 14, 2006, is a clear testimony of the bad feelings and frustration coupled with desperation on the part of Kwankwaso and his cronies. One still wonders whether what Mallam Ujudud said or wrote had anything to do with his (Ujudud) parental and ancestral background. Assuming Ujudud Shariff and Shekarau were both natives of Biu Local Government of the present Borno State, i.e. Babu by tribe, they are still Nigerians in all ramifications.

Imagine a kente calling the pot black. What an irony! The son of an ex-Chadian rebel (Gwado-Gwado) born and brought up in the ghetto area of Brigade, a suburb of Lagos, has the courage and audacity to question the integrity of other respected people. This

illegal alien went on to advise Trust newspapers to seal Mallam Ujudud Shariff off by denying him the honour and privilege of being one of their contributors. This is typical of Kwankwaso's cronies. This reminds me of what he (Kwankwaso) did to Ray Power FM Radio when they allowed Umar Yakubu Danhassan to campaign in their radio station during the 2003 general elections.

Turning to the submission made by Ado Gwagwarwa, there is no single place throughout his submission where he disputed the charges made against his haughty boss (Doctan Barno). All he was able to achieve throughout his write-up was the display and expression of anger and frustration on Mallam Ujudud Shariff, of which I shall explain the reason later in this write-up.

The most interesting part of it all was the response Ujudud gave; it is obviously amazing and impressive, and that makes the entire good people of Kano proud and to be solidly behind Ujudud. We urge him to continue with the good work by using his professionalism and expertise in exposing the real enemies of Kano State and its people. Fear not, Mallam Ujudud, Kano people are solidly behind you.

From our sincere observation, the only criminal Ujudud must have committed was to accept the Pledges of Allegiance to the Nigerian State voluntarily acceptance to bond

Rimi's presidential campaign PR unit and his refusal to work with the murderer's party in the 2003 elections.

It is at this point that I wish to congratulate Mallam Ujudud Shariff on his ability to build a solid reputation devoid of corruption. We are proud of your hardworking posture in establishing a media consultancy firm, where you earn legitimately unlike Ibrahim Gwagwarwa's boss who has been alleged to have appropriated public monies to himself.

As for me, I can only pick blame on Mallam Ujudud over his inability to expose other atrocities and economic crimes committed and being committed against Kano State and its people by Obasanjo, as aided and abetted by the arrogant and haughty Kwankwaso. It is therefore my pleasure to add some recent atrocities being sponsored and influenced by Kwankwaso in addition to the Kofar Na'isa (NAMA) land dispute to the notice of our people.

First, it was Kwankwaso's connection that saw the invasion of our textile market (Kantin Kwan) by men of customs and excise department, which led to the confiscation and burning of clothes/textile materials worth over N2 billion. Their simple offence was that the market was dominated by Yoruba traders. Anybody living within the area called Nigeria is aware of the

textile markets in Aba, Onitsha, Lagos/Abeokuta, but there was no such invasion anywhere other than Kano where market stalls and warehouses were invaded by fully-armed customs men.

Similarly, it is the handiwork of Rabiu Kwankwaso that our entire road exits from Kano are placed under tight and severe surveillance by men of the customs service. A trader from Maiduguri or Yola must pass through five different customs checkpoints before reaching his destination. This is aimed at discouraging people from neighbouring states from patronising Kano market, thereby crippling the traders and the state economy.

Secondly, it was Kwankwaso's connection that set Dr Dora Akunyili of NAFDAC to seal the pharmaceutical market in Kano. Dr Akunyili, being an Igbo by tribe and having being attacked by Igbo traders, did not find it important to impose sanctions and close their markets in the East. But in Kano, where our people did not even know of her existence, she was influenced and pressurised to seal off our markets, and this led to colossal financial losses for our traders. Their only crime is that they admire and support Abubakar Rimi.

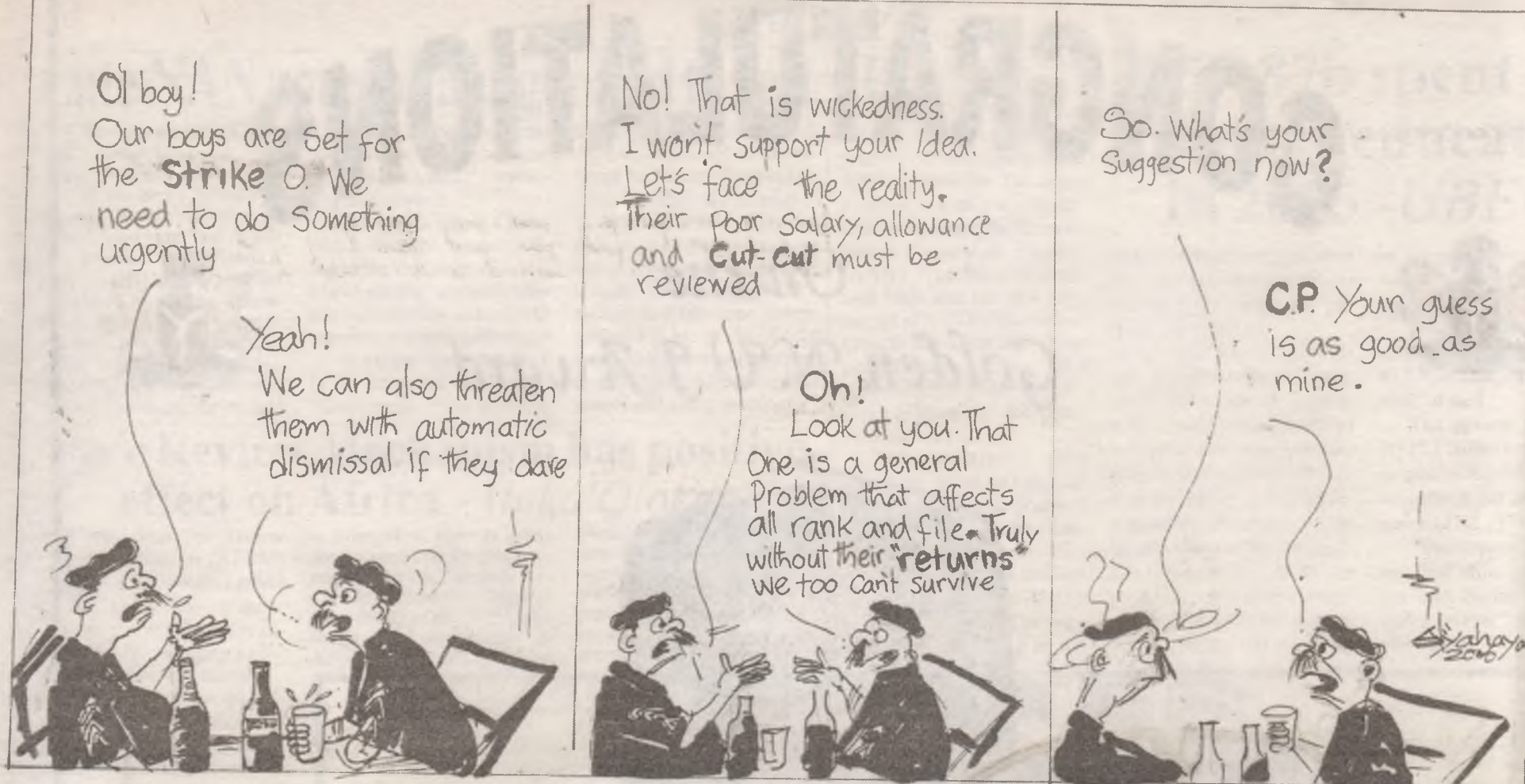
Thirdly, it was Kwankwaso's connection that led to the suspension and disbandment of Hizbah Corps. The painful and disheartening

text about this Hisbah issue is his desperate attempt to link Hizbah corps with some local and international terrorist organisations just to promote disharmony and chaos in our beloved state. His wicked intention is to instigate the Christian West/America against the good Muslim people of Kano.

One wonders and doubts his (Kwankwaso's) claim of Kano when compared, for instance, with Alhaji Danjuma Goje of Gombe State, who as a federal minister then, used all available opportunities to contribute and develop Gombe State. His actions and contributions led to the establishment of power transmission plant and massive electrification of many villages in Gombe. Alhaji Goje did these projects without considering that Alhaji Abubakar Hashidu of ANPP was the governor then. By 2003, Alhaji Goje was able to win the support of Gombe people and was elected governor that very year. However, ours is a different story. Our own man was only interested in destroying his people economically, politically and otherwise. The good people of Kano under the rule of Kwankwaso could only count losses, ranging from lives to property. It is fresh in my memory how he dispatched heavily-armed mobile policemen to the suspension and disbandment of Hizbah Corps. The painful and disheartening

in Fagge, Kurnar Asabe, and Brigade, etc., carelessly to pacify Obasanjo. For close to four years now as a federal minister, Kwankwaso and his cronies can hardly mention a single project of any kind that Kano State and its people have benefited from the federal government. This is a challenge to any of his cronies living in Kano, Kaduna or Abuja.

In conclusion, I want to advise and warn Ibrahim Gwagwarwa and his sponsors that the PDP killing machine which killed Dikibo, Harry Marshal, Bola Ige and now suspected to have killed Hajjiya Sa'adatu Rimi, should be careful. The good people of Kano would no longer fold their arms and watch their kin and kith being humiliated, murdered and destroyed. Should anything happen to Mallam Ujudud Shariff now or in the nearest future (not even severe fever), we know who and who to hold responsible. We would not waste our time waiting for the corrupt, inefficient, and ineffective Nigeria Police to come forward with their useless investigation reports. Their investigations are yet to find the members of Ige, Marshal, Harry, Dikibo in face the law. For how long shall we continue to waste our time on this incompetent and... from Kano (kntsigi@yahoo.com).



YOUR LETTERS

Bauchi Commissioner of Justice was not sincere

My attention has been drawn to an interview carried in the 19th December 2005 edition of *Thisday* by the Commissioner for Justice of Bauchi State, Alhaji Ibrahim Babale, who is just like a brother to me in so many respects.

I do not mean to fault the commissioner over the interview or enter into any dialogue with him, but put light on one issue he raised with respect to the article titled "Bauchi: Unfinished Business" and carried in the *Daily Trust* of 25th November, 2005.

This is because I happen to be one of the two witnesses the writer, Malam Adamu Adamu mentioned in his article; the other is Malam Sama'ila Bajoga.

Adamu Adamu said in the article: "He (Governor Ahmad Adamu Mu'azu) put his palms on each copy of the Qur'an and swore: 'I swear by these copies of the

Qur'an and I call God to witness.' He began, 'If I knew the results of the last election in Bauchi before they were made public, or if I had tampered with the figures in any way before they were released, may the curse of Allah be upon me. And may the Almighty never let me realise my wishes.'

On the other hand, Alhaji Ibrahim Babale in his interview with *Thisday* had this to say: 'I called Bajoga whom Adamu said was with him when they went to see Governor Mu'azu and he (Adamu) alleged that Governor Mu'azu brought out two copies of the Holy Qur'an and placed his two hands on them and swore that he never rigged the 2003 elections.'

He continued: "The governor" according to him, "never saw the result before they were announced."

You see, Malam Isma'ila Bajoga is a renowned Islamic scholar. To my utmost

surprise and shock, according to Babale, "Bajoga also swore to me with the same Holy Qur'an, that what Adamu recounted was not what happened in their presence."

Since then, a lot of people who either read or heard about the article have been asking me to verify the truth of the matter. It is these that prompted me to write and narrate my own part of the story as someone who happened to be there when the thing took place.

In the first place, before publishing his article, Adamu Adamu had alerted me to expect my name in print because he said he intended to disclose what happened between the governor and us during that visit. I believe he must have also told Malam Sama'ila Bajoga the same thing. I told Adamu Adamu to carry on as far as he would write exactly what my ears heard.

To me, what I read in the article was exactly what I heard Ahmad Adamu Mu'azu, the Bauchi State governor said.

And I swear to the Almighty God who made me and to whom I will return that I heard and witnessed Malam Sama'ila Bajoga say to the governor thus: "Your Excellency, when you carried those copies of the Qur'an embodied in their leather bags, my body began to shiver and when you swore on the Qur'an, I became so completely shocked." He continued, "Your Excellency, you shouldn't have done that with the Qur'an."

Bajoga took time to lecture His Excellency about the seriousness of swearing on the Qur'an, so it was shocking to hear him say, according to Babale, that the governor only said, "Wallahi tallahi." He told the governor that it was wrong to swear on the Qur'an.

At the point, His Excellency turned towards Bajoga and said, "OK Malam, na gode,"

meaning thank you in Hausa. That was exactly what I heard.

In fact, there were even more serious things that took place that day though not directly connected to this issue. Someday, I may have cause to say them. Surprisingly, we both might not have heard this dialogue, because when Adamu wanted to bring out the issue

of the election, he tried to excuse Malam Sama'ila and me to allow him some minutes of discussion with the governor and secretary to the state government who was also there in the office. But His Excellency said, 'Garbale, stay, don't go out. Adamu, say whatever you want to say.' So if we had gone out, we wouldn't have heard all those stories.

I decided to write this letter so that those asking me in order to verify the truth or at least hear my own side of the story will know exactly what happened. Bajoga was only telling a pack of lies if he really told Babale that the governor did not swear on the Qur'an.

Garba Ibrahim Bature,
 No. 233 Gadau Road, P. O. Box 54, Azare, Bauchi State.

Still on matters arising in Gombe

Permit me space in your news paper to react to the write-up published in *Leadership* newspaper dated 25/12/2005 captioned "Matters Arising from Gombe PDP" by one Abubakar K. Garba.

A group of disgruntled and confused politicians in Gombe State has been parading themselves as genuine supporters of the People's Democratic Party, PDP. They are united against the populist programmes and policies being executed by the purposeful leadership of Governor Mohd Danjuma Goje. They have been having a field day in their attempt to truncate the laudable transformation and praiseworthy programmes and policies through holding series of meetings aimed at destabilising the government of Gombe State.

Through some manoeuvres including sponsoring of write-ups in the media to unleash their propaganda and vile attacks against the Golden Governor to not only rubbish his success story and giant strides so far recoded by him, but to discourage the electorate from identifying with him as the 2007 election is approaching.

It is therefore not surprising that the main elements or should I say discredited PDP supporters in Gombe had to commission a faceless person called Abubakar K. Garba to churn out distasteful and incriminating write-up against Governor Goje and some respected PDP stalwarts from his camp with the sole aim of smearing their images and above all distorting issues or twisting facts out of context to hoodwink the people. In the

jaundiced and venom-laced article, my name was featured as a collaborator in the said article by the writer; therefore, I found it duty bound to reply the said write-up to enable me exonerate myself of the concocted viewpoints of the writer.

To set the records straight, the PDP revalidation exercise carried out in Gombe State of which Alhaji Mohd Santana anchored didn't leave complaints; on the contrary, it was rancour-free. The exercise was the most credible and praiseworthy in the entire country as testified to by the writer himself in paragraph three of the said write-up. However, it is not surprising that having lost out to Governor Goje in the power play and struggle for supremacy, the discredited supporters have resorted to campaigns of blackmail and character assassination to seek relevance and also erect roadblocks for Governor Goje's future political ambition. As far as we are concerned, the abuses directed at the governor cannot diminish his rising profile.

As far I am concerned, the writer used people's names just to bring more confusion where there is none or simply trying to create a storm in a tea cup or create artificial tension and

panic among those who have found favour with the masses.

It is also not true that Yerima and his followers have been sidelined or frustrated in government. As far as I am concerned, the group has been rocking the PDP boat in the attempt to nest its feathers. In other words, members of the group cannot openly be plotting the demise of PDP in the state and government of the day and expect that the electorate who voted for the party would take it kindly.

In conclusion, the writer has to bury himself in shame for attempting to demonise or vilify the populist and God-ordained government of Alhaji Mohammed Danjuma Goje whose performance in office is dazzling and which sadists and envious people cannot comfortably stomach or appreciate.

The writer has to exonerate those he named in his write-up as his contemporaries to enable posterity to judge him or he should quickly beat a retreat by teaming up with those on board as the plane moves to the Promised Land.

Hon. Dauda Aliyu Zagi,
 Local Government Service Commission, Gombe State.

On Katsina LEA's lands sale

Please, allow me a space in your recognised newspaper to express my appreciation to his Excellency, the executive governor of Katsina State, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua over his effort towards the improvement of primary education in the state.

Sir, your recent effort to decongest our primary schools by converting some of the schools into storey buildings has made teaching and learning conducive for both the teachers and pupils. It has also made it possible to run the school in a single shift with one headmaster controlling the whole school.

This laudable programme and many other good initiatives by your government are being met with some resistance by unscrupulous elements within the system. Officials of Katsina Local Government Education Authority are hiding under the recent

modification of primary schools in Katsina to encroach into lands belonging to primary schools.

The education secretary of Katsina Local Government should please investigate this matter in order to know the people involved in the recent negotiation going on over the sale of a piece of land belonging to Rafindadi Primary School before it is too late. A big man living near the school is trying to purchase the said piece of land.

A similar illegal transaction has already taken place at Kwado Primary School behind Hajj Camp, Shinkafi Primary School and Sabuwar Unguwa Primary School. I strongly feel that Katsina Local Government Land office may not be aware of this illegal land transactions going on around our primary schools.

Abba Musa T/Wada,
 Katsina.

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

CONGRATULATIONS



On the
Golden N.U.J Award



His Excellency, Alh. Muhammad Danjuma Goje
(Sarkin Yakin Gombe)
Executive Governor, Gombe State.

Water is Life. As you give us means of livelihood, posterity will continue to be on your side. No sacrifice is too great for us to support your laudable objectives.

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For better and for good, God bless you

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BY

Nassarawa State University, Keffi.

On Saturday, February 18th 2006

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ALHAJI ADAMU HUSSAINI LEFT AND HIS EXCELLENCY, ALH. ADAMU ALIERO

Signed:

ALH. ADAMU HUSSAINI
Managing Director

MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY
tempthist@yahoo.com

Platinum for the emperor!

The president played a fast one on Nigerians last week. He grabbed the Confederation of African Football's Platinum Award at its annual show held at the International Conference Centre in Abuja. The show was sponsored by telecommunication giants Globacom, which owns the franchise for the next five years. It was the first time the awards were held in Nigeria. That is not the story really. Trust Nigerians and our Nigerian mentality; what should otherwise have been a purely football affair, was in our typically corrupt mindset, promptly hijacked and turned into a political razzmatazz to showcase incompetence and mediocrity. In PR parlance, it is called ambush marketing. Against all norms of decency, we saw Nnamani, the president and Mantu, his indefatigable deputy of our phantom Senate share the spotlight with the likes of Samuel Eto'o who was about the only high profile player who bothered to show up anyway.

Not that OBJ was bothered about that anyway. Not for the first time in his military and political career, he reaped where he did not sow. He virtually threw protocol aside by inviting an unsuspecting Eto'o - the finest footballer from the continent presently - to the high dais and gloated about, wait for it, the Abuja National Stadium and the 8th All Africa Games which Nigeria hosted and dubiously won. Knowing the images were beamed across the entire continent and time, he delivered the longest speech of the night only pausing at the end to recognise his platinum, unlike Eto'o's hard-worn diadem, was due to the special generosity of the organisers and nothing more. I couldn't agree more!

Platinum is defined in simple terms as a greyish-white metal used in making jewellery often in combination with other metals. But beyond the president's grey hair, what has he done in the past seven years to deserve an award even if it may be one cast in stone or the most worthless metal? The 8th All Africa Games was above all an opportunity for all manner of characters with a foothold on the corridors of power to dent the public treasury. Forget that the building of the Games village and related infrastructure contract awards for the provision of logistics utilised for the games were completely devoid of due process oversight. Not only that, even the World Bank also objected to the colossal figures quoted for the construction of the stadium itself. But if the president truly deserved his platinum, then I have a few clues on why:

Edrees Abdulkareem may have had his say over the matter; but in truth, Nigerians, including those born after 1999, needed no reminding that Nigeria as at today is truly *jaga-jaga*. In the last six months, Nigerians have had to contend with

several disasters that left deep scars on our national psyche. Take the Bellview and Sosoiso air mishaps for example, or the daily carnages on our pothole-strewn highways, which Tony Anenih claimed to have spent fortunes and the picture of absolute hopelessness becomes too painful to bear. For those lucky enough to survive the often horrifying accidents, there are no well-equipped state-run hospitals to run to. And even where there are privately-run hospitals, a greater majority of our countrymen simply cannot afford them.

Since this regime happened on us, the general state of insecurity has been so terrible that most Nigerians have jettisoned night travel altogether. Today, you need God's mercies to travel successfully even during the daytime. The reason: armed robbers are having a field day at our collective expense on the same potholed highways and our inner cities. The robbers - mostly remnants of Hissen Habre's ragtag rebel army - used to be more notorious in the North-Eastern axis of the country. Now, thanks to a president prepared to play politics with almost everything including our security, they feel emboldened enough to operate deep into our hinterland in army and police uniforms too! For sometime, they rendered the Gusau to Sokoto highway their fiefdom; now they operate close to four times daily between Lokoja and Auchi.

They are armed with sophisticated weapons and operate openly often within the vicinity of checkpoints mounted by the other armed robbers on our highways, the Nigeria Police, that is. You are at liberty to question my sarcastic characterisation of the police in that manner, but one thing is beyond dispute: like the other robbers, they are equally armed, and they openly extort money from us on the highways very often against our wish. If I may also hasten to add, their abysmal welfare situation and intended strike do not in the slightest alter their public image, or belie the fact that they often connive with the same robbers or even operate together when it suits them.

Call a friend, an uncle, or even a colleague in the office and the story would be pretty much the same. If they managed to survive the experience unscathed, there would be gory tales of rape and slaughter perpetrated by hoodlums who obviously believe they can strike with impunity. The tragedy is that this administration, or rather this platinum president, simply hasn't got the slightest clue on how to tackle the problem. In his usual combative style at any hint of dissent, he is disdainful of police agitation for enhanced welfare and has virtually told them to take a hike, up Aso Rock presumably. But while - for now at least - he remains protected by officialdom and the security apparatus around him, we are not so lucky.

The greater majority of Nigerians without the resources to flee or protect themselves will remain paralysed in fear at what would happen when the police as expected join the robbers on the highways and cities in unleashing mayhem on the prostrate citizenry. We have not reached there yet, but there are signs everywhere that we are getting too eerily close to Thomas Hobbes's state of nature where every man or woman is forced to fend for themselves. From the activities of militants in the Niger Delta, which have graduated to wanton hostage-taking and sabotage of government infrastructure, to the plane crashes and the recent outbreak of the dreaded bird flu in which the government displayed an appalling lack of preparedness and ability in crisis management, we should be under few illusions that what we are confronted with presently is something close to a virtual paralysis of the state from which we will require God's special deliverance in the coming days and months.

The only business in town these days is the third term business, and; without necessarily going gung-ho about it, the president, by his actions and inactions, has thrown down the gauntlet to all of us no matter what our tribe, religion or occupation: it is either we are with him or against him. In fatalistic fashion, he seems hell bent on dying in office. Even as I write, the riots that trailed the protests at the irresponsible cartoons out of Denmark are threatening to spiral out of control. Our emperor is sure to milk the crises for political capital, especially as it relates to his desperate divide-and-rule strategy. It would be one further opportunity to showcase his indispensability, especially against the backdrop of the crises in the Niger Delta.

Without any doubt, with 2007 fast approaching, the nation is being primed for anarchy, with OBJ as the principal beneficiary. The National Assembly, nearly all governors, irrespective of party affiliation, as well as leaders of organised labour, have been cowed into submission. Most governors have soiled their fingers and are scared stiff of the EFCC bloodhound. The men and women in the National Assembly have sold their conscience and most of their self-respect in the process. The leaders of organised labour are not better than petty contractors who depend on government for patronage. They say one thing in the daytime and whisper a different thing at nightfall. Most of our surviving statesmen are mindful of their past. These days, it seems the emperor can get away with just about anything; and for that, he earns my award in platinum studded with coal nuggets, but only for his political debauchery!

Opinion

The police, politicians and thugs

By Chijioke Edeoga

In the early hours of the 12th day of April 2003, the day that election into the National Assembly was meant to hold in Enugu State, vehicles loaded with heavily-armed thugs were dispatched to the homes of prominent politicians who were contesting elections in the political parties opposed to the ruling People's Democratic Party.

The thugs, who were sent to my father's compound (where I live) in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, were led by "General" and "Torture" notorious and well-known thugs still resident and active in Enugu. The thugs who were visibly armed with all sorts of guns were gleefully escorted by a mix of regular and mobile police officers of the Nigeria Police Force.

Luckily for me, and contrary to their expectations, I was not at home when they arrived; very early in the morning of an election day! But the absence of their quarry did not prevent those determined men from making very loud statements: windscreens of vehicles packed in front of our compound in readiness for work related to the election were shattered, while some of the vehicles were destroyed beyond repair. Subsequently, my uncle, Edward Edeoga was to be killed and property of relations and supporters damaged in an orgy of violence that went on for more than forty-eight hours.

Armed thugs backed by men of the Nigeria Police also attacked Ukehe House, the country home of the Nwodo family in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area, while yet another spectacle of fierce battle was on show at Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State where Ugo Agballah of APGA and Emeka Eze of Alliance for Democracy were the target.

In Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area, the thugs who were detailed to attack Hon. Fidel Ayogu, gubernatorial flag-bearer of the ANPP met him at home. Undeterred by the presence of two armed mobile police officers who flanked Hon. Ayogu, the thugs opened fire. Though Hon. Fidel Ayogu escaped unhurt, the two mobile policemen assigned officially to him from Mopol 21 Nyanya were cut down. Sergeant Anthony Abba died on the spot while Corporal Nienyanku remains disabled and in hospital. Two years after the brazen murder of a police officer in broad daylight by persons whose

identities are known, the Nigeria Police Force has not done what the

police of any self-respecting country should do: arrest and punish a cop(s) killer (or killers) in order to drive home the point that nobody kills an officer of the law; more so in the course of lawful duty, and gets away with it.

A recollection of these painful incidents was caused by the stories published by the *Daily Trust* and *Weekly Trust* of the growing incidence of thug activities and violence and police complicity in these notorious activities in the politics of the North-Eastern states of Nigeria. In Bauchi State, armed thugs have been deployed by the state government or its agents to attack Isa Yuguda, a former Minister of Aviation. Though denials, as expected, have been quick in coming from the state government, but I believe Isa Yuguda's version of a particular incident for two reasons: he mentioned the names of the major actors, and the incident as strange as it appears, is a chilling replay of what happened at Ukehe House on 12th April 2003. Isa Yuguda mentioned the name of an Area Commander of Police who looked on unperturbed while armed thugs closed in on him. What saved the day for Yuguda was that he had the presence of mind to call with his GSM cell phone, Mike Okiro, the DIG of police, who then ordered the Area Commander of Police to act to save a Nigerian citizen from the peril of imminent death.

The story is the same in Borno State where Honourable Muhammed Kumalia, who has represented Maiduguri metropolitan in the Federal House of Representatives since 1999 has been attacked repeatedly by thugs (ECOMOG) deployed allegedly by Governor Ali Modu Sheriff.

Mohammed Kumalia who was until recently a member of the ANPP was ambushed on the 9th of January 2005 in Biu Local Government Area when he went to condole with the Emir of Biu who lost his brother. Between January, 2005 and December 2006, Hon. Kumalia had been attacked four times in Borno State; all the time in the presence of armed men of the Nigeria Police Force.

The docility of the Borno State command intrigues,

especially in the face of evidence published in the *Daily Trust* by Mohammed Kumalia, of a letter he had written to the Inspector-General of Police alerting him of the plan to attack him. The Inspector-General, Kumalia claimed, also assured the speaker of the Federal House of Representatives who had called at Kumalia's instance that he would act to guarantee Kumalia's safety. Amazingly, on the D-day, 17th December, 2005, the 'ECOMOG' troops stormed Kumalia's house in Maiduguri. They blocked the roads, forced their way into a gated compound and smashed as many human heads and vehicles as they wished.

These incidents of police collaboration with thugs which taint our democratic practice in Nigeria and question our claim to civilisation happen all over the country with varying degrees of depravity. Nobody who claims to love a people so much, who desires to serve a people, would in order to do that subvert the organs set up to protect the same people, deprive other people of their legitimate rights to a free and fair contest, and sometimes kill political opponents.

Mercifully, a panel on the Reform of the Nigerian Police has been set up by President Olusegun Obasanjo. While we await the report of the panel, my view is that the reform of the police will start when political leaders - presidents, governors, council chairmen - desist from turning the police into tools for anti-democratic, illegal, unlawful, unconstitutional actions. A genuine reform will start once the police is no longer used to effect illegal impeachment as was the case in Oyo State; once the police are no longer used as was the case in Anambra State to abduct an executive governor and to give cover to arsonists; once the police are no longer used to rig elections as was the case in all parts of the country in 2003; once the police are no longer asked to participate (by action) in the issuing of guns to political thugs and assassins as has been the case in Enugu State since 1999; once the police are no longer obstructed in the pursuit of the killers of Dele Giwa, Rewane, Bola Ige, Harry Marshal, A.K. Dikibo, etc. Only then will Nigerians believe that genuine reform of the police is being contemplated.

Honourable Chijioke Edeoga was a member of the House of Representatives between 1999 and 2003

Trust International

World Report

Bin Laden vows never to be captured alive

Osama bin Laden vowed never to be captured alive and said the U.S. military had become as "barbaric" as Saddam Hussein in an audiotape reposted on a militant Islamic Web site after first being broadcast last month.

In the tape posted to the Web site Monday, bin Laden offered the United States a long-term truce but also said

his al-Qaida terror network would soon launch a fresh attack on American soil. The tape was initially broadcast Jan. 19 on Al-Jazeera, the pan-Arab satellite channel.

Islamic militant Web forums often repost messages from al-Qaida leaders to ensure sympathizers can see them. U.S. intelligence officials confirmed that last month's tape was of bin Laden —

making it his first message in more than a year.

"I have sworn to only live free. Even if I find bitter the taste of death, I don't want to die humiliated or deceived," bin Laden said, in the 11-minute, 26-second tape.

In drawing the comparison to American military behavior in Iraq to that of Saddam, he said:

"The jihad (holy war) is

ongoing, thank God, despite all the oppressive measures adopted by the U.S. Army and its agents (which has reached) a point where there is no difference between this criminality and Saddam's criminality."

Bin Laden also denied Bush administration assertions that it was better to fight terrorists in Iraq than on U.S. soil.

"The reality shows that

the war against America and its allies has not been limited to Iraq as he (Bush) claims. Iraq has become a point of attraction and restorer of (our) energies," he said.

The last audiotape purported to be from bin Laden was broadcast in December 2004 by Al-Jazeera. In that recording, he endorsed Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi as his deputy in Iraq and called for a boycott of

Iraqi elections.



Bin Laden

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Africa



Mogadishu is controlled by thousands of gunmen.

Mugabe to step down at end of tenure

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has promised that he will step down at the end of his current tenure.

Speaking in an interview, "Reflections at 82", aired by Newsnet on Sunday night, President Mugabe said the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) is capable of electing a successor as long as aspirants campaign properly and people rely on leaders who come through congress.

Responding to a question on whether the ruling party was capable of coming up with his successor, the president said it could be done as long as this was carried out in the right manner and spirit without clandestine manoeuvrings and besmirching rivals.

"I think when the moment has come they will be able to do it. You will always get this

vying for power. They should go about it the right way. There is time to campaign, but campaign at the right time and not become divisive and over-ambitious, with secret meetings taking place and denouncing and denigrating others and soon," the president said.

"We will always rely on the leadership that is elected at congress and not from clandestine meetings — they will never win, never," he said. President Mugabe said his legacy was long as there was a vanguard of cadres willing to defend the gains of the liberation struggle.

"Yes, I want to believe there are enough cadres, some are still developing. I am sure there will be those in the future who will be prepared to uphold our sovereignty and die for the defense of our country."

Ugandan, Congolese security chiefs meet at border

Security and military chiefs from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have met at the border towns of Aru and Ariwara at the weekend, according to a local press report on Monday.

Major General Taban Amin, Uganda's Internal Security Organization (ISO) deputy director general in charge of West Nile and Congo, assured the Congolese officers that Uganda would not invade their territory.

He said "Uganda is not going to invade anybody. What we need is peace."

This was Taban's first

assignment out of the country since he was appointed by President Yoweri Museveni as ISO deputy chief.

Taban, who once led a rebel force against the Ugandan government with bases in the DRC, dismissed "intelligence" reports by the Congolese that Uganda had deployed two battalions along the border for the invasion.

A group of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army rebels led by its second commander Vincent Otti crossed to eastern DRC from southern Sudan in September last year.

Though the president has openly told his party to discuss the issue of his departure openly, not much debate has occurred though events in the run-up to the ruling party's last congress indicate that a lot may be happening under the surface.

The ruling party was gripped by a potentially divisive power struggle prior to the Congress of December 2004, during which Vice President Joice Mujuru was elected to succeed the late vice president Simon Muzenda.

Even though the party had resolved at its National People's Conference, held in Chinhoyi in 1997, to reserve the second vice president's post for a female candidate, some male candidates openly sought to overturn that decision.

The former minister of state for information and publicity Jonathan Moyo organized a clandestine meeting at Dinyane High School in Tsholotsho to which he invited six of the party's 10 provincial chairmen in a bid to torpedo the National People's Conference decision.

Fighting rocks Somalia's capital

Heavy fighting has again flared in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, after 10 people were killed on Saturday.

A BBC correspondent in the city says at least 10 people have gone to hospital after rocket-propelled grenades and anti-aircraft guns were fired.

The fighting pits a new group, the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism, against the Islamic Courts' militia.

Peace talks are due next week, aimed at restoring authority after 15 years.

Most of those killed and wounded over the weekend were civilians hit by stray bullets, says the BBC's Hassan Barise in Mogadishu.

Hundreds of families have fled their homes around the former military academy following the heaviest fighting in Mogadishu for several years.

"We remind the warring sides that no-one ever won a war during the past 15 years of fighting," said a statement read

out by Culture Minister Abdi Hashi Abdullahi.

Our correspondent says at least five warlords-cum-ministers in the transitional government are behind the new alliance, which is battling the Islamic Courts.

The courts have set up Mogadishu's only judicial system in parts of the capital but have been accused of links to al-Qaeda.

Their critics accuse the courts of being behind the killing of moderate Muslim scholars.

Our correspondent says the latest fighting is not linked to the first meeting in Somalia of the transitional parliament since it was chosen in August 2004.

The MPs have been divided

over whether Mogadishu is safe enough to host the new government.

Mr Yusuf and his supporters say it is too dangerous and has been based in Jowhar, while others, led by Parliament Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, insist that the president does not have the authority to change Somalia's capital.

The meeting is to be held on 26 February in the town of Baidoa - seen as a compromise between the two factions.

There has been no effective central government in Somalia since 1991 and rival warlords have divided the country between them.

Rains rendered thousands of refugees

homeless in Western Sahara

Aid agencies are rushing to help some 60,000 Western Sahara refugees after freak rains late last week wiped out houses and schools and damaged hospitals in camps in eastern Algeria.

Because the rains - reportedly the worst seen in the

area since 1994 - came on the heels of the UN World Food Programme's February distribution, refugees have lost an entire month's food supply, a WFP official told IRIN on Wednesday.

"Heavy, concentrated rains [at the end of last week] basically melted houses, administration buildings, the Red Cross building and schools," said Michelle Iseminger, head of WFP's office in Tindouf, Algeria. Aid workers say flooding also severely damaged hospitals and markets.

"[Refugees] had just received their monthly distribution," she said.

It is estimated that more than 150,000 Sahrawis - people from the disputed territory of Western Sahara - live in five refugee settlements near Tindouf since 1975; it is not clear exactly how many are currently in the camps. UN humanitarian agencies are assisting some 90,000 of the most vulnerable refugees.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR said the rains destroyed up to 50 percent of the mud brick houses in Awerud, Laayoune and Smara camps, leaving another 25 percent of shelters "seriously damaged and on the verge of collapse." A fourth settlement was also severely damaged.

Using its own emergency funds, WFP will begin a one-month distribution to replace the food destroyed by the rains. But the agency says the refugees' new plight put a burden on already strained food aid resources for the Sahrawi refugees.

"This makes WFP's needs tremendously more urgent," Iseminger said.

In a statement on Thursday, WFP said it needs about US \$3.6 million to cover food needs for the refugees over the next six months. "WFP intends to continue helping the refugees but it can only do so with the help of the international community," WFP regional director Amir Abdulle said after a visit to the camps. "That help is needed more than ever."

Ethiopian police foil terror attack

Ethiopian police said Sunday evening they have put under control the leadership and executors of a clandestine group that was preparing to unleash an armed urban terror assault.

The clandestine group, which had finalized preparations to launch attacks in a bid to instigate urban violence, has been put under arrest, said a police statement from the federal police anti-terrorism task force.

The statement said the group was meditating to launch simultaneous attacks in either of the two days including Sunday, targeting various government officials, people's delegates, public figures as well as private and public institutions.

According to the statement, the intended

attacks were part and parcel of the attempt to "hamper the ongoing democratization and development process as well as to dismantle the constitutional order."

However, the statement said the plots were thwarted "owing to the cooperation of the public and the relentless efforts the task force exerted over the past months."

According to the statement, the clandestine group is linked to the largest opposition Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), which, it said, "opted to pursue the path of violence after the May 15 parliamentary elections."

The group has been undertaking "various preparations over the past few months to launch an armed urban terror by reorganizing the structure of the CUD," the statement said.



Aid agencies are rushing to help some 60,000 Western Sahara refugees.

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Middle East & Asia



A bomb attack on a restaurant in Mosul killed at least five.

Many die in fresh Iraq bombings

A suicide bomber in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, has killed at least 12 people in an attack on a bus. One report of rescue workers continuing to pull charred corpses out of the wreckage of the mini-bus.

The attack occurred in Kadhimiya, a Shia dominated area of northern Baghdad at about midday local time

(0900 GMT). Elsewhere in Iraq, at least five people have been killed in a bomb attack on a restaurant in the northern city of Mosul, police and medics said.

At least one policeman was among the dead at the Abu Ali restaurant which is located near the police headquarters.

Police said that a man had eaten his breakfast before placing a bag under the counter and walking out. Another six Iraqis were killed and dozens more injured in a spate of other attacks across the country.

Five lorry drivers were reported killed when their convoy carrying building materials came under rocket and automatic weapons fire north of Baghdad, police said.

Hamas to seek common grounds with Abbas - Spokesman

Parliament spokesman of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) said on Monday that the group would seek common ground with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, but reiterated its reject of interim peace accord with Israel.

Salah al-Bardaweil said that Hamas, to form a new cabinet in the coming weeks, hoped to achieve agreement with Abbas over key internal issues during a meeting between the two sides in the Gaza City later in the day.

The talks are expected to focus on the formation of a Hamas-led new cabinet, the spokesman told a local Palestinian radio.

"We will find several subjects to talk about and we will find common grounds in these issues," he said, adding that Hamas agreed with Abbas to stem out the prevalent chaos in the Palestinian territories.

Al-Bardaweil made the statements two days after Hamas formally took over the Palestinian parliament following its landslide election victory. In a keynote speech before the newly-elected parlia-

ment on Saturday, Abbas urged Hamas, which calls for Israel's destruction, to respect previous agreements inked by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Israeli and resort to negotiations toward peace.

But Hamas defiantly rejected Abbas' calls, saying

it would not hold talks with Israel so long as the Jewish state continued occupying Palestinian land.

Al-Bardaweil reiterated Hamas' reject of previous agreements with Israel including the interim peace deal dubbed the Oslo Accords inked in 1993.

"It is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that signed the Oslo Accords with Israel, not Hamas, and it is this group that has to implement them. But it didn't get anything in return from Is-

rael," he.

The PLO is a political umbrella grouping key Palestinian factions with the Fatah movement as its backbone.

Hamas rejects the Oslo Accords, under which Israel recognizes the PLO and permits limited autonomy of the Palestinians in return for peace.

Israeli troops kill Islamic Jihad leader

The head of the armed branch of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement in the West Bank region of Nablus has been killed by the Israeli army.

Palestinian security sources said that Hamad Abu Sharif, chief of the Al-Quds Brigades, was gunned down by troops in the old town of Nablus in the north of the West Bank early on Monday.

An Israeli military spokesman confirmed the death of a fighter, saying: "Soldiers operating in the old town opened fire on armed men killing one of them."

Two members of a Pales-

tinian armed group, the Popular Resistance Committees, had been killed in an Israeli air strike early on Sunday.

Israeli and Palestinian sources said that the pair, implicated in the firing of rockets, had been targeted in the Khan Yunis area of southern Gaza. Palestinian medical sources said that two teenagers were also shot dead during a major Israeli army raid on a refugee camp near Nablus.

According to an AFP count, the latest killing raised the overall toll since the September 2000 start of the Palestinian uprising to 4960, four-fifths of them Palestinians.

Macedonian hostages freed in Iraq

Two Macedonian contractors kidnapped in the British-controlled area of southern Iraq have been released.

The two men, who work for a cleaning contractor, were abducted from their vehicle near Basra.

They were released on Monday morning, although there were no details given of the circumstances of their release.

Their company, Ecolog, had received a \$1m ransom demand after they were

seized while travelling from work at the UK's Shaibah military base.

The seizing of the Macedonians came days after UK forces launched an investigation following the brief capture of three Iraqis working at the base.

That incident was thought to be the first time people working for coalition forces in the area around Basra were directly targeted.

Macedonia has a small number of troops stationed in Iraq, but at least 1,000 of

its nationals, including ethnic Albanians, are also in the country working privately.

Civilian contractors working for coalition forces in central and northern Iraq have been targeted regularly by kidnappers and insurgents.

Hundreds of foreigners and thousands of Iraqis have been seized across Iraq since the US-led invasion in 2003.

Most have been freed largely unharmed, but several dozen have been killed, and others remain in captivity.

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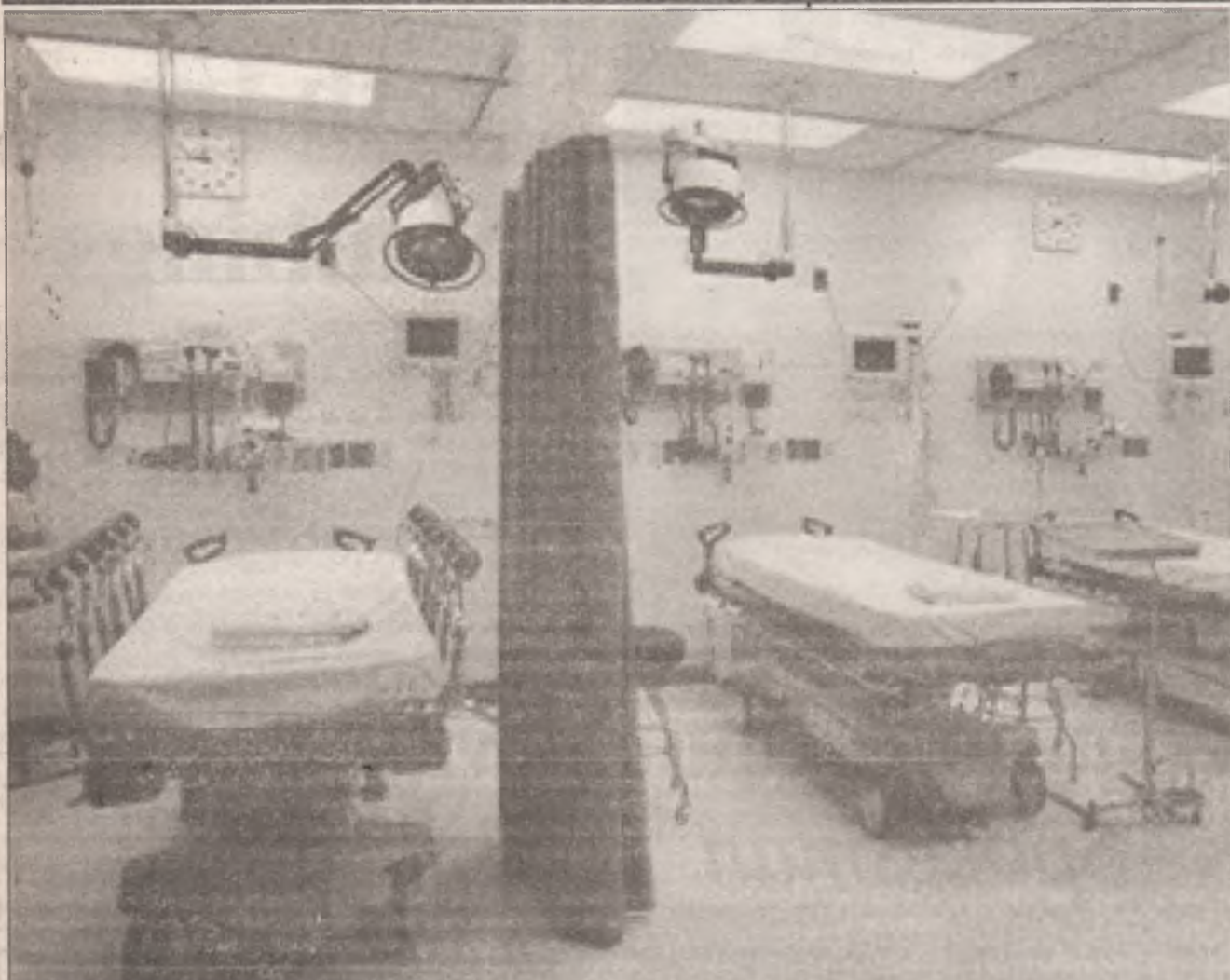
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Odd World



Cap: Doctors should stop wearing ties and traditional white coats to work because they might be responsible for spreading deadly hospital superbugs, according to a report on Monday.

BMA to doctors: Abandon bug-spreading ties

Doctors should stop wearing ties and traditional white coats to work because they might be responsible for spreading deadly hospital superbugs, according to a report on Monday.

The British Medical Association (BMA), which represents three-quarters of the country's doctors, said ties performed no beneficial function in treating patients and, as they were rarely washed, were a potential bug haven.

In Britain alone, up to 5,000 people every year are killed by hospital infections such as MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus), costing the state-

funded National Health Service as much as 1 billion pounds a year, the BMA said.

Washing hands properly was the most important action medical staff could take to help stop the spread of the so-called superbugs.

However other steps, such as doctors abandoning ties and other "functionless" clothing, could also help minimise the risk, said Peter Maguire, deputy chairman of the BMA's board of science.

"Hand-washing, wearing clothes that minimise the spread of infection such as clean, closely woven cotton, and stopping wearing ... functionless clothing such as ties will make a huge difference," Maguire added.

Turin skaters fail on fashion front

Milan fashion week is starting just down the road, dictating sexy city style for next winter. but in Turin, skaters are setting an example of what not to do.

If the ice dance costumes were anything to go by, day-glo orange would be the colour of the year, preferably cut into tiny feathery frills that barely cover the bottom.

Skaters are known for their risqué outfits, which are supposed to reflect the character of their dance but more often make fashionistas wince in pain.

On Sunday, where the dance was Latin, there were plenty of eye-sores on display, from a silver sequined bikini under a cut-away black dress to a neon pink one-armed dress for the girl with matching shiny shirt and black trousers for the man.

Even the little boy who helped pick up the flowers and cuddly toys thrown on to the ice looked like SuperTed in his red white and yellow jumpsuit.

"I think it's good to have slinky outfits. If you have the body, why not show it?" said Israeli ice dancer Galit Chait, wearing a backless pink top that gave way into a puffball of white feathers.

Her partner Sergei Sakhnovski was not so flattering. "I call it 'chicken feather'," he said.

Unsatisfied hashish buyer seeks German police help

A 52-year-old man from the German town of Darmstadt tried in vain to get a refund for 400 euros (\$475) worth of what he said was "bad marijuana" from his dealer before turning to the police for help, according to authorities.

The police then charged the man with violating drugs possession laws and confiscated the 200 grams of marijuana he brought with him to the police station, according to a report in Bild am Sonntag newspaper on Sunday.

"It is un-useable," the man told police in the hope they would help him get his money back. Amounts of up to 30 grams of marijuana are allowed in most German states for private consumption.

A meal fit for a prince provides food for thought

That may be stretching the truth somewhat but with Prince Albert of Monaco, an International Olympic Committee member, helping himself to salad and a bowl of ravioli among athletes in the Sestriere village on Sunday night, who could argue?

Stung by reports that their catering bore about as much resemblance to Italy's proud gourmet tradition as a tin of alphabet spaghetti, the powers-that-be invited a group of reporters in, to the high-security compound to taste for themselves.

"Here the athletes are fine, it is not true that they are eating badly," said village mayor Piero Gros, an Olympic Alpine skiing slalom gold medallist for Italy at the 1976 Innsbruck Games.

"They eat the things that people eat all over the world." A tray of condiments by the tented food hall entrance provided evidence of that. A bottle of HP, the brown sauce beloved by Britons determined not to let their palates be corrupted by foreign flavours, nestled alongside tomato ketchup, curry paste and maple syrup.

While not likely to win any Michelin stars, the food seemed of a higher standard than the average student cafeteria or airport self-service.

Open 24 hours, and free to all athletes, the village — catering for competitors at the mountain venues around Sestriere — serves up some 8,000 meals a day with different areas offering a range of cuisine.

There was certainly little evidence to back up the complaint last week by U.S. Alpine skier Resi Stiegler that the meat was so disgusting she feared it could be cat food or, even worse, the cat itself. "This is not supposed to be a five-star luxury restaurant," said media relations manager Loris Gherra. "They are athletes and not people who need to have their food accompanied by champagne and Barolo wine.

"If someone wants to eat a swordfish steak, they may be disappointed."

Athletes questioned over their meals seemed generally content with what was on offer, and particularly satisfied with the mountains of fresh fruit.

"When we started out it was kind of interesting but now it is definitely good," said Ethiopian cross country skier Robel Teklemariam, helping himself to pasta and a slice of pizza fresh out of the oven.

"I don't know what people were expecting or what they wanted, but I don't

think the food is that bad." United States bobsledder Jean Prahm and 2002 gold medal winning brakewoman Vonetta Flowers, were not convinced.

"There's good days and there's bad days and today was kind of a bad day," said Prahm, peeling a banana after

toying with "some kind of meat with rice — stuff that's been sitting out for a long time so that makes it kind of rough." Flowers, preparing to race on Monday, stuck to pizza and the bananas. "I think it's a lot better in Turin," she said. "They've got a McDonald's there."

Authors sell words to raise money for charity

A novel charity fundraiser in Canada has writers trading words for donations this weekend, organizers of a Toronto-area literary contest

said. Eighteen writers gathered at the Pickering Library near Toronto for the so-called Great Canadian Novel Marathon to ink a plethora of

words within three days, ending Sunday.

For a 50-Canadian-dollar donation (43.50 US dollars), an author will use a person's name in their novel, while 25 dollars gets a street name, address or pet's name put into the plot.

The money benefits a local women's shelter.

Writer and library manager Amy Caughlin told AFP she had no trouble fitting four orange cats and two gerbils into the plot of her book about an autistic boy with an ear for music.

But Caughlin said in a telephone interview that fellow author Martin Avery was struggling to include his friend's dog Chip in his gangster novel.

"The dog understands Latvian and English," she said. There is no guarantee the books will be published — quantity is valued over quality here — but such contests have raised thousands of dollars for charities in Canada in recent years.

Half of Britons chat to their motor cars

Nearly half of motorists regularly talk to their cars, giving words of encouragement ahead of a long trip and lavishing praise for a job well done at journey's end, according to research on Monday.

A survey of 2,000 owners also found 40 percent thought their car had a personality and was capable of being upset whilst 19 percent worried about how their car was feeling.

The poll, conducted by organisers of July's British International Motor Show found women rather than men tended to have a close relationship with their car. Giving a pet name to their car was not their main partners was admitted to by 20 percent of women.

fully 47 percent of drivers talked to their cars also looked at how people felt about their cars across the country.

Drivers in the southwest worry most about their car's feelings, with 36 percent admitting concern compared with just 15 percent in the Midlands.

Drivers in the northeast were most likely to attribute a character to their vehicles with 68 percent saying their car had a personality, compared with 28 percent in Wales.

More people chat happily to their cars in the southwest than anywhere else in the country, with 54 percent enjoying or good chat, compared with the more taciturn Scots where 26 percent indulged.

The survey that revealed

Business Trust



First Bank recently presented a new Peugeot 406 to Professor Bernard Kalu, Chair Occupant of the First Bank Professorial Endowment in Agronomy, University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Pictures shows Professor James Ayatse, Vice-Chancellor for the University (right) receiving the keys of the car from Mr. Suleiman Abdulkadir, Acting Area Manager, First Bank Area Office, Abuja.

Flight schedule

Virgin Nigeria
 Los - Abj: 7.00am, 10.55, 6.55pm
 Abj - Los: 9.00am, 12.55pm, 8.55pm

Los - PHC: 7.15am, 3.00pm
 PHC - Los: 9.00am, 4.45pm
 Los - Acc: 2.55pm; Acc - Los: 3.35pm
 Los - Douala: 6.30pm;
 Douala - Los: 8.30pm

Bellview Airlines Monday - Friday
 Lagos - Abuja
 0650, 0950, 1130, 1400, 1600, 1955
 Abj - Los - 0800, 1130, 1320, 1600, 1800
 Los - P/H - 0715, 1130, 1320
 Los - Kano - 0630

Saturday & Sunday
 Los - Abj - 0800, 1130, 1600, 1950
 Abj - Los - 0800, 1320, 1600, 1800
 Los - P/H - 0800, 1340, 1700
 P/H - Los - 0945, 1520, 1830
 Los - Kano - 0800
 Kano - Los - 1130

IRS Airlines
 Los - Abj - 7.15am, 8.15am, 11.00am, 12noon, 3.00pm, 4.15pm,
 Abj - Los - 10am, 11am, 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 4.15pm, 5.15pm,
 Los - PHC - 11.45am, 12.45am,
 PHC - Los - 1.30pm, 2.30pm,
 Los - Kan - 5.30pm, 6.45pm,
 Kan - Los - 7.45am, 9.00am.

Weekend
 Los - Ab - 9.15am, 10.15am, 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 11.00am, 12.00pm, 9.30am, 10.30am,
 Abj - Los - 11.00am, 12am, 2.45pm, 3.45pm, 12.45pm, 11.15am, 12.15am,
 Los - PHC - 11.5pm, 2.15pm.

Africa loses N19.2tr to corruption annually - Ribadu

African countries lose a total of \$148billion (about N19.2trillion) through corrupt practices annually, the Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu has said.

He said this figure which represents 25 percent of the continent's Gross National Product (GNP) has led to the loss of investment opportunities and is responsible for the high cost of doing business both in Nigeria and Africa at large.

Ribadu who was represented by the Head of External Cooperation Department of the EFCC, Miss Juliet Ume Ezeoke, at *The Business Convention on integrity* held in Abuja yesterday said the corrupt activities range from "bribery, tax evasion, breach of contract terms with active collusion of public officials mis-procurement, diversion of public funds and mismanagement of public resources".

By Anas A. Galadima, Asst. Business Editor

He regretted that despite efforts of regulatory and enforcement agencies, corruption persists across all sectors of the economy, pointing out that many public officials and managers in the private sector of the economy are guilty.

He observed that "most foreign businesses have been known to bribe government officials in order to win contracts or have their licenses renewed. They have also bribed law enforcement officials, thus making it difficult for business regulations to be enforced."

Ribadu said the arrest and prosecution of corrupt chief executives in the country has led to a situation where banks are now complying with financial regulations and money laundering requirements.

In his speech, Martins Ogbolu, Head, Compliance Division of Vmobile Nigeria said the "the issue of corruption has become a hydra

headed monster and for any meaningful socioeconomic growth to be achieved, it must be tackled with every state machinery and must be put in front burner of all economic reform mechanisms".

In Nigeria, economic indicators show that by 1999,

before the advent of the present democratic dispensation, the level of corruption has reached a feverish pitch. Unabashed demands for kickbacks, facilitation, of payments and inducement became the order of the day at the various levels of government".

He observed that Vmobile has made it a policy to have zero tolerance for corruption, calling on the government to accelerate efforts towards curbing the menace of corruption in the country.

Ajaokuta steel gulps N56bn

By Hamisu Muhammad, Business Reporter

Global Infrastructure Holding Nigeria Ltd (GIHL), the new owners of Delta Steel Company, and concessionary manager of Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited, said it has spent over N56 billion rehabilitating the two steel plants.

Speaking at a press conference in Abuja over the weekend, the Managing Director of Delta Steel Company (DSC) Dr. Onyeabor Nwabukei, said the amount constitutes 20 percent of the total cost of the two steel plants which are now around 90 percent completion.

He said before the coming of GIHL, the two plants are characterised as "dead infrastructure, poor government funding and sharp rise in the cost producing steel globally such that no one was ready to invest in the company."

Nwabukei said that Global would spend not less than 20 percent of \$800 million (N112 billion) which amount to (N22.4 billion) aside overhead cost.

He said already, DSC has started producing liquid steel as a result of the complete rehabilitation of the steel making shop, pellet plant, rolling mills, which now produce rounds and rib bars of 32 mm, 25mm, 20mm, and 16mm respectively.

BPE receives N2.3bn for shipping line

By Anas A. Galadima, Asst. Business Editor

The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) has received N2.3 billion from Seaforce Shipping Company Limited, representing 90 percent of the total bid price of N2.6billion for Nigerian Unity Line (NUL) Unity Line is the nation's national carrier in shipping. The payment was made on January 25, 2006.

The bureau had on 23 December 2005 received N260 million from Seaforce Limited, representing 10 percent deposit of the bid price.

Both payments by the preferred bidder were made ahead of schedule given that the deadline for 10 percent payment and the outstanding 90 percent were December 29, 2005, and January 30, 2006 respectively.

At the opening of bids for NUL on December 1, 2005,

Seaforce Shipping Company Limited, a subsidiary of Zenon Petroleum and Gas Limited, emerged the preferred bidder with an offer price of \$20million. The firm defeated two other bidders: Daddo - Frontline Shipping Co and Pedmacgrek Shipping and Training International (PSTI) Ltd.

Nigerian Unity Line is a public limited liability company wholly owned by the National Maritime Authority (NMA) on behalf of the Federal Government.

It was incorporated on 23rd January 1995 to serve as a model shipping line for the maritime industry after the liquidation of the Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL) and to exploit the extensive opportunities that exist in the shipping sector.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Dollar	131.86	132.86
Pounds	239.27	241.09
EURO	164.42	165.66
YEN	1.20	1.21
WAUA	193.58	195.04
RIYAL	35.15	35.42
CFA	0.240	0.250
Rand	20.54	21.55
S/Dollar	8.00	9.52
Yuan	16.00	17.00

Business Trust

Niger Delta attacks raise oil prices

Oil prices have risen by more than \$1 a barrel yesterday, after fresh violence cut production in Nigeria, the world's eighth largest exporter.

Nigeria's oil exports fell by 15% after militants kidnapped nine foreign workers and again attacked facilities in the Niger Delta over the weekend.

With the militia now promising more violence, analysts fear such attacks could continue for at least a year.

The price of Brent crude was up \$1.26 to \$61.15 a barrel in early trade.

There was no movement to the benchmark US light crude, as the New York Mercantile Exchange closed yesterday for the US President's Day holiday.

The new surge in violence Nigeria's main oil producing region comes after an earlier attack in January.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta said it would decide the hostages' fate "in the coming days", and has also threatened to start launching rock-

ets at international tankers.

The group is seeking greater control of the oil wealth produced in the region.

"I think this thing [the violence in the Niger Delta] is a chronic situation that will last at least a year," said Tony Nunan, a manager at Mits-

ubishi Corporation's risk management business.

Anglo-Dutch oil giant Royal Dutch Shell, which has substantial interests in Nigeria, said at the weekend that it had suspended 455,000 barrels per day of production following the latest attacks.

Mr Bigg's gets commendation for empowering Nigerians

Afribank Nigeria plc has commended the management of Mr. Bigg's Division of UACN for promoting local investment drive and empowering Nigerian entrepreneurs through franchising.

According to a release from the bank signed by Mr Lanre Alabi under the Scheme, entrepreneurs with requisite managerial competence and financial resources are licensed to operate Mr. Bigg's restaurants nationwide.

The ownership and control of such restaurants reside with the investors while Mr. Bigg's provides technical guidance on such areas as brand management, quality

control, advertising and marketing research.

The Managing Director of Afribank, Mr Patrick Akinkuotu noted that the initiative of the management of Mr. Bigg's has contributed immensely to the accessibility of its services in major cities in Nigeria while it has also tremendously facilitated entrepreneurial spirit in the country.

He said that Mr. Bigg's franchising option has proven to be a mutually beneficial business arrangement which industrialists in Nigeria should emulate.

According to him, "the franchise programme has opened an avenue for the company to expand its operat-

Afribank Nigeria Plc is having a good outing at the on going Kaduna International Trade Fair as participants and visitors are taking advantage of its flexible Account Opening policy.

According to the bank's image maker, Lanre Alabi in line with its broad customer friendly strategy, Afribank is opening Savings Accounts for participants at no cost at the fair ground. The accounts are to be transferred to any of the 165 branches of the bank nationwide. All branches of the bank are connected on-

Afribank opens free accounts for participants at Kaduna fair

line real-time. This enables customers to operate their accounts from any branch in any part of the country.

In keeping to its slogan, "efficient and courteous", the process of opening accounts for participants at the fair takes only five minutes. The bank has set up a complete banking hall to serve all its

customers.

Mallam Adamu Suraju, a trader from Maiduguri, who opened a savings account with Afribank at the fair praised Afribank's Free Account Opening initiative stating that this would help many small traders to operate bank accounts.

Participants are also opening Current Accounts with as low as N5,000.00 while the process has been simplified to make it convenient for them.

Afribank is also recording huge patronage from corporate institutions and traders at the fair as the banking services offered by the bank at the fair are tailored to meet their needs. For example participants variously commended the bank's services like Afribank Cash Evacuation Scheme, Afribank Cash express, Afribank Bulk Counting facilities, Afribank ValuCard and free advisory services offered at the fair.

Afribank is also showing appreciation to those patronizing its services at the fair with assorted corporate gifts.

He pointed out that the franchise is open to serious-minded investors who are willing to invest a minimum of N40 million, and will also make themselves available for oversight functions either directly or through representatives.

He assured that the Bank would continue to meet the diverse needs of investors, traders, businessmen and women, artisans, public servants and institutional customers.

From just one restaurant set up twelve years ago to tap

into the lucrative quick service restaurant sub-sector of the Nigerian economy, Mr Bigg's Restaurant Chain has grown to 179 outlets as at January 31st 2006. Three of these outlets are located in Ghana.

General Manager, Franchise Operations Mr Solomon Aigbavboa said the company plans to open 50 restaurants this year, out of which 30 are expected to be by franchise.

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From just one restaurant set up twelve years ago to tap

ZARIA ACADEMY SHIKA ZARIA

P.O. Box 532 Zaria

069: 550938, 551740, 551742, 551743 (08054531235, 08059280585, 08057266396, 08054531239)

Admission into JS1 & SSI * 2006/2007 Academic Session * Entrance Exam.

The management of Zaria Academy wishes to inform the public that the Entrance Examination for admission into JS1 and SSI of 2006/2007 session will take place on Saturday 25th March, 2006 at 9.30am Applications are invited from **boys** who are in the final class of their primary schools and who will be aged at least 10 and not more than 12 years on 31st August, 2006 for JS1 admission. For SSI admission, applications are invited from boys who have completed their JSS with credit in the English Language, Mathematics and at least 3 other subjects and who will be aged 13 and not more than 15 years on 31st August, 2006.

Method of Application

Application forms for the entrance examination will be issued on the payment of non-refundable fee of N2, 500.00 only for JS1 and of N3, 000.00 only for SSI at the following selling centres:

- Zaria Academy, Kilometre 10, Zaria - Funtua Road, Shika, Kaduna State.
- Sacred Heart School, Independence Way, Kaduna, Kaduna State.
- Panaf Nursery, Primary and Secondary School, Ethiopia by Gabon Street, Barnawa, Kaduna.
- New Capital School, No. 19, Kwame Nkrumah Road, Asokoro, Abuja. F.C.T.
- Lugbe International Academy, Lugbe Phase 11, Abuja. F.C.T.
- Roberto International Primary School, Wuse II, Abuja. F.C.T.
- Nadi International School, Yola, Adamawa State.
- Fariah Nursery/Primary School-Fadamar Mada, Bauchi, Bauchi State.
- Plateau Private School, Bauchi Ring Road, Jos, Plateau State.
- CBDA Primary School, Maiduguri, Borno State.
- Hadid Pharmacy, Tarauni Shopping Complex, Sabo Bakin Zuwo Road, Kano State.
- The Bells Comprehensive Secondary Schools Boys and Girls, Ota, Ogun State.

With the installation of the latest information technology facilities to enhance learning, Zaria Academy is aiming for greater heights from the enviable standard it already maintains. The Academy possesses a fully automated and computerised environment, including, intranet, internet, voice over IT, Computer Lab and System engineering, an integrated website and a V-SAT infrastructure that ensures real-time communication between parents, the school, students and the general public. These facilities have been set up to further enhance the quality and standard of education of the students.

Examination Centres

There will be three examination centres:

- Zaria Academy, Kilometre 10, Zaria - Funtua Road, Shika, Kaduna State.
- New Capital School, No. 19, Nkrumah Road, Asokoro, Abuja, F.C.T.
- The Bells Comprehensive Secondary Schools for Boys and Girls, Ota, Ogun State.

Application forms may also be purchased at the examination centres on the day of the examination. Parents who intend to do that should ensure that they arrive at the centre by 8.30 am; bringing 2 recent passport -sized photographs for each candidate.

For further information, visit or call 069-550938, 551740, 551742 or 551743 and call phone Nos. 08054531235, 08059280585, 08057266396, 08054531239 or visit our website: www.zariaacademy.edu

Signed:

Reuben U. Nyikwagh, M.A.
Principal.

Business Trust

Motoring



Honda Odyssey

Honda Odyssey fit for a mobile home

The third-generation Honda Odyssey minivan is designed to be more popular than ever, with everything from sharper styling to an engine with a cylinder deactivation feature to improve fuel economy.

The minivan market has become more competitive since Honda last revamped the Odyssey for 1999, as minivans have become increasingly like small mobile homes with lots of comfort and convenience features, including DVD entertainment systems.

Honda thus was left with no option but to redesign the 2005 Odyssey. Its predecessor was clunky looking, but was roomy and car-like and carried Honda's revered nameplate.

By Hamisu Muhammad, Business Reporter

Revised styling eliminates the front-wheel-drive Odyssey's boxy styling, and it gets more power, better road manners and additional safety features.

Odyssey drawbacks include no all-wheel-drive feature like the Toyota Sienna's, and the Nissan Quest minivan is more sharply styled. Also, the Odyssey's second-row seats don't fold into the floor.

But the new Odyssey according to Honda, provides more performance and versatility. And there's a new top-line Touring trim level, which has features including power adjustable pedals, Tri-Zone automatic

climate control for all seating areas, premium audio system and power tailgate.

A new, easily used fold-in-the-floor third row seat is split 60/40 to make it easier to fold than the old single-piece full-across seat. The new seat provides room for one or two third-row passengers if one half of it has to be folded forward for more cargo room. Such space is plentiful, even with the third-row seat completely in its normal position.

The new Odyssey has the same rather long 118.1-inch wheelbase of its predecessor and nearly the same length and height. However, it's about an inch wider for added shoulder room and third-row leg room. The extra width also gives it

a slightly more muscular look.

Even the entry LX offers lots of stuff; it has the usual power accessories and plenty of comfort, convenience and safety items, which include a new anti-skid system and side-curtain airbags with rollover sensors for all seating rows. Anti-lock brakes and traction control also are standard.

Both versions of the smooth Odyssey engine are hooked to a responsive 5-speed automatic transmission, which is controlled by a new dashboard-mounted shifter. While that's a handy location, I found the shifter action makes it easy to slip into the wrong gear if a driver isn't careful.

This, it claims, as outside the N320 million it spends monthly on the combine staff strength of 3,900 Nigeria workers of the two plants and 600 contract staff.

Tips

What affects fuel economy?

Weather conditions, aerodynamic drag as a vehicle moves through the air, use of accessories, tire inflation and wheel alignment, the tuning of the engine, how much weight a vehicle is carrying, its speed and a driver's habits all play a role.

For instance, driving up a mountain road with a 7 percent grade can cut fuel economy by as much as 25 percent.

If tires aren't properly inflated, fuel economy can be cut by up to 6 percent, and misaligned wheels also decrease fuel economy, said one Ford engineer.

And drivers who manage their driving habits accelerating gradually, driving smoothly and with care can boost fuel economy as much as 20 percent compared to a more aggressive driving style, the EPA says.

Auto Briefs

'Lotus not for sale'

Malaysia's ailing national carmaker Proton has dismissed an offer by former chief executive Mahaleel Ariff to buy its British sports car outfit Lotus for one pound (1.74 dollars). "We are not interested to sell it for whatever value," Proton managing director Syed Zainal Abidin Syed Mohd Tahir said Sunday.

Mahaleel, a protege of former premier Mahathir Mohamad who set up Proton as part of Malaysia's drive into heavy industry in the 1980s, has repeatedly attacked the sale of Proton's stake in motorcycle maker Agusta for one euro (1.2 dollars).

Mahaleel, along with Mahathir who remains adviser to Proton, in an apparent swipe last week at Proton, offered to buy Proton's Lotus unit for one pound.

Mahaleel was quoted as saying by the Edge financial weekly last week that "Since precedent has been set, we would like to publicly register our interest to acquire for one British pound if and when Lotus is put for sale." "Should it be more than one pound, we with Mahathir would like to register our interest to bid for it," he said.

The loss-making Proton announced in December it had sold its 57.75 percent stake in Agusta to Italy's Gevi SPA, which will assume Agusta's restructured frozen debts of 106.9 million euros and shoulder working capital requirements of 32.5 million euros.

Mahathir and Mahaleel have criticised the sale as unnecessary and ill-conceived. Proton suffered a net loss of 154.33 million ringgit (41.49 million dollars) for the second quarter to September, reversing a profit of 198.91 million ringgit a year earlier.

Daimler Chrysler earns \$3.3b

DaimlerChrysler AG posted improved financial results for the fourth quarter and all of 2005 on Thursday, largely because of improved revenue and profit from its Chrysler unit. But the results reflected lower sales of Mercedes-Benz and Smart autos, and company executives said competitive pressures in the U.S. and other car markets pose a continuing challenge for the world's fifth biggest automaker. "DaimlerChrysler expects an improvement in profitability in 2006, with continuous increases in operating profit during the following years," Chief Executive Dieter Zetsche told reporters at the company's event center just southwest of Stuttgart.

The German-American automaker said it is optimistic that sales of its Mercedes-Benz cars and new Chrysler models will increase through 2006, but said a major restructuring in Germany made exact figures difficult to estimate.

"Our goal is to return the Mercedes Car Group to the highest level of profitability and quality," Zetsche said, while adding that 2006 vehicle sales would likely mirror those in 2005.

Stephen B. Cheetham, a European auto analyst with Sanford C. Bernstein Ltd in London, said the results showed the company was on solid footing and moving forward.



Back view of Honda Odyssey

Frederick U. ... M.A.

The Bel's Comprehensive Secondary Schools Boys and Girls' Club

BUSINESS TRUST

Management Tips

Should a manager give orders?

Many people believe that to be a good manager you have to give orders to the people below you. They are wrong. You do not have to give orders. In fact, you should not give orders.

Don't give orders

When you give orders, you tell someone to do something. "Put that file on my desk", is an order. So is, "put Roger on the late shift". When you give an order, you do not allow the other person any latitude to think about what to do or how to do it. All they can do to satisfy your order is exactly what you ordered. There are two reasons why this is bad. First, you do not allow the person to figure out the best way to do the task. Second, you do not let them learn.

Sometimes it is appropriate to give orders. In the military, there are times when a leader has

By F. John Reh,
to give orders.

When you tell a squad to "charge that hill" you don't want them to think about it. You just want it done. However, even in the military, leaders don't give orders unless they have to. Instead of giving orders and telling someone what to do, good managers give instructions. Instead of telling them what to do, you tell them what you want done.

Give instructions instead
When you tell an employee what you want done, instead of giving an order, you give them the freedom to come up with their best way of getting that task done. It may not always be the

best way, and you may have to do some monitoring and guiding, but there is also the chance that they will come up with something better than what you planned.

When an employee is given an instruction instead of an order, they have to think. They can't just do what they were told and say they were following orders. They have to think of ways to get the job done. They have to decide which is the best way. They have to invest a little of themselves in the solution.

Also, when you give an employee an instruction, instead of an order, and let them decide for themselves the best way to accomplish the task, you are more

likely to get their buy-in and support. If they have made the decision about the best way to accomplish the task they are more likely to believe it is correct and valuable. They will defend it against others who question it.

Be clear

Orders are generally very clear. "Get the report to me by Thursday morning", does not leave much room for interpretation. So when you give instructions, instead of orders, you need to be as clear about what results you expect.

Instead of saying, "I'd like you to review the past month's data and get back to me on it", be more precise. For example, you could say, "Please review the

past month's data. By Monday morning, I expect your recommendation of the best course and a couple of alternatives for ways to close more sales." Or you could say, "By our meeting on Friday, I want you to have consolidated all the department's projects into a single master schedule. I want you to tell me where we are over committed and where we have excess capacity."

When you give instructions instead of orders there is a tendency to be less clear about the expected outcome. A good manager makes instructions clear.

Give instructions, not orders
Your job as a manager is to get things done. However, it also means getting things done

through others. When you give orders, you limit the group to your level of expertise. When you give instructions, you let the employees contribute whatever they can. It may not be as good as what you would have done, but that is an indication that you need to do further training. However, it also might be better than your idea. When that happens, you have an employee who feels involved and motivated and you look smarter.

The next time you start to give an order, give instructions instead. Tell the employee clearly what you want done. Let them figure out how to do it. It is a better solution for both of you.

Culled from John Reh's Guide to Management.



A performing manager gives instructions, not orders

Got work stress? Check the hair dresser

By Rebecca Sandles

Employees are becoming less and less happy in their jobs, according to a study, because they feel they are becoming like robots. So why is it that topping the list of most contented workers are hairdressers? And are there any lessons about the salon that the rest of us could learn?

Workers feel like robots, with little responsibility and no little scope for innovation. Hours are longer, and job satisfaction is lower, the study from the University of Kent has found. And yet, a different survey has suggested that, of all the different jobs in the UK, those who are happiest are hairdressers.

Stylist Emma Martin says the reason is simple: "If you didn't like hairdressing, you couldn't do it," she says. "You can't be miserable. Who wants to have their hair cut by someone who's grumpy?"

She has a point. As the scissors descend it would be disconcerting to hear an outpouring of anger aimed at the salon boss.

complaints of varicose veins or indeed just how much the stylist wished they had become a bank clerk. Faking it isn't really an option either.

"You have to be in a good mood, especially in a salon where there's a huge mirror in front of the client. They can see exactly the faces you're pulling behind them," says Emma.

A hairdresser for 22 years, Emma is self-employed and many of her clients have become friends after years of her preening their locks. She is still enjoying it and believes the profession is gaining esteem - TV shows like *The Salon* and *Cutting It* might be making a difference.

"A few years ago it was like, 'you're a hairdresser, you can't have a brain'. But hairdressers are more respected now than they used to be," she says.

"People see hairdressers do work fairly hard and can be creative. It's not just about slapping on some colour and a quick five minute chop."

It's like a friendship, but because you're a hairdresser, not a friend or a social worker, you

don't have the stress of responsibility

Emma Martin
Hairdressers 'happiest at work'

But Emma is self-employed, deciding whom she books in and when. What about on the shopfloor? Don't client nerves rub off?

Getting a haircut does make many people feel vulnerable. Someone they hardly know is standing behind them about to go to work on their self-esteem with a razor sharp instrument. The fear usually dates back to some dreadfully brutal chop in childhood.

Saturday is a salon's busiest day and it's no exception at Bavardez in Greenwich, South London. With 40 clients walking through the door on that day alone, some nervous about a new style, all expecting to leave looking and feeling better, surely the pressure must be on?

Owner Annie Keenan isn't feeling it as she tweezers strands of Peggy Poole's hair through a rubber cap.

Intimate details

"People do get their hair done when they're feeling low. You're producing something that makes you feel good and they go out of the door happy," she says.

Regular Peggy seems to be suffering no anxiety about what she might look like when the cap is pulled from her head.

"If someone says what would you choose to do for two hours I'd say the hairdressers, it's a treat," she says.

The role of the four stylists here is more than simply removing split ends and concealing grey. They have to chat too, says Gordon Oswald as he grabs a sandwich at the back of the salon between clients.

"It's about relaxing them. When you get home you're talked out," he says. "Everyone's different. I've cut some people's hair for 10 years and know nothing about them. Others come in twice and I know their life story."

Peggy suffers no anxiety
But dealing with the public supposedly contributes to stress levels in jobs. Listening to people telling you their intimate de-

tails - Emma once had to listen to a colourful account of a three-some her client had recently taken part in - every day would surely undermine workplace happiness?

One chair along from Annie and Peggy, Julie-Smith is trimming hair, just as she has done most Saturdays for the past 20-odd years.

"Sometimes it can be very personal and yes, some people do off-load. But it's the gossip element and at the end of the day, you're not responsible," she says.

Back in her kitchen Emma prepares some foil sheets for the afternoon. Does she realise there are people who have woken up to a bad hair day and are relying on her to rejuvenate them? They will be paying her to make them not only look better, but also hear their problems and be bubbly and smiley as well. It clearly doesn't bother her.

"I know people look forward to having their hair done. Most of my clients book six weeks in advance," she says. "People go to a hairdresser not just because

of how they cut their hair, but because of their personality as well.

"It's like a friendship, but because you're a hairdresser, not a friend or a social worker, you don't have the stress of responsibility."

Catherine, Manchester
I have never met a miserable barber in my life

David Jeffries
I can quite believe the 'happy chopper' label given to hairdressers. It is always a pleasure to have my hair cut. So relaxing as well. I have never met a miserable barber in my life.

My grandfather was a gentleman's hairdresser all his working life. He was always a happy soul, too. He worked in an establishment in Moorgate, still there last time I looked. All short back and sides and 'anything for the weekend'. I used to go to Amos Grove Tube station to meet him with Dad - I can still see his smiling face and remember being lifted over those so-high kerbs outside the station Dad lifting me up by one hand, Granddad the other and me swinging between them.

Culled from BBC Insideph

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2006

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
ADSWITCH PLC.	1	1.48	2,000	2,960.00
Sector Totals	1		2,000	2,960.00
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	3	1.13	5,306	6,061.92
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	3	0.90	2,500	2,250.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	12	18.00	17,229	310,122.00
PRESCO PLC.	7	11.06	20,672	234,471.80
Sector Totals	25		45,707	552,905.72
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	19	2.50	148,316	371,138.81
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	11	5.33	49,787	264,042.64
Sector Totals	30		198,103	635,181.45
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	147	2.63	4,841,893	12,666,518.74
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	3	9.10	259,998	2,365,981.80
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.	1	1.12	234	262.08
DIAMOND BANK PLC	2	7.75	210,000	1,627,500.00
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	2	5.11	11,000	56,210.00
FIDELITY BANK PLC	3	2.93	783,506	2,295,672.58
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	450	37.90	2,757,610	105,777,696.53
GTBANK PLC.	251	14.00	5,503,918	76,680,802.24
GUARDIAN EXPRESS BANK PLC	9	1.51	2,132,500	3,220,075.00
INVESTMENT BANKING	2	4.57	305,000	1,393,850.00
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	138	10.28	4,604,649	47,121,978.18
NAL BANK PLC.	32	2.80	13,252,411	37,106,750.80
OCEANIC BANK PLC	25	5.87	906,143	5,277,770.17
PLATINUM BANK PLC	1	2.60	5,200,000	13,520,000.00
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	4	0.36	29,771	10,717.56
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	89	12.15	10,695,693	129,418,815.78
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	138	25.48	625,813	15,945,719.24
WEMA BANK PLC.	14	3.74	1,666,455	6,232,541.70
ZENITH BANK PLC	18	19.64	65,554	1,287,480.56
Sector Totals	1,329		53,852,148	462,006,338.96
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	70	103.51	89,463	9,260,245.04
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	253	36.50	1,201,896	43,899,146.95
Sector Totals	323		1,291,359	53,159,391.99
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	100	33.71	1,180,614	39,955,864.48
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	17	6.50	438,000	2,847,000.00
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	4	7.00	109,006	763,042.00
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	75	18.17	420,383	7,655,100.96
Sector Totals	196		2,148,003	51,221,007.44
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	7	3.60	174,228	627,220.80
CAP PLC.	19	9.00	137,079	1,221,485.52
D. N. MEYER PLC.	5	3.46	3,076	10,615.64
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	1	4.20	1,822	7,652.40
Sector Totals	32		316,205	1,866,974.36
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	1.49	399	594.51
Sector Totals	1		399	594.51
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	9	1.19	48,575	57,795.85
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	8	3.40	5,957	20,253.80
JOHN HOLT PLC.	2	1.45	3,116	4,540.52
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	29	16.20	102,532	1,661,018.40
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	90	17.00	493,795	8,390,791.41
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	94	20.55	382,767	7,843,292.37
Sector Totals	232		1,036,742	17,977,692.35
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	1	1.09	50,000	54,500.00
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	7	21.51	10,027	215,680.77
Sector Totals	8		60,027	270,180.77
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	36	30.00	212,629	6,416,245.50
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	56	57.62	507,733	29,232,490.45
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	50	28.20	113,590	3,216,649.20
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	33	61.00	56,684	3,452,448.80
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	23	128.00	128,000	16,384,000.00
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	4	14.99	18,600	278,894.00
Sector Totals	200		927,151	46,000,400.94
HEALTHCARE				
BCN PLC.	1	0.61	1,000	610.00
CHRISTLIEB PLC.	2	0.56	1,167	653.52
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	4	2.54	15,762	40,035.48
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC	23	10.05	82,952	833,406.65
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	1	0.76	28,208	21,438.08
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	6	3.23	10,900	35,207.00
Sector Totals	37		139,989	931,350.73
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
B.O.C. GASES PLC	3	2.40	2,172	5,212.80
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	3	0.73	175,000	127,750.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	21	3.15	150,582	477,611.60
VONO PRODUCTS PLC.	1	1.06	250	265.00
Sector Totals	28		328,004	610,839.40
INSURANCE				
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	10	1.38	530,802	734,029.60
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	1	1.50	1,850	2,775.00
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	2	0.91	15,000	13,650.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	7	3.00	32,410	98,315.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	7	2.50	270,000	674,900.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	1	2.98	9,829	29,290.42
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	1	1.15	10,000	11,500.00
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	7	1.26	125,629	158,289.52
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	23	3.00	684,300	2,054,900.00
Sector Totals	59		1,679,820	3,777,649.54
MARITIME				
JAPPAUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC	3	1.90	3,500	6,650.00
Sector Totals	3		3,500	6,650.00
PACKAGING				
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	5	1.44	63,548	89,259.12
Sector Totals	5		63,548	89,259.12
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	51	40.20	1,114,177	44,785,778.40
CONOIL PLC	61	89.85	14,615	1,312,550.28
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	4	2.50	807,400	1,978,596.00
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	6	162.00	1,760	289,218.95
OANDO PLC	88	92.00	76,796	6,996,165.50
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	13	110.00	9,954	1,094,101.20
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	14	183.50	15,176	2,777,480.32
Sector Totals	237		2,039,878	59,233,890.65
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC.	4	3.66	19,800	72,468.00
Sector Totals	4		19,800	72,468.00
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	16	9.10	99,700	908,170.00
Sector Totals	16		99,700	908,170.00
TEXTILES				
AFRINT NIGERIA PLC.	11	0.28	47,800	13,460.00
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	11	1.95	84,621	165,369.35
Sector Totals	12		132,421	183,533.35
Overall Totals	2,778		64,384,504	699,507,439.28

TOP 10 TRADES AS YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
ASHAKACEM	1,228,052.00	41,554,525.08	102
WEMABANK	1,666,455.00	6,232,541.70	14
FIRSTBANK	2,888,018.00	110,720,812.92	480
GUARDIANXP	4,049,100.00	6,114,141.00	16
ACCESS	4,890,712.00	12,794,912.71	152
INTERCONT	4,968,742.00	50,864,179.29	148
PLATINUM	5,200,000.00	13,520,000.00	1
GUARANTY	5,752,818.00	80,165,422.24	261
UBA	10,744,633.00	130,012,825.18	97
NAL	13,252,411.00	37,106,750.80	32

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
TEXACO	109.00	111.00	+2.00
NESTLE	189.00	191.00	+2.00
OANDO	91.00	92.00	+1.00
TOTAL	183.00	183.50	+0.50
WAPCO	18.16	18.44	+0.28
GUARANTY	13.80	14.00	+0.20
LONGMAN	3.49	3.66	+0.17
DNMEYER	3.45	3.61	+0.16
AP	40.20	40.35	+0.15
NBC	61.00	61.11	+0.11

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
MOBIL	165.00	162.00	-3.00
CADBURY	60.47	57.85	-2.62
FIRSTBANK	39.00	37.95	-1.05
7UP	30.00	29.50	-0.50
GUINNESS	104.00	103.51	-0.49
UAC-PROP	9.31	9.10	-0.21
BERGER	3.78	3.60	-0.18
NIGERINS	3.12	3.00	-0.12
BOCGAS	2.50	2.40	-0.10
VITAFOAM	3.25	3.15	-0.10

Makarfi calls for urgent concessioning of railways

Worried by the severe deterioration of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), the governor of Kaduna State, Alhaji Mohammed Makarfi, has called for drastic solutions in order to save the corporation from collapse. Thus, he supports an urgent concessioning of the corporation so that private investors can take it over and turn it around for the benefit of all Nigerians.

Makarfi made this call last Thursday, February 16, 2006 when the Senate Committees on Privatisation and Land Transportation led by Senator Saleh Danboyi, paid him a courtesy visit at Government House, Kaduna.

A statement from the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) quoted the governor as saying "Privatisation is the best option for Nigerian Railways. Government should concentrate on governance and leave business in the hands of businessmen", the governor said.

The leader of the delegation and Chairman Senate Committee on Privatisation, Senator Saleh Danboyi, according to the statement, told the governor that they were in the state to assess the facilities of NRC, which is one of the federal government enterprises slated for privatisation.

Danboyi informed the governor that the NRC has enormous facilities in locomotives, land and buildings that have been left to deteriorate over the years. He added that the Senate committees would address the problems of NRC.

BPE had organised an oversight visit of the Zaria station of NRC, Electricity Meter Company of Nigeria, Zaria and Federal Superphosphate Fertiliser Company Limited, Kaduna for the Senators. The Zaria station is the headquarters of the Northern District of NRC.

The Senate and BPE team was received and conducted round the vast Railway station in Zaria by the Station Manager, Engineer Abdulaziz Subir. The team inspected both the running shed and heavy repair workshops of the station and saw several locomotives lying waste.

Subir explained that most of the locomotives, especially the ones imported from China, do not have spare parts for their repairs. He said that the station now lacks the locomotives to meet the demands of people who want the station to move various things from one place to another.

The study tour organised by the Bureau was to enable members of the senate committees see for themselves the state of the facilities of the NRC in Zaria and environs.

The BPE member of the delegation, Mr. Kayode Khalidson said the BPE was working very hard to conclude the concession of the corporation. "We need a modern railway system that can serve the best interest of Nigeria, and the best way to do it is through privatisation" Khalidson said.

Hajj: memories of a

Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam, is a life-time journey full of memorable experiences which can never be forgotten, even with the passage of time. It is one of the unifying rituals that brings the entire Muslim Ummah together in one place under one command. In this report, our foreign reporter, Aisha Umar who was sponsored by the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs (DPA), writes on her Hajj experience in the recently concluded 2005 Hajj, and recalls other captivating memories.

Going to Makkah for Hajj, is a memorable life-time journey sought after by every Muslim. It is a fulfilment of one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, but it is only those who can afford to, or have the means of going, who are enjoined to embark on this journey. A Muslim is expected to perform hajj at least once in a life time.

Hajj is obligatory for everyone that has the means, but he or she must be healthy, sane, be a Muslim, a free man and not a slave. A well performed hajj is rewarded with paradise, and every woman who performs hajj after the first one, is given the reward of doing jihad.

The congregation of hajj, reminds one of the last day of judgement, when the entire humanity would be resurrected and assembled in one place, in a simple white garb, so that a leader and his disciples, rich and poor, prince and slave, illiterate and intellectual, would



First from (L) Ambassador Ibrahim Musa Kazure, State Minister, Foreign Affairs, Abubakar Tanko, the Head of Delegation, Ibrahim Mantu, the Deputy Chairman Technical Committee on Hajj (TCH) Alhaji Sadiq (Walin Ganye) second left, after Mantu.

stand side by side, under the same class, colour and race.

Performance of hajj is a simultaneous show of many things. It is a show of creation, a show of history, and a show of the unity that binds the Muslim Ummah together.

Hajj occurs during the highly respected month of *Zul-Hajj*; the last month of the Islam calendar. During this period, Muslims all over the world get prepared for the annual pilgrimage, which is more important than the lesser hajj (Umrah).

The land of Makkah, where the Holy *Ka'aba* (House of

God) is situated, is a land full of tranquillity and peace. As you enter the town from either Madina or Jeddah, peace instead of fear or hatred, occupies your mind. The desert town is characterised by security and peace. The atmosphere is indeed captivating, and unconsciously, the spirit for worship moves you along other faithfuls during the circumambulation of the cube-shaped *Ka'aba*; the acclaimed centre of gravity in Islam.

Activities in Makkah revolve around the holy mosque. This historic edifice was built by Prophet Ibrahim

(Abraham) on the order God, and for the sole aim of worshipping Him alone. Since then, it has been a point of reference for all Muslims, especially during prayers.

Thoughts before leaving

Though there were a lot of problems in the airlift of intending pilgrims and there were other problems recorded, but these were not enough to dampen my excitement. With this feeling and other thoughts on my mind, I prepared for hajj, courtesy of the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs, which sponsored my trip, along with other journalists from various media

organisations. But before I left, I was full of joy. However, on the other side, I was very emotional leaving home and my loved ones behind.

On January 2nd, 2006, we finally took off from the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja on board Jordan Aviation, hired by Kabo Airlines. Immediately we took off, as a first timer, my heart started beating faster than normal. I was so apprehensive but could not tell whether it was as a result of a phobia. It kept on for sometime until my colleagues who realised the situation I was in, engaged me

in conversation which lasted throughout the trip.

To add salt to injury, there was no in-flight entertainment to occupy one. The cold food given to us was another bad experience onboard. It was cold, small and unpalatable, but in order to keep body and soul together, I forced myself to eat.

Before we arrived King Abdul-Azeez International Airport (KAIA) a crew member immediately came out from the cubicle and sprayed the area with an insecticide, which generated an argument in the plane between the passengers and the crew members. The crew members later explained that it was an internationally recommended practice to spray the plane, to avoid taking insects from one country to another. A passenger who speaks Arabic challenged them for using insecticide, and they apologised.

The Ka'aba experience

Being at Makkah for the first time for every Muslim is a thing of great joy. A city I have heard of right from childhood, and being there was like a dream. A blessed city, with so much honour and respect.

There is excitement in seeing the holy mosque (Haram), and setting my foot into the *Ka'aba*. I was overwhelmed by the feeling of joy, coming quite close to one of Allah's signs on earth, (Qibla) the direction of which one has been facing during his five daily prayers, all through my life.

Performing *dawaf* (circumambulation) was not easy be-



Pilgrims at the Jamrat stoning area.



The Prophets Mos. Medina.

first visit

ause of the crowd. But I was happy to have the opportunity, out of millions of Muslims on earth, to be part of those to perform hajj. Looking at the people assembled there you see devotion and unity of purpose, and worship of Allah. Elderly people were helped through, while some people, out of sheer euphoria, shed tears which moved my heart.

On the 8th of Dul-hajj, we took off from Jeddah to Mina. We spent five days at Mina going to perform different religious functions. On the first day there was no programme. On the 9th, we went to Arafat early, where we prayed, and prayers were also said at Arafat.

On the 10th we went for stoning and proceeded to do lawaf. After all this I felt like I have finished performing the hajj, because stoning on the 11th and 12th was less congested.

Shopping spree

Shopping was something you cannot stop pilgrims from doing, but some people seem to be taken away by this thing from their primary aim of going to Saudi Arabia. Immediately we arrived, some started shopping. Although one can understand this insatiable urge for shopping, on account of the beautiful items on display in all the shops visited. However, in order to discourage pilgrims from an unnecessary shopping spree, our carrier took drastic measures to curb the amount of luggage a pilgrim is expected to carry and reduce excess luggage. The

collection of 40kg bag was maintained, but most of the pilgrims overlooked the 10kg hand luggage.

Return

We spent the night at the Abdul- Azeez Airport before coming to Nigeria. However, that night was not without its own dramatic experience, as some of the pilgrims from Kano staged a demonstration to protest the delay in their airlift back home. They tried to prevent Ilorin pilgrims from taking off before them, but after profound deliberations with the officials, the Ilorin pilgrims took off. Their grudge was that they were at the airport three days ahead of their Ilorin counterparts, whom they claimed spent only a few hours at airport, and were asked to go. But Kano officials helped to resolve the problem, when they explained that they were operating according to the schedule given to them.

Most people who failed to comply with the 10kg hand luggage were asked to drop their luggage at the airport. Some had to open their boxes and remove the new cloths they had bought. A woman in an effort to beat the regulation wore more than five clothes, but was caught.

We finally departed on January 30, 2006, after a lot of luggage were removed from the airline.

Observations

So many things have been written and said about the inability of some intending pilgrims to make it to this year's hajj. More than 10,000 intend-

ing pilgrims were left behind in Nigeria, with Port Harcourt zone not being able to airlift even a single pilgrim.

It is sad to experience such, especially for a person that is going for the first time. It is seen as an opportunity that has slipped through ones hand, although succour came to some of the stranded pilgrims, with a promise of automatic tickets in next year's exercise.

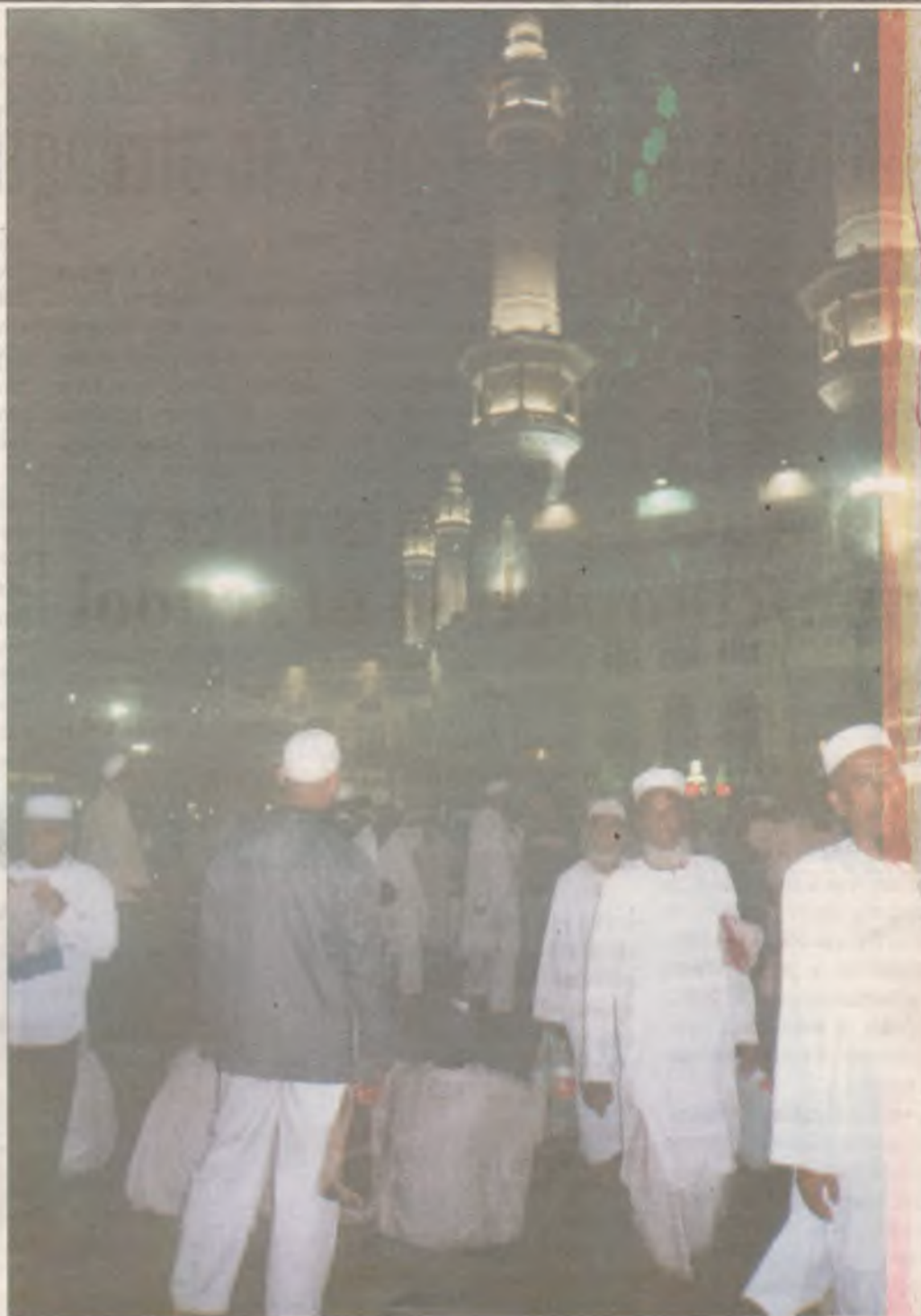
People have failed to understand that DPA has a duty to provide Visa, Passport, Basic Travel Allowance (BTA) e.t.c and this was properly managed. The problem encountered this year, is the failure by the airlines to beat the planned schedule.

The airlines were selected by the states, but at a point, the airlines failed. Observers are of the view that the committee members would have engaged new airlines, but sources hinted that the attempts failed.

However, on the side of the airlines, they complained of delay and poor payment of their contract allowances on time, to enable them position good aircraft.

There is also the case of travelling fees which some observed was too small, compared to the international standard. Nigerian pilgrims paid \$900, while countries like Cameroun pay \$4000, and even for Sudan that is close to Saudi Arabia, the price is higher compared to Nigeria, and they enjoyed better services than we did.

It is hoped that after any



(Haram) Holy Mosque at Mecca.

increment in hajj fares, the services will improve. States also should be allowed to contract reputable carriers just like Borno state. Another area that needs to be looked into is transportation, especially from Mina to Arafat to Muzdalifa and to Jamrat, were most of our pilgrim's had to trek.

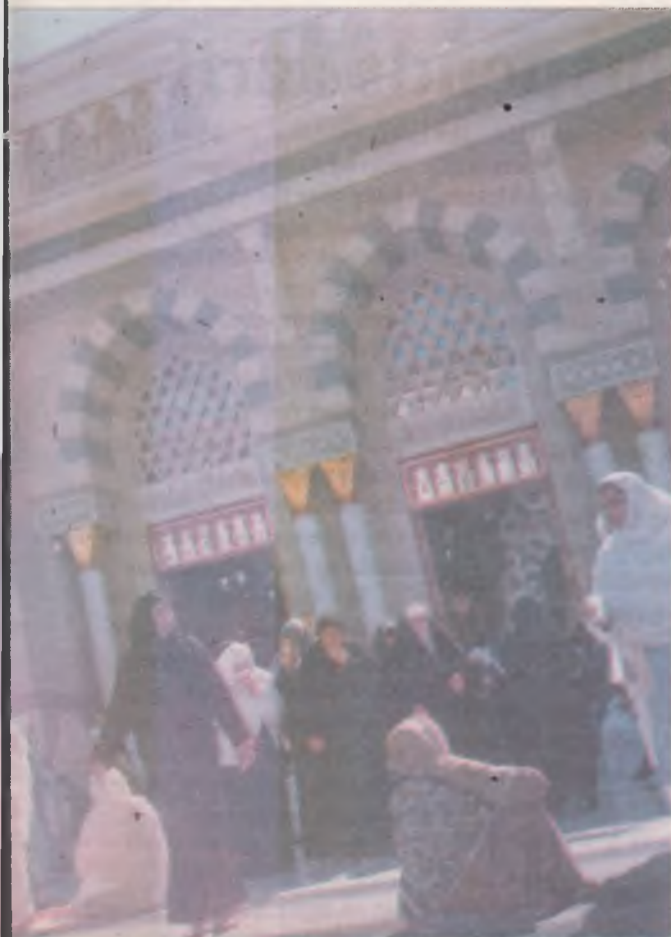
Nigerians also, should

emulate countries like Pakistan and Indonesia whose pilgrims perform hajj once in a life time, because they are very many. So after the payment of hajj fares by an individual, they will wait, which takes some five years or even more, before it reaches their turn.

An official from Indonesia told this reporter that this system has made it possible for

their governments to do the necessary bookings for accommodation, and other vital arrangements on time, such as having accommodation close to Ka'aba.

Engaging an experienced and established airline like Saudi Airlines, would minimise the problem of delays, normally associated with hajj operations in Nigeria.



Pilgrims at Arafat

KANO TRUST

Shekarau urges police to strengthen relations with community

Kano state governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, has urged the state police command to strengthen the police-community relations committees as a means of fostering greater cooperation with the citizenry

By Ahmed Abubakar,
Correspondent, (Kano)

in securing life and property. The governor was receiving the new police commissioner of Kano state, Alhaji M. D. Abubakar, on a courtesy

visit.

According to a press statement issued to *Kano Trust* and signed by the state director of press and public relations, Alhaji Sule Ya'u Sule, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau appealed to the peo-

ple to always provide the police with necessary information. He described the community-policing project as a step towards improving community participation in the provision of sustainable security.

The governor acknowledged the problems facing the police and promised to continue to support the effort of the state command to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. He recalled that the state government recently provided vehicles, communication gadgets, and sundry assistance to the police com-

mand and charged its officers and men to sustain their dedication.

Responding, the Kano state police commissioner, Alhaji M. D. Abubakar, pledged to do everything possible to tackle crime in the state. He called for greater cooperation between the government and the citizenry.

Governor Ibrahim Shekarau also received the country director of Opportunities Industrialisation Centers (OIC) International, Ms. Jacqueline Glin in his office. He pledged that youth empowerment and ethical re-

orientation would remain at the top of his administration's agenda to ensure a more progressive society.

Ms. Jacqueline Hardware Glin told the governor that her organisation is engaged in job creation and placement, as well as re-orientation training. She noted that thousands of less-privileged women and youth in Kano state are already benefiting from its programmes. She requested the government to provide the organisation with office accommodation and a vehicle to enable them function better.

Kwaci residents decry non-completion of school

Residents of Kwaci, in the Fagge local government area, have complained to the local government council about the delay in constructing a secondary school in the area, which could adversely affect the future of their children. In separate interviews with *Kano Trust* residents were dismayed that the project, which was commissioned in 2002, appears to have since been abandoned for unknown reasons.

Alhaji Sani Garba said that the non-completion of the school has negatively affected the education of their children, who now roam the streets in the absence of anywhere else to go for their studies. He feared that the abandoned school may become a hideout for criminals and Indian hemp smokers.

"It has become clear," he said, "that criminals are using the uncompleted building as

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru,
Correspondent (Kano)

their hideout. Unless the local government makes effort to complete the school, the building could be misused for crimes."

Mallam Baba Ali said that only a few people in the area could afford to pay the transport fare for their children to attend secondary schools in other areas.

"You know that poverty and hunger have engulfed every part of the country. We do not have a school in our midst," Malam Ali added, "and the majority of us are too financially handicapped to pay N100 every day to enable the children attend school elsewhere."

He emphasized that the federal and state governments' crusade for the total elimination of illiteracy, which led to the establishment of the

universal basic education scheme, could suffer a serious setback in the state if schools are not easily accessible.



Governor Ibrahim Shekarau shake hands with the Imam of Kura local government during the governor's visit to the local government...recently

Islamic body to battle unemployment

A non-governmental organisation, Islamic Peace and Development Initiatives, is alarmed by the growing spate of unemployment among youths in the country. It calls for all hands to be on deck to address the situation.

The director-general of the organisation, Bashir I. Muhammad, made the observation in a speech at a five-day skills acquisition training workshop for over 100 youths.

Bashir Muhammad observed that unemployment is among the principal factors hampering the rapid socio-economic development of the nation, which should be fought with all available weapons.

According to him, the rising rate of armed robbery and other crimes among the youth was caused by unemploy-

ment. He noted that only a collective approach by governments, NGO's and private firms could solve the problem.

The director-general however said that arrangements have reached an advanced stage for the take-off of extensive training programmes to equip Imams and Islamic scholars for self-reliance.

While declaring open the workshop, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, had applauded the organisation for its timely initiatives to eradicate unemployment.

The Emir enjoined wealthy individual stakeholders and private organisations to join forces with the government to totally eradicate unemployment.

Alleged laxity: NUT suspends scribe

The Kano state branch of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) has suspended its secretary, Mallam Saidu Adamu Chindo, indefinitely for what it described as "laxity in discharging his duties," as a result of which the election of union officials at the local government level could not hold despite being long overdue.

This was disclosed to newsmen by the union's state chairman, Alhaji Isah Yunusa Danguwa. He also disclosed that the secretary had blatantly refused to address problems bedeviling the union in the state, which has created "a confused situation."

Yunusa Danguwa revealed that the union's national body has already taken note of the situation and endorsed Alhaji Kabir Garba

By Ahmed Abubakar,
Correspondent (Kano)

Matazu to replace the suspended secretary pending an election to be held soon.

The state chairman, who described the new secretary as a dedicated union worker and civil servant, expects him to urgently address the union's problems with a view to finding lasting solutions.

He gave assurance that Alhaji Matazu will discharge his duties diligently, given his exemplary track record of honesty, hard work and dependability. He urged union members to cooperate with him by giving him all the support he needs to move the union to greater heights. He also urged union officials in the state need to be more united and focused in discharging their duties.

Speaking earlier, the newly-posted secretary, Alhaji Garba Kabir Matazu, said that he was redeployed to the state to handle issues that were threatening the unity of the union. While appealing to the union members to give him all necessary support to achieve the desired results, he assured them that he will be just and fair in discharging the new responsibility bestowed upon him.

Meanwhile, an NUT chairmanship candidate from the Kumbotso local government area of the state, Mallam Sa'adu Abdulkadir, has expressed delight over the recent suspension of the NUT scribe, describing the action as "a move in the right direction."

Mallam Sa'adu Abdulkadir, who is also a

headmaster in Sheka, observed that union members have over the years endured the non-payment of salaries when due and that headmasters in Kumbotso do not have specific schedules to guide them in their assignment.

Sa'adu also complained that staff members were not paid their 2001 annual leave grants when due. He revealed that 30% of the teachers' salaries were instead deducted to make up for the leave grant.

He disclosed that the "non-accountability and 'sit-tight' policy of the present NUT exco" have compelled him to contest for the chairman position with a view to bringing back sanity to the teaching profession.

He gave assurance that his administration will operate an open door policy and account for all union dues.

EKO TRUST

Disappearance of corpse causes ripples in Jankara

The sudden disappearance of the corpse of a hunchback mini Danfo bus conductor is causing ripples at Jankara, Ijaiye-Ojokoro area of Lagos State between residents of the area and the police at Ebenezar Police Station, Jankara.

The deceased, identified as Ige, but popularly called Lagata, was said to have been murdered on Saturday, February 4 this year at the Ebenezar Police Station, after which his corpse disappeared.

Eyewitness said the deceased's problem started on February 3, when he had a disagreement with Sule said to be a policeman at his 12, Ope Ewe Street, Jankara.

The following morning, reports said some men numbering about 11, believed to be policemen invaded the deceased's house, but could not find him before he was later found at a nearby compound.

They people alleged that he was dragged out of the house and was beaten by the invaders.

Our correspondent was informed that when his brother, Rasaki, heard him crying, he rushed to the scene, and as he tried to rescue him, the men also attacked him.

Stories by Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent (Lagos)

The two brothers were later handcuffed and taken to the police station where they were detained.

It was gathered that the police thereafter released Rasaki and asked him to go and look for money to bail his brother, however, when he returned to the police station with the money, he was shocked to find out that his brother was already dead and his corpse deposited at the back of the station.

Rasaki, surprised, went back to Ope Ewe Street to inform his relations and neighbours over the death of his brother.

Residents alleged that when they heard the shocking news and later got to the police station, the corpse had disappeared.

According to some of the residents, who spoke to our reporter, the corpse of the deceased was yet to be found.

They are suspecting that the corpse might have been stolen because of the hunchback, which they said might be used for ritual.

Experts investigate death of chickens in Dodan Barracks

Investigators are currently trying to determine whether reported cases of deaths of chickens at Dodan Barracks, Obalende, Lagos, have to do with the deadly bird flu, discovered at some poultry farms in the northern parts of the country last week.

Our correspondent gathered that there was pandemonium among residents of Dodan Barracks last Thurs-

day when they suddenly found dead chickens all over the premises.

The residents, who suspected an outbreak of the bird flu virus, were said to have alerted the commandant, Colonel Mustapha, who ordered the killing of all the chickens in the barracks.

Following this alarm, some medical personnel from the Army Medical Corps and the Lagos State Ministry of Health, reportedly visited the barracks to collect samples of the dead chickens, to ascertain whether they died of bird flu virus or other diseases.

A resident of the barracks, Mrs. Kalaingene, said she saw about five chickens dead within the premises and wondered what must have killed them.

She called on the government to visit the barracks and investigate the cause of deaths of the chickens. "They should please at least save us from death," she added.

Another resident, Mlam Bello Ranganda, confirmed that some chickens died in the barracks last Thursday morning.

A source close to Colonel Mustapha also revealed that a team of NAFDAC officials had visited the barracks to investigate the matter.



Family members and children of the late Comrade Beko Ransome-Kuti at their residence in Lagos. Pic: Oladipu Odunewu

AD donates N.5m to late members' family

The Lagos State chapter of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) over the weekend handed to the family of one of its late members, Lanre Ojumu, a cheque of N500,000 to reduce the burden on his family.

Ojumu allegedly lost his life in a scuffle last year between him and "a vicious gang led by Kunle Poly who is linked to a Lagos chieftain of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)".

In the same vein, the party gave out a cheque of N250,000 to Muri Lawal, a card-carrying member of the AD, whose right leg was amputated following a gunshot he received allegedly from a trigger-happy policeman.

Lawal was returning from a Mosque in the morning of last November when the incident occurred.

Lawal was on hand to receive his cheque, while Mrs. Iyabode Aruna, Lanre's mother, represented the Ojumu family.

The State Chairman of the party, Abiodun Adeyeye, presented the cheques at the AD Secretariat, where he reminded the police that its duty is to protect lives, rather than killing or politicising its operation.

"Our advice is that the police force must begin to see itself as responsible umpire in the political and democratisation process rather than being fixated as a tool in the hands of a political party and mechanism for unprovoked brutality.

"The taxpayers' fund which is being used to service the force is meant to safeguard lives and property of the generality of Nigerians and not for protecting the crime of a political party in power," Adeyeye stressed.

With him were Vice Chairman (Lagos), Olu Are, Secretary; Raji Lawal, Director of Organisation; Kunle Odufuwa, Publicity Secretary; Toyin Caxton-Martin, among others.

Adeyeye said the party was in court to seek redress in the two cases, and prayed God to grant the Ojumu family the fortitude to bear the loss, and Muri the strength to carry on with life.

Besides, the AD demanded the establishment of state police, which, it argued, would guarantee good security and accountability, urging the National Assembly to speed up the passage of the Police Act before it.

The AD insisted there could be no true federalism in the absence of state police, and asked Abuja to stop heaping the blame on governors at the outbreak of crisis because police commissioners are not answerable to them.

It alleged that the police operate as though it was an instrument in the hands of the ruling party, the reason, which it called on the Inspector of Police, Sunday Ehindero, to re-orientate his men to know that they are public servants.

Embrace corps members, Tinubu urges

The Lagos State Governor, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has called on employers of labour in the state and the people of the state to show the hospitality and warm welcome they have been known for over the years to corps members posted to the state for their one year national service.

The Governor, while making the call at the swearing-in-ceremony and the official opening of the orientation course for 2,293 corps members in the state, said it was part of the responsibility of employers and the people of Lagos to assist the new corps members to settle down by providing accommodation and other basic welfare needs, which will make them comfortable during their one year national service.

The governor, who was represented by the Commissioner for Special Duties and Intergovernmental Relations, Chief Henry Ajomale, praised the NYSC scheme as being a lofty and noble objective which has ensured a united and virile nation as well as being able to re-distribute skilled manpower throughout the country.

He also praised the contributions of the participants in the areas of agriculture, commerce and industry, health-care delivery system, education, environmental sanitation and various enlightenment campaigns which have continued to make the

scheme relevant to the growth and development of the Nigerian nation.

He called on the new entrants into the scheme to carry the flags of the scheme flying by improving on past achievements, more so, now that they have taken the oath of allegiance to serve in the scheme.

Anything short of this, according to the governor will negate the objectives of the NYSC scheme.

He further enjoined them to continue to take active part in all the activities lined up for the three-week induction course and show genuine interest in the entrepreneurship training, self employment and empowerment programmes as they will find out very soon that it is much better for them to start right there on camp to plan how to create jobs and employ people rather than wait for the non existing white collar jobs.

On the part of the state government, the governor assured the new corps members of its continued support and provision of a conducive environment for them to excel, urging them to make the best use of the available space at the temporary site to achieve the desired goals of the course as the state government was doing everything within its reach to ensure the early completion of the permanent camp at Igando.

Lagos jerks up exam fees

The Lagos State government has jerked up its Junior Secondary School Examination fee by 25%, bringing the fees for 2006 exam to N2,700.00 from N2,150.00. Announcing the increment at a meeting with the press, Director, State Examination Board, Olu Coker, said although Universal Basic Education provided free education at primary and Junior School levels, and Senior Secondary through the new National Commission, and should provide a quality education. According to the scrap paper

for the 9-3-4, the National Common Entrance into Federal Government Colleges has also given way for the National Common Entrance into Senior Secondary School I, Primary Education and Junior Secondary is free through the Universal Basic Education programme.

She advised all the schools in the state to comply with the directives, as the state schools are now working under the State Universal Basic Education Board, while federal schools will be under Universal Basic Education Commission.

Meanwhile, Opeyemi Bamidele, the State Commis-

sioner for Youth, Sports and Social Development has commended companies, non-governmental organisations and individuals that have donated gifts to social welfare institutions in the state.

The commissioner gave the commendation in his office while speaking on the activities of his ministry.

Barrister Bamidele stated that his ministry appreciated the supportive role of the donors, adding that the gesture was a testimony that they were partners in progress.

His words: "It is a good development that companies, non-governmental organizations and individuals are now

heeding the call of the state government by donating generously to our Social Welfare Institutions" the commissioner said.

Bamidele stated further that the donation was a pointer to the fact that the donors have now realized the need to reach out to the less-privileged in the society, adding that the responsibility of taking care of orphans, social miscreants, as well as the mentally-challenged was so enormous for the state government to shoulder alone.

Some of the donated items include, clothing materials, disinfectants, food items and washing materials.

LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION

PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN INITIATIVE TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY TO AND THE RISKS OF STI/HIV/AIDS

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

This request for expressions of interest follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business No. 667 of November 30, 2005.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission has received a grant from the African Development Fund and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this grant to eligible payments under the contract for the recruitment of staff for the project at the regional coordination office.

The services include:

Coordinator:

1. Task

- * Maintain ties between the various partners and countries of the initiative;
- * Maintain ties between the initiative and the NACs of country members;
- * Facilitate the application of the work plan of Initiative;
- * Disseminate documents required in countries of the initiative;
- * Facilitate/encourage identification and documentation of lessons learnt in the interventions of the initiative and render them accessible to other partners involved in the fight of the AIDS.;
- * Formulate and apply the community project implementation manual in accordance with procurement guidelines within the framework of community projects.

2. Qualification

Medical Doctor for public health with at least five (5) years experience in the area of HIV/AIDS control

Specialist in HIV/AIDS and Mobility

1. Task

- * Perform specific tasks ordered by the Coordinator
- * Supervise studies under the Initiative;
- * Approve community action plans and monitor their implementation;
- * Create and update a databank on STI/HIV/AIDS in the region;
- * Collate and disseminate good practices

2. Qualification

Epidemiologists with at least five (5) years experience in the area of HIV/AIDS

Manager

1. Task

- * Collate and classify all documents in relation to interventions of the initiative;
- * Prepare an action plan as well as an annual budget to be submitted to the ES and LCBC;
- * Prepare activity reports and financial reports of the initiative;
- * Prepare regular activity reports on the activities and forward them to the countries concerned;
- * Provide necessary assistance for meetings of the initiative;
- * Prepare necessary assistance for meetings of the initiative;
- * Prepare quarterly reports, including sections on disbursements and contracts to be submitted to the Executive Secretary for onward transmission to the Bank.

2. Qualification

Master or Bachelor degree in management with administration and finance as major subjects with five (5) years experience in the management of projects financed by donors. Good knowledge of English and French spoken and written. Good knowledge of computer (word, excel).

The Lake Chad Basin Commission now invites individual consultants to indicate their interest on providing the services. Interested consultants must provide a statement of capability and experience indicating that they are qualified to perform the services. This advertisement is open to consultants from eligible source countries.

A short list of five to seven consultants will be compiled in accordance with the procedures set out in the African Development Bank's Rules of Procedure for the use of consultants.

Written expressions of interest must be delivered on 25th February, 2006 to the address below:

**Executive Secretary,
Lake Chad Basin Commission,
CBLT Siege,
B.P. 727,
N'DJAMENA, TCHAD,
Telephone: (+235) 52 41 45/ (+235) 52 39 38,
Fax: (+235) 52 41 37.
E-mail: lebe@intnet.td**



PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Motto: Justice, Unity and Progress

National Secretariat: Plot 1970, Wadata Plaza, Michael Okpara Street, Wuse, Zone 5, Abuja. Tel: 09-5232569, 5233429. Fax: 09-5231299

February 20, 2006

ANNOUNCEMENT

In line with our earlier decision banning all meetings and fora that emphasize sectional interests over national unity and cohesion, the Peoples Democratic Party hereby directs all PDP National and State Legislators, as well as all card carrying members of the Party to ignore invitations to participate in any sectional meeting.

We are aware of plans for a meeting in Kano scheduled for this week by a sectional group based in the North of the country and their members in the National and State Assemblies. Such meetings defeat our goal of building bridges of unity and understanding across the federation and will therefore not be tolerated.

Party members should please note that the PDP would not take it lightly with any of its members who flout this directive.

The PDP also wishes to express its heartfelt condolence to the Government and people of Borno State for the loss of lives and property occasioned by the recent religious riots in Maiduguri. May the souls of the departed rest in peace. Amen

Senator (Dr.) Amadu Ali (CON)
National Chairman

Advertorial

New Constitution? North East Says **NO**

BEING A TEXT OF PRESS BRIEFING ON THE PLANNED CONSTITUTIONAL AMMENDMENTS, ZONAL PUBLIC HEARINGS AND THE STATE OF THE NATION

Distinguished members of the press,

We speak to you today as members of the defunct National Political Reform Conference representing the states of the North-East region and on behalf of all patriotic citizens on a matter so critical to the stability of our Nation and the sustenance of our democratic governance.

Our attention has been drawn to the so called public hearing organized by a joint committee of the National Assembly for the North-East region to be held in Maiduguri on Wednesday 22nd and Thursday 23rd February, 2006 to which we were invited.

We would not have found it necessary to hold this conference at all because we are confident that the people of Nigeria are solidly behind the view that any constitutional amendment should be left until after the 2007 elections.

We have been forced to hold this press conference because we have suddenly discovered that the worst fears of Nigerians are founded upon the true intensions of the joint committee of the national assembly on the amendment of the constitution. This is contained in the public announcement issued by that committee which appeared in the newspapers, for instance on page 10 of the Sunday Sun newspaper of 19th February, 2006.

The very title of that document reads "Invitation for the Public Presentations & Submissions by Citizens of Nigeria to the Development of a NEW CONSTITUTION" (emphasis ours). The first sentence on the body of the document states quite clearly that the intension of the committee is not to amend the 1999 constitution but to produce a new constitution we repeat to produce a new constitution.

Further down the line, the committee states that, they are calling for materials "that will assist in the development of a new constitution". The committee claims to cast their net wide to, quote, "all issues that the citizens of Nigeria believe are necessary for the making of a Constitution". Beyond the first paragraph of the statement of the committee, subsequent comments repeatedly talk about the production of a new constitution. The intention is clearly manifest by the concrete and very extensive all embracing list of 118 proposed amendments to the 1999 constitution.

We hasten to add at this point that almost every proposed amendment has absolutely nothing to do with the welfare of the masses of this country concerning their ways of life and general welfare; nothing at all on the operations of the economy, not on education, agriculture, health or poverty alleviation, which all have a direct bearing on the well being of the people.

We wish to add that subsequent sections of our statement will confirm that in fact what the Committee is trying to do is to provide a charter for autocracy, dictatorship and permanent rule which has been the undoing of African nations since they attained independence.

Having considered all these, we want to draw the attention of the public to a number of issues:

- i. There is already on record a court injunction halting the validity of whole exercise. We are dismayed that under a constitution which makes the courts the final arbiter on such matters, the committee is proceeding regardless as their hell bent with their plans on carrying on as if the courts do not matter under the existing constitution. This is a very dangerous action which portends evil for the future of this country.
- ii. Constitutional rectitude rests with all the views in Nigeria which has challenged the committee's choice of an illegal and unconstitutional framework for doing its work. Zones have never existed in any constitution prior to the 1999 constitution and we are happy to note that the framers of the 1999 constitution also rejected zones despite spurious efforts to foist them on the nation. The wisdom behind this is that zonalization is a dead certain way to promote the rapid disintegration of our country. We do not believe those who claim that the whole purpose of this exercise is a latent desire to promote the breakup of Nigeria. We however regret that true of false, the latent consequence of the committee's choice of zones is already producing controversy across the country.
- iii. We want to emphasize in connection with this that the Political Reform Conference was emphatic in its resolution that Nigeria shall be a multi state federation with a 3-tier system of government and not a single voice dissented from this view at the conference. We condemn the dishonest, deceitful, cowardly and surreptitious effort to alter the structure of our country which was won through blood and the loss of lives in an unfortunate civil war. We are strongly of the view that rulers elected into office act very immorally when they extend their authority in office beyond the constitutional provisions preferring instead to insist on their own personal opinions using public funds to impose their will on the rest of us suggesting thereby that their personal opinion is more important than the feeling of the whole nation. We caution that there exists a cause for war in any effort to alter the boundaries of our states today by devious methods thus going back 50 years on matters that were fought over during the colonial days and have been laid to rest since then.

- iv. The Political Reform Conference was also unanimous that the tenure of office for the president and governors would remain as stipulated in the 1999 constitution which provides a term of four years for the President and the Governors, including a possible re-election of an incumbent for another term of four years. The conference also agreed that holders of the offices of the President and the Governors currently serving a second term should be barred from seeking re-election to the same office. We note with serious concern that when the clamour against the attempt by the committee to alter this position became so high, the proposal was dropped from the list of amendments to be considered. We caution Nigerians to note that the withdrawal was a ruse because the proposed effective date for their intended "new constitution" is in May 2007. The implication of this constitutional amendment is that the incumbent President will be in power for the remainder of his active natural life. The 36 state Governors will also rule for a further 12 years from 2007 resulting therefore that some of them will be in power for over 20 years. We invite all of you in this country to picture your state and to think hard and contemplate your incumbent Governor ruling your state in his current style for another 12 years or more. Thus if you are 35, you will be 50 years old by the time the Governors' terms will end. We have looked for reasons why in a plural multi-ethnic multi-religious country of our size population and history of vigorous political activism we should agree to crown 36 kings in the states and an emperor at the centre for the next 20 years!

2. We believe there is sufficient reason widely held across the country that this exercise should be left alone until after the elections of 2007. Furthermore, the condition under which a country may need a complete remaking of a constitution are well known and clearly spelled out. None of these conditions are present in Nigeria today. We have a constitution which has made provisions for its own amendment, and these provisions do not give room for a review or development of a new constitution neither does it provide for any zonal public hearings. The language is specific and unambiguous on the procedures to follow. The legality of the procedure being attempted at this time is totally at variance with the provisions of the 1999 constitution which also does not provide for a joint committee of the National Assembly or even for legislators to proceed as they have done on any matter except in relation to fiscal matters. We also note that the constitution which has been operated for only 7 years in a country that has lived with several unconstitutional governments needs time for the weaknesses if any to manifest. In this regard a well articulated and well planned time table for any necessary amendment will follow. Finally, we firmly hold the view that the most important challenge facing Nigeria today is the challenge of producing successor leaders regularly after each tenure under the constitution. Any approach to stop this by deliberate action is clearly a willful act designed to impose failure on the nation and its constitution. The only other challenge after the general need for orderly succession is the conduct of an orderly, peaceful, free and fair election in 2007. We consider it anti-democratic and anti-nation to pursue any other objective.

Finally we further warn that total constitutional change at this point in time under the current illegal procedure including a fraudulent selection of loyalists and supporters will bring about chaos and disorder in our great Nation Nigeria.

This text was delivered by Dr. Ibrahim Tahir (Talban Bauchi) on behalf of the leaders of thought of north eastern states

Long live the North-East States of Nigeria.
Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

SIGNED:

NAMES	STATE	SIGNATURE
1. Ahmad Usman Faruk	Gombe	[Signature]
2. Muhi Chib. Abdulrahman	Adamawa	[Signature]
3. Malim Tahiru	Niger	[Signature]
4. M. Azeem Muz	Comos	[Signature]
5. Alhaji Mohammed Kagu Alho	Borno State	[Signature]
6. [Name]	Yobe State	[Signature]
7. Vidon A. JAULE	Benue State	[Signature]
8. Abduljelil A. Dauda	North East	[Signature]
9. B. G. Mustapha	Adamawa	[Signature]
10. Emmanuel Bovoa	Taraba	[Signature]
11. Rep. Albert S. Abiwarsha	Adamawa (Abiwarsha)	[Signature]
12. Alhaji Mulla Goni	Borno	[Signature]
13. Stephen Akmal J. Kadi (J.K.)	Tara	[Signature]
14. Prof. H. Nur Ali	Borno	[Signature]
15. Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan	Benue State	[Signature]
16. Prof. Musa Yakubu	Adamawa	[Signature]
17. Dr. Ibrahim Yakubu Lame	Bauchi	[Signature]
18. [Name]	Adamawa	[Signature]
19. [Name]	Taraba	[Signature]
20. Prof. Aude Lami	Borno	[Signature]
21. [Name]	[State]	[Signature]



CHALLENGING OPPORTUNITIES

The Society for Family Health (SFH) is one of the leading public health NGOs in Nigeria, implementing programs for improving Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS prevention and Maternal and Child Health. SFH works in partnership with the Federal Government of Nigeria, the British Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as other partners. Due to program expansion, the need to recruit qualified persons to fill vacant positions have been identified. SFH offers opportunity for career advancement; conducive work environment; competitive remuneration. If you desire to be part of our dynamic team, these should interest you:

(1) General Manager, Human Resources and Administration (Abuja)

Job Profile:

Reports to the Managing Director. The successful candidate will be responsible for drafting general administrative and HR policies; advise management on best human resources management and administrative strategies. Provides HR and Administrative support services to the divisional heads. Other responsibilities include advising management on labour and industrial laws and practices, recommending and preparing solutions, and implementing decisions on various human resources issues, including those with potential legal or public relations ramifications. This candidate will also coordinate the dissemination of policies/contract information to the divisions.

Qualifications/Experience: The desired candidate should have a minimum of first degree in Personnel Management /Business Administration / Management. A Masters degree in disciplines such as Industrial and Labour Law, membership of a related professional group (such as Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria) are added advantages. The candidate must also have a minimum of 15 years experience in Human Resources with 5 years at senior management level in a medium/large organization. In addition, the following skills among others are required:

- Substantial experience in human resources management and general administration, labour and industrial laws
- Strong research, critical thinking, analytical and problem solving skills
- Strong project management and strategic management skills
- Strong knowledge of Gender mainstreaming and HIV/AIDS work place implementation strategy.

Excellent interpersonal skills, self motivation as well as good computer/writing skills are essential attributes for this position.

(2) Gender Mainstreaming Specialist (Coordinator) – (Abuja)

Job Profile:

Reports to the General Manager, Behaviour Change Communication. The successful candidate will provide practical guidance to SFH in mainstreaming gender in the development and execution of all its programs (HIV prevention, care and support including VCT, family planning, and maternal and child health) as well as oversee the mainstreaming of gender in our human resources policies and practices. S/He will develop appropriate strategies for strengthening the development and implementation of gender sensitive research, evaluation, advocacy, training, communication and staffing agenda for the organization at all levels; review and analyse prevailing and emerging cutting edge gender issues at national and international levels and suggest how to incorporate them into SFH programming.

Qualifications/Experience: The desired candidate must possess a degree in health, medical or social science, with a minimum of four (4) years working experience in a similar position in a health related establishment. A post-graduate degree in gender or related studies will be an added advantage.

(3) Senior Manager, Accounts (Abuja) 2 Positions

Job Profile:

Reports to the Deputy General Manager, Finance and Accounts, successful candidates will coordinate an efficient Accounts Department, review financial transactions, implement management policies, procedures, internal and external financial controls and reporting responsibilities.

Qualifications/Experience: Desired candidates must have a first degree or equivalent in Accounting from a recognized university/institution, and must be a chartered accountant (ACA) with a minimum of ten (10) years relevant working experience in accounting and/or auditing. Post-graduate degree and NGO experience are added advantages. Candidates must be proficient in computer skills with good knowledge of accounting packages such as QuickBooks and excel.

(4) Deputy Manager, Accounts (MIS/Budgets) Abuja

Job Profile:

Reports to the Deputy General Manager, Finance and Accounts, the successful candidate will ensure that bank statements reflect the true inventory sales in the SFH field and head offices. S/He will closely monitor and review monthly bank reconciliations and produce reports of field offices' bank statements to the head of department. The successful candidate will also be responsible for monitoring and tracking departmental/divisional budgets.

Qualifications/Experience: The desired candidate must have a first degree or equivalent in Accounting from a recognized institution, and must be a chartered accountant (ACA) with a minimum of 8 years cognate experience in the accounts/finance department of a reputable organization. The candidate must also be proficient in computer skill with good knowledge of accounting packages such as QuickBooks and excel.

(5) Senior Coordinator, Payroll (Abuja)

Job Profile:

Reports to the Deputy General Manager, Finance and Accounts. The successful candidate will perform various specified payroll and financial software systems administration.

Qualifications/Experience: The desired candidate must have a first degree or equivalent from a recognized university/institution, with a minimum of five (5) years experience in 'Human Manager' Software administration. S/he must also be proficient in computer applications and have a good knowledge of accounting and data based management (SQL) and stock management software.

(6) Finance and Admin Officer (Port Harcourt)

Job Profile:

Reports to the Senior Manager, Accounts and assists in the Zonal and Admin/Procurement functions. The successful candidate will be based at the South - South Zonal office in Port Harcourt. S/He will be responsible for finance disbursements and retirements of the zonal cash floats, travels, bookings and reservations for SFH guests at the zone. Others include office administration, vehicle fleet management, localized procurement within the zone, and dispatch of documents/emails to head office, as well as the submission of monthly zonal financials and Admin reports.

Qualifications/Experience: A first degree or equivalent in Accounting from a recognized Institution, with a minimum of two (2) years post NYSC relevant work experience. S/he must also have experience in the use of at least one accounting package and other computer software packages such as Microsoft Office and Excel spreadsheet.

(7) Behaviour Change Communications Officers (BCCOs)

Position/Locations References:

- (i) BCCO Benin (Ref. BCCO - Benin) (to cover Edo and Delta States)
- (ii) BCCO Lagos (Ref. BCCO - Lagos) (to cover Lagos and Ogun States)

Job Profile:

Reports to the respective Regional Team Leaders. The successful candidates will be based in the location identified against each position. S/he will be responsible for implementing behaviour change communication activities of SFH within the region and work with stakeholders in HIV prevention/impact mitigation and other Reproductive Health campaigns for effective programme planning and implementation.

Qualifications/Experience: The desired candidate should possess the following:

- First degree in health sciences, social sciences, theatre arts, pharmacy or communication art
- Must have completed the National Youth Service Corp programme
- Must possess strong interpersonal, oral and written communications skills
- Must also be a self-motivated and determined team player who has the ability to work with minimal supervision

(8) Zonal Coordinators (ZC) Locations References: ZC GF (Abuja), ZC GF (Bauchi), ZC GF (Enugu), ZC GF (Kano), ZC GF (Lagos); ZC GF (Port Harcourt)

Job Profile:

Reports to the Deputy General Manager Service Delivery (GF), successful candidates will support the monitoring and evaluation, procurement and finance units of the Global Fund Project Management Unit (PMU) at the various specified zonal locations. In addition, successful candidates will make technical inputs into training, M&E, logistics, MIS and finance operations of the Global Fund PMU, and will be responsible for liaising with the funds sub-recipients, consultants and contractors within the zones.

Qualifications/Experience: The desired candidates should possess postgraduate degree in Public Health (or related disciplines) and should have a minimum of five (5) years working experience in HIV/AIDS programming. Experience in Monitoring and Evaluation (particularly in collating and managing data), working knowledge of budget management, as well as training and experience in ART service delivery will be added advantages. The candidates should be self-motivated, effective team players and must be able to accommodate and work under extremely high pressure. Demonstrated computer skills, especially in the use and application of word processing and spread sheets are added requirements for the job.

Compensation & Benefits: SFH compensation package is very attractive and designed to attract excellent candidates.

Method of Application: Candidates should submit a one-page application addressing relevant qualifications and areas of competencies and skills as identified for each position, together with a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae which indicates amongst others Grade/Class of Degree/Qualification obtained from the University/Institution, telephone numbers, functional e-mail address and current contact address (not P.O. Box). Applications should be sent within two weeks of this publication to:

The Manager, Human Resources
Society For Family Health,
8, Port Harcourt Crescent, Off Gimbiya Street
Area 11, Garki, Abuja. E-mail: recruitments@sfnigeria.org

Please indicate position applied for on the top left hand corner of the envelope. Only short listed candidates will be notified.

Relations of SFH staff and candidates who do not meet the minimum requirement for each position need not apply.

SFH is an equal opportunity employer. FEMALE CANDIDATES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO APPLY!



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ABUJA

2007 MOVEMENT

NO TO THIRD TERM PROJECT

We, concerned Legislators in the National Assembly, inspired by a determination to nip a national danger in the bud, have come together to form a redemptive group, *the 2007 Movement*.

The objectives of this Movement are:≤

i. To defend, sustain and foster the key attributes of constitutional democracy - especially the corporate dignity and independence of the legislature, and the hallowed independence of the Judiciary, without prejudice to the cultivation of the spirit of interdependence of the three realms of government.

- ii. Unequivocal defence of the rule of law in all circumstance.
- iii. Strict application of due process in the constitutional amendment exercise - especially transparency, and respect of the letter and spirit of the Constitution,
- iv. Opposition to any attempt to manipulate the legal framework and political structure, with a view to foisting a constitutional amendment for a third term Executive tenure on our fragile Federation.
- v. Transparency in all electoral processes and the sanctity of the ballot box.
- vi. Practice of participatory democracy in its widest and deepest legitimate scope.

In furtherance of these objectives and in pursuit of the immediate challenge, we hereby state our unequivocal stand on the issue of extension of the tenure of the Executive. For some time, there has been speculation in our polity concerning the reality or otherwise of a third term agenda by President Olusegun Obasanjo, and some Governors.

We wish to use this opportunity to alert Nigerians that the third term project is real. It presents a clear and present danger to the unity, stability, security, development and progress of Nigeria and our nascent democracy. We want Nigerians not to accept any longer the half truths, lies, deception and manipulations of the presidency on this issue.

We concerned Legislators of the National Assembly, hereby oppose, reject, detest and denounce unequivocally the 3rd term ambition of Mr. President and some Governors. We do so, because it is self-serving, unconstitutional, undemocratic and a retrogressive step into our sad historical experience. President Obasanjo is a lucky beneficiary of the long struggles of our people against despotic self perpetuation in office.

However, well intentioned the policies and programmes of President Obasanjo, our country is greater than any individual. The development and strengthening of our democratic institutions is more sustainable than personalization of the State in an individual. With humility, we invite all democratic forces from within and without to join us in this crusade to save our country from the clutches of despotism and tyranny.

We condemn the use of coercive forces and resources of State to blackmail, intimidate, harass, manipulate and threaten elected public office holders at all levels towards achieving this satanic project.

We note the despicable role which is being played by some captains of industry who are illegal beneficiaries of the wholesale mortgaging of the resources of this country, in this project.

We appeal to Mr. President to remember that every historical attempt at self perpetuation in our country has always met with failure. Come 29th day of May, 2007, Mr. President you have a date with history as you honourably did on the 1st day of October 1979.

We recommend your own words to President Babangida in 1992 under similar circumstance:

"I beg you in the name of Allah not to mistake the silence of our people for acquiescence or weakness and the sycophancy of the greedy and opportunistic people who parade the corridors of power as representative of the true feelings of our people. Nigeria needs peace and stability. It is too fragile to face another commotion. ... This is the time for you to have some honourable exit. May God help you and help our country".

Issued this 15th day of February, 2006 and signed by the under listed.

Signed:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Senator O. A Mamora | Lagos East |
| 2. Senator Ben Obi | Anambra Central |
| 3. Senator faruk Bello | Kebbi East |
| 4. Senator Nuhu Aliyu | Niger North |
| 5. Senator Usman Umar | Kano |
| 6. Dr. Usman Bugaje | Jibia/Kaita |
| 7. Hon Francis Amadiogu | |
| 8. Wunmi Bewaji ESQ | Lagos Mainland |
| 9. C.I.D Maduabum | Nnewi North/South/Ekuisigo |
| 10. Dr. Haruna Yerima | Biu/Bayo/Kwayo/Shani |

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 11. Mudashiru O. Husain | Oshodi/Isolo I |
| 12. Uche Onyeagucha | Owerri Federal |
| 13. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal | Kebbi/Tambuwal |
| 14. Hon. Lar Rampyal Victor | Langtang North/South |
| 15. Ifenjinaka Okoya-Thomas | Lagos Island |
| 16. Hon. Mohammed Abubakar | Maifata Maifats Tarauni |
| 17. Hon. S. A. kano Sumaila | Sumaila/Takai |
| 18. Sola Adeyeye (Prof.) | Boluwaduro/I/G/Ifedayo |
| 19. Ibrahim Shehu Kagara | Munya-Rafi-Shiroro |
| 20. Sani Saleh Minjibir | Ungogo/Minjibir |
| 21. Ade O. Adegbenjo | Ibarapa Central/North, Oyo State |
| 22. Gyang D. Dantong | Riyom/Barkin Ladi |
| 23. Hon. Dr. Wale Okediran | Iseyin/Itesiwaju?Kajola?Iwajowa |
| 24. Rep Shehu Haruna Lamba | D/Tofa/Tofa/Rimin-Gado |
| 25. Rep Arigbe-Osula Emmanuel | Oredo |
| 26. Hon. Hamzat Ganiyu | Mushin |
| 27. Hon. Arole Fancy | Surulere II, Lagos |
| 28. Hon. (Col) J. Tijani (rtd) | Atigbo Shaki East/Shaki West |
| 29. Hon. Dr. Tukur Idris Nadebo | Bakori Danja |
| 30. Hon. Hadi A. Sirika | Dutsi/Mashi |
| 31. Hon. Garba Umar | Yauri |
| 32. Hon. Jazuli Imam | Gwale |
| 33. Hon. Madiako Uche | Isikwato/Umunmerihi |
| 34. Mohammed Ali Ndume | Chubok/Danboa/Gwoza |
| 35. Hon. Farouk Adamu Aliyu | Birnin Kudu |
| 36. Hon. Nasiru G. Dantiye | Garki/Babura |
| 37. Hon. Saidu Y. Miga | Jahun/Miga |
| 38. Hon. Jibo Mohammed | Borgu/Aware |
| 39. Altine Shehu Kajiji | Yabo/Shejan |
| 40. Hon. Gabriel Y.B. Fom | Jos South/East |
| 41. Hon. Danlami Hamza | Fagge |
| 42. Hon. Usman M. Balkore | Sokoto |
| 43. Hon. Shehu U. Aliyu Yammedi | Karaye/Rogo |
| 44. Hon. Y. D. Baba Ahmed | Zaria |
| 45. Rep Umar I. E. L. Yakubu | Kano Municipal |
| 46. Hon. Wakili Aliyu | Wudil/Garko |
| 47. Abike Dabiri | Ikorodu |
| 48. Olakunle Amunikon | Agege Fed. Constituency |
| 49. Ada'u Isa Rano | Rano, Bunkure-Kibiya |
| 50. Lawal Garba | Sandamu/Daura |
| 51. M. A. Ahmed | Jama'are/Itas-Gadua |
| 52. Hon. Nasiru Abduwa Gabasawa | Gezawa/Gabasawa |
| 53. Hon. Dr. Almajir Geidam | Bursari/Geidam/Yunusari |
| 54. Hon. Kabiru Marafa Achida | Wurno/Rabah |
| 55. Hon. Baba Shattu Agaje | Agale/Lapai |
| 56. Hon. Isa Saidu | Lavun/Mokwa/Edati |
| 57. Rep. Farouk Mustapha | Katagum |
| 58. Hon. Zakari M. Shiwake | Goronyo/Gada |
| 59. Hon. Adamu Kalba | Kaltungou |
| 60. Hon. Usman Adamu Mohd | Gaya/Albasu/Ajingi |
| 61. Hon. Musa Ahmed Ibet | Rijau/Magama |
| 62. Hon. Musa Mahmood | Chanchaga |
| 63. Rep. Isa Musa Matori | Bauchi Feb. Constituency |
| 64. Rep Suleiman Adamu | Gummi |
| 65. Rep Azumi Bebeji | Kiru/BeBeji |
| 66. Hon. Bashir Idris Nadabo | Funtua/Dandume |
| 67. Hon. Saidu Yusuf Miga | Jahun/Miga |
| 68. Hon. Sirajo H. Dambatta | Danbatta/Makoda |
| 69. Hon. Moh'd kabiru Umar | Sokoto North |
| 70. Hon. Shehu Sele Homon | Bassa/Jos North |
| 71. Hon. Nasiru Balarabe Asara | Illela/Gwadabawa |
| 72. Hon. Musa Abubakar | Tangaza/Gudu |
| 73. Hon. Terngu Tsegba | Gboko/Tarka |
| 74. Hon. Sani Buhari | Igabi |
| 75. Hon. Bashir Yusuf B/Burum | T/Wade-Doguwa |
| 76. Hon. Ahmed Bichi | Bichi |
| 77. Hon. Umar Datti | Kura/Madobi |
| 78. Hon. Rev. Musa L. Wuyep | Paukshin, Kanam, Kanke |
| 79. Hon. Albea S. Atiwurcha | Gombi/Hong |
| 80. Hon. Baba Gana Tijani Banki | Bama/Ngala/Kala/Balge |
| 81. Hon. M. S. Ibrahim | Kaduna North |
| 82. Hon. Pat. Akwashiki | Akwanga/Wamba |
| 83. Hon. Peter Jiya | Bida/Gbako/Katcha |
| 84. Hon. Terfa Atii (JP) | Kwande/Ushongo |

Inside Politics

Why Obasanjo must continue

— Hon. Nzeribe

Recently a group of lawmakers pushing for constitution review sprouted in the House of Representatives. Under the auspices of Unity Forum, the group came in when suspicion was getting higher of an alleged third term agenda. Despite denials from many members, one of the forum's leaders, Hon. Chuma Nzeribe says the Unity Forum has a single goal, and that is to ensure President Olusegun Obasanjo stays in power beyond 2007. He spoke to a cross section of journalists including Habeeb Idris Pindiga.

A group has just been launched with you among the leading members. What is the purpose of setting up this forum?

We are committed to persuade the president, not the president persuading us. We are to persuade the members of the executive to seek additional term if that will ensure stability in the political process.

You mean the Unity Forum?

Yes.
Does this mean that you in the Unity Forum will endorse any constitutional amendment for third term?

I, Hon Nzeribe, will endorse any issue that I find consistent with the interest of my constituents and that will include an additional term, expunging the constitutional limit on tenure. British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has no tenure now. He is running a third term.

We should ensure an orderly development of the electoral process in this country and not place arbitrary restrictions on tenure on people. These are hangovers

of the military era.
Would you want state governors to also benefit from this third term?



Hon. Chuma Nzeribe

If a governor has performed well, his party gives him a chance, its for the elec-

torate to decide to return him for a third term or not. The issue of nomination is a party business. The restriction on tenure should come to the

parliament.

We do not mobilize in the parliament. The parliament is where you persuade the people with the force of argument, with the brilliance of your thoughts, with basic reasons. You don't mobilize in the parliament. You lobby your colleagues towards adopting your own views.

Where do you get funds for your activities?

“We should ensure an orderly development of the electoral process in this country and not place arbitrary restrictions on tenure on people. These are hangovers of the military era.”

Today you could see we didn't serve minerals of up to N5,000. Does it mean we cannot afford N5,000 to serve minerals? We are not taking any funds from any person. If we require funds we raise the funds from our own pockets.

You are from the South-east, how do you reconcile your third term agitation with the Southeast's clamour

South-East caucus that he is running for president. He is just posturing.

If any candidate comes out now, are you going to ditch Obasanjo?

If any candidate convinces me that he is better than Obasanjo, why not? So far I have not seen any.

You said the presidency should not be allocated to any section. By supporting

Obasanjo, are you not narrowing your own scope of choice to one man out of millions?

I'm not allocating the presidency to anybody. It's free for anybody who wants to contest. The president for one time has mounted a massive campaign against corruption. That's a major achievement and he is succeeding. In the South-East we have gotten more projects in this government than any previous government in this country. In my own town, Ihiala, for the first time in 700 years we are having federal projects going on in terms of constituency projects. We have never had anything like that before.

But has the president done the same thing to other parts of the country?

They have members here who are to fight for them. If their members cannot fight for them, I'm not elected to fight for somebody from Port Harcourt. I'm elected to represent the good people of Ihiala, Anambra State and so far we are getting a fair deal.

ANPP moves to reconcile Bafarawa, deputy

National headquarters of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) has set up a 10-man committee to reconcile Sokoto state governor, Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa and his deputy, Alhaji Aliyu Wamako.

The panel, headed by Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, is to complete its assignment within one month from its first day of sitting.

Terms of reference of the committee, according to ANPP's national publicity scribe, Nnamdi Olebara, were "To reconcile the governor and deputy governor of Sokoto state in the matter of the state of the party."

"To resolve all disputes affecting the proper conduct of the party affairs in the state."

"To liaise with the newly constituted caretaker committee in the state for any assistance in the discharge of your duties."

"(And) to embark on any other action deemed necessary to reinvigorate and strengthen the party in the state."

Olebara said in a statement in Abuja on Friday that the decision to set up the committee was taken by the party's national executive committee at its recent meeting.

Members of the committee include Fidel Ayogu, Yusuf Garba Ali, Daniel Obot, Muinat Obalolu, Saidu Kumo, Yinusa Adeola, Usman Abisim, Dahiru Bolnoma and David Dogoh.

party constitutions, and not the national constitution.

How many lawmakers do you have in this movement?

We are over 250 and growing.

Will you mobilize others to join this third term cam-

Jigawa Rep faces recall threat

Aggrieved voters from Birnin Kudu/Buji Federal Constituency of Jigawa state yesterday filed a petition at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) seeking for the recall of their legislator in the House of Representatives, Hon Farouk Adamu Aliyu.

Leader of the group that presented the recall petition at INEC, Alhaji Aliyu Baita said voters have lost confidence in Aliyu for his "undemocratic and unbecoming acts."

He claimed that 106, 717

By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Assistant Political Editor

voters out of 163, 795 registered in the constituency signed the petition for recall of the lawmaker.

Presenting a protest letter to the commission, Baita said "It's unfortunate that rather than perform his constitutional role and meet the aspirations of we the electorate that entrusted him with our mandate, he has been engaging in negative activities."

"We had in the past kept

mute over his acts, which have been detrimental to our progress, with the hope that he would retrace his steps towards the path of growth of his constituency, but unfortunately, he is unrelenting in his destructive disposition. We can no longer tolerate this attitude because of the grave threat it portends to the development of our area in particular and the state in general."

Baita accused the lawmaker of waging war against his party, the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and using thugs to terrorise

people. Based on this, he said, there was a vacuum of representation for constituency.

Receiving the protest letter, INEC chairman, Prof Maurice Iwu said the commission would be fair to both the lawmaker and the petitioners.

The embattled lawmaker, chairman of the House committee on population, had been having running political battles with Governor Ibrahim Turaki of Jigawa state.

He was reported to have dismissed the recall threat as a ruse engineered by his opponents.

Congratulations

We are proud to be associated with you and be part of your success story as true Democratic and Committed Patriot
as testified by the Award of
Honourary Doctorate Degree In Law (LLDB Honoris Causa) to



**His Excellency
Muhammad Adamu Aliero**
Executive Governor of Kebbi State

By

Nassarawa State University, Keffi.

On Saturday, February 18th 2006

The Board of Directors, Management and Staff of
ABDULLAHI BROTHERS COMPANY NIGERIA LIMITED

Wishes to celebrate with the Government and people of Kebbi State on this historic occasion



ALH. A. B. UMAR (MADAWAKIN BIDA)
CHAIRMAN

Signed:

ALH. A.B. UMAR
(Madawakin Bida)

Chairman

News

Plateau youths protest hike in employment form price

Some youths in Plateau State yesterday protested the 400 per cent rise in the price of employment forms into the Plateau State Local Government Service.

The Youths had stormed the Local Government Service Commission to purchase forms for employment following announcement by the state government of its approval for immediate employment of university graduates and Higher National Diploma holders into the Local Government Service.

The job seekers, who had gone with high hopes to commence the process of securing employment became agitated when they were told the prices of the form had risen to N500 from N100.

Many of them, who lamented that they travelled from other local government areas of the state to the state capital to obtain the form, stressed that they could not afford such an amount for it.

"Where does government want us to get such an amount when they have not given us

From Rakiya A. Muhammad,
Correspondent (Jos)

jobs and we have only been managing to survive," one of them commented.

The chairman of the Local Government Service Commission, Dr. Luka Fomson, who came out to address the crowd that gathered in front of the commission, had to go back to his office as he could not get the attention of the angry youth.

Attempt by our correspondent to speak with the chairman failed as the Public Relations Officer of the commission, Mr. Pius Dalen,

insisted that the chairman said they would get in touch when they are ready for comment on employment issue.

The Plateau State government which had last week announced its approval for immediate employment of university graduates and HND holders into the Local Government Service Commission, had asserted that the approval was aimed at reducing unemployment among the youths.

It had also stated that the move was to eject fresh blood to energise the local system for qualitative system and result oriented service.

EC approves N288m for health projects in North

The European Commission (EC) has approved the sum of 1.8 million (about N288 million) to finance health projects in 10 states in northern Nigeria. The states are Kano,

By Aisha Umar, Reporter
(Foreign Desk)

Bauchi, Jigawa, Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi, Gombe, Sokoto, Benue and Zamfara.

The overall objective of the projects is to improve the quality of life of young people and women of productive age through an expanded scope and coverage of an integrated sexuality education, reproductive health services and HIV/AIDS programmes in Nigeria.

The projects which will begin in April this year and last three years are expected to, enhance the availability and capability of a critical mass of leaders in Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other groups to work in the areas of reproductive health, prevention of HIV/AIDS and family planning advocacy, establish and equip one model clinic or model reproductive health centre in each of the 10 beneficiary states, integrate sexuality education curriculum into two subjects in junior secondary school, and enhance advocacy for comprehensive sexual education.

The projects are to be implemented by NOVIB/OXFAM-an international non governmental organization. The contract for the projects has been signed in Abuja between the European Commission (EC) Delegation to Nigeria and officials of the NGO.

The EC Delegation has also extended, by a week, the deadline for the submission of proposals under its ongoing European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) micro projects. The extension is from February 20 to Feb.28 and is meant to give more time to those who wish to apply for funding under the EIDHR micro projects.

By Shuaib Y. Aladire

disease to other categories of chicken handlers, beside poultry workers. He said "there is laboratory capacity in the country for the identification of the H5 element of the virus that causes Avian Flu, though subject to the confirmation of the WHO". So, he thanked the Japanese government for its frequent quality assistance to Nigeria, and he seized the opportunity of the occasion to announce the donation of 2,000 units of personal protective gears, while the United Kingdom has already delivered 1,500 units of the same equipment.

He therefore urged Nigerian who feels the symptoms of the Bird Flu to volunteer for test at any of the Federal Health Institutions nationwide. He said the treatment will be delivered free of charge, and also called on the state governments to embrace the gesture so as to increase the volume of tests and chances of early detection.

According to a paper made available to *Daily Trust*, the Japanese Ambassador, Akiro Tanaka, assured the minister of the immediate assistance of the Japanese government with regard to the long and short term plans of the country to tackle the outbreak disease. He added that his country has some funding assistance to Nigeria for-specific projects, and promised to approach the finance minister in collection with a view to securing help for the Health and Agriculture ministries.

Bird flu: No human infection - Lambo

The Nigeria citizens and International community have been reassured that no single man has been infected by the Avian-Influenza, known as Bird flu, in this country.

The Minister of Health, Prof. Eyitayo Lambo, reaffirmed this to the news men yesterday at his office while receiving the Ambassador of Japan, Akiro Tanaka, who paid him a solidarity visit on the outbreak of bird flu in some parts of Nigeria.

The minister of health told the ambassador that the key ministers which includes him, agriculture and Information have developed long and short term plans to interrupt the spread of the disease, adding that these plans are being integrated and harmonized for effective implementation. He also added that emphasis will be made on short term plans to ensure the prevention of an escalation of the scale of the outbreak in the country.

Lambo stressed that test of poultry workers is in progress, as experts are on the field nationwide for that purpose, and intimated the ambassador with country's urgent need of assistance in specific regards. These include the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the drug for Avian Flu treatment (Tamiflu), efficient laboratories for credible investigation and early detection of infection, logistics for field work, to mention but a few.

Meanwhile, the Federal Ministry of Health has concluded plans to extend surveillance and screening for the



BORNO STATE MINISTRY OF URBAN AND RURAL WATER SUPPLY
Mohammed Monguno Road,
P.M.B. 1188,
Maiduguri

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY OF API STEEL CASINGS AND JOHNSON STAINLESS STEEL SCREENS FOR USE IN THE DRILLING AND INSTALLATION OF WATER BOREHOLES IN BORNO STATE

The Borno State Government is inviting competent and interested companies to tender for the supply of API Steel Casings and Johnson Stainless Steel Screens which technical specifications are stated as follows:

API Steel Casings

- * Material - API Steel Casings
- * Size 6 "(150mm) and 9^{5/8}" (240mm) all by 6m length
- * Other features-plain end or threaded with socket

Johnson Stainless Steel Screens

- * Material - Stainless Steel
- * Size 6 (150mm) 3 or 6m length
- * Other features with minimum strength of 33-72 bars

1. Interested and reputable companies with sufficient and relevant experience, strong financial standings, as well as good track record are invited to tender for the supply. A non-refundable fee of N20,000.00 (Twenty thousand) Naira should be paid to the Revenue Cashier of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Water Supply, Mohammed Monguno Road, Maiduguri before the collection of tender documents.

2. The completed tender documents must be in a sealed envelope and clearly marked at the left hand corner "Tender for the supply of API Steel Casings and Johnson Stainless Steel Screens" for the attention of the Secretary Tenders-Board, Borno State Ministry of Urban and Rural Water Supply, P.M.B. 1188, Maiduguri, Borno State. It should also be accompanied with but not limited to the following:

- i) Photocopy of Certificate of Incorporation
- ii) Articles and Memorandum of Association
- iii) Copy of current tax clearance for three years

3. Please note that the Ministry of Urban and Rural Water Supply will publicly open the tenders received at 2.00p.m. on 28th February, 2006 at the Ministry's Headquarters.

Signed:

Secretary

Ministerial Tender Board

For: Honourable Commissioner

News

FG seeks stiffer penalty on female genital mutilation

The Minister of Health, Prof. Eytayo Lambo, has advocated stiffer penalties for people who engage in female genital mutilation.

He described the three months' imprisonment or a fine of N1,000 penalty for perpetrators as contained in the draft bill before the National Assembly as insignificant when compared to the gravity of the offence.

The minister made the remark yesterday in Abuja while speaking at a joint ministerial press briefing on the occasion of the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation.

He said female circumcision was a gruesome offence which needs a commensurate penalty.

Prof. Lambo said female circumcision not only has serious physical and mental consequences on women, but also has social, economic and political implications on them.

The minister called on the National Assembly to hasten up the passage of the bill to provide an enabling environment for those championing its eradication in the country. He also charged both religious and traditional rulers to join the crusade against such practices being carried out on women, saying it is a vio-

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin,
Senior Reporter

lation of women's fundamental rights.

"Men can facilitate this cause by forbidding the mutilation of their female children and by not insisting on marrying only circumcised girls for themselves and their sons," the minister explained.

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mr. Frank Nweke (Jnr), said women play significant roles in the socio-economic development of the country, adding that whatever impacts negatively on them would inhibit their capacity to contribute to the national development.



A cross-section of participants during the Youth for Human Rights International Conference at the Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution, Abuja.

Assembly speakers split over third term

Cracks have appeared among speakers of the state Houses of Assembly in the North East forging a common ground against tenure extension for the president and other elected officials.

Speakers of the six states of the region, *Daily Trust* learnt, have been meeting to fashion out a common ground at the zonal debate on the review of the constitution to be held in Maiduguri Wednesday.

A speaker of a state's House of Assembly told *Daily Trust* that "We have been meeting to see whether we can present a harmonised position," but lamented that

From Tashikalmah Hallah,
Correspondent Bauchi

"some state governors are hellbent on this third term issue. You know it's illegal, because we are trying to change the constitution to suit personal interest."

According to the speaker, the macabre dance at the floor of the Borno State House of Assembly last Tuesday and the open support expressed by Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim for a third term for the president and other elected officials have hampered the desire to have a common front to oppose any amend-

ment that could see to the realisation of third term.

He explained that the Bauchi State House of Assembly had earlier passed a resolution dissociating itself from the third term campaign, stressing that Adamawa and Taraba had followed suit, but regretted that in Borno State, the governor has caged the House to tow the line of the apostles of third term, while Bukar Abba Ibrahim is also at the vanguard. The speaker said, "The event at the floor of the Borno State House of Assembly is regrettable. At least, the former majority leader should not have been

suspended by refusing to append his signature to the paper. That shows how immature our democracy is," he added.

But Dr. Yakubu Lame, the former special assistant to the President on Drugs and Narcotic in an interview with *Daily Trust* at the weekend, believed that President Obasanjo's continued silence on the third term controversy is capable of destroying the country, hence he advised his former boss to come out and tell Nigerians his stand.

Alhaji Lame spoke against the backdrop of the observation that only a few political aspirants with guts are coming out to declare their intention for fear of incurring the president's wrath.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chieftain from Toro LGA of Bauchi State pointed out that unless the president openly disowned the third term speculation, the country will collapse.

According to Lame, "What is killing Nigeria is third term. Once Obasanjo settles this issue, it will save Nigeria. If he allows it to go like that, the country will collapse. So if Obasanjo does not want the country to collapse, he must settle the issue once and for all," he stressed.

With the taciturn nature Obasanjo is exhibiting regarding the third term which is reminiscent of the Abacha era, the Northern Union Forum scribe, pointed out that "nobody is sure there will be elec-

tions in 2007 or not; nobody is willing to risk his life, resources, and money.

"So, Obasanjo must settle this issue. If he delays it, even if at the end he decides he is leaving, he has denied Nigerians the opportunity to select the best out of the many who will come out."

ANPP moves to reconcile Bafarawa, deputy

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

The national headquarters of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) has set up a ten-man committee to reconcile the Sokoto State Governor, Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa, and his Deputy, Alhaji Aliyu Wamako.

The panel, headed by Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, is to complete its assignment within one month and its terms of reference, according to the ANPP's national publicity scribe, Nnamdi Olebara, are to reconcile the governor and his deputy, resolve all disputes affecting the proper conduct of party's affairs in the state, liaise with the newly constituted caretaker committee in the state and to embark on any other action deemed necessary to reinvigorate and strengthen the party in the state.

Olebara said in a statement in Abuja Friday that the decision to set up the committee was taken by the party's national executive committee at its recent meeting.

Members of the committee include Fidel Ayogu, Yusuf Garba Ali, Daniel Obot, Muinat Obalolu, Saidu Kumo, Yinusa Adeola, Usman Albshir, Dahiru Bornoma and David Dogoh.

Suspend retrenchment - NAPTAN urges FG

The federal government has been advised to suspend its plan to lay off 160,000 civil servants in order not to aggravate the existing high level of unemployment in the country.

The planned retrenchment of federal civil servants, according to the National Parent-Teacher Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN), contravened the much taunted federal government-youth empowerment programme, which is aimed at reducing unemployment in the country.

According to NAPTAN in a communiqué after its 45th national executive council (NEC) meeting in Lagos, the high level employment rate occasioned by retrenchments in the banking sector and other private employers has already disorganised several homes.

"NAPTAN passionately appeals to all public and private employers of labour finding it inevitable to retrench workers to please reduce the

By Suleiman Mohammed,
Associate Editor, Lagos

frustration and agony of such unexpected job loser by deploying and retraining such unfortunate employees into other arms of the organisations and giving satisfactory welfare packages to minimise the harsh effects of their sudden misfortune," NAPTAN national president Alhaji Babas Animashaun said.

Similarly, the union called for a review of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme to accommodate skills acquisition as a measure to curtail unemployment. The communiqué noted that such will assist graduates to be self-employed at the end of their service year.

The union also reviewed other national issues, stressing that the introduction of the post-JAMB university screening exercise should be a temporary measure to address examination malpractices among UME candidates.

"NAPTAN very strongly

demand a permanent single JAMB university admission examination system to reduce the financial and mental agony of candidates and their parents resulting from uncertainty of the present multiple examination tests and interviews in the name of post-JAMB screening."

It also called for the establishment of the Federal Ministry of Youth Affairs to address youth development related issues, stressing that measures be put in place to cushion the effects of government's reform policies on the populace.

While advocating a better national policy on educa-

tion, NAPTAN noted that the current global challenges constitute a threat to the nation's current education system. The meeting also stressed the need for an effective security network to checkmate activities of criminals in the country.

On the controversy surrounding the third term agenda of the present government, NAPTAN expressed the hope that President Obasanjo would not listen to the voice of disgruntled politicians whose motive was to champion selfish interest to the detriment of the nation.

Goje sets up c'ttee against political thuggery

From Muhammad
Abubakar, Gombe

The Gombe State Governor, Alhaji Muhammad Danjuma Goje, has set up a thirteen man committee to re-orientate youths in the state on the need to abstain from political thuggery.

The committee has as its chairman the senior district

head of Gombe, Alhaji Abdulkadir Abubakar.

Other members of the committee include both religious and community leaders.

Inaugurating the committee, Governor Goje charged

the members to inculcate discipline and morality in youths and eradicate among them anti-social behaviours.

Referring the committee as a demonstration of his government's commitment to eradicate violence among youths, Goje expressed confidence on the calibre of members of the committee.

NEWS

Late NAN zonal manager laid to rest

The remains of Sir Chuks Akpotuzor, the Port Harcourt zonal manager of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) who died recently, have been laid to rest in his home town, Ashaka, Delta State. Akpotuzor died at the age of 51 after an illness. At the funeral mass over the weekend, the officiating priest, Rev. Fr. Austin Orjei, described the deceased as a devout Christian. Orjei said

Akpotuzor lived an exemplary life that should be emulated by the Ashaka community and beyond.

The priest urged Christians to live their lives according to the teachings of Jesus Christ, saying "anybody who was wicked while on earth will experience eternal suffering."

In a condolence message to the bereaved family, the Managing Director of NAN,

Chief Akin Osuntokun, said Akpotuzor would be remembered for his commitment to duty, humility and honesty.

"He was indeed an invaluable source of inspiration to many who came in contact with him while serving NAN," he stated. Akpotuzor is survived by his wife, Lady Josephine, an aged mother, four children, a brother, four sisters and many relations.

The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBE) says N5.187 billion was spent on primary education projects in 2005, nationwide. The commission, in a review of its activities made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) over the weekend, said "this was out of a total receipt of N7.777 billion allocated to the sector during the period under review. "This represented 66.69 per cent average utilization," the commission added.

The commission also stated that N304.465 million was spent on pre-primary education during the same period.

It stated that this was out of a total receipt of N648.156 million at the end of January this year. According to the

N5.187b spent on primary education in 2005 -UBEC

commission, this represents a 46.97 per cent average utilization of funds during the period under review.

It stated that N2.124 billion was expended on Junior Secondary School nationwide, out of a total receipt of N4.537 billion. The commission further said N5.679 billion was spent on infrastructure development out of a total allocation of N12.963 billion, representing 43.81 per cent utilization of resources.

According to the review, N1.161 billion was expended

on the provision of instructional materials out of an allocation of N2.77 billion.

"This represents an average resource utilization of 41.83 per cent during the period," it said.

The review stated that N777.3 billion was expended on teacher's professional development out of total allocation of N2.777 billion.

"This represents an average fund utilization of 27.98 per cent during the period under review," the commission added.

Peer Review Mechanism has positive effect on Africa -Aluko Olokun

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has had positive effect on the continent as more countries have voluntarily acceded to its monitory influence for good governance.

The Senior Special Adviser to the President on NEPAD, (External), Amb. Isaac Aluko-Olokun, made the observation at a forum with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja over the weekend. Aluko-Olokun noted that the common phenomenon in Africa was the lack of good governance, which, he said, invariably affected the economy, peace and security of the continent.

He said the APRM was an instrument fashioned to foster and encourage government to adopt policies and programmes that conformed with international standards.

He said that Ghana and Rwanda had been peer reviewed and both countries had put in place sound programmes for economic management and good governance.

"The objective of the peer review mechanism is to recognise governance deficiencies and capacity gap and to draw a programme that will correct them," he said.

Other countries that have acceded to the peer review mechanism are Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Mauritania, Uganda, Sao Tome and Principe, among others.

Aluko-Olokun said Nigeria as one of the first countries that voluntarily acceded to APRM in March 2003 was in the process of submitting itself to the review process.

"The process as constituted in the base review is one of the four periodic systematic reviews enunciated in the APRM document," he said.

The four types of reviews are the base review, the mandatory two yearly review, requested review and crisis prevention review.

The APRM would enable cross country comparisons because African problems were similar, he said. Aluko-Olokun described the interventions in Togo and Liberia, where both heads of state were advised to step down and leave the scene as peer review in practice.

"The essence of review is to ensure that peer pressure

is brought to bear in good governance and for peace to reign in Africa," he said.

The APRM is a flagship programme of the NEPAD to foster good governance in African countries. The

mechanism, which is voluntary, carries neither punishment nor sanctions, but it presents the collective Expression of African leaders for sustainable good governance.

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c/o Akwa Savings & Loans Ltd
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08036281486, 08055871946
E-mail: victormkpog@yahoo.com

News

Ogoni youths denounce violence

The Ogoni Youths Council (OYC), has declared a cessation of violence and pledged its readiness to cooperate with the Shell Petroleum Development Com-

pany (SPDC) in development matters.

National President of the organisation, Mr. Marvin Yobani made the declaration in Port Harcourt at the graduation of 120 youths trained under the SPDC-operated joint venture skills acquisition programme.

Yobani said his appearance at a Shell function was a sign that Ogoni people were ready for constructive engagement.

He noted that the Ogoni had always yearned for a realistic partnership and mutual respect with Shell.

"I know that many will be surprised at seeing me here.

"But gone are the days of unnecessary agitation as we the youths of Ogoniland are ever ready to partner with companies and government to develop Ogoniland," he said.

Yobani commended Shell

for organising the programme, and urged youths to seize the opportunity to fashion out a better future for themselves.

Later in an interview, Yobani said his support for Shell at the graduation did not mean that the Ogoni had welcomed the company back to their land.

"We have provided the enabling environment for reconciliation with Shell.

"And Shell should reciprocate by engaging in positive and constructive engagement such as carrying out developmental projects such as this in Ogoniland," he said.

The 120 youngsters, who underwent the nine-month skills acquisition scheme at the Bori Training Scheme Centre in Rivers, were drawn from 75 communities in Abia, Bayelsa, Imo and Rivers States.

Bird flu: NVMA takes control measures

By Nasir Imam,
Abuja Property Editor

The Nigeria Veterinary Medical Association (NVMA) has assured Nigerians of the preparedness of the association in containing the spread of the bird flu virus in the country.

President of the association, Dr. Garba H. Sharubutu, who stated this at a press conference in Abuja, said in order to ensure professionalism and efficient management of the situation, all operation geared towards the containment of the outbreak should be carried out under the supervision of qualified veterinary doctors.

Dr. Sharubutu advised all tiers of government to set up surveillance teams for the disease and inform their respective state directors of veterinary services who will be the link to the co-ordinating committee at the national level.

The NVMA president urged the federal government to strengthen the diagnostic facilities and services of the apex laboratory in Vom and those of the Veterinary Teaching Hospitals not just for the purpose of diagnosis of the bird flu, but for other equally important contagious disease.

Similarly, the Veterinary Council of Nigeria (VCN) has warned its members to ensure that only professionally ethical and internationally accepted methods are used in the destruction of the affected poultry, as anything aside that will attract sanctions on the members by the council.

A statement by the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of VCN, Dr. Daniel G. Maddo, called on states who either have few or do not have veterinary surgeons to as a matter of urgency, employ some immediately.

"A case in point is Bayelsa State that has none and despite appeals from the council, the state has failed to employ any. The Dasuki Report on Local Government Reforms recommended the employment of at least one veterinary officer per local government," the statement added.

In the same vein, the president of the Post-Graduate College of Veterinary Surgeons, Dr. Maina Junaidu, has called on members to increase their knowledge on the bird flu disease or they will be held responsible.

Gov Boni makes case for traditional rulers

Governor Boni Haruna of Adamawa State declared over the weekend that the ongoing upgrading of traditional rulers in the state was not meant to score cheap political goals, but was informed by the desire of his administration to accord them their rightful position in society.

Governor Haruna made this assertion at Ganye town when he presented a first class Staff of Office to Gangwari Ganye, Alhaji Umaru Adamu Sanda II, who along with Hama Batta, Saul J. Swade, were elevated to first class status in December, 2004.

The governor urged the newly promoted emir to consider himself lucky as there were other chiefs in the state who have been in one status for over 20 years.

"In the case of his royal highness, the Gangwari Ganye, he is simply a man of destiny. He was destined to ascend the throne of his forefathers through a popular process and was destined to be conferred with a 'First Class' Staff of Office in this same venue (Gangwari Square) by me in my own time as governor of Adamawa State," he said.

Governor Haruna unceremoniously announced the elevation of the three remaining Second Class Chiefs in the state to First Class status; a development which he said gives all the eight paramount rulers in the state the status of First Class.

Those who benefited from the latest promotion includes Murum Mbula, Murum Foram, Joram J. Fwa; Kwandi Nunguraya, Dr. Wilfred Kaunlu Kimde and the Amna Shelleng, Alhaji Abdullahi Kindikah.

The governor reiterated that improvement in the well-

By Hamza Idris,
Correspondent (Yola)

fare and upgrading of the custodians of traditional institutions in the state was a continuous process "in line with the dynamics of our time," noting that he had the fullest understanding and cooperation of the state council of chiefs before embarking on the project.

"Of special mention is his royal highness, the Lamido of Adamawa, Alhaji Dr. Aliyu Mustapha, who by the elevation of all the other graded chiefs in the state to First Class status, now becomes the state's only and only Premier First Class ruler and life-chairman of Adamawa State Council of Chiefs," he said.

While congratulating the Ganye Chieftain over its triumph, Governor Haruna called on the good people of the state to guard against orchestrated campaigns by some people who are mischievously using un-contemplated issues to cause disaffection among the people.

Responding, the Gangwari Ganye, Alhaji Umaru Adamu Sanda II, thanked the governor over his progressive policies and promised his absolute loyalty to him. He assured Governor Boni Haruna that his name will be written in the annals of the history of the chieftain.

Significantly, the Gangwari Ganye, thanked Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, who is a native of the chieftain for his patriotic zeal and for playing the role of a pillar of success in the affairs of the chieftain.

Present at the ceremony were Vice-President Atiku Abubakar (Sardaunan Ganye) and his wife, Jamila Atiku Abubakar (Nya Gake Ganye).



Governor Mohammad Adamu Aliero of Kebbi State (left), presenting Merit Award Certificate to Miss Blessing Okoriye, during the passing out parade ceremony of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) batch 'A' held in Birnin Kebbi...recently

ADVERTORIAL

GREEN WHITE GREEN

THE ABUSE OF FREEDOM

Democracy has several virtues, the most of which is its capacity for promoting free expression and free choice. As they say, democracy gives tongue to all men. But democracy, by definition, rejects all forms of absolutism, including the absolutism of free expression. It is therefore recognized that freedom itself carries specific obligations, especially the obligation of restraint and responsibility.

In a country such as ours, where mutualities of nationhood are still evolving, the convention of restraint and responsibilities ought to be regarded as a sacred trust. Those who speak or write recklessly must recognize the potential for violence contained in their interventions. Historically, violent words precede violent actions and conduct.

In dictatorial dispensations, such as the several military regimes which besmirched our past, violence and conflicts were suppressed through repressive measures. Orthodoxy of thought, as it were, was maintained through the development of the iron fist.

However, since 1999, the environment has changed with fresh impetus now being placed on consensus building and inclusiveness. A thousand voices have blossomed. It must be noted, however, that grievances and partisan interests have been expressed sometimes in extreme and unhelpful languages. It is no surprise that in certain parts of the country, this convention has transformed into ethnic feuds and partisan conflicts. Against this background, patriots, leaders and, indeed, all of us Nigerians, have a responsibility to ensure that we speak and act with restraint.

One of the more shocking worries of the Nigerian condition is that those who have the most to lose in any conflagration appear to be least caring. The Chief of Army Staff, General Martins Agwai, recently admonished the political leadership on the need to be of good behaviour. Of course, the sub-text of his advice contained the unspoken threat of repercussions which could follow, if his warning was unheeded. We believe the Chief of Staff spoke out of turn. His warning in fact has done violence to the honoured convention which subordinates the military to its political masters. But this is a slight infraction compared to the incendiary statement recently made by General Victor Malu. Speaking at an Arewa meeting in Kaduna recently, General Malu expressed regret that he was unable to carry out a coup against Chief Obasanjo's administration when he served as Chief of Army Staff.

General Victor Malu is a military man and ought to be familiar with military laws. It is strange that he has chosen to adopt this attitude. This is no mere slip. General Malu, who had no difficulty in abusing his regimental honour by wearing the Abacha badge, has become a born-again enforcer of military integrity. Under this guise, he has, several times in the past, poured venom on the Obasanjo administration. Each effort seems to diminish the diminutive general.

Nigerians will not and should not be deceived by Malu's antics. Nor should we also be taken in by Chief Awoniyi's attempts to make light of General Malu's incendiary remarks. Awoniyi and Malu are different type of people: one military and the other civilian. It is only Chief Awoniyi that is capable of reducing Malu's thoughtless observation to a lighthearted joke intended to crack a few ribs at the Arewa gathering.

Much more is at stake. We believe that each time such remarks are made, the intent is incitement and possibly mutiny. Those who deal in such stuff should know what to expect as *quid pro quo*. The Nigerian state has an obligation to protect itself from the assaults of these professional pretenders to the throne.

As for the rest of us, we must remain calm, loyal, and make Nigeria inhospitable for those who either by speech or conduct, may wish to bring chaos upon us all. We must consolidate our democracy by exercising freedom with due restraint.

*The Green - White - Green Column is a public interested contribution from the Public Policy Advocacy Group (PPAG)

DELE MAX
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ABUJA.

News

Gunmen attack Archbishop in Jos

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

The Anglican Archbishop of Jos, Rev. Benjamin Kwashi over the weekend in Jos escaped assassination when about 20 heavily armed men stormed his residence.

His wife, Mrs. Gloria Kwashi, was however assaulted by the suspected assassins when they discovered that the archbishop was not at home.

The assassins had stormed the Archbishop's house at Tudun Wada, Jos, at 2.30am on Saturday, overpowered the security guards and forced their way into the house.

Daily Trust learnt that seven of the assassins actually went inside the house, while the others remained outside for one hour.

Our correspondent gathered that while inside the house, the assassins who met Mrs. Kwashi demanded to see the archbishop but were told he was out of town.

According to Mrs. Kwashi, she offered to give the hoodlums money, but they refused and insisted that they were after the Archbishop's life.

The assassins then decided to thoroughly assault Mrs. Kwashi after which they told

her to lead them to the Archbishop's office.

Daily Trust learnt that at the office, where they met the Archbishop's secretary, the suspected assassins carted away an undisclosed amount of cash.

The Archbishop's wife is now receiving treatment at the Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH).

The Archbishop was recently involved in a skirmish with the leadership of the Plateau state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), accusing the state chapter of financial impropriety.

The petition is believed to be sequel to a query the Archbishop received from the presidency over the outburst of the Plateau State CAN which condemned the alleged third term bid of the president and accused the president of selective justice in his anti-corruption drive.

Since then the Archbishop is believed to be working at cross-purposes with the leadership of CAN in the state which is believed to be sympathetic to the state governor.



Alhaji Nasir Ado Bayero, Turakin Kano delivering his address during his census sensitization tour of Tarauni area in Kano ...recently.

Bird flu: Price of fowl drops in Niger

From Aideloje Ojo, Correspondent (Minna)

Prices of poultry birds have drastically reduced in Niger State following the reported outbreak of bird flu in parts of the country.

Daily Trust investigation at the Central market Minna revealed that people have now distanced themselves from eating poultry birds for fear of being infected.

Prices of birds have reduced by 500 per cent with a chicken selling for between N150 and N200 as against N600 and N700 before the outbreak of the bird flu.

The vice chairman of the Chicken Traders Association in Minna, Alhaji Mohammed Namaikaji, said in an interview that business has been adversely affected even though there has been no

reported case of bird flu in the state.

He said the association has resolved not to allow into the Minna market poultry birds from neighbouring villages and appealed to the state government to break its silence on the issue in order to disabuse the minds of the people.

He lamented that members of his association are being compelled to give out their chickens free of charge to those willing to eat.

In a press statement, the chief medical director of the General Hospital Minna said no case of bird flu has been reported in the state.

Senator Zarewa joins guber race

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Correspondent (Kano)

Senator Isah Zarewa has declared his intention to contest the 2007 Kano State gubernatorial election on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Senator Zarewa, who addressed thousands of supporters at a rally, shortly after visiting the tomb of the founder of the defunct Northern Element Progressive

Union (NEPU), late Malam Aminu Kano, accused the state ANPP-led government of poor performance and bad leadership.

He said since the assumption of office, the ANPP administration has subjected the people of the state to untold hardships because of ineffe-

ctive policies to better the lives of the common man.

The senator insisted that his intention to jostle for the position of state chief executive was not for self enrichment or personal interest, but to salvage the lives of the citizens.

According to the senator, in spite of the huge amount of funds received from the federation account in addition

to the internally generated revenue, the Governor Ibrahim Shekarau-led government has failed to meet the expectations and needs of the people.

This, he said signifies the total failure of ANPP, adding that since the people have lost confidence in the administration, they should vote a PDP candidate in the 2007 gubernatorial elections.

Poultry farmers demand upward review of compensation

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

The Poultry Farmers Association of Nigeria has described the N250 per bird compensation offered by the federal government as grossly inadequate and demanded for an upward review.

Chairman, Plateau State Chapter of the Association, S. Gyang, made the appeal at a press conference in

He said farmers have spent over N1,000 on each bird and recommended between N800 and N1,000 per bird as compensation.

The association which also condemned in strong

terms the destruction of eggs in Benue State called on the state government to properly educate the public on the consumption of poultry products.

The farmers however expressed appreciation to the Plateau State government for setting up a technical committee to monitor and control the spread of the disease.

They also commended the approval of N3.8 million to the committee by the Plateau government.

Meanwhile, the chairman,

Committee on the Bird Flu in Plateau State, Dr. Lenke Chinke, has called on local council chairman in the state to set up technical committee on the disease at the various grassroot levels for proper dissemination of information.

Dr. Chinke decried the manner in which people go about spreading rumours on the disease, noting that the only way to understand the issue was by proper information dissemination.

He tasked the local government chairman to educate the citizens through adequate publicity.



Wife of Kebbi State Governor and member of National Youth Service Corp (N'YSC) presenting assistance to a VVF patient at the Birnin Kebbi VVF centre ...

News

FCT revokes accreditation for private schools

The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) has revoked certificates of accreditation for operation of private schools in the territory.

A press statement from the FCTA Education Secretariat, signed by its head, Public Relations, Anthony Ogunleye, stated that the Director of Policy and Implementation in the secretariat, Dr. Isma'ila Tsiga, made the announcement during an interactive session with the proprietors and head teachers of private schools held at the National Centre for Women Development.

Dr. Tsiga, at the occasion, announced a new set of guidelines regulating the operations of private schools in the territory, adding that fresh applications for operations of private schools will have to be made by the proprietors.

By Nasir Imam, Abuja
Property Editor

He said going by the new UBE Act, all schools in the FCT must function either as basic education institution with students from primary school to junior secondary school or a senior secondary school catering for students from SSS1 to SSS3. Tsiga advised that the school that might not meet the criteria for fresh registration should merge with other schools or be acquired by bigger schools.

The session, which had in attendance over 500 proprietors of private schools, afforded private schools owners the opportunity to hold frank discussions with members of the Education Secretariat's management team.

Although some of the school proprietors complained that they had no inputs in the preparation of the new guidelines, it was

explained that the department is not proposing anything different from what is in the UBE Act.

Chief on the list demands from the school proprietors

was allocation of school land to enable them to meet the provisions in the UBE Act, which recommended that a school must be situated on 1.5 hectares of land.

On the fate of students of demolished schools who had already registered for the 2006 SSCE examinations, Mrs. Alu Uganden, the Director of the Education

Resource Centre (ERD), explained that the names of the affected schools and students be forwarded to the centre so that WAEC can be informed and special centres created for them.



Alhaji Libari Oseni of Omuwo-Odofoin local government and MD, UPDC, Mr. Steeve Mayaki, at the flag-off ceremony/turning of sod of UPDC's Anchorage Estate in Amuwo-Odofoin, Lagos... recently

PDP youths protest Mantu's recall

The youths wing of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) at Pushit ward, Mangu local government area of Plateau State, has called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to disregard the attempt by some individuals to recall the Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, saying the move was not endorsed by genuine PDP members from the senatorial zone.

The youths, who staged a peaceful rally over the weekend, said staging the rally at the Pushit ward of the local government council was symbolic to demonstrate that the action lacks support from the constituency of the chief protagonist of the move, Capt. Joseph Din, since he hails from the area.

The leader of the group, Mr. Reuben Tyoden, who read the group's resolve at the rally, explained that the youths of the ward were surprised that a leader from their ward would be associated with the bid to recall the deputy senate president, who hails from their senatorial zone and who they describe as the best thing to happen to Plateau State in recent times.

While listing the achievements of the deputy senate president, the group says it sees no reason for the recall bid other than to serve the personal interest of a few individuals in the state and called on the people of the ward not to allow themselves to be used to settle personal scores.

The group, which also alleged that the signatures in the recall petition submitted to INEC by Capt. Din were forged, called on the electoral body to carefully scrutinize

From Andrew Agbese,
Correspondence, Jos

the signatures. The youth alleged that the recall bid is being supported by both the Plateau State Governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, and the chairman of Mangu local government area, Mr. Dennis Lamu.

Based on this, the group said it is dissociating itself from the recall agenda and called on other members of the PDP of the ward to do the same, saying the recall bid does not represent the genuine desire of the youths in the area.

"We in no unreserved terms disassociate our humble selves from the Senator Ibrahim Mantu recall agenda being spearheaded by Capt. J. Din and therefore declare our deep pain and utter disappointment with the action," they stated.

18,000 ad hoc staff for census in Plateau

The Plateau State chapter of the National Population Commission (NPC) has recruited 18,000 adhoc staff for next month's census exercise.

The Federal Commissioner, NPC, Plateau State, Mr. Henry Ezioko, disclosed this in Jos at an interactive session with chairmen of the seventeen local government areas in the state.

While stressing their importance to the success of the headcount, the federal commissioner charged the local government chairmen to give priority to the exercise in order to achieve the desired goals.

According to the NPC

From Rakiya A. Muhammed,
Correspondent, Jos.

chairmen to aid in the success of the exercise and resolve any inter-local government dispute would jeopardise the success of the exercise.

The minister of State for Defence, Chief Rowland Oritsejafor, has challenged the press to fully support the a crusade of the Obasanjo administration by conducting independent investigations on public officers.

The minister, who spoke to newsmen shortly after the

addressed religious leaders and other stakeholders in the state at the Hassan Katsina House, Kaduna.

He also expressed delight at the reaction of the state's chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), just as he condemned the cartoon in solidarity with

other Muslims worldwide.

"This singular act of CAN will go a long way in fostering unity and understanding among the diverse ethnic and religious groups in the country," Makarfi said.

He commended all religious leaders and their followers for ensuring that

the protest against the cartoon did not escalate into violence in the state.

Makarfi said the efforts of the imams and pastors at their various places of worship were worthy of emulation by other states.

He urged the people to desist from rumour peddling as "people who go about spreading rumour, either for the purpose of seeking political positions or getting money as a reward, will never get such reward".

Makarfi gave assurance that his administration would continue to ensure security and maintain peace, unity, law and order in the state.

Corruption: Minister challenges press to expose perpetrators

The minister of State for Defence, Chief Rowland Oritsejafor, has challenged the press to fully support the a crusade of the Obasanjo administration by conducting independent investigations on public officers.

The minister, who spoke to newsmen shortly after the

He noted that preliminary exercises, such as enumeration area demarcation, pre-test and trial census conducted in the state were successful, due to high advocacy and cooperation of the chairmen.

The federal commissioner disclosed that the state received over 1,000 packages of census materials for the headcount, and called for proper handling of the materials due to their fragile nature.

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent, Makurdi

son, Mr. Taseyo Oritsejafor and former Miss Ngunbur Saakwan at Vandekya, Beauce State at the weekend, criticized the press for overlooking the growing need for in-depth reportage on corrupt public officers.

"It's the job of the journalists to thoroughly investigate and make the anti-corruption war easier for the institutions established to check corruption," said Chief Oritsejafor, adding that "in America and other places, it is journalists who investigate and expose corrupt officers."

"It is better than to sit aside and say this is fair, or this is not fair," added Oritsejafor.



Chief Rowland Oritsejafor



THE SOCIETY OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYERS

24 A Bammidele Crescent,
Suru-Lere, Lagos.

CONSTITUTIONAL ALTERATION IS INDEED CONSTITUTIONALISM

It is now common knowledge that the National Assembly's Joint Committee on Constitutional Reforms has swung into full gear with the publication of its scheduled public hearings in various geo-political zones in Nigeria on 22nd and 23rd of February, 2006. The public hearing which would serve as an avenue to gauge the pulse of the citizenry and collate relevant information for the exercise is no doubt a welcome development. It is the expectation of our society that the recommended consequential amendment to the 1999 Constitution would therefore be made timeously as soon as the hearings are concluded and the joint committee's report submitted to the National Assembly for consideration.

We are, however, deeply worried by a number of comments and write-up to the effect that proposed amendments to the constitution on certain issues like immunity, tenure limit, and derivation etc are "illegal and unconstitutional". The said comments and write-up now frequent National Newspapers as if they are well co-ordinated to mould the mindset of the reading public in that direction. They are often so repeated with emphasis to give the coloration of "truth" to an obvious and cruel "lie". The claim that the proposed amendments to the constitution are "unconstitutional" is not only perfidious, but is a great assault on constitutionalism.

It seems to us that those canvassing this point are unprepared to accept the fact that an alteration/amendment of the constitution, where necessary, is regulated by the constitution itself. In the case of the 1999 Constitution, section 9 (1) of the constitution is quite clear and states as follows;

Section 9 (1) "The National Assembly may, subject to the provisions of this section, alter any of the provisions of this constitution",

Section 9 (2) (3) and (4) (supra) set out the necessary majorities required to alter the various provisions of the constitution, by the National and State legislative Houses.

The existence of section 9 of the 1999 Constitution validates the process of amendments or alterations as a democratic norm. It is a flawed argument to say that it is "undemocratic", "illegal" and "unconstitutional" as some have selfishly claimed knowing this to be untrue.

There is no doubt that Nigerians are deeply worried by some of the existing sections of the 1999 Constitution. They include,

- Section 162(2) which deals with the derivation formula.
- Section 162(6) which create the state joint Local Government Account.
- Section 308 which provides personal immunity from civil and criminal prosecution to certain categories of public officers.
- Sections 137(1) (b) and 182(1) (b) which disqualifies a person from being President and Governor respectively if they have been elected to such offices twice.

Our society is more concerned with the guarantee and defence of the alteration/amendment processes enshrined in the 1999 Constitution.

The ongoing review of the 1999 Constitution presents our country men and women in leadership and followership positions, a rare opportunity to redress the inadequacies that have characterized our various constitutions. Now is the time to give ourselves a workable, acceptable and realistic constitution. We must collectively stage this fight.

The guarantee of amendment processes is indeed a constitutional means that is a condicio sine qua non for constitutional democracy in Nigeria. Political elites must therefore refrain from misleading the reading and hearing public as to the true scope and contents of Nigeria's constitutional democracy. The struggle for dominance in Nigeria's political turf is purely an elitist struggle for power. It must not be stretched by any manipulative device to the door steps of the ordinary citizen through deliberate misinformation. Those who support or oppose certain amendments to the 1999 Constitution should take their battle to the National Assembly and lobby their various legislators to that effect. That is the right thing to do in the circumstance. They must not undermine their integrity by contriving constitutional lies.

We would be alert and continue to guide the entire public on all constitutional matters.

Signed:

Mimsa S. Shuaibu Esq.
(Project Co-ordinator)

News



President Olusegun Obasanjo (left), presenting licence to Alhaji Ahmed Rufai Mohammed, the Managing Director, Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund, during the presentation ceremony, held at the State House Abuja ...yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye.

Unrest: Police arrest 40 in Gombe

From Muhammad Abubakar, Correspondent (Gombe)

The Gombe State Police Command has arrested about forty youths following unrest that erupted in the evening of Sunday, which lasted till Monday. Reports say the crisis led to the burning of three houses, while property worth millions of naira were destroyed.

According to the state's Police Commissioner, Atiku Yusuf Kafur, the unrest was sparked by youths at Tekada Bari area of Gombe when they learnt that their friend in the police custody had passed on.

The CP told newsmen that police arrested eighteen year old Abba Lamido over reports of alleged rape, but that the accused died in hospital after falling sick immediately on arrest.

But speaking to *Daily Trust* in his residence after the burial of Abba Monday morning, the deceased father, Alhaji Lamido Umar, alleged that his son was brutally murdered by the police.

He stated that his son, Abba, was a decent commercial motorcyclist who handed himself over to the police when he learnt that they were looking for him over allegations of rape and that he was hale and hearty when he did that.

Alhaji Lamido narrated how he saw the body of Abba: "I was at the Gombe police division on Sunday to bail Abba without knowing that his corpse was lying just

by the counter. I could see that he was brutally murdered. They must have used something heavy on him," alleged Abbas' father.

He said he was looking forward to resolving whatever differences that existed between Abba and the girl he was alleged to have raped because, "they are related. They are all my children before this happened." He appealed to the Inspector General of Police to investigate the matter.

"I am appealing to the IG to have this matter fully investigated. My son was brutally murdered by the police. Let the police exhume the body - they will see all the signs on him of how he was

mercilessly killed. They will see the scars on his hands and legs," cried Alhaji Lamido.

Meanwhile, the crisis is turning religious as there are reports of pockets of attacks by hoodlums on some religious buildings in most areas of the state on Monday.

Our correspondent reports that as the crisis is coming at a time some Muslims prepare to protest over the Danish cartoon and the unrest that just happened in neighbouring Borno State, there is serious tension in Gombe metropolis that it will escalate.

However, the police commissioner assured residents that the situation was under control as mobile police men have continued to patrol strategic places in the state capital.

Floods, fires kill 30 in Jigawa in 2005 - Report

At least thirty persons lost their lives to flood and fire in Jigawa last year. Hajiya Ladi Dansure, the Permanent Secretary in the Jigawa State Emergency Management and Relief Agency, announced this to newsmen in Dutsé at the weekend.

According to her, nine people died in Gwaram local government area following the capsizing of a canoe during the last rainy season.

"Six others also died at Migga as a result of the same incident, while five persons perished in Jahun local

government area due to the flooding of their houses," Dansure said.

The permanent secretary stated that one Alhaji Yarima was burnt in an inferno, while two of his children also lost their lives.

Dansure said property worth millions of naira were destroyed, while farmlands were washed away in many local council areas of the state.

She asked relevant non-governmental organisations to aid disaster victims in the state.

Dress code: BUK to sanction culprits

In order to curb the rate of indecency among students, Bayero University of Kano has taken the bull by the horn by announcing the decision to sanction any student that violates the newly introduced dress-code within the institution's environment.

The Vice Chancellor of the university, Professor Aishiru Jega, made the announcement during the launch of students' dress code by the university's management yesterday.

Professor Jega explained that both Islam and Christian religions preach sanctity by way of proper dressing and therefore students should as a matter of obligation respect the dress code introduced or be ready to face the disciplinary actions of the authorities.

The vice chancellor, who also explained that, "proper dressing is an important aspect of ones' character", however urged the students to comply with the new dress code which would serve as a

From Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent (Kano)

defence against any abuse or harassment.

Jega, while addressing leaders of the university students at the occasion, said

that, "the university is not only a citadel for academic pursuit but also an avenue for moulding sound, moral character that is in conformity with both religions and cultural values."

FG begins destruction of 122,000 chickens at Yankari Farms

The federal government at the weekend began the destruction of 122,000 chickens at the Yankari Poultry Farms in Bauchi State. The chickens are said to be infected with the bird flu virus.

The state's Director of Veterinary Services, Malam Salisu Yakubu, who supervised the exercise, announced that 75,000 chickens were killed, burnt and buried.

He said apart from burying the burnt carcasses, the entire farms would be

fumigated.

Yakubu urged the people of Toro and the entire state not to panic, noting that necessary measures were being taken to contain the spread of the disease to other poultry farms. He explained that all the ninety-one staff of the affected farm had been disinfected and placed under close medical observation. Meanwhile, policemen have been drafted to the farm to keep vigil and ensure that nobody goes in or out of the farm with any product.

THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC

P.M.B. 1012
KAURA NAMODA
ZAMFARA STATE

INVITATION FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION

The Polytechnic is desirous of entering into agreement with interested, reputable and competent contractors/Property Developers to undertake the construction of a number of STUDENTS HOSTEL BLOCKS at the Main Campus of the Polytechnic on a BUILD, OPERATE and TRANSFER (BOT) basis.

In realization of this objective, the Polytechnic wishes to invite competent and reputable Estate Management Consultants/Property Developers to submit relevant proposals that will guide the Polytechnic in this regard. The proposals should include amongst other modalities for:

- Carrying out feasibility/viability studies.
- The preparation of Architectural/Engineering designs for the project.
- Raising funds to finance the construction of the project.
- Carrying out the construction of the project.
- Operating the completed hostels within a specific period in order to revamp their capital and return on their investment.

Further details on the proposed development can be obtained from the Office of the Director (Planning), Federal Polytechnic, Kaura Namoda.

The detailed proposals are to be enclosed in an envelope and titled on the top "PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND MANGEMENT OF HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION ON BOT BASIS" and submitted to the Office of the Registrar, Federal Polytechnic, Main Campus, Kaura Namoda on or before 30th April, 2006.

Signed:
A. DANBOYI
REGISTRAR

Sports

Galadima plans youth development

Nigeria Football Association (NFA) Chairman Ibrahim Galadima has said that top on his new board's agenda when they meet later this week would be to fashion out ways to start proper youth development of football in the country as to

discover a lot of hidden talents in the land. The NFA board, which Galadima, who only had his re-election validated by FIFA after a long drawn out tussle with the sports ministry over his re-election last year in Kano, said would be meeting

either on Thursday, Friday or Saturday this week, would have met much earlier in the week but for a supposedly stake-holders meeting called by some 'football stake-holders' and scheduled for Wednesday in Abuja. "We want to hear the out-

come of the supposed stake-holders meeting scheduled for Abuja on Wednesday and see what they are up to next" Galadima said. "Otherwise we would have held our board's meeting much earlier. But certainly we would be holding a

board meeting either on Thursday, Friday or Saturday. "The specific date I don't know yet. But we would definitely meet this week" he added. "Top on the agenda of our meeting asides from

reviewing the FIFA's verdict on the election of the new NFA board, would be to chart a new programme for football development in the country. "We would really look at developing our football from the youth level so as to discover more hidden talents for the different national teams.

"Also we would map out immediate plans for the 2008 Nations Cup. Plans that would not only see us qualify for the nations cup but also to win it. "It's time for Nigeria to win the nations cup again. We would also start preparation for the world cup in 2010. "We want to qualify for the next world cup and not fail the country again" Galadima told Nigeriansportsonline.com in Kano.



Olympiakos Brazilian striker Rivaldo, left, celebrates his goal against AEK Athens with his Nigerian teammate Haruna Babangida, centre, and Greek international Anastasios Pandos, right, during their Greek first division match in Athens on Sunday. Olympiakos beat AEK 3 - 0.

Suleiman hails FIFA's verdict

Nigeria Football Association (NFA) re-elected board member Suleiman David has said that the validation of the re-election of the Ibrahim Galadima led board of the NFA by FIFA was a very sound decision, though it isn't time for anybody to start jubilating.

David, who was the NFA's head of technical committee in the last board, said the verdict given by FIFA should be seen as a no victor, no vanquished situation.

He said: "I like the verdict given by FIFA and I think it's clear enough and settles all the acrimony on ground.

"But it shouldn't be time for anyone involved in the whole saga to start jubilating. To me it's simply a case of no victor no vanquished.

"What is important now is for everyone involved with football to come together and let's work for the development of the game."

"There's been too much fighting and mudslinging and it's now time for all parties involved to cease-fire and help move the nation's football forward.

"FIFA have done their credible best, we stakeholders in the game should take-over from there and push our football to glorious heights" David, a re-elected NFA board member, told Nigeriansportsonline.com on Monday.

There had been controversy plaguing the country's football, with some so called 'football stake-holders' together with the sports ministry claiming that Ibrahim Galadima was falsely re-elected along with members of his new board in an election held in Kano.

The matter was taken to FIFA to adjudicate on it as the world football governing body on Sunday. The Honourable Ndubuisi Kalle Okeke led electoral commission decision that Galadima as NFA

Lulu insists on new NFA elections

An NFA chairmanship aspirant, Sani Lulu Abdullahi has insisted that the Football Stakeholders' elections into the board of the NFA scheduled for February 23 in Abuja will go ahead despite the FIFA verdict upholding the Kano December 29

elections which returned Ibrahim Galadima as the chairman of the association. Reacting to the FIFA verdict in an interview with KICK OFF, Lulu said: "So-called verdict given by FIFA cannot be said to be a representation of the majority of the football followers in the country. Galadima used his influence to deceive some people in FIFA. His action cannot stand the test of time because it was based on deceit."

confusion following our failure to qualify for the World Cup finals. "Having failed Nigeria, Galadima should be the last person to talk of coming back as the NFA chairman. The only way out of the present problem is for him to resign. "Some of us that believe in the future of this game, and in the country will fight this cause to the last until we have those that truly love the game in charge of soccer administration in Nigeria." He asserted, "the so-called verdict upholding the election of Galadima was a de-

cision taken by a committee of FIFA. It is not entirely representative of FIFA. As a result those of us that want to save Nigerian football from confusion will still have to ahead with this election." Charles Ojugbana the secretary of the election committee appointed by the

Stakeholders, said: "The development in Zurich is a topical issue and we are waiting for the meeting of the Stakeholders in Abuja to know whether the election will go ahead or not. We are expecting their reaction. What ever they tell us is what we shall do."

Shut up, says Gara-Gombe

Members of the football stake-holders forum that challenged the re-election of Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima as the NFA chairman have begun to throw words at each other, with the secretary of the factional group which condemned the re-election of Galadima in Kano, Shuaibu Gara-Gombe, asking another supposed member of the group Sani Lulu to shut-up.

calling for a football stake-holders meeting in Abuja on Wednesday. But Gara-Gombe who is the chairman of Gombe United and secretary of the stake-holders group opposed to Galadima returning as FA chairman told Nigeriansportsonline.com when contacted that Lulu should shut-up, since he was just a former chairmanship aspirant and not a member of the football stake-holders group. "Please tell Sani Lulu to shut up! He was just an ordinary aspirant for the chairmanship position of the FA and can't call for a stake-holders meeting.

"He isn't a member of the football stake-holders group and therefore can't call its members to a meeting. "In any case, FIFA, has made their pronouncement on the issue and there is nothing anyone can do. It's the highest ruling body in world football and their decision is always final. "It's just like the supreme court whose decision you can't appeal, so I wonder why anybody would be foolishly calling a stake-holders meeting. "What the stake-holders can do now is to look into FIFA's decision and find out ways of proffering ideas to

move the country's football forward. "We should all come together and help improve the fortunes of our football and not for any-one to start wasting time trying to go contrary to what FIFA has decreed" Ahmed Shuaibu Gara-Gombe, who was in the vanguard for the revocation of Ibrahim Galadima's re-election as NFA's chairman told Nigeriansportsonline.com. Ibrahim Galadima was on Friday pronounced by world football governing body FIFA as the de-facto chairman of the nations football ruling body NFA.

Lulu, who is the director of sports the Federal Capital Territory, added: "Instead of Galadima running to Fifa to give legitimacy to his illegal action in Kano, I expect him to resign honourably for plunging Nigeria football into

Sports

Mourinho is Chelsea's best player, says Deco

Coach Jose Mourinho is Chelsea's best player and has imprinted his personality on every member

of his squad, according to Barcelona midfielder Deco. "Every team is a reflection of their coach and Chelsea have taken on board Mourinho's mentality, a winning mentality of working hard and fighting for everything,"

the Portugal international told the Barcelona website Monday. Chelsea host Barcelona whom they beat at the final stage in last season's competition, in the first leg of the Champions League knockout tie at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday.

"They have got some great players, but Chelsea's strength lies in the way they work together and in their winning mentality," added Deco.

"I think Chelsea's best player is Mourinho because he has known how to ensure that his team fights to the death. Mourinho has given Chelsea and its players victories and trophies that they hadn't experienced before he arrived."

Deco, who was a key member of Mourinho's Porto side when they won the UEFA Cup and the Champions League in 2001 and 2004, said that Mourinho is capable of getting one over on his former mentor this time round. "I think we are in very good form and we are a more mature side than last year. Last time we were better than Chelsea but that didn't do us any good because we lost, but since then we have won the Spanish championship and have the same core of players and so we should have the right attitude. We now want to win the Champions League and to do that we have to beat Chelsea. If we can win there we will settle the tie."

Deco said of his

class forwards, and with David Trezeguet you have in my opinion one of the best, maybe the best striker in the world," Micoud said of his

team mates they will be up to the task. "We are a team that is capable of getting one over on their former mentor this time round."



Mourinho has imprinted his personality on every member of his squad.

Trezeguet the world's best striker - Micoud

Werder Bremen midfielder Johan Micoud has warned his

team mates they will be up to the task. "We are a team that is capable of getting one over on their former mentor this time round."

Roma captain Totti upbeat after surgery

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti said he was surprised by the cheery mood of striker Francesco Totti after the Italian international striker underwent major surgery on his badly-injured left leg.

The fibula runs parallel with the tibia and runs from the knee down to the ankle. It is the smaller of the two bones but is not weight-bearing.

not be fit in time for Italy for this summer's World Cup.

in a good mood

There is enough time

They face

The 29-year-old Roma captain was operated on late Sunday as surgeons realigned the left ankle ligaments that had been ripped away from the broken fibula that he suffered in Sunday's 1-0

Ten screws were inserted into the fibula to stabilise the bone.

Yet despite a massive blow for club and country, Spalletti said Totti was far from down.

"He joked that his son Cristian will take his place for Roma against Lazio next Sunday."

"It would be a great shame if he doesn't make it to Germany. He is a very important player for Italy."

They face

...Lippi wishes him speedy recovery

Italy coach Marcello Lippi has wished Francesco Totti a speedy recovery after he fractured his ankle in a Serie A match against Empoli at the weekend.

Totti, who is expected to be out of action for two months, could struggle to return for Roma before the end of the season and may

"Francesco is already talking about his comeback," Spalletti said after visiting Totti at the Villa Stuart clinic in the Eternal City.

"We will do our utmost to help him recover in time," Lippi said. "It's hard to say how long it will take for him to recover, but I hope

Totti was stretched out in the 11th minute after a tackle from behind from Empoli's Richard Vanigli. It was not the tackle that caused the injury but the way Totti landed on his leg.

They face

The Roma captain, who many Italians regard as their best player, underwent surgery on Sunday evening after going down under a heavy challenge by Empoli

defender Richard Vanigli.

"I hope the recovery time proves to be a bit shorter," Lippi was quoted as saying in La Gazzetta dello Sport on Monday.

have to do it. We will be with Germany and then on March 1.



Roma captain Francesco Totti remains optimistic for Italy's World Cup squad after he underwent a major surgery on his injured left leg.

Villarreal confident against 'weak link' Rangers

Villarreal are due to arrive in Glasgow on Monday for their Wednesday Champions League clash with a Rangers team they consider the weakest of the last 16.

"All the players were very happy to have drawn Rangers, they were the weakest team left in the tournament."

aggressive, physical football that Rangers play when they are on form. So maybe Rangers have a chance - but I believe that in the long run, skill and technique will win," he added.

Rangers to come at us through the game, but we are not going to wait for them and try to hold out, we want to control the game so that we can win."

They face

The Spanish club's scout Javier Cabello last week belittled the Scottish team's defensive duo Marvin Andrews and Sotirios Kyrgiakos as weak and slow.

"I know Villarreal are confident they will progress."

Coach Manuel Pellegrini told weekend Scottish papers: "I know Rangers is a very important club, a huge club. Villarreal is a very small club and, of all the clubs left in the last 16, I think Villarreal and Rangers have the least potential."

"We need to approach this game with the same attitude as our previous games and that is to believe that we can achieve something important. If we can score it will be great."

They face

Former Villarreal player an Kromkamp, who joined Liverpool in January, told the Scottish Sun newspaper:

The Dutch international defender played in the qualifying round win over Everton to earn Villarreal a group stage slot then appeared in four Champions League games to help them top the table ahead of Benfica, Lille and Manchester United. "Villarreal won't like the

"We are expecting

They face

Sports

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Bayern wait on Kahn fitness for Milan clash



UEFA
CHAMPIONS
LEAGUE

Coach Felix Magath trusts the Bayern Munich medical department to perform another minor miracle by getting goalkeeper and captain Oliver Kahn fit for today's Champions League game against AC Milan.

Kahn suffered a badly

bruised thigh in Saturday's 1-1 draw with Hanover 96 and will remain doubtful until just before the opening leg of the first knockout round clash with last season's beaten finalists.

Bayern, eight points clear at the top of the Bundesliga, have no reason to fear Milan after holding their own against Serie A leaders Juventus in the opening group stage — winning the home game 2-1 and losing the return by the same scoreline.

Magath would be a lot more confident against the six-times European champions with the inspirational Kahn in goal, however.

"Kahn's swelling got worse overnight," the coach revealed on Sunday. "I'm hopeful, though, because I know our medical department. They'll pull it off."

Kahn himself is not so confident, despite the legendary abilities of chief Bayern doctor

Hans-Wilhelm Mueller-Wohlfahrt, who has rescued the careers of many an athlete and regularly gets Bayern players back fit ahead of schedule.

"It's very painful," Kahn said. "We'll have to wait and see."

The 36-year-old keeper has been in inspired form since the turn of the year, providing a stream of top class saves to safeguard points for a Bayern side in generally unimpressive form.

The contrast was clear on Saturday as Michael Rensing proved unable to stop Hanover taking the lead five minutes after Kahn was forced off.

The German Under-21 international looked slow to react to a glancing header from Thomas Brdaric that gave Hanover the lead and Bayern, four-times European Cup winners, needed a header from Michael Ballack a minute from time to rescue a

point.

Magath has no other injury worries.

Bayern are odds on favourites to retain their Bundesliga crown, and clinch what would be a 20th German title in all, despite Saturday's hiccup.

Milan were being written off as Serie A also-rans last month but they are now roaring back to form. A 1-0 win over Cagliari on Saturday lifted them above Inter into second place, 10 points behind Juventus.

In their last three matches the 2003 European champions have scored 10 goals and conceded one — an encouraging sign for a defence that has struggled to deal with the lengthy injury layoffs of Paolo Maldini and Cafu.

"We're playing well in defence now and (goalkeeper) Dida is regaining confidence like all his team mates," said Milan

coach Carlo Ancelotti, who added that centre back Jaap Stam was expected to recover from a thigh strain suffered against Cagliari.

Andriy Shevchenko has recovered from a bout of tendonitis and should lead the attack alongside Alberto Gilardino.

Probable teams:

Bayern Munich: 1-Olivier Kahn or 22-Michael Rensing; 2-Willy Sagnol, 3-Lucio, 23-Valerien Ismael, 69-Bixente Lizarazu; 31-Bastian Schweinsteiger, 13-Michael Ballack, 6-Martin Demichelis, 11-Ze Roberto; 14-Claudio Pizarro, Roy Makaay.

AC Milan: 1-Dida; 31-Jaap Stam, 13-Alessandro Nesta, 4-Kakha Kaladze, 27-Serginho; 8-Gennaro Gattuso, 21-Andrea Pirlo, 20-Clarence Seedorf; 22-Kaka; 7-Andriy Shevchenko, 11-Alberto Gilardino.



Bayern Munich goalkeeper and captain, Oliver Kahn suffered a badly bruised thigh in a Bundesliga match on Saturday. Will he be fit for today's clash against AC Milan?

Last chance for Arsenal against Real

It is the last-chance saloon for Arsenal when they face a rejuvenated Real Madrid in the first leg of their Champions League knockout tie at the Bernabeu on Tuesday.

For Arsene Wenger's side the game represents their only remaining hope of saving a season that is threatening to disintegrate around them and to make matters worse they appear to have caught the Spaniards just when they have rediscovered their best form. The Londoners, who impressed in the group stage, have gone into freefall in recent months and hardly look to be in the best shape to face up to their first-ever meeting with the nine-times European champions.

They are out of both English cups and are struggling in fifth place in the league, 25 points behind runaway leaders Chelsea.

It is unknown territory for Wenger, who after finishing third in his arrival season in 1996/97 has led Arsenal to a top two finish every year since.

The bad news for Wenger is that anything beyond the Champions League quarter-finals is also unknown and he is only just about on nodding terms with the last eight after regular frustrations in Europe's elite competition.

A taxing injury list, a string of poor results and some off-field distractions complete a miserable picture for the Frenchman going into the club's biggest game of the season.

"At the moment we are struggling a little from a confidence problem," Wenger said after a late 1-0 defeat at Liverpool on Tuesday, Arsenal's seventh away loss of the season.

Sol Campbell, who went missing for several days after being substituted in a 3-2 home defeat by West Ham United two weeks ago, is absent injured and though Kolo Toure is back from the African Nations Cup the defence remains lightweight.

As so often before, Arsenal's hopes appear to depend on Thierry Henry - but with the club captain also perhaps distracted by daily



full potential then we can be devastating and, if we do that, hopefully we'll get a good result and beat Arsenal," Beckham said on Sunday.

Probable teams:

Real Madrid: 1-Iker Casillas, 11-Cicinho, 4-Sergio Ramos, 18-Jonathan Woodgate, 3-Roberto Carlos; 16-Thomas Gravesen; 23-David Beckham, 5-Zinedine Zidane, 14-Guti, 10-Robinho; 9-Ronaldo

Arsenal: 1-Jan Lehmann; 27-Emmanuel Eboué, 28-Kolo Toure, 20-Philippe Senderos, 16-Matheu Flamini, 7-Robert Pires, 19-Gilberto, 15-Cesc Fabregas, 8-Freddie Ljungberg; 14-Thierry Henry, 9-Jose Antonio Reyes/11-Robin van Persie.

media speculation about his future it is a lot to ask of the France striker.

As far as who is going to partner him, Jose Antonio Reyes remains a doubt with an ankle injury, Dennis Bergkamp says he is prepared to travel by road and sea while 16-year-old Theo Walcott could be given an incredible debut, possibly off the bench.

Real's season has been the mirror image of Arsenal's, a poor start giving way to a series of confident displays under new coach Juan Ramon Lopez Caro.

They chalked up their sixth league win in a row with an easy 3-0 victory over struggling Alaves on Saturday and received a further boost with the return to action of skipper Raul after three months out because of a serious knee injury.

Although Real they went out of the King's Cup last week spirits were raised by their storming, but ultimately futile, 4-0 win over Real Zaragoza in which they narrowly failed to overturn a 6-1 first-leg deficit.

Ronaldo is set to make his first start for Real in a Champions League match this season and Robinho has hit a rich vein of scoring form, notching up his 11th goal of the season in all competitions against Alaves.

If Raul plays he will become the first player to appear in 100 Champions League games - he is the competition's all-time leading scorer with 51.

The Arsenal match will be particularly special for English duo David Beckham and Jonathan Woodgate,

marking as it does their first games against Premier League opposition since they moved to Spain.

"If this team plays to its



Ronaldo hinted he would leave Real Madrid at the end of the season. Will the Brazilian gem give his best to Real in tonight's game against Arsenal?

Ronaldo drops 'I may leave Real' bombshell

Brazil striker Ronaldo hinted yesterday he would leave Real Madrid at the end of the season because of a lack of support from fans at the Bernabeu.

"I've never felt at home at the Bernabeu, the fans have never treated me with affection," the three times World Player of the Year told a news conference on Monday. "The fans have never accepted me."

"The reaction of the fans is something to take into account when thinking about my future. I've always said that I don't want to be where I'm not loved."

"I still make a decision at the end of the season. After all the effort I made to come to this club I don't understand why I'm treated like this. I will decide after the World Cup."

Ronaldo joined Real for 35 million euros (\$41.79 million) from Inter Milan after

the 2002 World Cup and is under contract until 2008.

He was whistled by a section of Real supporters after he failed to score during a 3-0 win over Alaves at the weekend.

Ronaldo's admission was a bombshell on the eve of his side's Champions League knockout tie against Arsenal.

He has been Real's leading scorer in every season since joining the club.

"I've thought about it and spoken with thousands of people and I have never understood why the fans have so little patience with me. As soon as I make an error people jeer me."

"I still haven't thought about leaving Real Madrid yet. At the end of the season I will make a decision. The president knows how I feel and why I'm sad about this."

"I don't know how the fans will react to what I said but to be honest I don't care."

Sports



West All-Star Tim Duncan collides with East All-Star LeBron James during their NBA All-Star Game in Houston, Texas, United States of America on Sunday. The East defeated the West 122-120.

McEnroe claims San Jose doubles

John McEnroe claimed his first doubles title since 1992 as he teamed up with Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman to win the SAP Open in San Jose on Sunday.

The 47-year-old McEnroe, in his first ATP event since 1994, linked up with Bjorkman to beat Paul Goldstein and Jim Thomas 7-6 4-6 10-7.

"They beat the first and third seeds and we beat the second and fourth," said McEnroe.

"Not surprisingly it went to the final tie-break, but the right team won."

It was McEnroe's 78th doubles title, the last won with Brother Patrick at the Paris Indoors in November 1992.

McEnroe has now won doubles titles in four different decades and is now tied with Tom Okker for second-most doubles events in the Open era.

"The key to success is working together with your partner and picking a good partner and I did that," said McEnroe.

"I am going to enjoy this and then take a few months off - minimum."

"Then I will go back on the Seniors Tour where I belong and tell them I can still cut it with the younger guys."

Bjorn withdraws from Match Play

Dane Thomas Bjorn has become the second European to pull out of this week's WGC-Match Play tournament in San Diego.

Spaniard Sergio Garcia has already withdrawn from the San Diego event after claiming he needed to take a break from his exhausting schedule.

Bjorn, who has a sore neck, had been due to play American John Daly.

Bjorn's withdrawal means that Northern Ireland's Graeme McDowell will now face Vijay Singh in the first round rather than world number one Tiger Woods.

Meanwhile, little-known Korean Charlie Wi birdied the last hole to seal a one-stroke win in the rain-shortened Malaysian Open.

The 34-year-old, from Seoul but now a resident of California, completed a nine-under 63 to finish on 19-under, one shot clear of Thongchai Jaidee.

Jaidee, looking to win the tournament for the third successive year, carded a closing six-under-par 66.

A 62 saw Frenchman Raphael Jacquelin finish third, one clear of English pair John Bickerton and Mark Foster.

Wi was the second US Nationwide Tour player to win on the European Tour in two weeks after American Kevin Stadler won the Johnnie Walker Classic in Perth, Australia.

MVP LeBron helps rally East All-Star to victory

Even down by 21 points, the Detroit Pistons' Fab Four plus LeBron James were still in the game. A push from the Pistons, an MVP performance by King James and a put back by Dwyane Wade helped the East rally for a 122-120 victory over the West in an NBA All-Star game that went down to the final seconds Sunday night.

"We didn't want to get blown out on national TV," James said. "All in all, this is a game and we just want to have fun, but you know we're all competitors and our competitive nature kicked in at one point."

The East pulled it out in a frantic final minute that felt more like a game that mattered than an exhibition.

"I thought, especially for our league, the fourth quarter was a great quarter," said East coach Flip Saunders of the Pistons. "They saw a little bit about what NBA basketball is about: great plays by great players."

With the score tied, Allen Iverson was off-target on a jumper, but Wade darted into the lane for the rebound and the go-ahead basket with 16 seconds left.

Still, the East didn't wrap it

up until hometown hero Tracy McGrady of the Houston Rockets missed a jumper with the clock ticking down. Kobe Bryant then had the ball slip out of his hands for a turnover, and it hardly mattered that Vince Carter missed a break-away dunk on the other end just before the buzzer.

McGrady led all players with 36 points. The 21-year-old James, in his second mid-season showcase, scored 29 and became the youngest All-Star MVP.

"It was more impressive that we came from, at one point, 21 points down and willed ourselves to a win," James said.

Detroit team mates Chauncey Billups, Rasheed Wallace, Ben Wallace and Richard Hamilton, all selected as reserves from the team with the league's best record, came off the bench together to help the East rally.

"I talked to the guys at halftime and basically said that we were not as competitive," Saunders said. "I thought that the second half they played exceptionally well. In these type of games, it takes a lot of time to get used to playing with guys. Every guy did something in a very positive way."

The West took a 74-53 lead

2 minutes into the third quarter. But the East responded with a 28-13 run over the next 6 minutes as James scored 13 points.

"You could definitely see the game change when (the Pistons) were all out there together," West center Tim Duncan said.

led by Billups' 15 points and seven assists, the Pistons combined to score 23 points, grab 14 rebounds and dish out 10 assists. Defensive ace Ben Wallace added three steals and blocked two shots.

"They were in sync," West coach Avery Johnson said. "It really shows how great of a team sport basketball can be when you have everybody on the same page."

The East grabbed a 117-107 lead with 3:29 to go. The West made it 120-all on Bryant's fade away jumper with 32 seconds remaining.

That set up the final sequence. After McGrady missed, Bryant lost the ball and Rasheed Wallace grabbed it with 5 seconds left.

McGrady claimed he was fouled by James on his final shot.

Had McGrady hit the tying jumper, he might have beaten out James for MVP honors.

McGrady thanked his West team mates for trying to help him win the award at home.

"That was the whole strategy," he said. "Obviously, those guys did a great job. First of all, just their kindness to want to get me the MVP. It was there if we would have won the game."

McGrady said the game provided a respite from the undisclosed personal problems that have bothered him in recent weeks.

"This was just an opportunity for me to have a piece of mind and go out and have some fun, and I took advantage of that," he said.

Early in the game, play was dominated by flashy dunks and sloppy ball handling. But the tenor changed when the East returned to the floor for the second half.

"I think tonight, the first three quarters was pretty much more entertainment than anything," McGrady said. "The East came out in the third quarter and they were ready to play ball."

As is often the case, the All-Star game had plenty of subplots. Ex-Los Angeles Lakers team mates Shaquille O'Neal and Bryant, no longer feuding, shook hands before

tip off and laughed when O'Neal fouled Bryant in the first quarter. The 7-foot-1 O'Neal, now with Miami, took a spin as the guard for one possession.

The four Pistons, along with Boston's Paul Pierce, entered the game with 3:38 to go in the first quarter and the East trailing 24-21. After Phoenix's Shawn Marion scored on a lay-up to give the West a five-point lead, Pierce and the Pistons closed the quarter on a 7-2 run.

Defense, which has long been Detroit's calling card, is rare in the All-Star game — but once the Pistons entered the West struggled to score. The East limited the West to four points in the final 3:38 after it had scored 24 points in the game's first 8 minutes.

"It was just fun for us," Hamilton said during an in-game television interview.

The four Pistons were the most on one All-Star team since 1998, when Bryant, O'Neal, Nick Van Exel and Eddie Jones represented the Lakers. The Pistons honoured the fifth member of their starting lineup, Tayshaun Prince, by writing '22' on their shoes.

The Pistons were the talk of the East locker room.

"They deserve it - and Tayshaun probably should have been here," said Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal, who was injured and did not play. "Those five guys are a big reason why they have the best record in the NBA. I think it's a huge thing for the league. I'm not any story that makes the NBA look good."

Detroit center Ben Wallace said the selection of four Pistons underscored the importance of the team concept.

"I think it says a lot about the league, that you don't have to come out and try to dominate the basketball and dominate the game in order to have individual success," he said.

But the All-Star game is all about individuals. And on Sunday night, the East was best.

Boxing: I'll be in shape against Skelton

Danny Williams has admitted he trained on cakes for his fight against Audley Harrison - but says he will be in top shape for his clash with Matt Skelton.

British heavyweight champion Williams, who beat Harrison on points, fights countryman and Commonwealth king Skelton at the ExCel Arena on Saturday.

Williams said: "I regret the Harrison fight. If I'd laid off the pizza and cakes I could have finished him early."

"This fight I'm taking se-

riously. It will be the performance of a lifetime."

Williams, 32, came in for some strong criticism after recording a split decision over Harrison last December following 12 disappointing rounds.

After the fight, Williams revealed that he gave his usual trainer Jim McDonnell time off and prepared for the Harrison clash on his own.

But he has vowed not to make the same mistake again.

"After the fight with Harrison, I said to Jimmy, 'that's the last fight I'll be on my own

-Williams

for,'" said Williams.

"So I went straight back to the gym. I've been pushing cars about, doing hill work and he's had me doing weights."

"I reckon I'll be weighing about 18st 12lb for Skelton, the same I was for the Mike Tyson fight (in 2004). That way I'll be strong, powerful and fit."

Williams expects his fight with the 39-year-old Skelton to be in complete contrast to his lacklustre affair with Harrison.

Sports

Ministry top brass keep mum ...after marathon meeting

Chieftains of the Sports Ministry rose from a marathon meeting yesterday and advised all stakeholders in the football family to sort out their differences to allow the game the needed space to grow to the desired expectation.

The newly reappointed Director of Sports Development, Dr Amos Adamu had held a meeting that lasted for about four hours with key officers of

the ministry. Though there was no official statement on what was the basis for the meeting, a source said the FIFA verdict and the Commonwealth Games were the main subjects of the day.

At the end of the marathon meeting, the ministry declined to state specifically

whether it would accept the verdict of FIFA on the

elections impasse, instead its spokesman Charles

Chikezie said the stakeholders, and all other

members of the football family have been advised to sort out their differences to allow peace to reign in the system.



AC Milan's coach Carlo Ancelotti, left, Ukrainian forward Andriy Shevchenko and midfielder Kaká of Brazil, right, talk during their training session in Munich, yesterday. AC Milan will play Bayern Munich in a UEFA Champions League match ...tonight

Sambawa aide kicks against FIFA verdict

A Sports Ministry top official yesterday kicked against FIFA's validation of NFA elections that returned Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima as chairman of the football governing body.

Speaking to brilafm.net the Special Adviser to the Sports Minister, Al Hassan Yakmut, declared that FIFA's endorsement of the Kano elections does not translate to a confirmation of Galadima as the chairman of the Nigeria Football Association.

He insisted that only the stakeholders have the power to do that.

After the long wait, the world football governing body FIFA made its official pronouncement last Friday on the disputed NFA elections held on December 29 in Abuja. FIFA endorsed the Kano elections and by implication Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima as the chairman of the Nigeria Football Association NFA.

Also yesterday Galadima, who was responding to Yakmut's claims, told Brila fm.net that it was unfortunate that

the crisis could not be amicably settled at home and 'we had to wash our dirty linen for the entire world to see.'

He, however, added that it was a part of democratizing Nigerian football. He called on all parties involved to put their differences and the past behind them.

The Kano state-born administrator urged all parties to join hands with him for the good of Nigeria football.

C'wealth Games: NOC reinforce 2014 bid

The Nigeria Olympic Committee has given greater voice to the Nigerian bid to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games even as it is bidding to host the secretariat of Africa.

After a long and exhaustive board meeting at its secretariat at the National Stadium, Lagos, the committee declared that it is satisfied that the Nigerian Federal Capital

Territory which Nigeria is presenting as host city for the 2014 games is fast growing into a tourist destination and has standard sporting facilities. Interestingly, the president of the NOC Engr. Habu Gumel is the director of facilities in the ministry of sports by which it is taken for granted that the issue of facilities and infrastructure will pose no

difficulties from the side of government.

Accordingly, the NOC believes that Nigeria has a strong case and is looking good enough, "from all indications" to win the bid against oppositions from Glasgow (Scotland) and Halifax (Canada).

The committee noted that the games would be used to celebrate Nigeria's 100 years of existence after

the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 and urged Glasgow to see reasons and drop its bid against Nigeria since the amalgamation was done by their own Scottish son, Sir Lord Luggard.

The bid committee headed by Nigeria's former head of state, Gen Yakubu Gowon is expected to storm Melbourne during the 18th

Commonwealth Games to intensify its lobby on the Nigerian dream.

In the same vein, the Olympic Committee has stated that it is still strongly in the bid against Egypt, Kenya and Tunisia to host the secretariat of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA).

The secretariat of ANOCA is currently being hosted by the Cameroons in Yaounde, but the call for bids became imperative in the recognition that the office in its present state is not befitting enough of ANOCA.

Meanwhile, in furtherance of the development plans and objectives of ANOCA, the board of the Nigeria Olympic Committee also approved the plan to stage the first edition of ANOCA Zone 3 regional developmental games for under-21 athletes.

Though no date has been fixed for the event, the NOC according to its PRO, Tony Neziyanya, has picked Abuja as venue for the competition which will feature three sports - athletics, boxing and volleyball.

Stakeholders hold Congress Feb. 23

The Nigerian Football Stakeholders has insisted on holding its scheduled Congress on

By Patrick Andrew, Asist. Head Sports Desk

Thursday, February 23 to deliberate on the recent FIFA verdict that endorsed the December 29 elections which returned Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima as NFA.

Secretary of the stakeholders, Mallam Shuaibu Ahmed Gara-Gombe said in a signed release that the sole agenda that will be deliberated upon is "the recent FIFA pronouncement on the annulled Kano elections," adding that every other subject worthy of their consideration will only be given attention if there is serious need for it.

Gara-Gombe said he hopes that whatever decision reached by the congress will be adhered

to, noting that since it is the highest decision making organ of football.

"It is expected that all members of the family will abide by whatever decision arrived at for the sake of the game," he said.

According to him, all delegates are to arrive tomorrow while accreditation of the 101 members expected is to attend the congress will be at Sheraton Hotel, which is also the venue of the event.

The Gombe FA chairman said though he is yet to see the official statement from FIFA on the verdict, the stakeholders are of the view that the scheduled congress should hold so that members of the football family will assess situations and take decisions which would be to the advantage of the game.

"The congress will hold as scheduled on Thursday, February 23 where all members of the football family will deliberate on the verdict of FIFA on the annulled elections on December 29 in Kano. You will recalled that the Congress had on January 6 not only annulled the December 29 elections but had fixed February 17 for fresh elections into the NFA board. But FIFA directed that it should

be suspended until it listened to our grievances against the elections. We had then said that whatever the verdict the congress would meet to further assess the situation and consider the way forward for the game.

"We do hope that all will abide by whatever decision is arrived at the congress," he said, adding that he does not foresee any problem.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

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Ahmed Shu'aib, stakeholders scribe

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EDITORIAL

Stop these public hearings now!

It is unsettling news for most Nigerians to read the bizarre conditions set for the public hearings by the National Assembly Joint Constitution Review Committee on the 1999 Constitution holding concurrently tomorrow in six geo-political zones. The hearings taking place in Abakaliki (South-East), Katsina (North-West), Lafia (North-Central), Maiduguri (North-East), Osogbo (South-West) and Port Harcourt (South-South) are meant to access the input of the public to the Mantu-led committee recommendations.

This exercise from available evidence is merely intended to give democratic credence to what has faced stiff opposition from a broad spectrum of the society. This much was said by Senator Ibrahim Mantu, the deputy Senate president who is the chairman of the National Assembly Joint Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution in a four-page advert in some national newspapers last weekend. According to Senator Mantu, the public hearings are organised "...further to the resolve of the Committee to ensure that Nigerian citizens are not restricted in any manner whatsoever from being involved, both directly by themselves and in representative capacities, in the production of a Constitution that can proudly be said to have come from the people."

Ironically, while Senator Mantu was saying this, the secretary to the same committee, Oluyemi Ogunyemi, wrote a circular to leaders of the six tour groups stating what obviously is undemocratic. Ogunyemi's circular, among other things, bans debate on presentations made; gives priority to government functionaries and traditional rulers. It also stipulates that all presentations must be written and submitted a day before the sittings begin and allots 15 minutes to each speaker.

This is most unacceptable as it would disenfranchise millions of Nigerians and we believe this is targeted at suppressing contrary views. Secondly, the two days scheduled for the hearings are not enough for an exercise that has 118 items on the list for review and in a country of more than 120 million people.

Most importantly, the politics of the review, the crux of which revolves around tenure extension for the president and governors, makes the hearings and the constitution review at this stage most undesirable, immoral and to a large degree, illogical even though many Nigerians agree that the 1999 Constitution is far from what the country deserves.

We note with concern that many of those who were hitherto opposed to the tenure extension clause for the president may have been intimidated or blackmailed to become its supporters. There is sufficient popular opposition to the amendments such that the issue has become a time bomb waiting to explode. Already, last weekend's riots in Katsina are linked to tenure extension and the situation is volatile in many parts of the country. States like Niger and Benue have said that they will boycott the hearings while there is the possibility that Lagos, Kano and Adamawa may do the same.

It is obvious that the Mantu committee, in concert with some vested interests in the Presidency, are bent on foisting on Nigerians a constitution whose content will serve just a very few, and from all indications, at the expense of the blood of Nigerians and at the risk of breaking up the country.

Whatever the outcome of the review, it is evident that the approach is replete with fundamental flaws, which will affect the credibility of any document that would in the end be produced. We therefore call on the National Assembly, President Olusegun Obasanjo, statesmen and civil society organisations, as well as the international community to come together and call for the suspension of the review until the tenure of this government ends. The earlier this is done, the better for the fate of our nation whose existence is once again hanging on the balance.

DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, February 21, 2006

Who killed Sa'adatu Rimi?

By Ujudud Shariff
ujushariff@yahoo.com

As the whole world is aware, Hajiya Sa'adatu Rimi, the wife of a frontline politician, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar Rimi, was brutally murdered on Saturday, January 14, 2006 at her residence in Kano by unknown persons. Tomorrow, Wednesday, February 22, 2006 will be exactly 40 days without her killers found. The question still remains, who killed her?

This heinous murder shocked the nation to its marrows, as there was nothing like it in recent memory. Kano was literally turned upside down as they mourned the death of an innocent housewife and the manner in which she was killed. Since then, people from far and near across the country have continued to visit and pay their condolences to her husband. The



Late Hajiya Sa'adatu Rimi

people were outraged by the senseless and wicked murder and called on the police to find the murderers. We were encouraged by the importance the police attached to the investigation and calibre of the head of the special investigation panel led by a deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG). Similarly, we were also happy with the announcement by the Inspector General, Mr Sunday Ehindero, that 23 suspects were arrested as at the time he addressed the press on the matter. We are not sure whether the number has increased or not as there has been scarcity of information on the state of investigation and when the suspects would be taken to court. Also, in the course of police investigation, the DIG has named some of the principal suspects. Of particular importance to me is the "retired district head" who was arrested barely two days after the murder. Though his name was not categorically mentioned, the identity was sufficiently revealing, as there has not been many retired district heads in Kano. This description led me to the conclusion to identify one man as someone I know very well from childhood. I saw him last ironically from a distance on Sunday, January 14 at the residence of Alhaji Rimi among the thousands of mourners. Suffice it to mention that he was relatively close to Rimi and can be described as politically operating on a similar frequency with Rimi.

Indeed, one can recall his recent meeting with Alhaji Rimi at a wedding ceremony in Kano city and the jokes they shared just a few weeks before the brutal murder. Therefore, as my mind reviewed this and several encounters in the last few years, it is inconceivable that he is now a suspect in the murder of Rimi's wife.

Thus, in the absence of any detailed information from the police, the story making the rounds revolves around the sending of a text message to one of Rimi's disciples alleging that the retired district head's involvement in the planning of the

murder. The text message sent by an anonymous person was said to have alleged that the meeting to murder Rimi's wife took place in his house. Though he denied this allegation citing also that he used to receive some abusive text messages from the same MTN number, he is still being detained by the police indicating that he might have a case to answer. It is also heart-warming to learn that the police have arrested the owner of the phone number the incriminating text message was sent from. As if coming out from one of those novels by James Hadley Chase, the police were also said to have arrested one of the younger brothers of the retired district head as being linked to the text message. From another dimension, we have the "confession" of a Mallam who allegedly went to Alhaji Rimi and publicly confessed to have participated in the gruesome murder. He was said to have walked to Rimi's house and cried out that he was unable to sleep since the murder and therefore had to confess to get some relief. But on the other hand, his mother dismissed the confession, describing her son as mentally-unstable. Like so many things in this essay, I do not know what the police were able to find out as to whether he actually took part in the murder or was just insane.

So while the world awaits the conclusive findings of the police and the prosecution and conviction of the suspects, we have very few options but to speculate on probabilities. This explains probably why Alhaji Rimi accused a "big man" in Kano, but "having a big responsibility" in Abuja as the sponsor of his wife's murder. As I do not know whether the police have investigated this lead or not, the task of identifying a "big man" from Kano and working in Abuja is not an easy one. In fact, how can we define a "big man" in this context? I want to limit it to those holding very senior government appointments. Kano State is blessed with many personalities holding senior government appointments from different walks of life. At the political terrain, we have three senators, 24 members of the House of Representatives, one serving minister, one federal permanent secretary, some directors and at least three chief executives of federal government parastatals. I also believe we have one serving Major-General in the army, a deputy governor in the CBN, a dean of a university faculty and many others. But out of all these "big men," it is only Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, the Minister of Defence that through one of his aides, Waziri Tambuwal, denied having anything to do with the murder. What happened to all the other "big men?"

In all these circumstances, the police have the greatest challenge to unmask the murderers. It is not doing the image of the police any good that in the last couple of years, it was not able to resolve some grey issues surrounding these high-profile murders in the country. We recall the brutal murder of Chiefs Bola Ige, Asari Dikibo, Harry Marshal, Alhaja Suliat and others that have remained unsolved. All said and done, we have to come back to our original question as to who killed Sa'adatu Rimi. In answering this question, the motive for the murder must first be ascertained. Was it political? Who is likely to benefit from this murder? Was she the actual target or her husband? There are so many unanswered questions that are begging for answers. If the motive is to politically paralyse or intimidate Rimi into silence, they have woefully failed. By his utterances, especially during the condolence visit of Governor Chris Ngige, it is apparent that he is still his old self. As shocked and grieved as he was at losing a wife and a first son within a matter of days, he accepted his fate with sobriety and dignity. Let it also be said that violence can only take root in falsehood, and falsehood its support in violence, confirming the fact that only those who revel in falsehood have violence as their principle. What therefore exemplifies this state of anomy than the cold-blooded murder of an innocent woman? There is no justifying this murder only to state it categorically that the act bordered on falsehood. Let men of goodwill therefore continue to fight against violence and falsehood as that is the only way we can cleanse our society of evil.

Finally, we wish to once again commiserate with Alhaji Rimi for losing a devoted wife; her children for losing a caring mother and her friends and relations. We pray for the repose of her soul as we observe the 40th day anniversary of her death. We will continue to pray until her killers are found wherever or whoever they are. As believers, we believe that the Almighty Allah will not allow all the prayers of millions of people to expose these killers to go in vain. We also call on anybody with any useful information to assist the police to unravel this murder. One of the dangers we are facing today as a people is that if out of fear or selfishness we refuse to speak the truth in the face of injustice to others, it could be our turn tomorrow. And there might be nobody to speak for us then.