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NEWS

NUB moves to acquire BON

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N55M BRIBERY SCANDAL

We're not corrupt

Reps reply Obasanjo

The House of Representatives has taken exception to the sweeping allegation of corruption levelled against the institution of the National Assembly by President Obasanjo, saying it will not be intimidated into shying away from its constitutional responsibilities.

By Hammeed M. Bello, *Senior Political Reporter* **and Zainab Alimi,** *Political Reporter*

"The war against corruption should not be against the National Assembly as an institution but against any identified individual after conclusive investigations and fair hearing. The power of adjudication in criminal trials as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is specifically conferred on the judiciary not the legislature and not the executive by tele-vision trial and conviction," the House said yesterday after rising from an executive session that lasted over an hour.

Also, two members of the House, Hon. Gabriel Suswan, the Appropriation Committee chairman, and Hon. Osita Izunaso, who were among those specifically named by the president for alleged collusion in the bribery scandal, jointly addressed newsmen at the National Assembly during which they refuted the president's claims.

Suswan said all those suspected by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), were invited

Contd. on Pg 2



Firemen at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria on Tuesday putting out fire on Block EE, Ribadu hall, a block of female hostels. The whole of the top floor was consumed by fire but no life was lost. Students are observing a two-week mid-semester break which began on Monday.

Pix: Odoh Diego Okenyodo.

Senator Ngaji may emerge senate president

Moves to pick a successor to the embattled senate president, Adolphus Wabara, continued yesterday with strong indications that the position may be zoned to the South-South. Sources say the presidency favours the emergence of Senator Gregory Ngaji (PDP/Cross River North), as the replacement for Wabara.

By Isa Sanusi, *Senior Political Reporter*

The presidency's position, Daily Trust gathered, was resisted by South-East senators and Igbo political leaders who insist that the position of the senate president remains in the zone.

After President Olusegun Obasanjo's national broadcast, the PDP caucus in the senate has been meeting at Apo Legislators Quarters and the residence of Deputy Senate President, Ibrahim Mantu having in attendance the Chief Whip of the Senate, Senator Udoma Udo Udoma whom many senators say is a more acceptable candidate for the leadership of the senate in the event that the to position is moved to the

Contd. on Pg 2

I have no intention to resign - *Wabara*

Embattled senate president, Adolphus Wabara has denied resigning his position saying he does not intend to resign.

His special assistant on media and publicity, Mr. Henry Ogbolue told journalists yesterday in Abuja that: "He (Wabara) is still the president of the senate of Federal Republic of Nigeria. Eventually between now and may be today he will make his own reaction known.

Mr. Henry Ogbolue further said: "The President of the Senate, Right Honourable, Adolphus Wabara has not resigned and he does not intend to resign. Infact he is enjoying his Easter holiday with his family and some very prominent Nigerians."

By Isa Sanusi and Habeeb I. Pindiga, *Political Reporters*

Contd. on Pg 2

See statement on P 3

No formal complaint from FG - *ICPC*

Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Justice Mustapha Akanbi, yesterday said that the commission is yet to receive a formal complaint about those indicted in the N55 million bribery scandal.

By Kemi Ogedengbe, *Judicial Editor*

Answering questions from newsmen in Abuja, Justice Akanbi expressed hope that the comprehensive re-

Contd. on Pg 2



Senator Gregory Ngaji

Matazu in Singapore, may return soon

The chairman of the House of Representatives Education committee, Hon. Garba Matazu, alleged to have disappeared in the wake of the controversial N55 million bribery scandal might have been on an official trip to Asia after all.

The leader of the House, Hon. Abdul Ningi, confirmed yesterday that he spoke with Matazu who said he was in Singapore on official engagement and would return to the country on Saturday.

By Hammeed M. Bello, *Senior Political Reporter &* **Lawal ibrahim,** *Correspondent, Katsina*

Ningi said suspicion that Matazu disappeared is incorrect because the Speaker, Aminu Bello Masari is aware of Matazu's official trip.

Matazu, who was billed to

Contd. on Pg 2

Reliable electricity generating set dealers and services companies in Nigeria, *see Pages 11 – 15.*



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News

N55M BRIBERY SCANDAL

and questioned but that nobody ever questioned him and saw no reason why he should not be given fair hearing before the president's indictment, while Izunaso said the president mentioned his name in error because he was neither a member of the education committee nor of the Appropriations hence couldn't have participated in the bribery scandal.

At a press briefing to convey the decision taken at the executive session to x-ray the president's charges of corruption, the leadership of the House, led by the House Leader, Hon. Abdul Ningi, the opposition leader, Hon. Ahmed Salik and other committee chairmen, acknowledged the president's anxiety over the issue of corruption but added that "we caution against sweeping comments like that contained in Mr. President's national broadcast which has very serious implications for our democracy."

The House, while acknowledging the receipt of a letter by the president on the charges of corruption which was read on the floor of the House by the presiding officer, the deputy Speaker, Austin Opara and committed to the Ethics and Privileges committee for investigation, said it will not give up in the discharge of its legislative and oversight functions because "democracy is a complex learning curve which requires serious commitment from all stakeholders, so that collectively, we can journey towards the goal."

The House also said it has been in the vanguard of the fight against corruption and has conducted various probes into the controversial Pentascope and Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), NITEL management contract, the missing ship saga, the Halliburton scam and the Ajaokuta/SOLGAS contract scam among others.

Meanwhile, briefing newsmen shortly after the plenary, Hon. Gabriel Suswan and Hon. Osita Izunaso, both of whom were fingered in the bribery scandal, denied involvement, saying that the report of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on which President Olusegun Obasanjo based his allegations said that investigations was still going on.

They alleged that the EFCC did not give them fair hearing in the matter, adding that at no time were they invited by the EFCC to give account of any alleged misappropriation.

Hon. Suswan specifically said: "Let me categorically state that I was never invited by the EFCC to answer questions pertaining to these allegations, neither was I involved in any money sharing. I have been in this country in the past three months in which according to the EFCC report of which I have a copy, the EFCC claimed those House members involved in the scandal were out of the country. I could easily have been reached but nobody invited me in the course of any investigations."

He said that the president accused him wrongly by fin-

Reps *Contd. from Pg 1*

gering him in the scandal, pointing out that Section 35(6) of the 1999 constitution as well as the constitution of the House have been violated in the matter.

"Let Professor Jude Njoku come forward and name those whom he allegedly delivered the said bribe. I am a responsible person having held various reputable positions in the House of Reps in the last six years," he charged.

Hon. Osita Izunaso on his part said that he believes that President Obasanjo mentioned his name in connection with the scandal in error, saying that his letter of protest over his inclusion in the matter has been forwarded to the president through the Speaker of the House, Hon. Aminu Bello Masari.

He said further that he could not have helped any party in the matter since he did not have any capacity, either as a member of the appropriation or education committee, adding that he too, never received any invitation from the EFCC, police or SSS.

"I have been too busy conducting a public hearing investigating the delayed take-off of the National Housing Fund which has resulted in our recovering as much as two billion naira. I am a corruption fighter and will take necessary actions following the outcome of the House which will duly guide me on this matter."

Both members also said that they should have been invited by the EFCC in accordance with the principles of fair hearing and expressed readiness to face any committee or body to state their position on the matter adding that if necessary, they'll take action after due consultations with their lawyers.

When asked if their alleged involvement in the scandal may be as a result of unstable relationship with the executive, Hon. Osita replied that "when allegations like these are made, there is the need to conduct one's investigations, which I am doing now. While not insinuating anything, in politics, anything is possible. But I am not involved in any scandal, so I can't be worried."

Individual members reacted differently to the charges of corruption against the National Assembly by the President. Hon. Bala Ibn Na'allah (ANPP Kebbi), said the president wants to destroy the National Assembly but will not succeed.

Hon. Emmanuel Osula (ANPP Edo), said it's crude blackmail by the president while Prof. Sola Adeyeye (Alliance for Democracy, Osun), said the polity is dirty and there is need to sanitize it.

NLC demands speedy trial of culprits

By Austine Odo, *Assistant News Editor*

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), has urged President Olusegun Obasanjo to ensure a speedy investigation of all those involved in the alledged N55 million bribe scandal involving the former minister of education, Prof. Fabian Osuji, Senate President, Chief Adolphus Wabara and other public officers.

A statement from the congress signed by its general secretary, Mr. John Odah, made available to *Daily Trust* in Abuja yesterday, also urged government to ensure the speedy and effective prosecution of the culprits where sufficient evidence is established.

"This case should not become another hollow ritual as exemplified by the abandoned corruption-related prosecution of a former federal permanent secretary at the instance of the Federal Attorney General during the life of this administration," the statement noted.

In the same vein, the congress urged the Senate to summon the courage to cooperate with the relevant agencies in the investigation and prosecution of those involved, adding that the Senate needs to exercise absolute independence and respect for competence and integrity in choosing a successor for Senate Wabara.

According to the NLC, doing so will produce a senate leadership that truly reflects the decency and strength of character that the Senate has always prided as its hallmark.

The statement commended President Olusegun Obasanjo for saving the nation from what it termed the pervasive use of the budgetary process by officials of both the executive and legislative arms of government for self-enrichment.

"The handling of this incident represents the quality of decisiveness that congress and other Nigerians have always expected and demanded from this government, rather than the widely criticized executive aloofness in the face of allegations and stories of corrupt practices, some of which had involved the same figures in the past," the congress said.

It however advised President Obasanjo to avoid getting involved in the election of a successor for Wabara, saying the present embarrassment might have been avoided if the executive had not imposed him on the Senate through a decidedly fraudulent process over which Obasanjo himself must accept culpability and responsibility.

The statement said the bribe scandal should be the beginning of a more decisive resolve to combat corruption in high places in an open and honest manner.



Adams Oshiomhole

Ngaji *Contd. from Pg 1*

South-South zone.

A senator who spoke to *Daily Trust* under anonymity, said whoever the PDP caucus comes up with should be a person of high integrity and capacity to chart a new course for the senate saying: "Obasanjo should not try to impose this man (Senator Ngaji) on us and if he insists, that means he is on a mission to undermine the legislature."

Presidency's favourite, Senator Gregory I. Ngaji, is a lawyer born in 1946. He was chairman, Yala local government and was also a commissioner in Cross River State before his election into the senate on the platform of the PDP in 2003.

Commenting on the indictment of the National Assembly over corruption by President Olusegun Obasanjo, Senator Kanti Bello (ANPP/ Katsina North), said the whole issue is a designed script to tarnish the image of the National Assembly which Obasanjo sees as an obstacle to his bid to remain in power.

Senator Kanti Bello further said: "He (Obasanjo) is targeting some of us and Nigerians have to be very careful. I don't condone corruption but why should the president be anxious to prosecute lawmakers while former Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun, has not been prosecuted even though evidence are clear that he stole billions of naira."

The lawmaker said even though the EFCC report has indicted some senators, the senate still has to listen to their explanations, saying 'there is more than meets the eye.' Other senators also view the president's stance on the N55 million bribery scandal as part of the effort of the president to rubbish the image of the legislature.

Earlier, the media assistant to the president of the Senate, Mr. Henry Ugbolue had told newsmen that "the president of the senate, the right honourable Adolphus Wabara, has not resigned and indeed does not intend to resign. Infact, he is enjoying his Easter holiday with his family and some very prominent Nigerians. So he has not resigned and he doesn't intend to resign.

Infact when I left him, he was just seeing off the president general of Ohaneze, Chief Joe Izukwu," he added.

The ANPP caucus of the senate has maintained a wait-and-see posture to the scramble of the PDP caucus for the choice of a successor to the embattled Senate President who spent most of yesterday receiving top Igbo politicians at his Apo mansion.

Senators who started a two week Easter break yesterday, shunned the National Assembly complex while the few who turned out avoided the press.

Matazu *Contd. from Pg 1*

appear before the Ethics and Privileges committee on Monday in connection with the suspected role of his committee in the corrupt charges was absent, and the committee chairman, Hon. Bello Mutawalle, said he learnt Matazu had traveled out of the country.

When *Daily Trust* contacted Matazu's home in Katsina yesterday, Matazu coincidentally called to inform his family that he was in Malaysia, but will arrive Singapore today. His brother said Matazu will arrive Nigeria on Saturday enroute London.

ICPC *Contd. from Pg 1*

port of those indicted would be forwarded to his office by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), or by the presidency within the next few days.

According to him, he will not on his own ask that the report be forwarded to his office because doing so will amount to overzealousness on his part.

"But I trust President Olusegun Obasanjo and I know that he is very serious with the situation. 'Am still expecting them," he added.

Justice Akanbi said, "I do hope I will get the papers very soon. I listened to the president on NTA news just like you. But from what I gathered, ICPC appears to be the body that has jurisdiction over the matter. We have not received the list of those indicted."

He, however, said that before the arrival of the formal complaint letter, he would put in place a high-powered investigation panel that will handle the matter.

Justice Akanbi said that the commission would not limit its scope to the EFCC investigations report, but examine it for possible loopholes to be blocked.

He noted that it was not an oversight for President Obasanjo to pronounce those indicted guilty before the ICPC investigation. "The ICPC is not a rubber stamp. It will investigate the whole thing and determine whether there should be prosecution or not. I think the president was very sad with NASS which made him to talk like that.

"I cannot blame the president for dismissing the former education minister, Professor Fabian Osuji over the matter because he who has the power to appoint has the power to fire. Everything started with budget delay. I hope this case will make things move faster, so be it," he said.

Asked whether the National Assembly would follow back through the current amendment bill now before the National Assembly, Justice Akanbi said that he did not believe that they would do anything to tarnish their image.

"I am not a prophet to know what is going to happen. We are all in a learning process. If you watch what is going in the judiciary, judges have stopped making frivolous injunctions. So we are making progress."

On the former Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Tafa Balogun, Justice Akanbi said his office was not investigating anything about the former police boss. "He has not written to me on the issue. I am still expecting report from them."

He noted that there are ICPC cases in the appeal courts, saying that they are delayed because some of the judges handling them presided over election tribunal matters.

Justice Akanbi disclosed that the commission will open offices in Kano, Lagos and Bauchi. The offices, added, will not exceed the quarter of the year.

Wabara *Contd. from Pg 1*

On Tuesday, sources at the senate said that Wabara had agreed to quit based on the report written by the EFCC which showed his complicity in the N55 million bribery scandal involving the education ministry.

Wabara, a source told *Daily Trust* had earlier remained adamant, insisting that he was innocent of all allegations against him. He was reported to have said that the outcome of EFCC's investigations would exonerate him.

But the EFCC report when it was made available to the senators made it evident that the Senate president played a prominent role in the bribery scandal.

When it became clear that the EFCC report was not favourable to him, Daily Trust gathered that Wabara declared that if he had to go two principal officers of the senate should, as well, follow suit.

President Obasanjo in is address to the nation Tuesday night had expressed disgust over the involvement of the Senate president in the bribery scandal, pointing out that the National assembly is wallowing in corruption.

Prior to his broadcast, the president, it was gathered had summoned the Senate president to the State House asking him to report with the N20 million he allegedly collected and also with his resignation letter.

The presidency has however denied the report saying that the president had no such powers to call for the resignation of the senate president.

News

KADUNA MYSTERY BURIAL REPORT

It was premeditated murder by police –*Human rights boss*

From Sani Babadoko,
Bureau Chief Kaduna

The Human Rights Monitor (HRM), Nigeria has described the killing of a student and the hasty burial and exhumation of 12 corpses in Kaduna in October last year as a premeditated murder by the police and demanded a judicial commission of inquiry.

HRM chairman, Barrister Festus Okoye a said at press conference in Kaduna yesterday, in response to the release of the government's white paper on the report of the administrative commission of inquiry to unravel the unfortunate incident at the Bachama road cemetery, Tudun Wada, Kaduna, that contentious issues of widespread human rights abuses by the police have arisen with the release of the white paper.

He said there were four such worries, one of which is whether the corpses exhumed by irate youths at the cemetery were those of the 33 youths arrested by the police on 11/10/04 during the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) strike action.

The second is if the Kaduna state had a hand in the burial of the corpses and the death of the 12 year old school boy, Mohammed Sani Idris, during the NLC strike.

Okoye who is also chairman of the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), said the third issue the report raised was whether the panel of inquiry succeeded in unravelling the unfortunate incident at the Bachama road cemetery, Tudun Wada, Kaduna on 18/10/04 and the four issue is whether further inquiry is required given the enormity of the issues and the level of public interest on the two issues.

He said HRM attended the panel's sittings and commissioned an independent inquiry to unravel the mystery which it has published in its report titled: "Licence to Kill: Widespread Extra-Judicial executions in Kaduna state," pointing out that there is a correlation between its findings and that of the administrative panel.

"Human Rights Monitor insists, that in line with the recommendations of the administrative commission of inquiry and the decision of the Kaduna State government, that the Inspector General of Police and the office of the Attorney-general of the federation conduct further investigations into the death of the suspects and the killing of the 12 year old school boy Mohammed Sani Idris," Mr. Okoye declared.

He said the police did not handcuff the 12 suspects it was transferring to the Riga police station from the Gabanawa police station, a distance of over 20 miles thereby creating the conditions for attempted escape and an excuse by the police to execute them.

He said," the bullet wounds on the corpses were inflicted on the chest and not consistent with shots fired at escaping prisoners which should be from the back."

"Our findings did not however establish the complicity of the Kaduna state government in the police killings of either the teenage student nor the 12 suspects.

Obasanjo now serious on corruption –*Jigawa dep.gov*

From Hassan A. Karofi,
Correspondent Dutse

The Jigawa state deputy governor, Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, has described the stance taken by President Obasanjo as not only commendable but a clear sign that the administration is serious in it policy to fight corruption.

He told newsmen that the president has shown that he is serious about fighting corruption, adding that although some people have questioned the motives, the president's action is a good example that his avowed fight against corruption is real.

Barrister Hadejia added that government at all levels should investigate and deal with anybody any functionary found wanting if the fight against corruption is to be successful.

"As long as there is transparency, there is going to be no problem in the fight against corruption,' he added.

The deputy governor also reiterated his believe that the president is more than ever out to ensure that his crusade against corruption sees the light of day, stressing however that the recent stance will really go a long way to redeem the opinion that government is selective in it's fight agsint corruption in the country.

"I think the recent action of the president has clearly changed the perception of selective action as far as the fight against corruption is concern,' he said

The deputy governor said the international community will take Nigeria serious is by the kind of action taken by the president in coming out to not only denounce corruption, but to actively take drastic actions on any body that engages in such acts.

"This is the only way to show the world that we are serious,' he disclosed.

On the allegations raised against some governors by the president, the deputy governor said be only allegations since issues to name or evidence is given to substantiate such claims, adding that proof of such allegations must be provided to Nigerians as in the case of recent corruption allegations against the minister and the legislature.



President Obasanjo

Breach of contract: Court orders closure of DBN at Kaduna refinery

A Kaduna state high court has ordered the immediate closure of the premises of Delattre-Bezor Nigeria (DBN) Ltd at the Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemicals Company (KRPC), pending the determination of the case of breach of contract involving N510,800,000 brought against it by G-Techno Engineering Nigeria (GTEN) Ltd.

Giving the order in the suit no: KDH/KA129/2005 last Tuesday the presiding judge, Justice, E.Y. Inuwa, adjourned the case to April 4, 2005 for hearing.

G-TEN had through its counsel, Morris Odah Esq sought the court to determine whether the defendant, DBN, had the right to terminate the contract it entered into with the plaintiff and still continue with the labour supplied and to use the plaintiff's equipment continuously at the site even after the contract was terminated.

The plaintiff is also asking the court to determine whether the defendant was right to abort the termination procedure as contained in the original agreement reached on 12th November 2003.

The plaintiff also wants to know if the defendant has the right to backdate the termination written on 26/10/2004 to take effect from 18/10/2005 and determine whether the notice was thereby invalidated.

A 24-point affidavit in support of the motion sworn to by the plaintiff's fiancé director, Mr. U. Yohanna, averred that the defendant was awarded a contract for a rehabilitation project at the Kaduna refinery but did not know how to mobilise necessary labour to execute the contract whereupon the defendant approached the plaintiff who agreed to supply labour needed throughout the duration of the contract.

A formal agreement was reached and documented between the defendant and the plaintiff for labour supply on the 12th November, 2003, which spelt out the rights and liabilities of the two parties to the contract.

An addendum to this agreement was further prepared on 29/9/2004 and the plaintiff recruited 110 personnel to work for the defendant as contained in the agreement.

The affidavit also posited that on 18 and 19 October, 2004, the workers raised an agitation for further improved work conditions which was within the powers of the defendant to meet If so, the productivity of the workers for the two day period was nil.

It said the plaintiff's managing director explained the situation to the defendant and the workers' demands which was beyond his capacity as the supplier of the labour and that inspite of the explanations, the defendant on 26/10/2004, wrote terminating the plaintiff's contract purportedly backdating the effective date to 18/10/2004.

NUB moves to acquire BON

From Musa Umar Kazaure,
Regional Editor (Kano)

The NUB International Bank Limited has begun moves to acquire debt-ridden Bank of the North even as NUB management embarks on plans to expand its branches Nationwide as well as establish five foreign branches in Liberia, Gambia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, London and New York.

Dropping the hint in a presentation of the bank at its Kano customers forum, the managing director of the bank, Mr. Danjuma Ocholi, who fell short of mentioning the name of the bank, be acquired, said NUB will use its managerial skill and expertise to turn Bank of the North around af-

Daily Trust investigations however confirmed that NUB International bank has written to the Central Bank of Nigeria and the NDIC to acquire Bank of the North and that the response from both financial bodies has been positive.

Mr. Ocholi said the purpose of the private placement offer is to enable NUB to re-engineer and grow its business, including raising funds for the expansion of its information and communication technology, improve on its corporate branding and additional working capital for its operations.

He further explained that 20 percent of the estimated net proceeds of 8.763 billion naira will be expended in the expansion of local branch network, 15 percent on establishment of foreign branches, another 15 percent for the enhancement of information and communication technology while 5 percent is meant for corporate branding while 45 percent of the estimated proceeds will be pumped into the working capital, he stated.

The NUB managing director stated that the bank is also currently discussing with banks in Ghana and other West African countries for cross border financial transactions and over 200 new branches are expected to be established during the period of re-engineering the bank.

NITEL reduces internet dial-up tariff

By Anas A. Galadima.
Business Reporter

The Nigerian Telecommunications Limited, (NITEL), has announced a reduction in its internet dial-up tariff to N3.25 per minute for peak periods and N2.25 per minute for off peak periods.

According to a press release signed by NITEL's deputy general manager, corporate communications, Tayo Ekundayo, this represents a sharp reduction from the former tariff which ranged between N6.50 and N26.000, depending on where a customer was accessing the internet from.

The new rates, the statement added, are fixed regardless of the class of the call, whether local, regional or national and the internet service can now be accessed by dialling 150 directly from any part of the country without first dialling any city as the case was in the past.

Ekundayo explained that "NITEL will continue to examine areas where access to telecommunications services will be improved upon and thereby make the world a smaller village at minimal cost to customers."

The new tariff regime takes effect from Friday, April 1, 2005.

PRESS RELEASE

25th March, 2005

THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

This is to further clarify that Chief Adolphus Wabara has not resigned his office as the President of the Senate.

Following the Senate adjournment for Easter, the President of the Senate is spending his Easter break with his family, friends, colleagues and associates at his Aso, Abuja official home. He is indeed wishing all Nigerians a happy Easter break.

HENRY UGBOLUE
Special Adviser, Media and Publicity
to the President of the Senate

News

NATIONAL CONFAB... NATIONAL CONFAB... NATIONAL CONFAB

Confab lacks mandate to produce new constitution – *Yadudu*

Stories by Habeeb I. Pindiga, *Political Reporter*

One of the delegates from Kano state to the national political reform conference, Professor A'uwalu Yadudu, says the conference has no mandate to produce a new constitution for the country.

Yadudu told *Daily Trust* in Abuja that all previous constitutional conferences had been put in place with enabling laws backing them and that since this confab is without any legal teeth, it lacks the competence to produce a constitution.

"We lack the mandate to produce a new constitution. We lack the competence. The legal backing to put our decisions in force without the National Assembly coming in," he said.

Yadudu said any attempt by the conference to produce a constitution will amount to the usurpation of the powers of the federal and state legislatures. "It's sheer usurpation of the powers of the National Assembly and the states Houses of Assembly," he said.

According to the professor of law, it was still not late for the conference to set up a committee that would produce a draft bill for onward transmission to the National Assembly to provide the terms of reference for the confab and state clearly its mandate.

According to him, there was nothing wrong with the president setting up a conference but expressed fear that the report of the confab may not be implemented because of the legal lacuna.

"You need a law to have the work of the conference respected. I have been advocating this legal backing because you don't want to engage in a fruitless exercise", he said.

The delegate suggested that the National Assembly should be taken along in the project, as the legislature is the only constitutionally recognised lawmaking body.

Gemade counsels South-south on resource control

Former national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Barnabas Gemade, has urged the oil producing states to jointly form exploration companies to participate in managing the oil wealth instead of pushing for an unrealistic resource control.

He told journalists yesterday in Abuja that a federal arrangement would not allow for resource control and that Nigeria's must stick to federalism.

Gemade, who is on the federal delegation to the national conference said, "We need a country that will have a strong federal government, thereby causing states to come together. If you allow a confederation, that will lead to the break of the country."

He said calls for fiscal federalism regarding resource control were not encouraging to a nation with diverse interests.

Gemade, however, said when the oil states form "quasi-public" oil corporations, they would be actively participating in managing the resources and would make adequate funds to take care of environmental degradation.

"I am for resource management where you give reasonable latitude to people of the area to participate in exploiting the resources," he said.

If Nigeria should remain a federal entity, Gemade said, oil resources has to be controlled jointly by the federating units.

Coups: South-east should apologise – *Ex-gov*

One time governor of the defunct North-western state, Alhaji Usman Faruk, has challenged former military officers of the South-east extraction and their civilian collaborators to apologise for staging the first coup in 1966 that led to successive military intervention and a subsequent civil war.

Faruk, a retired commissioner of police and delegate to the national political reform conference, told *Daily Trust* in Abuja that all ex-military officers tendering apology at the confab lacked the *locus standi* to do that because they were not in any position of authority during the first and second coups.

He said only apologies from members of the supreme military council would be acceptable to Nigerians whose leaders according to him, were mowed down in an attempt to wrestle power.

"If there is any apology to offer to civilians for the coups, this apology should come from the eastern block, the former Biafran army and the civilians. They are the ones that should apologise because they started the war. The war was not started by officers from the north nor from army officers from the west or Midwest. It was their people who started the war. They are the real culprits. Those who started the war should be the ones to apologise to the entire Nigerians.

"They started the war. They killed our fathers, our political leaders and the federal troops only responded. So we have no apology to anybody in Nigeria. They should apologise to us for starting the war," he said.

C'ttee composition: Delegates protest misinformed'

Former minister of [illegible], Alhaji Mohammed Ibrahim Hassan, has exonerated the chairman of the national political reform conference, Justice Niki Tobi, from any breach of procedure in appointing members of the business committee.

Hassan, leader of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), delegation to the conference, said Tobi was right in the appointments since no immediate protests trailed the announcement of the committee membership.

He said those accusing the chairman of wrongdoings were not being sincere, as all known rules were adhered to, adding that the protests have been aborted.

Last week, a group of Northern delegates alleged that Tobi flouted some standing rules in appointing the business committee. *Daily Trust* learnt that the moves were spearheaded by Alhaji Umaru Dikko and Senator Uba Ahmed.

On Thursday it was further gathered that the two delegates, who are leaders of Kaduna and Gombe states delegations respectively, started collating signatures of fellow Northern state leaders to register their protest to Tobi.

A source said, however, that the two delegates were persuaded by some northern elders at the confab to drop the challenge so as not to portray the north in bad light.

When contacted, Dikko declined comments, saying since the move was jointly attributed to him, he would first contact his alleged co-actor, Ahmed, before responding.

Ahmed was, however, not available at the conference venue on Monday and Tuesday, and persistent telephone calls to his GSM number were picked by an aide who said he (Ahmed) was not in town.



Justice Nibi Tobi

Conference adjourns for Easter

The national political reform conference on Tuesday completed the first phase of debate and adjourned for the Easter break. Delegates are to reconvene next Tuesday, March 29, before they dissolve into committees.

Prior to the recess, the conference concluded debate on the 19 areas of focus and inaugurated committees to take up these areas.

As the conference resumes, the panels will conduct committee deliberations till April 28 and report back to the plenary on May 2 and is expected to end on May 21.

Announcing the composition of the committees, chairman of the conference, Justice Niki Tobi, said, "we have tried to create a balance using all the variables of north/south and Christian/Moslem among others. No one should feel bad if they are not allocated committees of their choice. What we did was in the event that we could not place you in your choice of committee; we then considered your expertise and place you accordingly."

ACF wants strong centre retained

[illegible] Forum (ACF), yesterday at the on going national political reform conference, called for the retention of the federal system with a strong centre to manage the nation's diplomatic affairs and protect its territorial integrity.

Most submissions made at the conference, including those from some Northern states, canvassed for the devolution of powers to the federating units in the spirit of federal character.

But making the forum's position known yesterday, leader of the ACF delegation, retired General Ibrahim Haruna, said Nigeria's prime [illegible] should be to protect its [illegible] integrity and that [illegible] be achieved [illegible] strong [illegible]

What poses [illegible] challenge, Haruna said, was "defence and security, both diplomatic and physical. If our kith and kin today are anxious to cross the desert to go and enslave themselves in other countries, it's a reflection of our internal organisation and mismanagement.

"I believe unless the centre of the presently constituted Federal Republic of Nigeria is strong enough to manage our diplomatic affairs and our territorial integrity, then we are not doing justice to our people."

Haruna also advocated a remedy to the slow judicial system in the country. "This conference should resolve that inspite of the separation of powers between the judiciary, executive and legislature, we need umpires. We need a body of umpires, of ombudsmen to give [illegible] card or yellow card, because we know our judicial system has been slow. It is still slow and not likely to become any quicker," he said.

During yesterday's sitting, delegates harped on the rule of law, improved funding for agriculture and electoral reforms.

Alhaji Ibrahim Shehu Shema said one of Nigeria's main problems was the failure to respect the rule of law, cautioning that unless this tendency is reversed, democracy is in danger.

Shema, a Katsina state delegate, urged governments at all levels to abide by the rule of law so that democracy could thrive.

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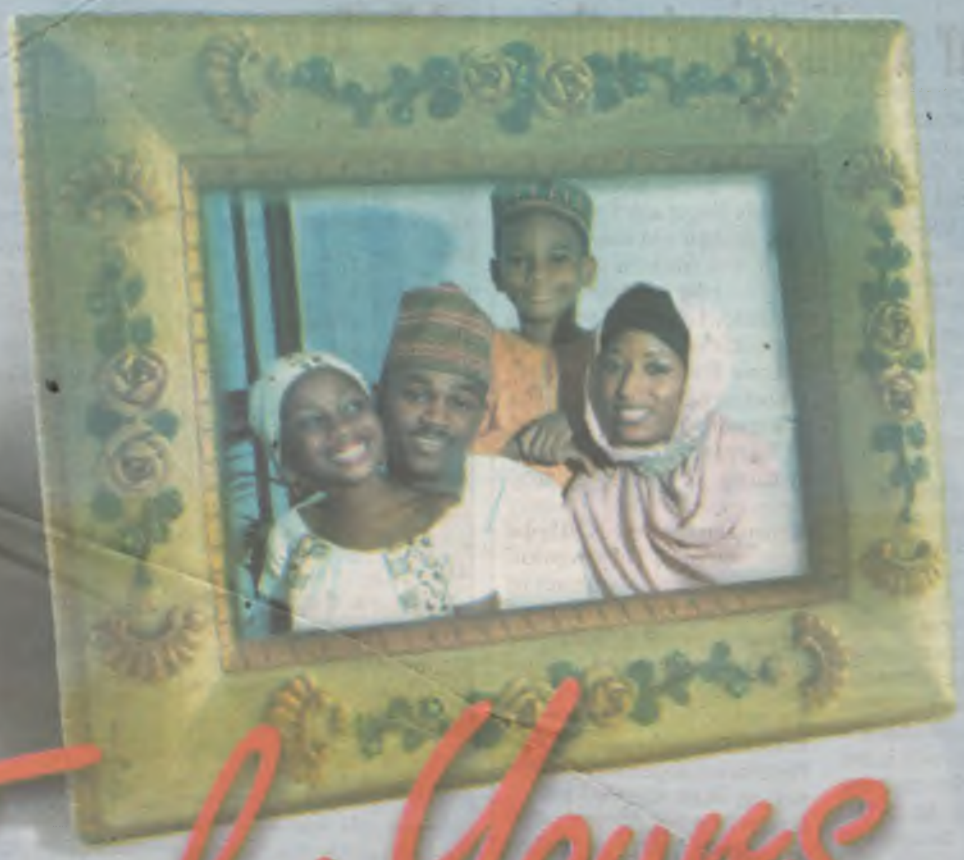
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Idang Alibi on Thursday

Obasanjo's renewed war against corruption

The event was of sufficient significance to cause a columnist to drop his original piece for the week and go for it. I am referring here to none other than President Olusegun Obasanjo's national broadcast two days ago, in which he, in no uncertain term, sent a signal that the real war on bribery and corruption has begun.

By that Tuesday evening, I have written the column for the week but when the broadcast came, I had to discard it for this subject.

The president's demeanour on TV, his naming of the big names involved in the infamous N55 million scandal, in fact, the general import of his broadcast on the issues, were all meant to drive home the point that his administration is now ready to do real battle against the bribery and corruption.

This time around, there is no meeting of the commonwealth or any of such high profile gathering of foreign leaders so cynics are not likely to dismiss Obasanjo's tough step as PR gimmick intended to impress the world that his government is serious in his declared war against cancer eating away the soul of the nation.

"Fate, it seems, has been very kind to Obasanjo in his renewed offensive against the enemy. When I take a look at the ethnic, regional and even religious affiliations of the victims" of the latest battle, I cannot help but conclude that God is behind Obasanjo in this campaign. The Ibos, Hausa-Fulani, and the Yorubas were all hit!

In varying degree, members of the three major ethnic groups were involved. In a country where people look with magnifying glasses to see whether it is a particular ethnic, regional or religious group that is being "victimised" in the name of dealing with wrong-doers, no one is certainly going to accuse Obasanjo of witch-hunting a certain section!

The involvement of the high and mighty in both the executive and legislative branches in this latest scandal and Obasanjo's vehement denunciation or scattering words for all those involved, will also help to show that it is not going to be a selective war. If any members of the judicial arm were involved, they equally would have been dealt with.

For a president who is often accused of wanting to pocket the legislative arm, Obasanjo's call on the National Assembly to engage in self-cleansing by looking critically at the allegations against Senate President Adolphus Wabara and some of his Senators in the Education Committee and the Chairman of the Education Committee of the House of Representatives and some members of shows tact and respect for the doctrine of Separation of Power.

I thank God for giving Obasanjo the wisdom to recoganise that even in his zeal to deal with a malaise that constitutes a clear and present danger to the father land, there is need for due process to be followed. Which is why even if he had don so in private, the vehement denial by the Senior Special Assistant to the President (Media and Publicity), Mrs. Remi Oyo, that the President had asked for Wabara's resignation, is quite in order.

We are not running a parliamentary System where there is no distinction between the executive and legislative branches but a Presidential System where there is a clear Separation of Powers between the two arms. If it is seen that the President is demanding Wabara's resignation, many will leave the substance of the case and start protesting that the president, is becoming imperial and overbearing, that he has no right to tell the other branch what to do with any of its members who is alleged to be engaged in some malfeasance.

Nigerians are looking and watching what the National Assembly, especially the Senate, is going to do about the allegations against its President. We hope the matter will not be swept under the carpet in the name of it being a family affair. No, this cannot be a family matter. It is an important national issue in which the whole world has an avid interest.

It does not matter now what disagreement led to this scandal coming to public attention. What is however very important is that it has given Obasanjo a unique opportunity to re-invent himself and his administration and become that authentic hero Nigerians have been yearning for.

From what I hear and perceive, Nigerians will be more wiling to bear the necessary pains that have come with Obasanjo's courageous reforms if they see that the high and mighty who commit crimes against the fatherland are punished for their sins.

Every one recognises that one of the main reasons Nigeria is grossly underdeveloped is our soft attitude towards bribery and corruption. Any leader who therefore bravely confronts this public enemy number one, is certain to be hailed as a national hero. Nigerians will be ready to forgive such a person any other minor failings in his character or conduct.

The thing for Obasanjo to do is to keep up with this momentum. There are certainly many other high functionaries of government in all branches under investigation. Reports on such investigations should be quickly written and actions taken on them. Such a step will send a clear message that the battle against bribery and corruption is truly on.

If for any reason the President allows the perception to gain ground that the Osuji, Wabara and company palaver was a chance affair or one-off matter, Nigerians who are frightened by the latest action, will quickly forget any fear and go back to their old ways.

If it is truly an offensive that will be sustained, the President should try and beam his search light on the Nigeria Police. No one will seriously think that the government is out to fight bribery and corruption if nothing is done to stop policemen who openly demand and receive N20 bribe from motorists. They even kill drivers and innocent passengers on account of refusal to pay this "toll."

The demand and collection of this N20 bribe by the police has done more to foster the perception that Nigeria is a hopelessly corrupt nation than the actions of high public functionaries who do their own in more "civilised" manner!

Some commentators have alleged that so far the president's war against bribery and corruption has been more of an excuse to deal with his enemies and friends who have fallen out with him than a genuine national cleansing of the Augean Stable.

The way Obasanjo has now descended on Wabara, Osuji and others who are known not to be his enemies or fallen friends, will surely help to erase any doubts about the genuineness of his campaign. The President should build on this new image. Many Nigerians are likely to sit up and take the president more seriously when they see that if he can deal with his friend like Wabara, there is no knowing what he can do to other people.

Ideally, the fight against bribery and corruption is not supposed to be Obasanjo's fight alone as it now appears. It ought to be a collective one. But in the type of unitary federalism which we are now practising, every one takes a cue from the President at the centre. That is why Obasanjo's Tuesday utterance and action are so significant. If the President catches and punishes more bribe-takers and givers, he will succeed in taming this monster by about 50 per cent before the end of the year.

With what Obasanjo said and did on Tuesday, no one in Nigeria will be so casual in asking for or receiving bribe any more. Nigerians have been so brazen because there were no consequences for asking or receiving bribes. We are a people who fear if we know that our actions will attract a sanction.

As a President who is not seeking re-election, Obasanjo has a golden chance to hurt friends and foes in the interest of Nigeria. History is waiting anxiously to see if he is the man who will slay the dragon called bribery and corruption, the dragon that has stopped Nigeria from fulfilling its destiny as a world super power.

Short Pieces Weekly

With Professor Lavi Erinosho
laierinosho@yahoo.com

Who cares about 419?

I have had the privilege of traversing our country over the past few years and interacting across the socio-economic divide and ethnic groups. How I wish our government would find a way of checking out the feelings of the members of the public about a number of burning issues. I am therefore taking the liberty to bring to the attention of readers their views on a number of issues such as 419.

It is true that Nigeria has carved a remarkable niche as a country of fraudsters popularly referred as 419. Just travel around the world and you are confronted by deep suspicion. Every one outside our border thinks that a Nigerian is a fraudster or a potential one for that matter. Of course millions of mails are sent out to people around the world about opportunities for making millions of dollars.

The story line takes different forms. Sometimes it is about a big commission that would be earned if large sums are lodged in one's account. All that is required is for the interested individual to indicate his/her foreign bank account number. In another context, a proposal is made to you over the phone about doing business on minerals like gold or diamond or some sort of precious stones and you are lured to invest in order to make huge amount of money. There is another one about money doubling. The fraudster would like to convince you that he can double your money, often US dollars. Bank statements are intercepted and instructions are given that the funds therein should be transferred to the fraudster's account. The fraudster often writes to thank the bank for protecting his account from other fraudsters! The tricks come in different scope and shapes.

The result is that we do not have any reputation in the world. This is coupled with the fact that we are adjudged to be among the most corrupt in the world. Corruption thrives and traverses all sectors of our society. The civil servant, lecturers in tertiary institutions, policemen and women, bank managers, the military and just any group that you can think are not entirely immuned from corrupt practices. Some have even argued that corruption has crept into religious institutions and quite a number that claim to be Men and Women of God in Nigeria are part and parcel of our corruption culture.

Our government has no doubt responded to the terrible image that we have earned by talking about it all the time, enacting a law to against it, and establishing institutions like the ICPC to fight it. The government officials including our president sermonize about the need for us to clean our image and be godly from time to time.

I wish to recall the speech of our president before Nigerians that were resident in Botswana when he made a trip not too long ago to Southern Africa. He simply said when he was invited to address them: 'Fellow Nigerians, *I beg una, make una do clean business in this country*'. He repeated this three times and thereafter took his seat. The message was clear. Nigerian business is never clean business and there is need to begin to do clean one.

We often take time off in our studies as sociologists to conduct in-depth interviews that usually reveal the deeper meanings of feeling and attitudes I would like to share the outcomes with the public in this piece.

In my travels around the country, I sought to find out if the message is sinking and what do Nigerians feel about corruption and the so-called 419. Are people very concerned and willing to do something about it? How do they perceive the 419 syndrome? Do they care as much as our president on the problem and if not why not?

Yes, most Nigerians are deeply concerned about 419 and recognise the fact that it dents our image in the world. Surprisingly, they appear to have different attitudes towards it and justify it on quite a number of grounds. First, they think that those who are lured into the 419 trap are often greedy individuals and they should not blame the fraudsters but themselves. They asked: Why should someone in his/her right senses like to benefit from stolen funds? Why should someone provide information on his/her bank account to a stranger that he/she has not met or related to? To them, it takes two tango and those who are to lured into the 419 racket are themselves dishonest individuals who should not blame anyone or the country for this. Incidentally, this view was shared by top senior level police officers.

But Nigerians are not yet done with their views on 419. Hear them again. Some of those interviewed felt all the noise about 419 is nonsense. They argued that this is one way of paying back the West in particular. They pointed to the fact the third world countries remained the victims of vicious exploitation. Millions of their funds have been siphoned every year from colonial times till today. They noted that the so-called WTO agreement is tilted against third world countries and they are busy paying back debts that are fraudulently concocted because of their weak negotiating skills and lowly status in the world. To this school of thought, the 419 menace is one way of paying back the West in their own coins.

It seems that the 419ers are seen as heroes that are helping third world to fight back for the rights albeit through what a famous sociologist Robert Merton would argue to be inappropriate means. Rather than feeling guilty and apologetic, our governments should ignore the tantrums of the West and let the 419ers 'get along'. Finally, they argued that 419 would disappear if there is a level playing ground for all the peoples on earth.

The views are an eye opener to me and should be for the authorities. It is doubtful if the efforts of the government would pay off as long as a cross section of the society perceives 419 in different sense. The government may have to do more work to convince Nigerians that 419 is a vicious crime that costs us a lot. But as some of my discussants argued, our governments also do not have the credibility to put an end to 419 or sermonize about this because hands of its functionaries are also not clean. We may need people from other planets that are not tainted to persuade Nigerians that certain behaviours are inappropriate.

Has 419 come to stay? I hope not. The point is that the 419 syndrome reveals the public perception of the world as a place where inequality may be redressed through what is regarded as inappropriate means. Perhaps, the world could nip quite a number of anti-social behaviours in the bud if efforts are made by powerful countries on earth to lead by example.



YOUR LETTERS

Agricultural agenda for Gov. Sheriff

Kindly permit me to use your reputable national medium to address Governor Ali Modu Sheriff on the agricultural problems of Borno state.

The state as a state has come a long way down the memory lane. Tracing back its origin as one of the most powerful Kanem dynasty, from the Pre ≤colonial times of Jihad into the post Colonial era, we notice that it has embraced modernity without compromising its traditions and culture.

Leadership is from God, and Allah has anointed you to lead Borno people for a purpose. You have been assigned a mission, a mission of taking the people to the Promised Land. So don't let anything deter you from your set goals prove yourself worthy to Allah, so as to disprove your critics.

History has shown that we have ever since been agrarian. That is having farming as a mainstream of our economy. Unfortunately it has been relegated to the background, because of our quest of fast bucks in the Petroleum sector, that even a new born baby nowadays in Borno thinks petrol, dreams petrol.

For if it happens that the few farmers now available also join the madness, and there is total blackout of food from our neighbours, are we going to drink petrol or its allied product to survive? Impossible.

Before the discovery of the almighty bone - of contention (Crude oil) in Nigeria today, horses, donkeys, camels and cows were used as a means of transportation and sources of hard labour to man. And he was at comfort with himself, having peace of mind, well organized and covers the journey our automobiles cover's nowadays.

With regards to petro - chemicals and its allied products and other derivable from the crude oil, one can say it has done us more harm than good. For the fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides, which. are supposed to improve yield have transformed our fertile land to barrenness, destroyed our organic soil content, polluted our natural habitat and in extreme cases death of the individual it was supposed to serve. To cap it all in so far that it is now the only option, we are confronted by its unavailability.

All hope is not lost. We are in the jet age, so we must learn how to fly, by converting such a dilemma into an achievable dream. To avoid recurrences of the recent past mistakes like in the Chad basin Project, the Yau Project and the Dadin - kowa project, his Excellency should throw open the doors of agricultural production to the public.

A private - public sector initiative should be injected into the agric system. It is my firm belief that if given the enabling environment and publicity on the part of government, such sector alone can register Borno on the agricultural world map.

Going by the current state of agriculture in the nation, Governor Sheriff should cash in on the poor funding and relegation of the agricultural sector is experiencing by the current dispensation and seek investment in the sector from foreign partners. In this respect specialist like Israel, Canada, Australia are good example of nations ready to partner in this regard. He should also borrow a leaf from Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia and many others who solely depend on agriculture for self sustenance and export.

Borno State alone can be a food basket of the nation and West Africa, in terms rice, wheat, beans, Soya beans, Maize, Millet, and Sorghum. Similarly it has the capacity to service our textile mills in terms of cotton production. It also has the potential to produce Gum - arabic in a large scale.

Therefore he should create the enabling environment for public private sector partnership especially as it relates to agriculture. With the current agitation for resource control, he should go back to the drawing board in the interest of the state and the nation as a whole.

In the same vain he should re - direct and re - orient the minds of the well-to-do and youths of the state, by empowering and enlightening such groups on the significance of agriculture especially when it comes to commercial production.

Scientific and improved indigenous food production should be his main drive. Our agricultural specialist, which we have in abundance should be utilized, but with the firm gospel to their listening ears that this time around it is not a free for all bounty, but rather a profit oriented venture and stakeholders are involved. And that should anybody mess up or even attempt to because of his/her personal greed will not only be shown the way out but also suffer the penalty.

Such specialist if employed and compensated adequately as standard set - up like that of Canada and Israel will not only boost there morale but also reduce unemployment of graduates in our state.

In the long term, his Excellency should seriously consider setting up industries to process such products to finished goods which can be made readily available for export.

Processing industries like the flower mills, Netal leather industries and other Agro - allied sectors should be re - juvinated and privatized.

I will therefore earnestly appeal to our dynamic Governor to please critically consider my suggestion. He should climb to higher grounds so as to see into the valley of agriculture. When harnessed properly it will not only put smiles on the faces of Borno state indigenes, but the nation as a whole.

Such a move will leave his firm footprint on the sands of time.

Yusuf Pindar Kida, Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) Abuja.

Re: Obasanjo rebuffs Muslim leaders

When I read the above story in your 10th March edition, I nearly lost my breath. In any case, this in itself is a lesson for those that think the President is predictable.

I found it very difficult to convince myself that these words actually come out from the "Horses Mouth". If somebody of his caliber can utter such derogatory words in the presence of eminent leaders. I think something wonderful is going on underground in this country. However, as a student of history I learnt that in everything there is cause and effect. That will probably sum up what prompted our respected Otta farmer to behave the way he did. Although it is difficult to locate a definite answer, it may not be far from the truth to assume some possibilities that resulted to such unexpected response to the gentle request of their highnesses. For Obasanjo to call them "crowd" or to even tell them that their visit "disappointed" him is simply ridiculous.

More disheartening was the numerous people that were denied access into the President's office. I saw the name of Dr. Datti Ahmad, of the poliocontroversy fame; Mallam Nafi'u Baba Ahmad, another Obasanjo challenger, and Mallam Yakubu Musa, the unshakable shari'a proponent. This composition as opposed to the one allowed access to Aso Villa really revealed to the Nigerian public that; the president had identified category of people: the ones he calls "crowd", and the other one he would rather ignore.

Well, as father of the nation, the President should have treated everybody equally, regardless of what he thinks of them. I think the President should have taken a cue from the address of his predecessorLate Gen. Murtala Muhammad his guests on 9th September,1975 when he sent massage to National EPISCOPAL conference of Nigeria, Onitsha where he said:"...the various religious bodies should not be found wanting in this drive to give our nation a new lease of life". So, to tell a group well meaning Nigerians that: "I am the chairman of this meeting, enough is enough. Closing prayers"is gross political miscalculation.

Notwithstanding, your highnesses as loyal citizens of your land, I will advise you to take heart forgive Mr. President. It is only hoped that this new label (crowd) will not be a stigma. It is my contention however, that no being is beyond errors, so it may be part of his weakness as a living being. I also hope the emirs will borrow from Late Gen. Murtala the following, as a reminder: "For too long we have paid lip service to issues of remoulding our society, for too often we have talked glibly... of the birth of a new nation...now is the time to re-think, to reflect and to act.

Finally, I think the report should have been titled: *Obasanjo rebuffs northern emirs* since, in my opinion, Muslim leaders were not even allowed entry into the Villa.

Dahiru Rabe, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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



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World Report

Arabs to normalise ties with Israel if...

Arab leaders have said Israel cannot expect peace or normalised ties with the Arab world if it does not make concessions and give up occupied lands.

The remarks opening a two-day Arab summit on Tuesday marked a clear shift away from a Jordanian proposal that Arab leaders had already rejected.

In what would have been a dramatic change in Arab countries' peace strategy, Jordan had suggested that Arab League members offer diplomatic ties to Israel before it returned occupied lands.

But Arab League Secretary-General Amr Musa told the summit that Israel should not expect "the Arabs will make concessions and even normalise without anything real in return".

Only 13 heads of state from the league's 22 members attended the summit. Others stayed away either for health reasons or because of personal disputes with other members, sending lower-level officials in their place.

With a thin agenda, the summit sidestepped glaring issues that have shaken the Arab world in recent months - increased pressure for democratic reform, new optimism in the peace process, Sudanese issues, huge demonstrations in Lebanon and the withdrawal of Syrian troops.

Instead the leaders spoke in support of Syria's concerns about US pressure and considered reform of the Arab League itself.

Jordan's King Abd Allah II had shaken the summit preparations with his peace initiative. When it was rejected, he did not attend.

Jordan had argued that if Arab nations go ahead with normalisation, it would prompt Israel to make major peace concessions.

Musa did not mention the Jordanian proposal, but dismissed the idea of normalisation.

"Israel is pressing to gain concessions without anything in return. It imagines that our rights will be forgotten and that the support and immunity it enjoys will allow it to continue in building settlements and erecting the imperialist wall and keeping the occupied territories - or most of them"

"Israel is pressing to gain concessions without anything in return.

"It imagines that our rights will be forgotten and that the support and immunity it enjoys will allow it to continue in building settlements and erecting the imperialist wall and keeping the occupied territories - or most of them," he said.

Syria, Lebanon, Sudan and Yemen led the fight to reject the Jordanian proposal. The summit is expected to endorse a text reaffirming a Saudi peace initiative approved in 2002.

That initiative said Arab states were prepared to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel in exchange for its full withdrawal from occupied Arab territory, the creation of a Palestinian state and settlement of the Palestinian refugee issue.

Pressed by the United States to move towards democracy and combat what it calls Islamic terrorism, Arab leaders struck a defensive note, saying that reform cannot be imposed from outside.

Algerian President Abd al-Aziz Butaflika said terrorism should be defined in a way "that everyone in the United Nations can agree on".



Jordan's King Abdullah II

'Arab lands must be free from occupations– *Moroccan King*

Moroccan King, Mohammed VI said the task of putting the Arab house in order will remain incomplete unless Arab lands are freed from foreign occupations.

"I wish to reiterate our active support for the Palestinian people's peaceful struggle waged under the leadership of our dear brother, President Mahmoud Abbas, for the establishment of an independent viable, Palestinian State," he said.

In his speech at the Arab summit in Algiers and made available to *Daily Trust* by Moroccan embassy in Abuja, the King said several reforms have been proposed and undertaken for the

According to him, "political efforts to put the Arab house in order have spanned the entire sixty years of the Arab league's existence."

In his view, priority should be given to resolving inter-Arab disputes which are the foremost obstacle hindering the desired reforms.

"We also back international efforts aimed at enabling the Iraqi people to recover full sovereignty and preserve their national and territory unity within a democratic state, where security and stability prevail," he said.

Ireland refuses Nigerian's return

Jibrin Abubakar, *with agency report*

Irish government has rejected an appeal for a deported Nigerian student to be allowed back into the country to complete his high school exams.

Olukunle Eluhanla, 19, was among more than 30 Nigerians deported last week after their asylum applications failed.

Opposition politicians have called for the student - apparently deported in his school uniform - to be allowed back to the Irish Republic from Nigeria.

But the Irish government said reversing the decision would set a bad precedent.

The case of Mr Eluhanla, now in the Nigerian commercial capital, Lagos, has sparked widespread concern.

He has been pictured in Irish newspapers wearing his uniform from Palmerstown Community School in Dublin.

The teenager, who arrived in Dublin unaccompanied two years ago, says he has no family in Nigeria but that supporters in Ireland have arranged somewhere for him to stay.

However, Irish Justice Minister Michael McDowell rejected calls for Mr Eluhanla to be permitted to return to take his Leaving Certificate exams in June.

He said the case had been examined twice by independent bodies, whose findings had cast doubt on parts of the teenager's asylum claim.

Mr McDowell also warned that Ireland's asylum system would fall into chaos if the government granted automatic asylum to orphans.

The head of the Irish Refugee Council called the deportation "inexcusable".

Children and their mothers Irish town of Athlone because they face being deported back to Nigeria.

Last week's deportation also left some children in Ireland while their mothers were returned to Lagos.

Opponents of the policy, including some of the student's classmates, plan to protest outside the Irish parliament building on Wednesday.

Around 15,000 Nigerians are thought to be in Ireland, with most of them living in Dublin.

Beijing fights media corruption

China said it will introduce new measures barring journalists from reporting if they are found to have made up stories or taken bribes.

The journalist concerned could be banned from reporting for five years, or even for life if the offence leads to a criminal penalty.

The rules also set out guidelines on how to avoid conflicts of interest

the Communist Party and media watchdogs, but it is unclear when they will come into effect.

Driven by the need to sell newspapers and advertising space, China's media has been increasingly turning into what one local journalist called "a dog serving two masters - not just the Communist Party, but also the market".

The result has been a steady surge towards sensationalism among some of China's once staid newspapers.

The latest announcement from Beijing's regulatory authorities seems to be aimed at addressing some of the side effects.

Yet reactions to the measures are likely to be mixed.

There is widespread public cynicism about journalistic ethics and suspicion of reporters' roles.

But the regulations will also stir fears among those trying to write about abuses of power or corruption that they could be targeted.

A number of high-profile journalists have already been detained in cases which international media rights groups warn are centred on their bold reporting of touchy issues

Dutchman charged over war crimes in Liberia

A Dutch lumber merchant has been arrested and charged with war crimes, accused of murders and arms smuggling during Liberia's civil war.

Guus van Kouwenhoven, 62, allegedly ran militias in the west African country and funnelled weapons to the regime of deposed dictator Charles Taylor.

Mr Taylor was barred from buying weapons before his fall in 2003.

Mr van Kouwenhoven is the second Dutch businessman to be charged with war crimes in the past week.

He was linked to Liberia by United Nations reports and testimony from NGOs working in the country.

Van Kouwenhoven was a key player in instability in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Last week Frans van Anraat was accused of selling Iraq chemicals used to manufacture poison gas used against the Kurds in Halabja in 1988.

According to a UN report submitted to The Hague, Mr van Kouwenhoven formed part of Charles Taylor's "inner circle".

Hizb Allah criticises US interference

The head of Lebanon's Shiite Hizb Allah group, Hasan Nasr Allah, has accused the United States of interfering in the country's affairs and of influencing its politicians.

Nasr Allah said US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State David Satterfield, "who exercises influence over certain opponents of the regime has set himself up in Lebanon to interfere in the tiniest of Lebanese details".

up an operations centre in the American embassy to direct the affairs of Lebanon," he said.

Asked about US declarations that Hizb Allah's eventual disarmament was an internal Lebanese matter, Nasr Allah said "that is a good thing. Any foreign interference in this matter will complicate things".

UN Security Council Resolution 1559, sponsored by the US and France and adopted in September, calls for the disarmament of Hizb Allah, besides the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the country.

President George Bush said Washington viewed Hizb Allah "as a terrorist organisation, and I would hope that Hizb Allah would prove that they are not by laying down arms and not threatening peace between Israel and the Palestinians".

Nasr Allah immediately rejected Bush's call.

"We are being asked to disarm so that Lebanon remains defenceless. Our force is protecting Lebanon," he said.

"The core of the problem is that the United States and Israel want to disarm Hizb Allah."

Putin to make first Israel visit

Russian President Vladimir Putin will make the first visit by a Russian or Soviet leader to Israel at the end of April, Israeli officials said.

Mr Putin will meet Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and top Israeli officials, spokesman Ron Ben-Yishai said.

Russia is a member of the diplomatic group known as the Quartet of mediators for Middle East peacemaking, along with the US, the UN and the EU.

They sponsored the stalled "roadmap" peace plan for a Palestinian state.

It was not clear if Mr Putin would also meet Palestinian officials during the visit on 27 and 28 April.

Israeli-Russian relations have improved greatly in the past 15 years since the fall of the Soviet Union.

Mr Sharon, who is of Russian descent, has visited Moscow three times since taking office in 2001.

However, ties between the two countries have been strained in recent months over a Russian decision to consider supplying Syria with missiles.

Israeli President Moshe Katsav is said to have invited Mr Putin while the two men were in Poland to mark the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz Nazi death camp.

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Sen. (Dr.) Ahmadu A. Ali (CON),
The National Chairman,
Peoples Democratic Party,
National Secretariat,
Abuja.

Sir,

RE-FACT FINDING COMMITTEE ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE P.D.P. PANEL OF INQUIRY INTO THE POLITICAL DISTURBANCES IN ANAMBRA STATE AS IT AFFECTS THE NWC OF THE PARTY AND THAT OF PROBLEMS SURROUNDING THE GOVERNOR OF PLATEAU STATE.

The undersigned are truly lovers and die-hard members of this Great Party of ours right from inception, but who by every standard of Nigeria's defined Political indices, are the underdogs of the Party. We did a lot of Networking along with other groups in the Party, Particularly the Youths and Women to bring about the desired victory of P.D.P up North. Since then we have remained resolute and Loyal to the course of this Great Party. It is in consonance with this focus of ours that we easily become prey to political fever any time we seem to be dazzling within the zone of negative political disequilibrium manifested in rancor, self-centeredness and cynism among others. On the other hand we become joyous and gladdened when the party appears to be solid, formidable and or waxing in that direction with all its members and leaders sheltered under this lofty Umbrella.

2. Sir, the entire Grand Alliance of the P.D.P. Patriots across this Country wish to congratulate you for formally taking over the mantle of leadership of this dream Party of ours. As a man tested as an astute achiever in all facet of human endeavour, God has exposed you to, the confidence of our members and the party is further strengthened. Your acceptance speech for instance was indeed a Gospel of reconciliation, forgiveness and patriotism to the party and our dear Nation.

3. Equally, your speech on the Inauguration of the Fact Finding Committee on the problem surrounding the Governor of Plateau State and the Committee on the recommendation of the PDP Panel of Inquiry into the Political disturbance in Anambra State as it affects the National Working Committee (NWC) became a clear point that you are out to leave a positive legacy within your shot stay as the Chairman of the Party.

4. To achieve these lofty ideals and values, we need to postulate and galvanise appropriate strategies, procedures as well as human and natural resources coherently enough to enable us solidly move forward as one people. In this crusade, there should be no sacred cows, no senior partners, no god fatherism, etc.

5. To our mind therefore, only a man of vision, transparency, leadership capability and democratically principled can harmonise and gauge the feelings, inputs and concerns of Party faithful towards achieving the most desired democratic experience.

6.In the light of this sir, we make bold to advise in strong terms on the aforementioned subject matter, because the success or otherwise of that exercise will have tremendous impact on the fortune of our great party.

FACT FINDING COMMITTEE ON THE PROBLEMS SORROUNDING THE GOVERNOR OF ANAMBRA STATE.

7. The compounding problem that has emerged from the Anambra state saga has to do largely with the leadership of the party as it relates to the way and manner those mandated to handle the job did it, thus, adding another dimension to the already existing saga. No doubt Mr Chairman, the

hierarchy of the Party has absolute moral basis to investigate its members' course of action because they (sub-committee NWC) acted vide the delegated powers of the party.

8. We wish to state in categorical terms however, that the expulsion of Governor Chris Ngige from the party in the first instance is highly uncalled for in the circumstances the Governor found himself; albeit his desires to survive the subjugation of his democratic mandate sacredly given to him by his electorate.

9. We need not revisit the background of the saga because it is well known to you. Will expelling Governor Chris Ngige from the Party solve the problem from its roots? Certainly not, because the antecedents of the saga are there on ground. The supporters are there, the political field is there and the problem of perceived "pay back" is there. So what are we

10. Can true reconciliation be achieved under this arrangement? We need a better approach coherently and realistically packaged in order to achieve this value-loaded ideals. To our mind we need an approach of values clarification and interactional dialogue to understand ourselves as a people. Only then can we be armed to the teeth to cope with the challenges of our contemporary democratic demands.

FACT FINDING COMMITTEE ON THE PROBLEMS SORROUNDING THE GOVERNOR OF PLATEAU STATE

11. There is no doubt, deriving valid data to address the issues generated within the framework of the terms of reference will go along way in enhancing the quality of decision of the party regarding one of ours in the PDP family and provide a leeway towards setting our house in order to face better challenges of our democratic experience. Suffice it to point out however, that in championing this course, as democrats, we should be guided by some basic democratic tenets like respect for the rule of law, case of double jeopardy and other prejudicial indices enshrined in our constitutional practice.

12. We feel strongly in the light of the above that the decision of the party should be rather anchored on the decision of the court because the Judiciary is the veritable organ shouldered with the responsibility of adjudication. For fair hearing therefore, the decision of the party should not be seen to be interfering with the judicial process in whatever form.

13. Sir, in your words "As a responsible party, we have a duty to seek the truth to enable us take informed decisions." Seeking the truth to our mind can best be obtained through the decision of the courts, as far as the issues raised in your inaugural speech are concern. We must not attempt to ridicule ourselves and the party by way of escapist strategy either now or in the near future.

14. By and large, issues relating to corrupt practices are serious claims that require thorough investigations under the tenets of rule of law. Since these claims equally hinges on constitutionality of the state directive policy, it becomes the primary responsibility of the state to initiate action towards unveiling the facts or otherwise of the matter with the view to taking decision based on the principle of fair hearing. Therefore the state through the instrumentality of the Judiciary be given the free hand to conclude its constitutional responsibility unless the party is suspecting the state to be doing otherwise, because the party though in control of the machinery of Government, still remains a cricop of the state.

15. Secondly, we observe with dismay the credibility of the Chairman of the committee. We thought that the PDP in its quest for genuine forgiveness

and reconciliation encourage the state to set machinery to verify the claims of forgery on Governor Donald Duke. These claims have not died down to its lowest ebb, yet he has been given assignment similar to the ones he is being accused of. Even if the courts have concluded their findings, we need a healing period to restore the confidence of the people on Governor Donald Duke. But the moral question still remains, "will you now set up a committee to look at Governor Duke's case after he has examined some one's case?"

16. Mr Chairman, the point we are trying to put across is that the decision to set up this committee to investigate Governor Dariye is likely to compound the problem as did in the case of Governor Ngige. We see another inappropriate strategy being adopted to achieve desired objectives.

17. This we condemned in its totality the idea of taken recourse to smoke screen approach through the instrumentality of political escapism to carpet the reality on ground just to enable the leadership achieve the goals of those who are out to destroy the Party at all cost. Be it known to you Mr Chairman that we shall resist this constitutionally, no matter what it takes to see that the lofty ideals and values of our Party are preserved and protected from the hands of those who rode through it to become what they are now; but decided that the Umbrella is shattered so that it does not shelter anyone again.

18. We may like the whole world to seek answers to these questions: where are the Rimis? The Awoniyis? The Ekwemes? The Gemades? The Lars? And just recently the Ogbes? Back to political oblivion of course. Reason is not far fetch. Having toiled to ensure that the Party germinated, grew to maturity and began to yield fruits, a few who did not partake in the planting session, felt they should reap the fruits alone. The best way to do it is by eliminating those who are resolute and true to the Party's course. This action is seen as a deliberate step to expel some members of the party and legislators considered to be in bad books of the power that be at the center.

19. The expulsion axe is feared to be dangling on the heads of six PDP Governors and other top notchers of the party. This is with the aim of depriving them from participating in the forth-coming party congresses.

20. Consequent upon the fore going, we make bold to advise Mr Chairman to be cautious in handling the issues. This is because, these actions might have negative consequences on the party. As an astute achiever, we are sure you will not allow the Party to disintegrate in your hands.

21. CONCLUSION:

The escapist approach through the antics of elimination by series cannot present appropriate strategies for achieving the desired goals of moving the Party forward beyond the threshold of impoverished performance and meaningful impact on the polity. As a party that commands large followership with the manifesto built on the theme of procedures no matter the level of good intention.

We believe that the Party is made of men of good conscience who will not destroy the very formidable family called the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) overnight as a result of over zealousness of a few.

The choice is yours, but we are watching.

Alh. Mustapha Busulumbe
Protem Secretary

Mr Osumayi Ajakaye
Protem PRO

Mallam Abdullahi Ahmed Argungu
Protem President

SPECIAL PROJECT PUBLICATION ON ELECTRICITY GENERATOR MARKETS IN NIGERIA

Electricity Generating Sets Markets in Nigeria

By Idowu Onasoga

Developing an enviable industrial based economy depend largely on the effectiveness and the functionability of the power sector of the nation, Nigeria inclusive. Most developed nations that have launched themselves into the stabilised economy made that breakthrough via a reformed and structured power generating sector.

No nation can hope to make any meaningful progress in the strides for socio-economic development in the face of unreliable and unstable power supply. It is only electricity that turns the wheels of industrial growth and accelerates the pace of development.

The Nigeria power providing agency, the National Electric Power Authority, NEPA's output took a precarious plunge for the worst and the entire nation is gradually getting back to perpetual darkness. This failure has re-echoed the terrible experiences of yesteryears where light was on for one day and other days of the week went into permanent darkness. The terminal failure of NEPA has therefore, made the acronyms to be bastardised as, "Never Expect Power Always."

Federal Government in its quest for launching Nigeria into an industrial growth nation in 1999 at the inception of this administration, made a promise to ensure that, four years later, the nation will not again experience power outage through the generation of at least 10,000 mega watt. Tentatively, efforts were made and geared towards getting this aspiration accomplished, but the government soon realised the under-estimation of decadent nature of the sector. Four years after, it was a discordant tunes that trail the policy and the nation remain stagnant in a total darkness.

Nigeria may not have any cause to experience power outage, but the military era that eroded the aspirations of the nation to transform her economy into an industrial based one is ultimately blamed for this, due to negligence that sector was subjected to over several years of military misrule.

The realisation of the enormity of the crises besetting this sector has forced the present government to solicit for the participation of independent power generation, distribution and transmission companies to participate actively and effectively in turning the nation into an industrial based economy. Be that as it may, attempts and efforts were not yielding the expected results and it is failure all through.

In line with the power plan programme set, the federal government projection still seems to be on course, as every opportunities and avenues are being explored to ensure success. Hence the dream of generating 10,000mega watt was a disaster in the last five years, it could still be achieved before 2007. The transmission capacity expected is from 5,838MVA to 9,340 MVA while the distribution capacity is put at 8,425MVA to 15,165MVA. All these are efforts, but the fact still remain that restoring normalcy in the power sector can hardly be an exclusive affair of the government. Because operation in the power sector is capital intensive and requires all and sundry participation, private sector initiative becomes mandatory. By extension, alternative power sourcing is dearly needed to meet the industrial power requirements of the nation.



President Olusegun Obasanjo



Chief Lyel Imoke, Minister of Power & Steel

To say power generation, transmission and distribution in Nigeria have been grossly inadequate in meeting the demand is to state the obvious. Huge investment and attention in the last five years have been deplored to resuscitate the sector but it turn out to be unperturbed. Given the epileptic and erratic nature of power supply in the country, many organisations including residential quarters sought solace in electricity generating sets as source for alternative power supply.

Nigeria is a big market in terms of everything require by human kind to make life worth of living, electricity of course, is one of the essentials. When you look around the neighbourhood, three out of the residential apartments or industrial complexes are electricity generating sets users. The contributions of this market to the national economy cannot be quantified in all ramifications. From small to medium and large scale enterprises all are gradually and virtually finding succour in the alternative power supply system.

Many of the generating set manufacturer have carved a niche for themselves in terms of reliabilities, affordability, durability and functionability of their products. The sets are in various sizes according to mega watt voltage required by individual users including manufacturing companies. In the course, of this research, we noted there are many types of generators with different brand names and different capacities. The capacities are ranging from 1KVA to 8,000KVA. Top amongst the brand names are Cummins, Ferguson, Petbow, F. G. Wilson, Perkins, Lister Petter, Deiltroitte and several others. Of the major organisations that are contacted, the following are the best among the manufacturers, distributors and maintenance services companies.

1. Central Support Engineering Services Limited
2. SCOA Nigeria Limited
3. JMG Limited
4. Gentech Power Nigeria Limited
5. John Holt Engineering
6. Penbitt Limited
7. Kafarda Engineering Services Limited

Roadsides artisans, food restaurants, farmers, industrial complexes and so forth have all enlisted the usage of alternative power supply system because they are dependable and no disappointment except in a few rare cases especially among these companies listed above.

The products and services are what one can acquire and be rest assured to power one's business to success. Because the sets have been tested and adjudged to be the best among their competitors in the market, they are made available in every market and built to the taste of individual users.

The participants in this project are those whose products and servcies have been sampled in the market and found to be genuine products as attested to by the various electrical engineers of repute, whose opinions we sought and confirmed their durability and exceptional.

To ensure regular power supply, several firms corporately and individually owned are into the management and servicing business of generating sets as well as wholesales, retailing and selling of accessories. When they manage and service your machines, you cannot but engage their services on a permanent basis. This is the story of many organisations that are enjoying their technical-know-how. A trial will convince you.

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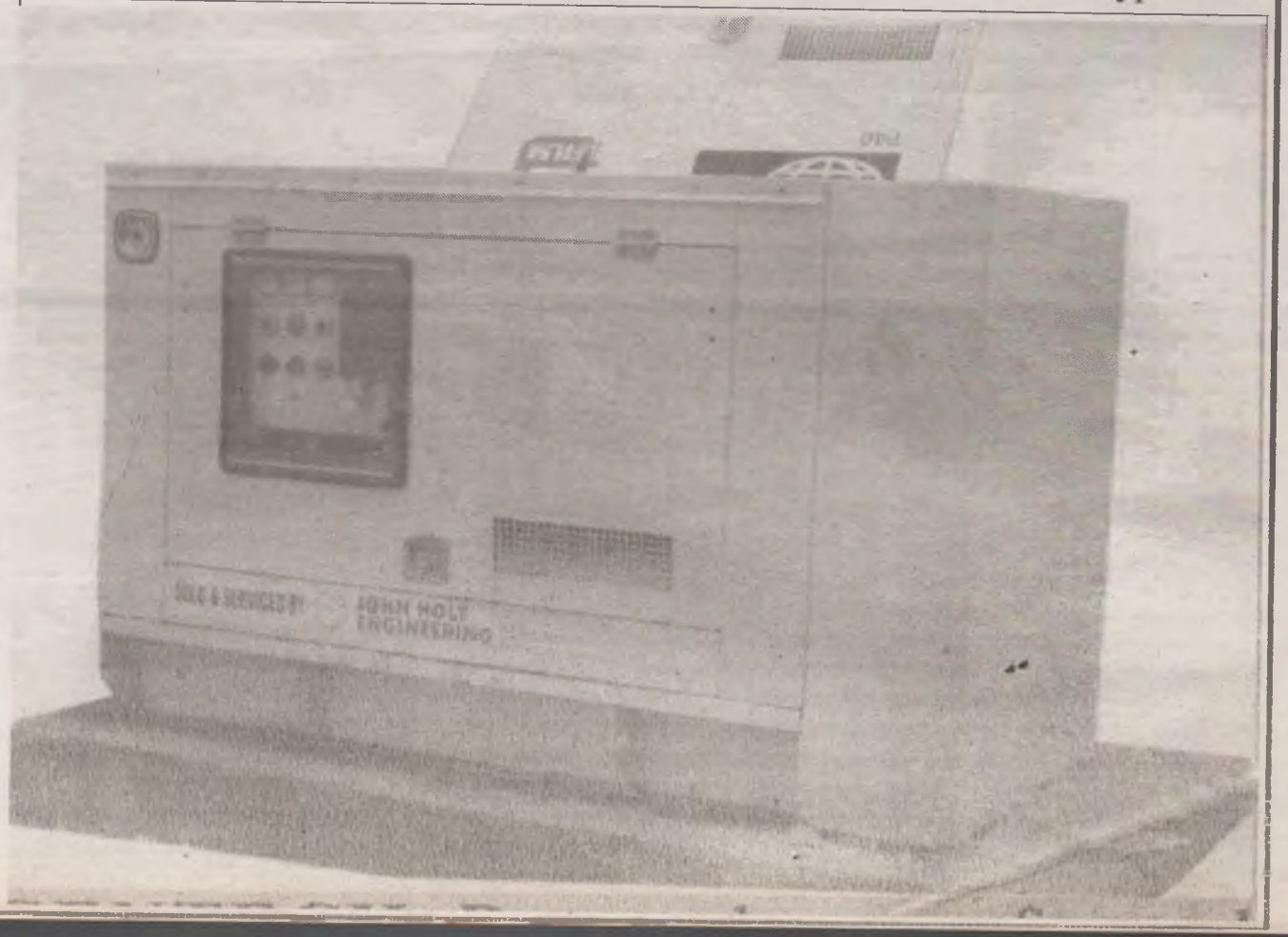
Registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission in 1992. From its inception to date, the company has successfully transacted business with a lot of government organisations and industries in Nigeria and beyond.

The company has sold many generating sets over eth years. Though it started mainly with the importation of diesel generators, it gradually expanded its scope into the area of international procurement of industrial equipment, raw materials, consumable and building constructions.

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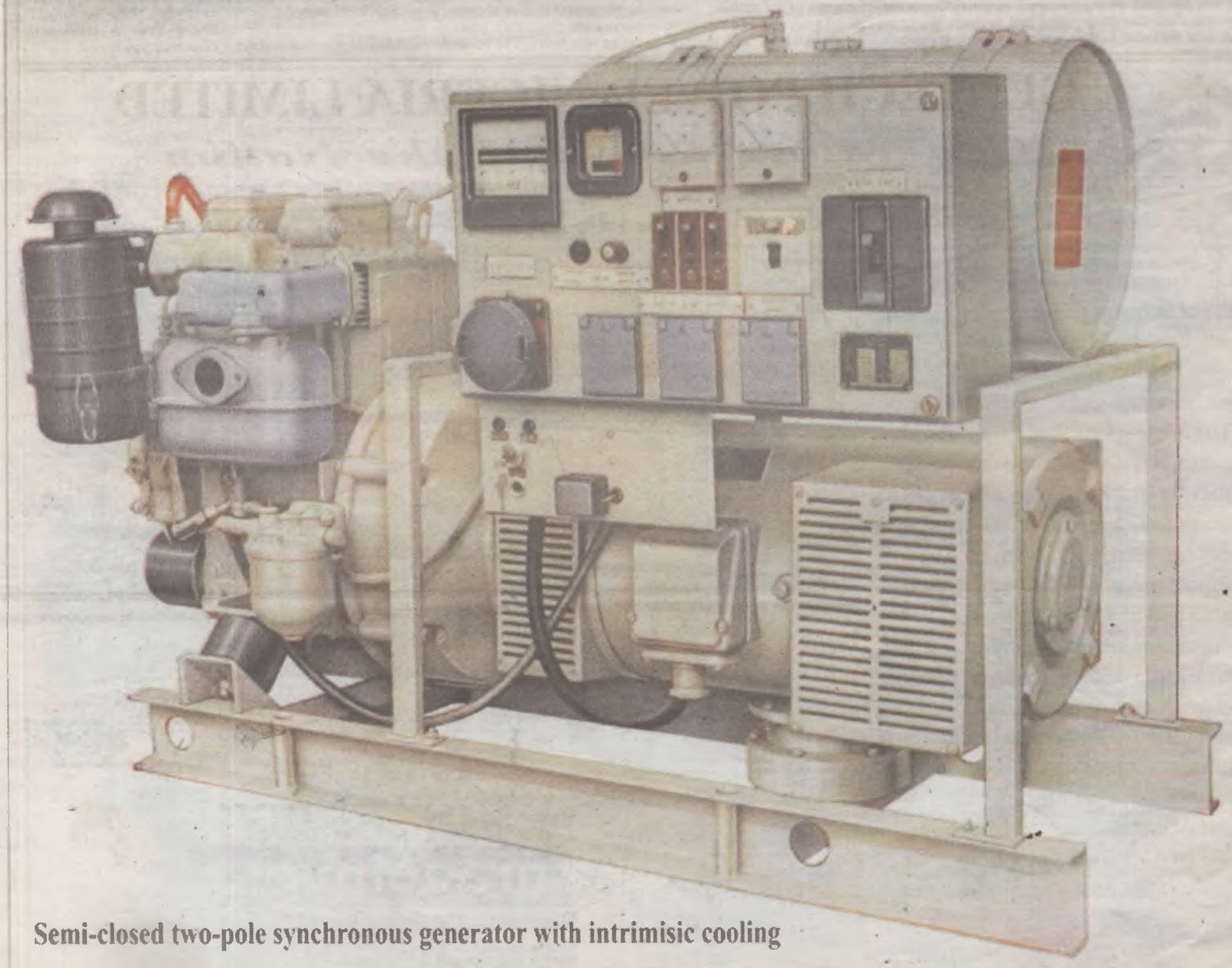
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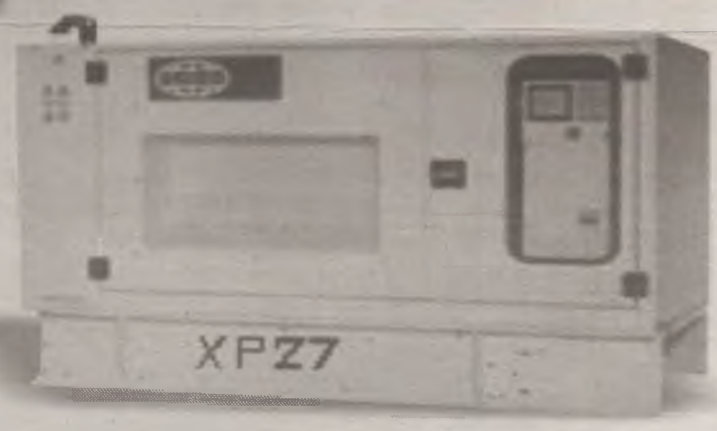
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SPECIAL PROJECT PUBLICATION ON ELECTRICITY GENERATOR MARKETS IN NIGERIA

JMG LTD. –*Quality as usual*

One of the nation's leading generator dealers with toga of quality is JMG Ltd, founded more than 26 years ago. JMG Limited has been diversifying its experience in the electrical world over the years. The company has expanded its activities from a-major Generator Company to include a wide range of products and services such 'as Massey Ferguson Generators, Lister Petter Generators and Engines, Sound Proof Enclosures, Diesel Tanks, Pumping Machines, Electrical Panels, 24-hours Maintenance and Generator Rentals.

The company has provided electrical solutions to a variety of industries. By doing this, the expertise of JMG Limited have further increased tremendously thereby making it one of the leading experts when it comes to engineering power solution. Sectors of the economy which JMG Limited have served and are still serving are Telecommunications, Oil Companies, Construction, Diplomatic Agencies, Banks, Hotels and Restaurants, Hospitals, Government Agencies. JMG Ltd has stressed the toga of quality that it is noted for to these organisations. The company's qualities of services speak volumes as those that have tasted it can testify.

JMG Limited is different from its competitors. The reason for this is not far fetched. The company represents international organisations that are reputable. The organisations so represented, have dedicated their efforts to provide state of the art products and solutions to their consumers. JMG Limited is the sole agent of Massey Ferguson Power Series (Powered by Perkins) and the authorized representatives of Lister Petter Engines. Built in the United Kingdom, these Machines are guaranteed for excellent performance. Equally represented are a number of other products that are high in performance.

Understanding the value of customer support, JMG Limited, has invested a large portion of its resources to build one of the most reliable, maintenance centres in the country. Their professional team of expatriate and Nigerian engineers entertains customer's calls, 24 hours a day, all year long. The Company's Engineers are trained every year by F. G. Wilson engineers and are updated on the latest Technologies. The expertise of their Engineers guarantees full, reliable and high quality services to all the customers at all times. JMG Limited extends its cooperation to its clients to give them the most cost effective solutions while maintaining the high standards of its products and services. The strongest tool available' in marketing is excellent performance, JMG Limited, has built its name upon this tool, JMG Limited, is nationally spread; it has strategically distributed its branches in order to cover most Areas in Nigeria. Their Head Office is, based in Lagos at Plot 1393, Tiamiyu Savage-Street, Victoria Island, the Abuja office is based at 13, Gana Street, Maitama while Port Harcourt office is No. 28 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, the Kano Office is No 39, Niger, street. These offices cater for the needs of the Company's clients as at when needed. It also has representatives who are physically dispensed in different states, which facilitate communication and support with the company's growing list of customers.

JMG Limited is armed with 250 Employees, 25 Expatriate Staff, 18 Maintenance Teams, Sound Proof Factory, 4 Showrooms and 3 Warehouses, 4 Overhauling Workshops, Electrical Workshop, Injector Pump Service Centre and Training Centres. These facilities have confirmed the leading edge of JMG Limited amongst its peers.

JMG Limited has exhibited a high sense of corporate responsibility by providing Traffic Stands that shelter the police officers that regulates traffic in every Junction in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory. This exemplary behaviour has earned the organisation a high rating among' the corporate citizen in Nigeria. 'Truly, JMG Ltd is quality as usual.

SCOA Power (A Division of SCOA Nigeria Plc)

– Optimistic of future involvement in the power generating business

SCOA Power, A Division of SCOA Nigeria PLC is a Power Generation Company and is the Sole officially appointed distributor representing Cummins Power Generation, UK.

Its scope of business covers Sales, repairs, overhauling and maintenance of Cummins generators, as well as the sale of genuine Cummins spares. It also stocks a vast range of Fleetguard Oil, Fuel, Water and Air filters.

SCOA Power has a modern workshop with state of the art technology manned by well trained Engineers and Technicians. It also has a dedicated Sales team who strive to satisfy their customers needs by offering them a quality product range with good, friendly service and an excellent after sales service backed up by the Cummins team in the UK.

The vast capacity range offered is from 10KVA to 3000KVA for Diesel Powered gensets and from 680KVA to 2000KVA for gas powered gensets. It has increased its smaller range in order to appeal to a much wider customer base. The official launch of this new range will be coming up towards the middle of this year.

SCOA Power offers a 1 year warranty on all Gensets purchased.

SCOA Power has offices in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt and Warri and is looking at expanding its reach in the nearest future.

The Management of SCOA Nigeria Plc and its various divisions are continuously striving to maintain and improve its service levels to its ever expanding customer base-, and they are very optimistic about the future of their involvement in the Power Generation business.

KAFARDA Engineering Limited

One of the leading engineering firms dealing in the supply, installation and servicing of generators in Nigeria is Kafarda Engineering Nigeria Limited. The company was incorporated in December 1990 and has since engaged in comprehensive engineering services.

Part of their range of services include; mechanical, electrical and consultancy services. They construct, reactivate and rehabilitate boreholes. They are also experts in the field of construction of earth dams. In the IT sector, they supply and install computers and stock accessories.

This company is not left out in the field of air-conditioning and refrigeration installation and repairs of the equipment.

Kafarda has served several clients including first and new generation banks, communication service providers, government agencies and parastatals complexes and high network individuals.

The company is owned and managed by Engineer Abubakar A. Fari.

John Holt Engineering

– Most reputable, most reliable

In the field of electricity generating sets distribution in Nigeria, John Holt Engineering stands tall. They have been described to be the most reputable and most reliable amongst their peers.

Established in Nigeria over 60 years ago, John Holt Engineering has built a reputation as the largest and most reliable distributor of generating sets in the country.

John Holt Engineering is the sole distributor in Nigeria for F. G. Wilson generating sets manufactured with the world renowned Perkins Engines. They also provide excellent after-sales service, through their extensive branch network which covers the entire country. John Holt Engineering's generators are fitted with Perkins Engines and all are fitted with either Stamford Newage or Leroy Somer alternators.

F. G. Wilson generators are fitted with key start systems. Special controls, including automatic mains failure, paralleling and local sharing can also be supplied upon customer's request.

Generating sets of 250KVA, with sound proof canopies are imported, fully built and held in stock at all times. However, higher capacity, sound proof sets can be sourced and delivered to customers upon order. In addition, John Holt Engineering offers power solutions through their projects department involving non-standard control systems with power output of up to 8000 KVA.

The company's maintenance teams are highly mobile with service vehicles that are equipped with radio mechanism to ensure efficient communication and minimal response time. Similarly, they have highly trained installation teams who will ensure that generators bought from them are safe and properly installed, in accordance with laid down F. G. Wilson standards.

On a regular basis, staff training is carried out in conjunction with F. G. Wilson (Engineering) Limited, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom and this ensures that their staff are kept fully abreast of all the latest technical developments.

Central Support Engineering Limited

– Leading in the supplies of power generators

In Nigeria today, there is one company that is involved in what is hitherto known to be handled by foreign organisations. The company is Central Support Engineering Company Limited, a fully indigenous power system equipment and generation company. The company was established as an indigenous company in 1993 to provide consultancy services in stages of project implementation for major engineering fields like Electrical, mechanical and industrial. The firm undertakes planning, detailed design and project supervision/monitoring of industrial installations and maintenance.

Central Support Engineering Limited represents in Nigeria, Slavia Engineering Company and CKD/Horovice International, manufacture's of generators, water pumps and equipment in Czech and German Republics.

The company also represents Masons Overseas Limited, who are UK based manufacturers of generators. They distribute sell and service generators ranging from Cummins, Dorman, Duetz, Caterpillar Petbow and Detroit Generators. All engines and electrical spare parts including optional equipment such as automatic mains failure panels, sound proof and weather proof canopies are part of what the company supplies to its customers.

The company undertake annual service/maintenance contract on generators, which enable clients to leave their plants in the care of the company while having efficient operation and complete peace of mind. The company also undertake electrical installation and general electrical services. Part of the activities of the company is the supply of science technical laboratory equipments, computer hard wares and industrial machinery and spare parts.

The company was involved in the design and supervision of so many projects in different places such as Federal University of Technology, Minna, Inland Bank of Nigeria, New African Bank office complex, Abuja, National University Commission, Bank of the North etc.

Blue chip and multinational companies including government agencies have enjoyed the quality services as being reeled out by Central Support Engineering Limited.

The company empowers its staff to use modern equipment that is aided with the use of computers aided designs such as auto card and electronic bench packages. Each of the company's service team is equipped with modern installation tools and equipment necessary to measure any parameter and effect any repairs on site. All the company's frequency meters, voltmeters, transistors and battery testing devices, mergers, clamp on ammeters, speed tachometers etc, are fully digitalised. The organisation is fully equipped with heavy duty workshop tools and equipment needed for assessing engine performance, nuzzle calibration, decoupling and recouping of equipment.

Central Support Engineering Limited has proved itself to be a giant in its chosen field by using its key technical staff to handle the installation of Ashaka Cement Factory, CBN branch office, Minna, Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, Life Camp Staff Housing Estate. Generating plants for NAMB, installation of 100 generating plants for NITEL Plc and several other organisations to mention a few.

Central Support Engineering Limited is headed by Engineer Mohammed Sani Haruna a COREN registered engineer who has eaten many pies in the field of engineering, supported by many highly qualified personnel. In this field the sky seems to be their limit.

Gentech Power Nigeria Limited

– Generating power to the nation

In terms of electric power generation in Nigeria today, Gentech Power Nigeria Limited is synonymous. It is one of the major players in the sales and services of brands of generators in Nigeria.

The company was incorporated in Nigeria in 1992 and has since its inception, transacted business with a lot of government organisations, industries and individuals.

Not only dealing in generators, the company doubles as importers of industrial equipment raw materials and consumables. They are also experts in building construction.

The company has well trained electrical and mechanical engineers both Nigerians and expatriates. They supply industrial pumps, water treatment equipment and workshop tools.

The company also deals in printing equipment, agricultural machineries and earth moving equipment.

PEMBITT Nigeria Limited

– Quality experience and hard work encapsulated

Pembitt Nigeria Limited is one of the leading suppliers of electricity power generators in Nigeria. They deal in various types of generators which include Cummins, Perkins, Lister, Deutz, Volvo, John Deere and several other types.

One thing that is peculiar about PEMBITT is that the company engages in the supply of several sizes and brands of generators other than static on one type of product.

They stock genuine spare parts of all diesel engines and engage in the supply, service and installations of all these brands.

The company's Chief Executive Officer, Jibril Baba Ahmed has gotten several years of experience in this engineering field and could meet the requirements of its clients at any time.

NOTE: *Please. contact any of the clients through the addresses on their adverts.*

IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT OF NIGERIA
IN THE ABUJA JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT ABUJA

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT, LAWS OF THE FEDERATION, 1990.
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF KATSINA STEEL COMPANY LIMITED FOR LIQUIDATION OF THE COMPANY.

SUIT NO. FHC/ABJ/PET/2/2005

KATSINA STEEL COMPANY LIMITED.....PETITIONER

ORDER

UPON THE MOTION EX-PARTE dated and filed on the 11 th day of March 2005 praying the Honourable Court for the following:≤
1. An Order granting leave to the Petitioner to give notice and advertise the presentation of this Petition in the Official Gazette, and also in Thisday and Daily Trust newspapers, being two dailies with wide local and national circulation in Nigeria.
2. And for such further or other orders as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances.

S. J. ADAH
(PRESIDING JUDGE)

AND AFTER READING the Affidavit in support of the Application sworn to by Chinedu Umeh, male, Adult, Christian, Nigerian Citizen of 16 Takoradi Street, Abuja and filed at this Court Registry.

AND AFTER HEARING Israel Usman Esq. of Counsel for the Petitioner/Applicant move in terms of the Motion Papers.
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:≤
1. That Leave is granted the Petitioner/Applicant to give notice and advertise the presentation of this petition in the Official Gazette, and also in Thisday and Daily Tnlst newspapers, being two dailies with wide local and national circulation in Nigeria.
2. That the petition shall be advertised in the said Newspapers weekly until the return date.
3. That case is adjourned to 20th day of April 2005 for the hearing of the petition.
ISSUED AT ABUJA under the Seal of the Court and the Hand of the Presiding Judge this 15th day of March, 2005.

AWASE IGBA (MRS.)
(Registrar)

IN THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT OF NIGERIA
IN THE ABUJA JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT ABUJA

SUIT NO: FHC/ ABJ/CS /2/2005

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT, LAWS OF THE FEDERATION, 1990.
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF KATSINA STEEL COMPANY LIMITED FOR LIQUIDATION OF THE COMPANY.
KATSINA STEEL COMPANY LIMITED.....PETITIONER

WINDING UP PETITION

The humble Petition of Katsina Steel Company Limited ("the Company") shows that:
1. The Katsina Steel Company Limited (hereinafter called the "Company") was incorporated under Companies and Allied Matters Act, on the 23rd Day of January,1981
2. The registered office of the Company is at Shehu Yar'Adua Way, Katsina.
3. In the last three years or so preceding this Petition when the company virtually stopped production, the Federal Ministry of Power and Steel, Federal Secretariat, Abuja has, for all practical purposes, served as the headquarters of the company with a liaison officer in Abuja.

FEDERAL ... ABUJA Cashier's Office Date ...

The nominal capital of the Company is N30,000,000divided into 30,000,000 shares of N1.00 each. The amount of capital paid up or credited as paid up is N2.

5. The objects for which the company was established includes the following:
(a) To carry on in Nigeria and, elsewhere the trades and businesses of manufacturers, producers, sellers, purchasers, importers or exporters and dealers in iron, iron ore, manganese, limestone, natural gas, coal and cokes, refractories, domolite, scrap, bauxite, aluminium, ferromanganese and all by-products arising from iron and steel industry including those from its associated input industries.
(b) To subscribe for, underwrite, purchase or otherwise acquire shares, stocks, securities or the right to participate in profits or similar documents issued by any company or body of persons and any options or rights in respect thereof.
(c) To apply for, purchase, or otherwise acquire any trade marks, patents, designs, brevet d'invention, licenses, concessions, and the like, conferring any exclusive or limited rights to use, or any secret or other information as to any invention which may seem capable of being used for any of the purposes of the company, or the acquisition of which may seem calculated directly or indirectly to the benefit the company, and to use, exercise, develop or grant licenses in respect of or otherwise turn to account the property, rights or information so acquired.
(d) To borrow money for all purposes incidental to its objects. And other objects set forth in the Memorandum of Association thereof.
6. Following the inability of the Company to carryon business, loss of confidence of the shareholder(s), inability to meet its liabilities as and when due, inability to pay insurance premiums or meet insurance liabilities, fast depreciation of the Company's assets and considering the increasing liabilities including a backlog of unpaid salaries running into billions of Naira, the Company on the 4th March, 2005 passed the following special resolutions:
a) That following the inability of the Company, Katsina Steel Rolling Company Limited, to carryon business over the years, and in view of the inability of the Company to secure enduring partnership arrangements to enable it remain in business, the lack of interest and confidence by potential investors, the huge and rising debt profile of the Company as against the increasing. depreciation and dissipation of the assets of the Company and consequent upon the resulting decision and direction of the National Council on P.rivatisation representing the shareholder that the company be wound be up by Court, the company shall take all necessary and immediate steps towards dissolution without delay.
(b) That the Company, Katsina Steel Rolling Company Limited, be wound up by the Federal High Court.
(c) That in addition to the Power of Attorney and authority given to the Bureau for Public Enterprises (Secretariat of the National Council on Privatisation), and in addition to its statutory powers, the Bureau for Public Enterprises be mandated and is hereby mandated to proceed on behalf of the Company with all necessary speed to initiate and expedite the liquidation process, give necessary approvals, appoint consultants, liaise with consultants, liaise with the Shareholder, negotiate all fees payable and to act on behalf of the Company and shareholder in all respects as if it were the company or shareholder acting and with all powers conferred on the company and shareholder by any law in force.
(d) That the firm of **D.D. DODO & CO.** evaluated, approved and endorsed by the Bureau for Public Enterprises be and are hereby appointed as Legal Advisers for the liquidation and winding up process.
(e) That **ALHAJI MUKTAR ALI DANGAMA,** an independent and experienced liquidator investigated, evaluated, approved and endorsed by the Bureau for Public Enterprises, be recommended to the court for appointment as Provisional Liquidator (if need be) and ultimately as the Liquidator of the company.
(f) That in addition to the power of Attorney and authority given to the Bureau for Public Enterprises, and in addition to its statutory powers, the Bureau for Public Enterprises be mandated and is hereby mandated to proceed on behalf of the Company with all necessary speed to initiate and expedite the liquidation process, give necessary approvals, appoint consultants, liaise with consultants, liaise with the Shareholder, the Federal Government of Nigeria, negotiate all fees payable and to act on behalf of the Company and shareholder in all respects as if it were the company or shareholder acting and with all powers conferred on the company and shareholder by any law in force.
In consequence of the dire circumstances of the Company and the subsequent resolution that the Company be wound up by court, it is imperative that the company be wound up and liquidated.
8. On the directive of the shareholder, the National Council on Privatisation and the Bureau for Public Enterprises conducted an open and competitive process for evaluation of suitable persons to act as liquidators to the Company subject to court approval, and **ALHAJI MUKTAR ALI DANGAMA,** an independent and experienced liquidator investigated, evaluated, approved and endorsed by the Bureau for Public Enterprises emerged as the best qualified person.
9. WHEREOF your Petitioner humbly prays as follows:
(a)That the company be wound up by court under the provisions of the Companies and Allied Matters Act.
(b) That **ALHAJI MUKTAR ALI DANGAMA,** an independent and experienced liquidator investigated, evaluated, approved and endorsed by the Bureau for Public Enterprises, be appointed as the Liquidator of the Company.
(c) That **D.D. DODO & CO,** evaluated, approved and endorsed by the Bureau for Public Enterprises, be appointed as the Legal Advisers to the liquidation.
(d) And for such other orders as may in the premises be just.
Dated this 8th Day of March, 2005

Israel A. Usman, Esq
D. D. Dodo & Co.
(Petitioner's Counsel)
No. 14 Takoradi Street
Zone 1, Wuse
Abuja



A promising future

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Japaul Oil & Maritime Services Plc.

Rc 250346

Offer for Subscription 600, 000, 000 Ordinary Shares of 50k each at N2.20 per Share.

Payable in full on application.

Application opens February 28, 2005 and closes March 30, 2005.

Offer extended to 30th March, 2005



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Rc 250346

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Application forms are available at all banks and stock-broking firms nationwide, and can also be downloaded online at www.japaulplc.com

Consult your Stock broker, Accountant, Banker, Solicitor or any other professional adviser for guidance before subscribing.

KWT

Brand: JAPAUL //Campaign: I.P.O. //Theme: A Promising Future

Business Trust

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air

Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja	06:50
Abuja - Maid	17:00
Lagos - Yola	1:00 p.m
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15.30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m

Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos - Abuj	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.

IRS Airlines

CBQ - Abuja	8.00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	
2:30p.m.	
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - CB	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.

EAS Airlines

Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos	2:30pm.

Dasab Airlines

Auja - Lagos	8:30 a.m.
Lagos - PHC	10:30 a.m.
PHC - Lagos	12:30 a.m.
Lagos - Kano	2:30 p.m.
Kano - Lagos	4:30 p.m.
Lagos - Abuja	6:30pm.

ADC Airline

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

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

PPPRA urges oil workers to shelve strike

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, *Group Business Editor*

The Executive Secretary of the Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) Dr. Oluwole Oluleye has appealed to the Petroleum Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) to shelve their planned strike action, which he said has already jolted the petroleum sector of the nation's economy.

A statement signed by Yusuf Mu'azu on behalf of the ES said Dr. Oluleye made the plea when he received the President of PENGASSAN, Comrade Louis Brown Ogbeifun who paid a courtesy visit to the PPPRA in Abuja, on Monday.

The statement said the executive secretary observed that PENGASSAN and NUPENG were better placed to understand and appreciate the peculiarities of the oil and gas industry, and therefore appealed to the two unions to pursue the option of meaningful dialogue so as to avert the strike action that may follow the 21-day ultimatum issued by the unions.

"He warned that the strike notice had triggered off a sharp rise in crude prices and Nigeria will loose

greatly if the strike is not averted," the statement said.

The statement added that Dr. Oluleye said the PPPRA has taken it as a policy to move products pricing towards import parity, adding that prices have to be freed to ensure the success of deregulation of the downstream sector.

The ES also used the opp-ortunity of the visit to appeal for PENGASSAN's to sup-port the federal government's reforms in the oil and gas sector of the economy.

Dr. Oluleye assured that the PPPRA would not only ensure that the reforms were transparent but also see to it that in-house unions such as PENGASSAN NUPENG, are carried along especially on labour-related issues.

The President of PENGASSAN, Comrade Ogbeifun said his association's appreciation of deregulation and liberalisation policies was not in doubt, but that in a democracy, policy formulation and implementation cannot be by government fiat.

He said that, petroleum products marketers need to be challenged and encouraged to take the lead in the importation business, rather than waiting for when the prices will crash.

Dr. Ogbeifun counselled that to ensure the success of the deregulation policy, the PPPRA should advise the government on the need to reduce interest rates, strengthen the value of the Naira, reduce demurrage at sea ports as well as the rate of pipeline vandalisation.



Dr Edmund Daukoru (right) and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources, Mrs Amnuna Lawan-Ali (left) at the briefing session on the 2005 Oil Licensing Round held in Abuja ...recently.

FIRS to begin automated tax collection

By Anas A. Galadima, *Business reporter*

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has disclosed that it will install an automated revenue collection system which is aimed at climinating bottlenecks and fraud in the collection of taxes. This was disclosed by the executive chairman of the FIRS, Ms. Ifueko Omoigui, at a two-day capacity building workshop for finance correspondents organised by the FIRS in Abuja on Tuesday. According to Omoigui, who was represented by Elias Sulu, the workshop was part of the reforms of the service, which is aimed at improving the efficiency of tax collection.

The automated tax collection project, which is codenamed project FACT, is to operate in cooperation with some major banks. It is expected to enable the tax collected to be remitted to the accounts of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on a daily basis.

Ms. Omoigui called on finance correspondents to enlighten the public on tax-related issues.

... Shareholders want FG to reduce 10%

From Bright Ewulu, *Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)*

Shareholders under the umbrella of the Association for the Advancement of the Rights of Shareholders have called on the federal government to reduce corporate tax in the country for the overall benefit of banks and other business establishments.

The association spoke through their national co-ordinator, Dr Farouk Umar, in a chat with *Business Trust* in Lagos. He said that Nigerian banks are currently over taxed and that corporate tax in the country should be reduced to 10 percent.

According to him the current situation whereby 'banks pay 30 percent corporate tax, two percent education tax, and 10 percent of their profit before tax for the SMIEIS is too much on banks. Besides, if you look at it, the minimum rediscount rate (MRR) has been reduced drastically and this is bound to further dip the profits of banks.'

Dr Umar urged the government and its regulatory agencies to look of the issue as a matter of urgency in order to avoid the situation whereby the profits of banks will drop after the ongoing consolidation. He pointed out that the problems of multiple-taxation should be reviewed to make our economic enviro-nment more viable and investor friendly.

On the consolidation exercise, Dr Umar expressed the hope that it would be a success. He praised the CBN Governor, Professor Charles Soludo, for his efforts in that direction. He stressed his belief that the consolidation will be a success and generally settle the nation's financial sector.

Stakeholders task new NMA boss

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, *Correspondent (Lagos)*

Stakeholders in the maritime sub-sector of the nation's economy have tasked the new Director General of the National Maritime Authority (NMA), Engineer Festus Ugwu, to focus on programmes that would be beneficial to the industry. They pledge their support in the task ahead. According to a statement made available to *Business Trust*, the stakeholders charged the new NMA boss to implement the cabotage law, which is presently paper-based, so as to benefit the indigenous operators for whom it is meant. The stakeholders under the aegis of Nigerian Shipping Companies Association (NSCA) said this when they paid a courtesy visit to the new NMA helmsman in his office. They were led by NSCA president, Alhaji Aliyu Jabu Mohammed.

Alhaji Mohammed told Ugwu to work at capacity building and the training of human capital in order to ensure competency. He commended the NMA boss for the timely introduction of interactive sessions with the various sectorial operators because the cross fertilization of ideas would move the maritime industry forward.

The NSCA boss expressed the hope that the new NMA helmsman would continue to leave his doors open to operators who might have reason to see him and not take the part of 'red-tapism,' which was the case with the imme-diate past leadership of the authority. He also charged Ugwu to give priority atten-tion to the documents of operators whose contri-bution would benefit the industry.

NUB to collect NEPA revenue

NUB International Bank Limited has secured the mandate of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) to collect revenue from electricity consumers in the Abuja distribution zone.

A statement signed by spokesman of the bank, Aliu Akoshile said, the mandate, which takes immediate effect, covers Garki and Wuse in Abuja; Minna in Niger State; Lokoja in Kogi State; and Lafia in Nasarawa State.

This appointment, it said further, "has further lent credence to the reliability, efficiency and transparency of NUB International Bank Limited in the discharge of its various mandates for revenue collection for government parastatals and agencies both at the federal and state levels."

Meanwhile, NUB said in the same statement that it has expanded its branch network to eighteen locations with the commencement of operations at the Kantin Kwari Branch located at No. 333, Kofar Mata.

Briefs

Ports Fair

A private media firm, Marine Business International, is organising an international exposition on port and shipping services in West and Central Africa, tagged 'Nigeria International Port Fair 2005,' in the effort to attract greater direct foreign investments in the maritime industry of the sub-region. The expo's theme is 'Achieving a sustainable public – private sector partnership in ports development.' It will take place from Thursday 7th – Saturday 9th of April, 2005 at the Expo Centre of Eko Hotel & Suites in Victoria Island, Lagos.

According to a statement made available to *Business Trust*, several established players in the industry from within and outside West and Central Africa have indicated interest in participating in the three-day event, which is expected to be declared open by the deputy president of the Nigerian Senate, Senator (Dr) Ibrahim Mantu.

Union Bank

Union Bank of Nigeria Plc will be offering professional advice on its agricultural and SME financing to customers and prospective investors at the forthcoming Enugu International Trade Fair. This would enable them to enjoy the bank's assistance in establ-ishing new business, expan-ding existing ones, and reviving ailing ones.

According to a statement signed by its Senior Man-ager (corporate affairs), Mr Francis Barde, the bank will also publicise its attributes as one of the most capitalised banks in the country with special focus on the additional two billion shares which would soon be offered to the public by way of public offer and rights issue.

Customers and visitors to the bank's stand will be offered with Automated Teller Machines (ATM) to enable them withdraw cash of up to a maximum of N20, 000 daily and obtain their account bala-nces as well as statements. Other products/services available at the fair include the bank's on-line, real time banking services; telephone banking; operation of current and savings accounts; as well as Vigo, Travelex, RIA express, Money Exchange SA international money transfer products, leasing, trade, commerce, and other products/services of the bank's subs-idiaries.

Business Trust

International



Lufthansa and Swiss Air planes on the tarmac at the airport.

Lufthansa to raise Swiss Air investments

German airline Lufthansa hinted at a capital increase for its newly acquired subsidiary, Swiss International Air Lines, soothing over Swiss fears about the fate of their former flag carrier.

"We would like to inject cash if the market allows," Lufthansa chief executive Wolfgang Mayrhuber said at a press conference the day after he sealed a deal to take over Swiss after months of tentative behind-the-scenes talks.

Mayrhuber gave no indication of a timetable for the possible cash injection or the amount.

Switzerland's government, Swiss's former top shareholder, had warned it would not have been able to afford a 600 million Swiss franc (386 million euros, 505 million dollar) investment that the carrier was likely to need soon to upgrade its fleet.

Lufthansa took over Swiss on Tuesday after major institutional and corporate shareholders who hold an 86 percent stake in Switzerland's top carrier approved a deal worth up to 310 million euros (409 million dollars).

They accepted far less than some three billion Swiss francs they invested in a rescue plan in late 2001 amid a surge in national pride after Swiss's predecessor, Swissair, collapsed.

Despite doubts about letting a 74 year-old company that flew the Swiss flag across five continents fall in foreign hands, Swiss commentators admitted Wednesday that it was better than the threat of another financial failure and more job losses.

Swiss has been plagued by heavy losses from the outset, although it has managed to pare them down recently with a massive restructuring drive that slashed more than one third of the company's staff to 7,000 and one third of its fleet.

Chief executive Christoph Franz, a former Lufthansa and German railways executive who took over at Swiss in June 2004, has urged more cuts this year as Swiss grapples with high oil prices and low-fare competition in Europe.

"We must not ask if it's a good or a bad agreement, it was either this solution or bankruptcy," an editorialist on Swiss public radio DRS said.

But many newspapers questioned the huge amounts of public money invested to salvage privately-owned Swissair more than three years ago.

"We want our money back," the tabloid daily Blick said. Under the deal, Zurich airport is due to continue to be a hub for the airline, which will keep its own distinct brand identity as a part of the Lufthansa group in Switzerland.

The German group also set up a supervisory foundation composed of four Swiss nationals, to ensure that the agreement will be maintained over the next ten years — "an eternity in civil aviation", according to Franz.

"It's not easy for anyone, neither for Lufthansa nor Swiss where the emotional tug is huge," Mayrhuber commented.

Lufthansa will take over 1.1 billion Swiss francs in debt with the Swiss carrier. The German group's operating profits should stagnate this year at the 383 million euro level recorded in 2004, Mayrhuber predicted.

The German airline revealed that it would be offering 8.96 Swiss francs a share to Swiss's remaining small shareholders from May 4.

Swiss's small batch of freely floating shares were being traded at 8.87 Swiss francs on the Zurich stock exchange at 1202 GMT, a decline of 7.6 percent over the previous closing price on Friday.

Oil price drops to $55

Oil prices eased toward $55 a barrel yesterday as OPEC deliberated a second supply increase to cool prices and a recovering dollar lured some fund money out of commodities.

US light crude traded down 86 cents to $55.18 a barrel, down from a record $57.60 struck last week. Prices dropped more than $1.40 on Tuesday as funds took profits from a steep rally this year. Brent crude oil fell 95 cents to $53.64 a barrel.

Prices were pressured in part by a rebound in the dollar's value to a one-month high against the euro — boosted by the Federal Reserve's decision on Tuesday to raise interest rates by a quarter percentage point.

Oil has risen nearly 28 percent this year as dollar weakness encouraged funds to switch money out of treasury markets and into commodities. Booming demand in the United States and China is also straining global production capacity.

"I don't think this little dip we're having is going to last too long," said Bob Frye, a Woodside, California-based commodity broker at Access Futures and Options Trading. "I'm looking for a lot higher prices — $60 to $63 is my major target."

The market will be watching US government data due out at 1530 GMT on Wednesday, expected to show commercial crude stocks rising but product inventories in decline as many refiners are still shut for maintenance and demand remains firm.

Crude inventories probably rose 2 million barrels in the week to March 18, a Reuters survey of 12 analysts found.

Gasoline stocks were expected to have fallen 1.2 million barrels and distillate stocks, which include heating oil, were seen down 1.3 million barrels.

Ericsson sues Sendo over patents

Sendo and Ericsson had been discussing the licensing

Telecoms giant Ericsson is suing UK mobile phone maker Sendo for alleged patent infringement.

Ericsson said it had "no choice" but to take the legal action in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK as Sendo had not signed a licensing agreement with it.

The Swedish firm is seeking damages and an injunction against sales and marketing of Sendo phones.

Sendo's chief executive Hugh Brogan said the firm was prepared to pay a "fair" and "reasonable" royalty.

Sendo had previously made a complaint to the European Competition Commission about the way Ericsson sets licensing rates for unaffiliated companies, he told BBC News.

Sendo is a small player in the global market. It sold about five million handsets in 2004 compared with total global mobile sales of about 684 million.

Ericsson's case concerns alleged infringement of its GSM and GPRS handset patents.

Mr Brogan, who founded Birmingham-based Sendo in 1999, said the company had been in negotiations with Ericsson about the technology in question.

The legal action was "unprovoked and unnecessary" and took Sendo by surprise, he added.

"We do not want a free ride," Mr Brogan said.

"We respect other people's intellectual property. We will pay a fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory royalty."

It is not the first time Sendo has found itself up against one of the titans of the tech sector.

Last September, Sendo and Microsoft settled a lawsuit in which Sendo accused the software maker of stealing its technology and customers.



A sample of Sendo handset.

Europe buries misgivings over Wolfowitz at World Bank

Europe buried misgivings over Washington's nomination of Iraq war architect Paul Wolfowitz to head the World Bank yesterday, making clear that it would not stand in his way.

European Union leaders pressed, nevertheless, for a meeting with the US deputy defense secretary before the end of March to hear his views on the multinational development bank's role.

"The realpolitik of the situation is that in all likelihood Mr Wolfowitz will be appointed as chairman of the bank," Irish Finance Minister Brian Cowen told a news conference after a summit of European Union leaders in Brussels.

Wolfowitz's nomination to succeed James Wolfensohn as World Bank president shocked many Europeans, who know him best as an advocate of using US military power to invade Iraq.

More than 1,300 European aid organizations have put their names to a statement of concern about Wolfowitz's nomination, saying his appointment risked turning the bank into a "tool of the current controversial US foreign policy."

No European government spoke out openly against the choice but diplomats say many were uneasy, especially after the appointment of another hawk, former under secretary of state John Bolton, as US ambassador to the United Nations.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, one of Europe's fiercest opponents of the invasion of Iraq, said he had spoken to President Bush on the matter some time ago.

"I told him that I believed Europe's enthusiasm would be limited but that the appointment would not fail because of Germany," Schroeder told a news conference. "My impression is that is also the case for others in Europe."

Others at the summit indicated there would be no objections to Wolfowitz's nomination, which comes at a time when Europe is seeking to heal rifts with the Bush administration and wants U.S. backing for former EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy's bid to head the World Trade Organization.

Coca-Cola shakes up management

Coca-Cola Company yesterday announced the retirement of the head of its European division in a fresh shake-up of its global marketing and advertising groups to combat sluggish sales.

It said it was also realigning its group structures and reporting lines for its business in Europe, Asia, Eurasia and the Middle East.

Mary Minnick, president of Coca-Cola Asia for the past four years, will lead the new unit overseeing coordination of marketing, innovation and strategic growth.

Chuck Fruit, chief marketing officer, and Danny Strickland, chief innovation/research and development officer, will report to Minnick, along with a head of strategic growth paths who is yet to be named.

Sandy Allan, president of Europe, Eurasia and Middle East since July 2001 and a Coke employee since 1968, will retire, the company said.

In January, Javier Benito, Coke's chief marketing officer for the North American unit, resigned after 10 years with the company as part of the wider restructuring of marketing and advertising.

A new EU group will include all of Coke's operations in the EU member states as well as the European Free Trade Association countries. It will be led by Dominique Reiniche, most recently president of Coca-Cola Enterprises Europe.

Coca-Cola also announced the creation of two new operating groups: a North Asia, Eurasia and Middle East group; and a Southeast Asia and Pacific Rim group.

The company said the changes would be effective from May 1, 2005.

Coca-Cola is currently seeking to increase sluggish soft drink sales in North America and other key markets while combating a consumer revolt against regular soft drinks and other sugar-laced, high-calorie products.

Recent innovations from the company have included a version of Diet Coke sweetened with Splenda as well as Coca-Cola Zero, a diet version of its Coca-Cola Classic drink, and a lime version of the flagship Coca Cola brand.



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Science & Education



Alh. Sa'idu Muhammed Fawu (l), the Emir of Gombe, Alh. Shehu Abubakar and the governor of Gombe State, Alh. Danjuma Goje while inspecting facilities at the newly established Gombe State University...recently.

Minister tasks NANS on campus violence

Minister of works, Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe has enjoined Nigerian students to eschew violence and embrace dialogue to restore stability to the nation's higher institutions.

Receiving the newly elected officers of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) led by its president, Comrade Kenneth Orkuma Hembe, in his office in Abuja, Senator Ogunlewe assured that the federal government would continue to rehabilitate and expand physical infrastructure and social facilities in universities to enhance opportunities for recreation and self-actualisation.

He lamented the practice by parents who send their wards to foreign institutions for higher education, instead of sending them to Nigerian universities and assisting the schools to maintain internationally acceptable standards.

Senator Ogunlewe urged the new leadership to pray fervently, dialogue with all relevant stakeholders in the education sector and remain mindful of the legacy they would leave behind to fulfil their onerous responsibilities and meet the expectations of the Nigerian people.

He pledged his constant accessibility to the leadership to facilitate their interaction and communication with the various agencies of government, even as he advised officials of the new leadership to watch their utterances and actions so that the body of Nigerian students would not be portrayed in negative light internationally.

The new president of NANS, Comrade Kenneth Orkuma Hembe, pledged to run an objective administration committed to eradication of cultism through a re-orientation campaign on Nigerian campuses.

He said cultism on campuses would be fought and brought to a minimal level and pledged to embark on a series of symposia and workshops to imbibe in students a new outlook about the value of education.

Don gives recipe for technology development

From Bassey Ita,
Correspondent (Calabar)

Except an institutional framework for technological development is put in place Nigeria's technological advancement efforts will remain a mirage.

Prof Hilary Inyang, of the University of North Carolina, United States of America made this assertion at the second inaugural lecture of graduate school, University of Calabar (UNICAL).

Prof. Inyang, who is an environmental engineer and the director of the Global Institute for Energy and Environmental System at the North Carolina university said Nigeria's technological advancement efforts require well planned programmes that must consider the fact and situations of the Nigeria environment.

According to the university don, Nigeria's efforts at developing its technology is based on borrowed initiatives adding that rather than plan its own agenda on technology to suit its peculiar needs, the country depends on American strategies.

He explained that other smaller African countries like Botswana, Ghana and South Africa are better than Nigeria in terms of technological advancement because of their ability to perfect policies that were designed based on their home situation.

"Nigeria has poor attitude to technological development which makes the country backward. This is so because of the selfish interest of some persons. They have refused to embrace local technology and make it established for universal acceptance in the country.

"Nigerians abroad are best in technology projections, but they cannot easily come back home because they will not be given the necessary support, coupled with the problem of ethnicity, so they decide to remain abroad.

"There is also no clearly defined policy on technological advancement put in place by government, hence the backwardness," he said, adding that there ought to be collaboration between the public and private sector as technology is indispensable to economic growth.

Prof. Inyang also called for a well articulated policy on environmental management.

"There should be an environmental advisory body made of people from different areas of the economy to liaise with the federal government and its agencies to have a proper environment programme.

"The university system should begin programmes in environmental management, while research facilitates proper tackling of environmental problem," the university teacher explained.

Higher Education This Week

By Dr. Isaac N. Obasi , zikobasi@yahoo.com

Memo to the political reform conference (2)

We continue today with a look at the functional character of our higher education system. Some delegates such as Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyawu, Prof. Attahiru Jega (former ASUU national President) and Dr. Nuhu Yakubu (executive secretary of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) have already spoken eloquently well on the need to make our higher education system more functional. We have all it takes to make our educational system very functional in such a way that its graduates would have the capacity to be job creators rather than being only job seekers. The task confronting us now therefore is no longer whether we should make our higher education system more functional, but rather how to make it so.

One of the ways of doing this is to forge a closer interaction between the tertiary institutions and the industries. Engineering and allied students that require practical training should as a matter of necessity be made to work in industries and to base their research projects on experience gathered while doing industrial attachment and training. But more importantly, the present type of industrial attachment is not enough. Serious exposure and training must be an essential part of the attachment. What exists at the moment is what we may call shallow or peripheral attachment devoid of functional and effective practical exposure and training. Our proposed new attachment modality, must be designed and seen to be mutually beneficial to both the institutions and the industries. Put differently, the envisaged attachment and training should be designed in such a way that it is not a burden to the industries hosting the students. These are the challenges that need to be worked out by the relevant professionals at the appropriate time.

Another complementary way that can deepen the functional interaction between the town and the gown is to head-hunt very knowledgeable, gifted and successful professional retirees from some strategic industries and then get them employed in the engineering laboratories to work closely with academics and students. This would provide the benefits of healthy blend and interaction between the gown and the town right there in the polytechnics and universities without having to go out. It may be appropriate to ask: where do our highly skilled technical retirees of successful industries go? The next question is: how can we tap their knowledge for the benefit of future generations?

Further more, from the educational *pipeline point* of view, our technical schools should be made more practically oriented and not just a centre of theoretical excellence. There must be a good blend of both theory and practice at the secondary technical level for us to get the right type of inputs into tertiary level in the fields of engineering and allied disciplines.

Another issue that requires your attention in this regard is the state of research in our tertiary institutions. It may be necessary to know the extent of government interest in the variety of researches being carried out in our tertiary institutions. Does the government really care and take active interest in such? Does the government have national research priorities that the institutions are not only required to focus on but which can act as both motivators and challenge to the researchers? How effective is national research coordination in this country? And more importantly, what is the status of the government funding of research? Are we satisfied with the level of government funding of research in this country? These are some of the issues to examine by your relevant committee.

Some observations are appropriate here before we continue. If the federal government-owned universities are to provide the leadership they are expected to give to the state and private universities, funding of research and international conferences by academics should be given more attention. There is no reason why academics based in Nigeria should not be funded to attend at least one international conference every year or at worst once in two years. Some Africa countries are ahead of Nigeria in this respect and this is not good enough. One point that needs to be stressed here is that there is too much 'investment' of our national funds in providing political leadership in Africa than in the very important areas that we ought to naturally excel and secure our leadership role without too much hassle. The expected leadership we should provide in the technological fields in Africa is lacking given our endowments and population. No country can be a political power without the necessary economic and technological infrastructure. Imagine where we are presently in electricity power generation and compare it with the situation in the Republic of South Africa and other countries in the Southern African region like the Republic of Botswana. It is a serious national embarrassment at the moment. We have just heard one of the delegates saying that part of NEPA's problem is the lack of technical skills. Then the question is: how can we lack technical skills when there is abundance of human resources in this country with a lot of people having technical certificates? This again raises the issue of the functionality of the technical certificates of our institutions.

The University Autonomy Bill has generated a lot of controversies, which is not unexpected in a diverse and complex country as ours. The task before that bill, is how to strike a balance between the responsibility of the state (as main financier of higher education) to make and hold tertiary institutions accountable to the people through the government on one hand, and the need to allow the institutions and their staff enough autonomy and academic freedom necessary for the optimum discharge of their statutory functions as centres of knowledge production and dissemination, on the other hand. In this regard, the role of the government is to serve as a catalyst and facilitator rather than an inhibitor. It is against this background that this bill should be seen and any other thing contrary to this should be jettisoned.

This column has been on for more than two years now and it has raised a lot of pertinent issues, which for constraints of time and space cannot be repeated here. For example, the question of the liberalization of hostel accommodation, equitable cost sharing regime, staff and student discipline, appointment of VCs, are all arrears that require your attention and which we have addressed here in the past. A search into the *Daily Trust* archive can enrich the diversity of views at your disposal.

TO THOSE WHO MOURNED WITH US OVER THE DEATH OF OUR MOTHER

On behalf of the family of late Brother Innocent Obasi of Ezuhu Nguru in Aboh-Mbaise LGA, I wish to express our sincere gratitude to all those who sympathized with us over the death of our beloved mother Mrs. Fidelia Nwaoluoma Obasi at the age of 78 years. The unexpected high level of support from colleagues at the University of Botswana and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka actually humbled us. The support of our various in-laws from Umuezechime Udi; Obetiti Nguru; Orlu; and Lagwa Mbaise, was very impressive. My co-sons-in-law were extremely very supportive. Many relations, friends and well wishers went beyond expectations to serve as pillar of support to us. May the good Lord reward you all abundantly-Amen.

Dr. Obasi writes from the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Southern Africa.

Science & Education

ASUU opposes marketisation of higher education

By Henry Onunu, *Senior Reporter (Education)*

President of the Academic Staff Union Of Universities (ASUU), Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano has explained that university lecturers in the country were not opposed to the reformation of the university system, but were against what he termed the marketisation of higher education in Nigeria.

Speaking at a two-day conference on reforming the higher education system held in Abuja, by ASUU in conjunction with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research In Africa (CODESRIA), the ASUU president said what the union was bothered about is the essence and consequences of a reform programme on higher education.

Dr. Sule-Kano said ASUU believes the essence of reform in the higher education system cannot be meaningful if government stops funding tertiary education, warning that such a step will not promote national development.



President Obasanjo

According to the ASUU president, such a step by government will shrink access to higher education and further increase inequality in the society and ultimately be a threat to the emergence of a fully democratic society.

"Education is not a commodity, just for sale. It is a social good. It is the social responsibility of any government to its people. It is the engine of growth, development and transformation of any society. Higher education restores to mankind its humanity.

"ASUU is not against reform in the higher education system. What ASUU is opposed to is the marketisation of the higher education system in Nigeria in the name of reform. ASUU believes that reform is a necessity in almost every facet of life and human endeavour in present day Nigeria, the education sector inclusive," Dr. Sule Kano said.

He, however, advised that any reform agenda in the higher education system must be arrived at based on relevant knowledge, research, debate and consultations with all stakeholders in the sector.

"The truth is that if government fails to provide quality tertiary education for its citizens, the private sector cannot. Nigeria needs to provide tertiary education for its citizens in order to develop. The present thrust of government to force on Nigerian tertiary institutions the so-called financial autonomy will ultimately frustrate the achievement of the national goal of development. This is what ASUU is struggling against," he added.

Dr. Sule-Kano said the problems of higher education in Nigeria, have been of concern not only to academics, but also to government and the people, adding however, that successive Nigerian governments have paid lip-service to solving these problems because such problems have been misunderstood.

The ASUU president argued further that the present market-driven reform programme of government is inimical to the nation's national interest, do not stem from any well articulated programme of action, but is externally driven by the combined forces of the world Bank and the IMF

Fed Poly Idah to award higher diploma in science courses

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, *Correspondent Lokoja*

The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), has given approval to the Federal Polytechnic, Idah, to commence the award of higher national diploma and national diploma in three science courses.

The NBTE approval which is with effect from the January 15, this year is for higher national diploma in building technology, town and regional planning and Architectural Technology.

The polytechnic has also been given approval to run national diploma, and high national diploma, in survey-geo-information, mechanical engineering with production option, quantity survey, engineering management and electrical/electronic engineering with option in electronic telecommunication and power-machines.

A statement by the registrar of the polytechnic, Mr. Jonah Elangwu, said with this development, the institution has joined the club of few polytechnics which run higher national diploma programmes in the core mechanical/civil as well as electrical-electronic engineering in the country.

The polytechnic according to Mr. Elaigwu now offers 22 higher national diploma Programmes.

Two Benue institutions ban indecent dressing

From Hir Joseph, *Correspondent (Makurdi)*

The university of Agriculture, Makurdi (UAM) and the College of Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) also in Makurdi have respectively banned indecent dressing by students on their campuses, saying the act is promoting prostitution and sexuality among students.

The decision which was made known to newsmen by the management of the two institutions is coming on the heels of mounting pressure from authorities and individuals, including religious organisations on the indecent dress styles of students.

The university's announcement which was contained in an address delivered by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. James Ayatse, during the 2004/2005 matriculation ceremony, said students' dressing habits was a disturbing societal vice that should be redressed.

Accusing female students of being guilty of indecent dressing on campus, the vice-chancellor blamed the misconception of freedom on campus for the negative phenomenon.

"Nakedness brings shame to mankind, especially the body of a woman which is endowed with grace and beauty," the vice chancellor said adding that "mobile pornography, has been identifying as promoting sexuality, rape and prostitution as well as the spread of HIV/AIDS among students'.

The vice-chancellor also named other campus vices as cultism and examination malpractices and warned new and old students to stay away from these vices.

Equally, the Rector of CAPS, Mrs. Magdalene Damkor Ikpa, in a chat with newsmen in her office, said as part of her commitment to restore the image of the college, According to her, she would begin the full enforcement of the dress code, particularly among students and warned that students who flout the code would be punished.

"Girls here dress to entice their male counterparts. But the college has a dress code with rules and regulations. We will enforce that to bring full compliance," said the rector who lamented that the college, before her appointment in 2004, was bereft of discipline.

"But we are now on course to change the system and bring total sanity to the college. Students who go naked in the name of freedom on campus will be sanctioned," she concluded.

Lamido supports ABTI-American varsity

The Lamido of Adamawa, Alhaji Aliyu Mustapha, has promised to support the ABTI-American University in Yola.

Speaking in his palace in Yola, while receiving top officials of the university on a courtesy call, the Lamido pledged on behalf of himself and the entire Adamawa people to ensure the smooth take-off of the university in September.

"I want to assure you that I will do everything possible to support the project. The people of Adamawa are proud and supportive of this project," the Lamido said.

Dr. David Huwiler, president of ABTI-American University in Yola, introduced members of the delegation to the Lamido which included. Benjamin Ledner, president of American University and Dr. Robert Pastor, vice-president of international affairs at American University.

The facilitator of ABTI-American University in Yola, vice president Atiku Abubakar, accompanied the delegation to the Lamido's Palace.

The ABTI-American university team had earlier on visited the permanent site of the university in Yola, to inspect construction work on students hostels, classrooms, central cafeteria and the administrative block.

ABTI-American university, the first American style university in Nigeria is expected to open its doors to the first batch of 200 students in September this year.

FUTY expels 13 students

The Federal University of Technology, Yola, has expelled 13 students and suspended 25 others for engaging in examination malpractices.

The expulsion and suspension of the affected students was ratified by the Senate of the university as its 62nd special meeting.

According to the information and protocol officer of the institution in a statement, the suspended students will stay away from campus for one to two academic sessions depending on the individual students.

Vice-chancellor of the University, Prof. A.Y Ribadu, said the institution has reinvigorated the student's disciplinary body to "up hold quality education which the institution is known for" and stressed that any student caught for examination malpractice will face appropriate disciplinary measures.

"The university is a place for serious-minded people who yearn for the acquisition of knowledge and skills and not a ground for perpetuating examination fraud," he said.

Already, the affected students, the statement added, have been directed to submit their identity cards

Nigeria's pace of dev. lamentable –Prof. Utomi

Nigeria's slow pace of development has been described as lamentable despite the fact that the nation shares a common colonial history, economic and political features with rapidly developing economies of some Asian countries.

This was disclosed by Professor Patrick Utomi, guest lecturer at the third policy lecture and investiture ceremony of the Igbinedion University Okada chaired by General Yakubu Gowon (rtd) recently.

Professor Utomi who is also director Lagos Business School maintained that the abject poverty and stunted growth in Africa was not accidental as the continent needs "to go beyond platitudes" and face existing realities on ground.

Earlier, a 100-room multimillion naira hostel was

Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Dr. Dora Akunyili by Igbinedion University, Okada in recognition of her dogged fight against fake drugs. Dr. Akunyili at the ceremony was also honoured with the executive performance award by the university.

The NAFDAC director general observed that the naming of the university hostel after her was unique in the sense that she is a non indigene and that the honour came during her life time.

She commended the founder of the university, Chief Gabriel Igbenedion for recognising her modest achievements and assured the university community of her unwavering commitment towards eradicating fake drugs and other

UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, NIGERIA

VACANCY

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates to fill the position of Director, Computer Centre of the University of Abuja.

Qualifications:
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The successful candidate would be responsible for the day to day supervision of and direction for operations of the Computer Centre as well as matters relating to the University's ICT programme and commercial services.

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The Registrar,
University of Abuja,
P.M.B. 117, Abuja, FCT

To reach him not later than one month from the date of this publication. Only short listed candidates will be invited for interview.

Signed
Alhaji Umar Bannah

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON AIDS (NACA)

HIV/AIDS Programme Development Project

(World Bank- Assisted)

IDA Credit No. 3556 UNI

ADVERTISEMENT ON THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS FUND (HAF)

ISSUANCE DATE: March 24, 2005

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FROM PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS (PSOs)

The National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) request proposals from private sector organisations for the implementation of acitivities within the HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) and subsequent strategic plans for HIV/AIDS. This is the first call for proposals specifically targeted at Nigeria private sector organsiations.

1. BACKGROUND

The World Bank-assisted HIV/AIDS intervention programme is within the overall framework of the HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) and the new National Strategic Framework (NSF) for HIV/AIDS. The overall objective of the project is to assist Nigeria to reduce the spread and mitigate the impact of HIV infection by strengthening its multi-sectoral response to the epidemic. The project will also assist in the development and start of the implementation of a long-term strategy for the fight against HIV/AIDS. The project aims at:

(i) Creating an enabling environment for the response to the HIV epidemic and,

(ii) Scaling up HIV/AIDS related activities at the federal, state and local levels.

2. The HIV/AIDS Fund

The HIV AIDS Fund (HAF) has been established as one of the components of the HIV/AIDS Programme Development Project (HPDP). Its purpose is to support the expansion of the response of the civil society to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Approximately one-third of the World Bank credit has been set aside for financial and technical support to civil society organizations, including NGO groups and networks of people living with HIV, faith based organisations, workers unions, professional associations, community groups and the private sector to enable them participate in the fight against HIV/AIDS in their respective spheres. Please note that the HIV/AIDS Fund (HAF) will not provide support for antiretroviral therapy.

3. Activities Eligible for Funding under the National HAF

This call is specifically aimed and scaling up the Nigerian private sectors response to HIV/AIDS. Preference will be given to medium scale enterprises, and those organisations/companies who work with small scale enterprises and informal businesses. For example, private sector businesses may wish to increase the HIV/AIDS work within the operations of their sub-contractors or informal businesses in their supply chain. Consideration will also be given to private sector companies who wish to provide outreach to communities in the areas in which they work.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to: work place policy to reduce sigma and discrimination and to reduce vulnerability of workers (such as truck drivers and migrant workers); prevention programmes including peer education, IEC materials, STI treatment and condom distribution; voluntary counselling and testing; support groups for those infected with HIV; care and support for those infected and their families (including support for orphans and widows); and, community education and care schemes. It should be noted that HAF does not finance the procurement of antiretroviral drugs, but support all other aspects of care and support for people living with HIV and AIDS.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SUPPORT UNDER THE NATIONAL HAF

This call for proposals is directed at private sector organisations (PSOs) that are able to meet all of the following criteria:

- Must propose to work in two (2) or more states;
- Must have been registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission for at least two (2) years;
- Must have been in operation for a minimum of two (2) years;
- Must show evidence of being recognised by the State Action Committee on AIDS (SACAs) of states in which they propose to work.
- Must submit their proposal before the deadline in four (4) hard, spiral-bound copies together with an electronic copy in (MS Word) on a standard 1.4MB diskette. E-mail copies are not acceptable.

Please note that preference will be given to those organisations which provide counterpart contribution to their HIV/AIDS work. This may be in cash (i.e. a percentage of the total project cost), or in kind (such as staff, office space and equipment, transport etc)

5. PROPOSALS

The HAF will finance proposals to a ceiling of N13, 000,000 (thirteen million Naira only) for activities that can be managed over a maximum period of 12 months. Any proposal that overshoots the budget ceiling by more that N100, 000 (one hundred thousand Naira) will be automatically disqualified.

The proposal shall consist of the following:

- A cover page which contains information about the organisation including organisational capacity, physical address, telephone number(s), facsimile number, e-mail address and details of contact person.
- A summary of the proposed activities in no more than 300 words.
- Background/justification of the proposal.
- Target groups, beneficiaries and expected outcomes.
- Objectives of the proposal as relates to activities.
- Plan of action, including a detailed list of activities to be carried out and a time line.
- Monitoring and evaluation plan (indicators and means of verification).
- A detailed budget with justification.
- Information on how bulk items and services will be purchased.
- List of past and on-going projects and activities and sources of support if any.
- Information about extent of interaction with state SACAs (on past projects and this project) and letter of endorsement by chairperson of SACAs in the project states.
- Declaration on any other sources of funding for this project.
- Information on available resources (such as qualified staff, project vehicles, telephones, computers, photocopiers, etc).

ATTACHMENTS:

Each proposal should be accompanied by the following documents as attachments:

- Proof of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- Letters of endorsement jointly signed by SACA Chairmen and Secretaries (or any authorised persons) of the states where you propose to work

It is expected that the proposal should not be more than 20 pages in length on A4 size paper.

6. PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

There are 3 major stages of evaluation: Desk Review, Technical Review and Final selection.

a) DESK REVIEW:

This is the elimination stage. Any proposal that fails to meet all of the eligibility criteria listed in 4 above will be eliminated.

b) TECHNICAL REVIEW

Once the eligibility of the organisation and its proposed activities have been ascertained, the following four (4) criteria will be used to evaluate and rank the proposals by a Technical Review Committee:

i. Relevance of the proposed project activities and priorities
ii. Technical quality of the proposal
iii. Appropriateness of budget and time frame
iv. Capacity of the organization to implement the activities

C) FINAL SELECTION

Based on the outcome of the evaluation and ranking, the Technical Review Committee will then make recommendations for a final shortlist using the following criteria:

i. Merit of proposals
ii. Thematic Foci
iii. Geopolitical considerations

A site evaluation of short listed organisations will be conducted for capacity verification. The final selection list will be subject to report of the site evaluation and approval by the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA).

8. For further information and clarification, please contact:

The Chairman (or Special Advisor, Public-Private Partnerships),
National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA),
Plot 823, Ralph Shodeinde Street, Central Area, Abuja
Tel: (234) 9 – 2904411 – 17 Ext. 127

9. *Submission of Proposals*

Applicants should submit only one proposal per organisation. All proposals (in hard and electronic copies) should be submitted not later than close of day on Friday, May 13, 2005. Proposals received after this date will not be considered.

Proposals should be forwarded to the Chairman and consist of four (4) hard, spiral-bound copies accompanied by an electronic copy in MS Word on a standard 1.4MB diskette to:

The Chairman,
National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA),
Plot 823, Ralph Shodeinde Street,
Central Area, Abuja
Tel: (234) 9 – 2904411 – 17

Signed
Chairman (NACA)

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON AIDS (NACA)

HIV/AIDS Programme Development Project

(World Bank- Assisted)

IDA Credit No. 3556 UNI

ADVERTISEMENT ON THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS FUND (HAF)

Issuance Date: March 24, 2005.

SECOND CALL FOR PROPOSALS FROM UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS

The National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) requests proposals from national umbrella organizations (faith-based coalition groups, workers unions, NGO networks, professional associations, etc,) for the implementation of activities within the HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) and subsequent strategic plans for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. The first call was made October2003.

1. BACKGROUND

The World Bank-assisted HIV/AIDS intervention programme is within the overall framework of the HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) and the new National Strategic Framework (NSF) for HIV/AIDS.

The overall objective of the project is to assist Nigeria to reduce the spread and mitigate the impact of HIV infection by strengthening its multi-sectoral response to the epidemic. The project will also assist in the development and start of the implementation of a long-term strategy for the fight against HIV/AIDS. The project aims at:

(i) creating an enabling environment for the response to the HIV epidemic and,
(ii) scaling up HIV/AIDS related activities (advocacy and awareness, prevention, care and support) at the federal, state and local levels.

2. The HIV/AIDS Fund

The HAF has been established to support the expansion of the response of the civil society to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Approximately one-third of the World Bank credit has been set aside for financial and technical support to civil society organizations, including umbrella organizations (faith-based coalition groups, workers unions, civil society groups and networks of people living with HIV/AIDS, professional associations, etc), to enable them participate in the fight against HIV/AIDS in their respective spheres.

A wide range of umbrella organizations exist in Nigeria and each has the opportunity of increasing and scaling up their activities on HIV/AIDS. We recognize that the activities of these umbrella organizations may differ and each have an important role to play in the national response. Therefore the involvement of umbrella organizations in the National Response will help to scale up the HIV/AIDS response through the utilization of their existing structures and systems. It should be noted that HAF does not finance the procurement of anti-retroviral drugs but supports all other aspects of care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

3. Eligibility for Support as umbrella organizations

To be eligible for support under this call, umbrella organizations (faith-based coalition groups, workers unions, civil society groups and networks of people living with HIV/AIDS, professional associations, etc) should meet the following criteria and provide evidence of the following:

i. Must be currently active in at least two (2) geo-political zones of Nigeria;
ii. Must propose to work in at least two (2) geopolitical zones
iii. Must be registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission for at least 2 years;
iv. Have been in active existence for a minimum of two (2) years;
v. Have a track record of having worked as an umbrella organization;
vi. Must be submitted before deadline in 4 hard (spiral-bound) copies together with an electronic copy in (MS Word) on a standard 1.4MB diskette. E-mail copies are not acceptable.

All capable umbrella organizations that are currently receiving grants from NACA are eligible to apply. Organizations that represent the interest of private for-profit individuals and groups can also apply as umbrella organizations.

4. Activities Eligible for Funding under the National HAF

These activities may include among others, capacity building of member organizations in project management, strategic and operational planning, particularly within the context of the new National Strategic Framework as well as proposal writing to enable them access funds from other sources. These could be combined with any of he following:

§ Home-based care
§ Intervention activities at the community/workplace level such as behaviour change and condom distribution to high risk groups, voluntary counseling and confidential testing for HIV, etc
§ Workplace-based social support for members/families affected

5. Proposals

The HAF will finance proposals to the maximum of N39,000,000 (thirty-nine million Naira only) for activities that can be managed over a period of 12 months. Umbrella organizations should provide detailed descriptions of the structures and functions of their organizations, including details of coverage and membership.

The proposal shall consist of the following:

- A cover page which contains information about the organization including organizational capacity, physical address, telephone number(s), facsimile number, e-mail address and details of contact person.
- A summary of the proposed activities in no more than 300 words.
- Background/justification of the proposal.
- Target groups, beneficiaries and expected outcomes
- Objectives of the proposal as relates to activities
- Plan of action, including a detailed list of activities to be carried out and a time line.
- Monitoring and Evaluation plan (indicators and means of verification)
- A detailed budget with justification. Budgets must not exceed the ceiling of N39,000,000.
- Proof of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- List of past and on-going projects and activities and sources of support
- Information on available resources (such as qualified personnel, project vehicles, telephones, computers, photocopiers, etc).

Attachments:

Each proposal should be accompanied by the following documents as attachments:

- Proof of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- Letters of endorsement jointly signed by SACA Chairmen and Secretaries (or any authorized persons) of the states where you propose to work

It is expected that the proposal should not be more than 20 pages in length on A4 size paper with double space typing.

6. Proposal Evaluation Process

There are 3 major stages of evaluation: Desk Review, Technical Review and Final selection.

i) Desk Review:

This is the elimination stage. Any proposal that fails to meet all of the eligibility criteria listed in 3 above will be eliminated.

b) Technical Review

Once the eligibility of the organization and its proposed activities have been ascertained, the following four (4) criteria will be used to evaluate and rank the proposals by a Technical Review Committee:

i. Relevance of the proposed project activities and priorities
ii. Technical quality of the proposal
iii. Appropriateness of budget and time frame
iv. Capacity of the organization to implement the activities

c) Final Selection

Based on the outcome of the evaluation and ranking, the Technical Review Committee will then make recommendations for a final shortlist using the following criteria:

i. Merit of proposals
ii. Thematic Foci
iii. Geopolitical considerations
iv. Preference will be given to those organisations with wide coverage and many potential beneficiaries.

A site evaluation of shortlisted organizations will be conducted for capacity verification. The final selection list will be subject to report of the site evaluation and approval by the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA).

7. *For further information and clarification, please contact:*

The Chairman (or Community Mobilization Specialist),
National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA),
HIV/AIDS Programme Development Project
Plot 823, Ralph Shodeinde Street,
Central Area, Abuja
Tel: (234) 9 – 2904411 – 17

8. Submission of Proposals

Applicants should submit only one proposal per umbrella organization. Proposals (in hard and electronic forms) should be submitted not later than close of day on Friday, May 13, 2005. Proposals received beyond this date will not be considered.

Proposals should be forwarded to the Chairman and consist of four (4) spiral-bound hard copies accompanied by an electronic copy in MS Word on a standard 1.4MB diskette to:

The Chairman,
National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA),
HIV/AIDS Programme Development Project
Plot 823, Ralph Shodeinde Street,
Central Area, Abuja
Tel: (234) 9 – 2904411 – 17

Signed
Chairman (NACA)

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON AIDS (NACA)

HIV/AIDS Programme Development Project

(World Bank- Assisted)

IDA Credit No. 3556 UNI

ADVERTISEMENT ON THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS FUND (HAF)

Issuance Date: March 24, 2005.

THIRD CALL FOR PROPOSALS FROM NATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO) AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (FBO)

The National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) requests proposals from non-governmental organizations for the implementation of activities within the HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) and subsequent strategic plans for HIV/AIDS. This is the third call for proposals. The first call was made October 2002 while the second call was made October 2003. All organizations that received grants under the first and second funding windows (HAF1 and 2) are eligible to apply.

1. Background
The World Bank-assisted HIV/AIDS intervention programme is within the overall framework of the HIV/AIDS Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) and the new National Strategic Framework (NSF) for HIV/AIDS. The overall objective of the project is to assist Nigeria to reduce the spread and mitigate the impact of HIV infection by strengthening its multi-sectoral response to the epidemic. The project will also assist in the development and start of the implementation of a long-term strategy for the fight against HIV/AIDS. The project aims at:
(i) Creating an enabling environment for the response to the HIV epidemic and,
(ii) Scaling up HIV/AIDS related activities at the federal, state and local levels.

2. The HIV/AIDS Fund
The HIV AIDS Fund (HAF) has been established as one of the components of the HIV/AIDS Programme Development Project (HPDP). Its purpose is to support the expansion of the response of the civil society to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Approximately one-third of the World Bank credit has been set aside for financial and technical support to civil society organizations, including NGOs, groups and networks of people living with HIV, faith based organizations, workers unions, professional associations, community groups and the private sector to enable them participate in the fight against HIV/AIDS in their respective spheres. It should be noted that HAF does not finance the procurement of anti-retroviral drugs but supports all other aspects of care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

3. Activities Eligible for Funding under the National HAF
This third call will give priority to proposals targeted at Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) as well as vulnerable groups {sex workers, children (including street children), youth (in-school and out of-school), women, long distance drivers, construction workers, the uniformed services, prison inmates, etc,}.

4. Eligibility Criteria for Support under the National HAF
This third call for proposals is directed at national non-governmental organizations (NGO) and faith-based groups that are able to meet all of the following criteria:
- Must propose to work in two (2) or more states;
- Must have been registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission for at least 2 years;
- Must have been in existence for a minimum of two (2) years;
- Must have demonstrable track records of working in the area of HIV/AIDS or other related human development fields.
- Must be accompanied by letter of endorsement by chairperson/Secretary of SACAs in the states in which they propose to work.
- Must be submitted before deadline in 4 hard (spiral-bound) copies together with an electronic copy in (MS Word) on a standard 1.4MB diskette. E-mail copies are not acceptable.

All organizations that received grants under the first and second funding windows (HAF1and 2) are eligible to apply.

5. PROPOSALS
The HAF will finance proposals to a ceiling of N13,000,000 (thirteen million Naira only) for activities that can be managed over a maximum period of 12 months. Any proposal that overshoots the budget ceiling by more that N100,000 (one hundred thousand Naira) will be automatically disqualified.

The proposal shall consist of the following
- A cover page which contains information about the organization including organizational capacity, physical address, telephone number(s), facsimile number, e-mail address and details of contact person.
- A summary of the proposed activities in no more than 300 words.
- Background/justification of the proposal.
- Target groups, beneficiaries and expected outcomes
- Objectives of the proposal as relates to activities
- Plan of action, including a detailed list of activities to be carried out and a time line.
- Monitoring and evaluation plan (indicators and means of verification)
- A detailed budget with justification
- Information on how bulk items and services will be purchased
- List of past and on-going projects and activities and sources of support
- Information about extent of interaction with state SACAs (on past projects and this project) and letter of endorsement by chairperson of SACAs in the project states
- Declaration on any other sources of funding for this project
- Information on available resources (such as qualified staff, project vehicles, telephones, computers, photocopiers, etc).

ATTACHMENTS:
Each proposal should be accompanied by the following documents as attachments:
- Proof of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- Letters of endorsement jointly signed by SACA Chairmen and Secretaries (or any authorized persons) of the states where you propose to work

It is expected that the proposal should not be more than 20 pages in length on A4 size paper.

6. PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS
There are 3 major stages of evaluation: Desk Review, Technical Review and Final selection.

a) DESK REVIEW:
This is the elimination stage. Any proposal that fails to meet all of the eligibility criteria listed in 4 above will be eliminated.

b) TECHNICAL REVIEW
Once the eligibility of the organization and its proposed activities have been ascertained, the following four (4) criteria will be used to evaluate and rank the proposals by a Technical Review Committee:
i. Relevance of the proposed project activities and priorities
ii. Technical quality of the proposal
iii. Appropriateness of budget and time frame
iv. Capacity of the organization to implement the activities

c) FINAL SELECTION
Based on the outcome of the evaluation and ranking, the Technical Review Committee will then make recommendations for a final shortlist using the following criteria:
i. Merit of proposals
ii. Thematic Foci
iii. Geopolitical considerations

A site evaluation of shortlisted organizations will be conducted for capacity verification. The final selection list will be subject to report of the site evaluation and approval by the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA).

8. For further information and clarification, please contact:
The Chairman (or Community Mobilization Specialist),
National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA),
Plot 823, Ralph Shodeinde Street,
Central Area, Abuja
Tel: (234) 9 – 2904411 – 17

9. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS
Applicants should submit only one proposal per organization. All proposals (in hard and electronic copies) should be submitted not later than close of day on Friday May 13, 2005. Proposals received after this date will not be considered.

Proposals should be forwarded to the Chairman and consist of four (4) spiral-bound hard copies accompanied by an electronic copy in MS Word on a standard 1.4MB diskette to:

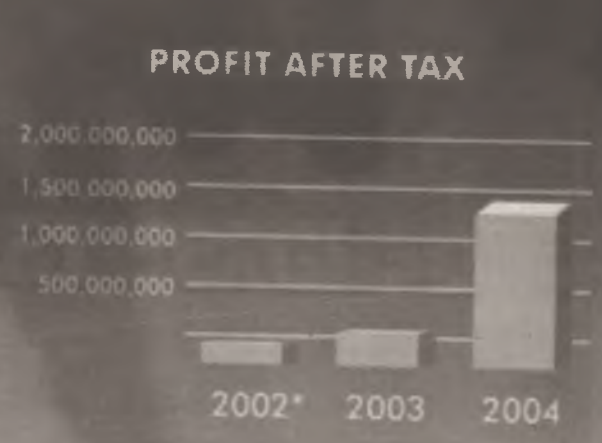
The Chairman,
National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA),
Plot 823, Ralph Shodeinde Street,
Central Area, Abuja
Tel: (234) 9 – 2904411 – 17

Signed
Chairman (NACA)

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GOVERNOR YAR'ADUA RECEIVES PRIMARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AWARD

On Thursday 17th March, 2005, Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua of Katsina State added yet another feather to his Cap, with the conferment on him the National Primary Education Productivity Merit Award as the best governor in Primary Educational Development in Nigeria for the year 2004. Eminent Citizens and friends of the State were at the Colourful ceremony which took place at Sheraton Hotel, Abuja.





Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua of Katsina State delivering his acceptance Speech after the Award ceremony.



L-R, Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua of Katsina State, Senator Samaila Mamman and former IGP, Alhaji Ibrahim Commasie chatting at the occasion.



Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua (Second Left) presented with a certificate by Former IGP, Alh. Ibrahim Commissie (L) while others watch during the National Primary Education Productivity Merit Award Ceremony in Abuja.



A cross section of Members of the high table observing the National Anthem during the Conferment of the National Primary Education Productivity Merit Award.



L-R, Speaker House of Reps., Alh. Aminu Bello Masari, Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua and Senator Samaila Mamman, Member of the National Confab, at the occasion.



Alhaji Bello Kofar Bai, Chairman, Federal Character Commission (R) and the former Brigade Commander, Col. John Madaki (Rtd), Garkuwan Katsina (L) at the occasion.



Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua (R) and Mallam Ismaila Isa, Chairman Bullet Construction (L) in warms greeting at the occasion.



Members of the Yanbankaura group entertaining the guest at the occasion.



Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua (R) Flanked by the Speaker, House of Reps, Alhaji Bello Masari (L) and the DIG, National Primary Education Productivity Merit Award Dr. Tom Ohikere (R) receiving the Award being presented by Professor Gidado Tahir, Executive Secretary UBEC during the National Primary Education Productivity Merit Award Ceremony in Abuja.



R-L Hajia Jummai Mohammed Daura, Katsina State Women Leader, Anti Balaraba, Women Leader, H. Binata Ibrahim K/Soro and Aisha D/Ma during the occasion.

ABUJA TRUST

Magistrate remands six MASSOB members

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi, *Stringer (Abuja)*

An Abuja Chief Magistrate sitting in Jabi has remanded six members of Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in prison custody pending when the ruling on bail is delivered on April 7, 2005.

The presiding Chief Magistrate, Othman Musa, said he will take his time to go through the motion made by the defense counsel, Barrister Steve Ehi Odiase, and a counter affidavit prayed by DSP Ibrahim Bako, the police prosecutor, before he writes the ruling.

Delivering his motion, Barrister Odiase, who prayed for bail, said the court should discountenance the content of the First Information Report (FIR) charged against the accused person by the police and consider the accused innocent before the court. He prayed the court to invoke section 36, subsection 5 of the 1999 constitution to admit the six accused persons to bail.

According to the prosecuting officer, DSP Ibrahim Bako, the six accused persons, one I.R.R. Abraham, Stephen Memunalima, Elijah I. Obiora, Charles Olebunne, Cletus Emesheba and Victor Agu who were arrested and deported by the Gambian Authorities to Nigeria for undermining the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by way of giving lectures, public campaign, distributing anti-Nigeria pamphlets, conducting anti-government television interviews and flying the Flag of Biafra as against the Nigerian flag in effort to breach the National Security of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The accused, according to the prosecution, caused the break down of law and order as well as seeking the disintegration of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with the sole criminal intention of overthrowing the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

DSP Ibrahim Bako said in view of the said above, he opposed the bail application prayed by the defense counsel, stating that the federal ministry of Justice had been briefed and it will soon take the matter to the High Court.

The accused were charged with criminal conspiracy, treasonable crimes, managing and being members of unlawful society contrary to sections 97, 412 (1) a, b & c and 97B of the penal code law.

Man remanded over N1.7m deal

An Abuja Chief Magistrate sitting in Jabi has remanded one Ibrahim Danlami Suleja in prison custody over a deal involving the sum of N1.7 million with Oando Filling Station, Umuratu Junction, Abuja.

According to the prosecution, the accused is charged with breach of trust and theft contrary to sections 312 and 287 of the penal code law.

The prosecution revealed that on March 16, 2005 at about 10.00 a.m., one Alhaji Umaru Gostu of Wuse Zone I, Abuja wrote a letter of complaint to the commissioner of police, Intelligence Department, Force Headquarters, Abuja that the accused person collected the sum of N1.720, 797.75k for the sale of fuel at Oando Filling Station, Umuratu Junction, Abuja sometime in February and March 1st, 2005.

The prosecution further said that the accused, instead of depositing the said money in Diamond Bank Plc converted it to his personal use.

The presiding chief magistrate, Othman Musa, ordered that the accused be remanded imprison custody and adjourned the case to April 27, 2005 for ruling.

Knight urges Catholics to join politics

Catholic faithfuls have been called upon to participate in active politics by joining other honest Nigerians in transforming the country.

A Knight of Saint John (KSJ) International, Sir Emmanuel Nduka, made the call recently in a paper entitled, "The necessity for Laity Participation in Governance," at Bwari, during a retreat organised by Bwari Deanery of Knight of St. John (KSJ) International to mark this year's Laity Week.

Sir Nduka lamented that it is regrettable that the Catholic laity have failed to utilise its large population to vote for other Catholics who have shown interest in elective positions.

According to the knight, Catholics are in a better position to rule in any capacity in this nation stressing that they should emulate the late Mahatma Ghandi who led India in her struggle for independence from Britain.

He explained that a good number of our politicians have failed all those who voted for them by looting the treasury, not providing the basic social amenities and creating jobs for the unemployed.

The only way, according to him, to eradicate corruption in Nigeria is for the electorate to begin to think of those God-fearing Nigerians who they trust could steer the ship of this nation to safety in 2007.

Sir Nduka observed that foreign investors are scared from coming into the country to invest because of high rate of corruption and insecurity.



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KANO TRUST

Contractor gets seven-day ultimatum over mosque project

Piqued by the handling of the construction of a Juma'at mosque at Maigari Village in Rimin Gado local government area of Kano State, the state commissioner for Works and Housing, Prof. Abdu Salihi, has issued a seven-day ultimatum to the contractor to either return to work at the project site or face the wrath of the law.

Prof. Salihi, who gave the ultimatum while on an inspection tour to some projects undertaken by the minister, frowned at what he described as "slow pace of work" at the site even as he vowed that government would not hesitate to take appropriate measures against unpatriotic contractors.

The commissioner observed that by abandoning the project, government could perceive the contractor as an agent of sabotage.

Prof. Salihi said the present administration employed prudence, transparency and open door policy in its activities, warning that all contractors should comply with these exemplary initiatives.

Conducting the commissioner round the project, the state assembly member representing Rimin Gado and Tofa local governments, Barrister Haruna Danga lamented that the contractor had abandoned the mosque construction for a long time, just as he pleaded with the commissioner to intervene.

The lawmaker expressed dismay that the contractor has abused the confidence reposed on him saying such action was a clear breach of contract agreement.



IBB Way, Kano under rehabilitation by Kano State Govt.

Bayero tasks northerners on BON

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, *Reporter (Kano)*

The emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, has charged governors, local government councils and business moguls in the north to join forces to face the challenges of repositioning Bank of North Limited through recapitalisation and business patronage.

Dr. Ado Bayero made the plea while receiving in his palace the outgoing managing director of the bank and his successor, Alhaji Garba A. Yakasai and Alhaji Mustapha M. Bugaje, who paid him a courtesy visit.

Alhaji Ado Bayero particularly implored Northern governors to intensify efforts to address the issue of debt repayment, recapitalisation and business patronage, this according to him, will enable them to free the Bank from its present predicament.

Bayero explained that "all right-thinking northerners must cherish and support this important legacy which assisted not only the northern economy but the nation as a whole within its forty five years of existence.

He said that Bank of North has lived up to the philosophy of its founder and it is therefore imperative for all stakeholders to rise up to the support of the Bank in its trying period and for the sake of posterity.

Speaking earlier, the outgoing, managing director of the bank, Alhaji Garba Abdulkadir Yakasai, told the emir that they were at his palace to thank him for his personal support to the bank and to introduce the newly appointed MD of the Bank, Alhaji Mustapha M. Bugaje.

Alhaji Garba Yakasai therefore appealed to the emir to use his influence to garner support for the bank in its recapitulation as well as business patronage. He then prayed for more support to his successor in the daunting task of managing the affairs of the bank for better performance.



Alh. Ado Bayero, Emir of Kano

NARTO, IPMAN join campaign against pipeline vandalisation

The Kano State branches of the National Association of Road Transport Owners and Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) have joined the federal government's crusade against petroleum pipelines vandalisation, with the donation of bicycles and other security gadgets to the petroleum products stakeholders on the eradication of pipelines vandalisation.

Speaking at the presentation ceremony held at the Kano NNPC depot, the state chairman of IPMAN, Alhaji Musa Yahaya Maikifi, said the menace of pipelines vandalisation sounded strange to many people in the north hence it is constantly perpetrated at the southern part of the country.

He, however, expressed dismay that the menace is gradually making its way up to the north, threatening the harmony and peace enjoyed by the business community especially in the oil sector.

"Until recently, issues like pipelines vandalisation, oil bunkering and adulteration are the ugly trends carried out in the south, but unfortunately last year, similar menace perpetrated at Kwanar Dangora, in Kano," the IPMAN chairman said.

Alhaji Maikifi observed that in a bid to halt the situation before it escalates, and considering its negative impact, a stakeholders' committee has been instituted aimed at curbing the menace.

In his remark, the state governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, applauded IPMAN, and NARTO for donating the equipment, saying the gesture will eliminate the problem of pipelines vandalisation.

According to the governor, the measure was a clear signal that the associations have put aside appropriate modalities to support the federal, government's fight against the pipelines vandalisation, just as he made a plea to the NNPC to increase the number of petroleum trucks allocated to the marketers in the state.

According to Shekarau, the present allocation due for the state could not meet people's requirement considering its population and socio-economic activities, saying NNPC should intervene to save the situation.

Dawakin Tofa spends N30m on hospital, health centres

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru, *Reporter (Kano)*

The chairman of Dawakin Tofa local government area of Kano State, Alhaji Ahmad Muhammed, has disclosed that the council has built a hospital and four health centres worth N30 million in Tattarawa town.

Alhaji Muhammed observed that the people of the area were subjected to series of difficulties due to absence of a comprehensive hospital or health centre.

The council boss pointed out that any responsive political office holder will not hesitate to give attention to the health sector, explaining however that no nation could achieve rapid social economic development if strategies to battle diseases are not put in place.

He said, for effective enhancement of their operation, the local government has purchased medical and other health facilities for the hospital and health centres.

The chairman pleaded with the people to always report to the health centres when they suspect a disease or an ailment among them for proper diagnosis.

Kunchi LG constructs Islamiyya primary schools

In a bid to revamp Islamic activities and education, Kunchi local government area in Kano State has embarked on the construction of Islamiyya primary schools in all major villages of the council.

The council chairman, Dr. Danladi Zakari, who disclosed this while on inspection tour of some projects said the measure was intended to halt the growing rate of illiteracy among children.

Dr. Zakari, who expressed delight over the speedy progress of the project, said when completed, children will no longer roam the streets as they will be in such schools.

Dr. Zakari, frowned at the attitude of some parents who despite the council's crusade for the total eradicate of illiteracy have failed to take the children to school and posited that this will not augur well for their future.

The chairman pointed out that the council has unveiled a series of strategies for the promotion and propagation of Islam, adding that six Friday mosques have been selected for the provision of electric generators.

EKO TRUST

Govt assures residents of healthcare service

From Olumide Bajulaiye,
Reporter (Lagos)

Residents of Lagos have been assured that regardless of their economic status, they will continue to enjoy access to solid healthcare service.

Lagos State governor, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who stated this while presenting various walking aid to patients under the second phase of the Limb Deformity Corrective Surgery and Rehabilitative Programme, said healthcare is perceived by his administration as a right and not a privileged.

The governor, in disclosing that 1,525 persons were screened since the commencement of the programme, said 483 persons had surgery performed on them while 638 are being given physiotherapy.

He said mobility aids such as calipers, wheels, and crutches were being handed to all those who really needs them adding that his administration will continue to adopt strategies that will ensure citizens get the best.

According to him, "disability is a long term impairment leading to social and economic disadvantages, denial of rights, and limited opportunities to play an equal part in the life of the community." Tinubu stated that by providing an integrated approach to fighting disability the communal life are adhered to.

He said though deformity can be traced to poor nutrition in early childhood, inadequate immunisation and poor management of trauma, the state government is giving attention to preventing them.

The governor further praised the improved performance of medical personnel in the state, promising to ensure that the administration improves the condition of service in the hospitals.

Describing the policy as a product of genuine passion to give better life to the people and not political motivation, the commis-sioner for Health, Dr. Leke Pitan, said the policies are legacies that they will come to appreciate.

He said the policies have earned international acclaim from the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and even the federal govern-ment, which has invited the state government to give a lecture on the healthcare system for the nation.

Recounting his ordeal, the pastor father of Felista Oguntomilola, a beneficiary, said his daughter prior to the operation could not wear any shoe and requires about N250, 000 for an operation.

He said having been on the case since 1995 the promise of the administration and eventual operation on his daughter meant the begging of joy for his family who had borne the pains of their daughter's state.

N800m spent on public schools outrageous - *Oyedele*

The claim by the Lagos State commissioner for Education, Olakunle Lawal, that the state government has spent over N800 million for the rehabilitation of public schools, has been described as financial recklessness.

The condemnation was contained in a press statement issued in Lagos by the special assistant on legal matters and public affairs to the minister of Works, Mr. Kole Oyedele.

Oyedele in the statement said the deplorable condition in Lagos public primary and secondary schools does not justify the colossal sum claimed to have been spent to renovate the schools.

He said; "With so many dilapidated classrooms all over Lagos State, the question is how many classroom blocks have been renovated with N800 million out of the 365 secondary schools? 42 primary and secondary schools were renovated with N800 million. There is a lot of fraud in a system that is not open and transparent.

"Equally important to know here is that Lagos State government under Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu had in 2002 purportedly spent N180 million out of the 2nd Lagos State Redeemable Bond 2005/2009 to rehabilitate schools in Lagos State."

While querying what happened to the sum of N180 million floated in 2002, Oyedele stressed that the schools being refurbished in 2005 with N1 billion are the same schools purportedly renovated in 2002.

According to him, there was a double expenditure being done for the same project within three years of the administration.

"It is commonplace to find dilapidated classrooms, empty classrooms without desks and chairs thereby forcing students to learn under trees, library and laboratories without books and science equipment.

Lagos advocates derivation principle on tax

The federal government has been called upon to listen to the voice of reason and ensure that fiscal federalism and the derivation principle apply to all tax collected in Lagos State.

The Lagos State government on Tuesday said that the state is a veritable source of revenue generation for the federal government with about 70 per cent of industries in the country located in the state, four seaports and two airports.

The commissioner for Finance, Dr. Adebayo Adewusi said it did not make sense for the federal government to collect value added tax, (VAT) corporate tax, revenue from seaports, airports and wharf landing charges from the state without the derivation principle in force.

The commissioner, during a news briefing in Alausa, said: "The federal government collects value added tax, corporate tax from the state and nothing comes into the coffers of the Lagos State government.

"Lagos State government also deserves to be accorded fair hearing in matters related to derivation similar to the principle operating in oil producing states. It only makes sense that this should be applicable, it will portray justice and fair play," he said.

The commissioner insisted that Lagos gets a certain percentage as derivation from such taxes as VAT, corporate tax as well as revenue from seaports, airports and wharf landing charges and be allowed to have financial autonomy.

He noted that the federal government has been unfair to the state adding that justice and fair play demand that Lagos receives its own share of revenue generated by the federal government within its territory.

Lagos, Adewusi said, has enormous responsibility which qualifies it for a special status treatment by the federal government.

The state equally called for the sharing of the proceeds of the excess crude oil among the three tiers of government to enable them to fight the prevalent poverty in the country.

Adewusi said that the sharing of the proceeds would enable the various tiers of government to respond effectively to the myriad of problems in the country.

"The current level of national reserves (about $20 billion) will not do our nation any good in the face of high level of domestic debts, unfounded pension fund, depreciating value of the dollar and high and rising domestic inflation".

UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, NIGERIA

P. M. B. 117, ABUJA
Office of the Registrar

Introduction of New Academic Programmes (2005/2006 session)

Introduction

The Senate of the University of Abuja has approved the introduction of new academic programmes which will take off during the 2005/2006 academic session. The programmes are in the Faculties of Agriculture, Engineering, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has provided course codes for the new courses. Therefore, all U.M.E. candidates interested in any of the new courses, but who may have chosen other courses in their JAMB application forms, Can apply to JAMB for change of course before the release of the U.M.E. results.

Courses, Codes, Entry Requirements and Duration

Listed below are the courses, their codes, entry requirements and duration for information and guidance:

1) Faculty of Agriculture

a) Agricultural Economics.....Course Code: 12604 H
b) Animal Science..... Course Code: 12605 D
c) Soil Science.....Course Code: 12606K
d) Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology.....Course Code: 12607 G
e) Fisheries.....Course Code: 12608 C

Course Duration

The courses listed under the Faculty of Agriculture run for 4 or 5 years depending on the mode of entry.

Entry Requirements

i) Direct Entry

Two 'A' level passes in Chemistry and anyone of Zoology/Botany/Agricultural Science/ Biology, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Geology, Economics and Health Science.

ii) U.M.E. Entry

Five '0' Level credit passes in English language, Chemistry, Mathematics; Biology/ Agricultural Science and one of Physics, Geography or Economics.

iii) UME Subjects

Chemistry, Biology, Agricultural Science, Physics or Mathematics in addition to English

2) Faculty of Engineering

Agricultural Engineering.....Course Code: 12596 I
Chemical Engineering.....Course Code: 12597 E
Civil Engineering..... Course Code: 12598 A
Computer Engineering .....Course Code: 12599 H
Electrical and Electronic Engineering ...Course Code: 12600 B
Mechanical Engineering .....Course Code: 12601 I

Course Duration

The courses listed under the Faculty of Engineering run for 5 years.

Entry Requirements

(i)Direct Entry

'A' level passes in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics.

ii) U.M.E. Entry

Five '0'. Level credit passes to include Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, English Language and one science subject.

iii) UME Subjects

Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics and English.

3) Faculty of Medicine

a) Medicine - Course Code: 12602 E
b) Dentistry - Course Code: 12603 A

Course Duration

The courses listed under the Faculty of Medicine run for 5 or 6 years depending on the mode of entry.

Entry Requirements

(i) Direct Entry

Three 'A' level in Physics, Chemistry and Biology or Zoology

ii) U.M.E. Entry

Five '0' Level credit passes in English language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

iii) UME Subjects

Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics and English

4) Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

a) Veterinary Medicine .....Course Code: 12609 J

Course Duration

The Veterinary Medicine course runs for 5 or 6, years depending on the mode of entry.

Entry Requirements

(i)Direct Entry

'A' level passes in Chemistry, Biology/Zoology, Physics or Mathematics.
HND distinction in Poultry Production, Animal Health and Animal Products Inspection

ii) U.ME. Entry

Five '0' Level credit passes to include Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics.

ii)UME Subjects

Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and English.

SIGNED
Alhaji Umar Bappah
Ag. Registrar

News

Kogi purchases N160m equipment for road projects

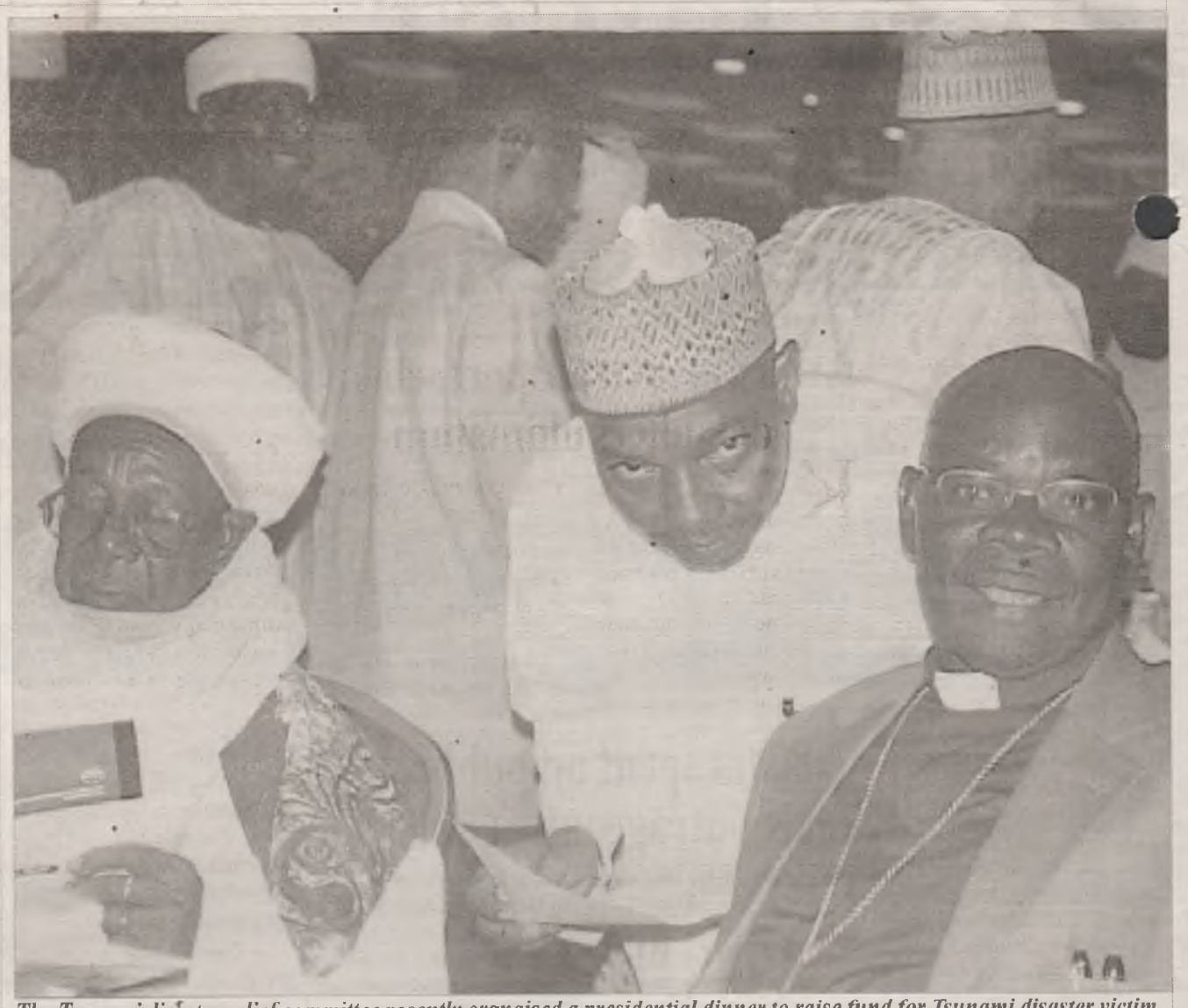
The Kogi state government has procured equipment worth over N160 million for the rural road projects of the Directorate of Rural Development. The equipment consists of rollers, graders, pay-loaders, two tippers, and a low loader and are to be used by the directorate for opening up of rural feeder roads.

Flagging off the rural development programme of the directorate, the Kogi state governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, said the equipment demonstrated his administration's commitment to provide the rural areas with basic amenities that would make life more meaningful.

'It is sad to note that our people have suffered untold hardship over the years as a result of the deplorable condition of our roads. Some communities have been cut off from the rest of the state, while farmers find it extremely difficult to move their products to the markets. This situation has caused a lot of social and economic hardship and aggravated the poverty of our rural dwellers, Governor Idris noted. His administration, he said, was determined to halt the trend through the provision of necessary amenities for the rural dwellers.

In his welcome address, the director general of the Kogi state Directorate of Rural Development, Dr Seidu Mohammed Oga, said that the directorate would embark on the construction of 400 kilometres of rural roads in the first phase of the programme. Rural areas, Dr Mohammed Oga said, constitute the overwhelming proportion of the state's economy and therefore possess the greatest potential for the absorption of labour through the development of rural technologies. He noted that investment in the rural sector is an investment in the bulk of the populace.

The opening up of these roads would have a tremendous impact on the life of the rural dwellers who are predominantly farmers, and have hitherto had no good roads to transport their produce to the market.



The Tsunami disaster relief committee recently orgnaised a presidential dinner to raise fund for Tsunami disaster victim. Here the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido and Arch Bishop Peter Akinola (co-chairman) of the fund group through the programme with them is Capt. Shehu Usman Iyal, chairman, dinner committee.

Briefs

National Mosque

The meeting of members of the launching and fund raising sub-committee of the Presidential Committee on the Rehabilitation of the National Mosque, Abuja has been postponed. The meeting, earlier scheduled for today, has been shifted to Thursday March 31. A statement signed by Salisu Na'Inna Danbatta said that the venue and time of the meeting remained unchanged.

NBTE

President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the re-appointment for another term of Dr. Nura A. Yakubu as executive secretary of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). The approval for a second term was conveyed in a letter dated March 9, 2005 and signed by the former minister of education, Professor Fabian Osuji.

The renewal of Dr Yakubu's appointment followed the successful completion of his first term early this month. Born in 1957 in Nguru, Yobe state, Dr Yakubu holds a doctorate degree of the Royal School of Mines, Imperial College, London, in mineral processing design and mineral technology.



Abia State Governor, Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu with the Executive Chairman, Isialangwa South Local Government Area, Chief Patrick Onwuka, during the governor's tour of the area.

FG earmarks N2bn for water

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, *Correspondent (Lokoja)*

The federal government has earmarked the sum of N2 billion for the completion of all abandoned water projects across the country. The Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji Muktar Shehu Shagari, disclosed this yesterday at the World Water Day celebration in Lokoja.

Alhaji Shagari said that contractors have already been asked to submit lists of such abandoned projects to his ministry for necessary action. He expressed optimism that the federal government would meet the nation's medium-term objective in water supply and sanitation by the year 2007as stipulated in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The nation, he said, attained 65 percent coverage in water supply between 1999 and 2001 as against the 35 percent in 1999. The average percentage would increase significantly in 2005 with the commencement of the Chinese government to construct about 59 motorised boreholes free of charge in 18 states of the federation, including FCT. Some Chinese experts, he said, are also been expected to assist in the development of the nation's irrigation schemes and hydropower dams on a build, operate, and transfer basis.

Alhaji Shgari pledged that the federal government would sustain the construction of small earth dams across the country to boost irrigated agriculture and the production of food and livestock, while also implementing programmes to optimise the utilisation of 30 billion cubic metres of water for power generation and regional water schemes.

of the National Rural Water Supply Programme and the installation of 20 hand pumps in each local government. The effort of the federal government to meet the water supply target by 2007, he said, would be further boosted by the recent offer

Former VC canvasses financial autonomy for varsities

By Aliyu G. Machika, *Correspondent (Kano)*

The former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Professor Oba Abdul-Raheem, has canvassed for the autonomy of the Nigerian university system from the federal government. Professor AbdulRaheem was speaking to the press after delivering a lecture titled, 'Reconstructing the road map of Nigerian literature,' at the 27th [illegible] Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL) in Kano. 'I want university autonomy; and that's exactly what I want,' he said, adding that 'autonomy can only be when you allow the stakeholders to take part in every aspect by determining their stake in an autonomous environment.'

According to Prof. Abdu-

nomy when government fun-

ding of the universities is 99 percent. He added that universities and parents must find ways to secure financial autonomy.

Speaking on the use of the strike option by ASUU, Prof. AbdulRaheem described it as excessive and unwarranted. Embarking on strike is counter-productive, according to him, especially when the disagreement is with 'fighting instrument and that the issue of education is not an issue that demands for drawing such a hard line, but rather an issue which can be resolved through dialogue,' he observed.

The former university administrator said that government funding of university education is a function of the national economy. He stressed that there are other contending and competing needs that demand the attention of government. 'I think it is important that what we should do more is to reduce the weight in a whole sectors, whether in academic or health services, and conserve funds for more pressing issues,' he observed.

FCE Gombe uncovers forgery syndicate

From Mohammed Abubakar, *in Gombe*

The Federal College of Education (Tech), Gombe has uncovered a forgery syndicate that specialised in issuing fake admission letters to unsuspecting prospective students of the college. Briefing newsmen on the issue, the college provost, Dr Daniel Pindar Banu, said that the syndicate was divided into two groups. The first group printed fake admission letters and receipts, while the second group was engaged in facilitating the direct admission of students through JAMB.

The provost said that about five members of the college staff were involved in the racket, all of whom have been appropriately disciplined. Two of the staff members faced dismissal and the other one faced the termination of his appointment. Another one was yet to be disciplined. According to Pindar Banu, the activities of these people were discovered when the registration numbers of students admitted through these dubious means were found not tally with those officially recognised by the institution. That led to a primary investigation, after which a committee set up to officially investigate the matter invited those involved for questioning, including 14 of the victims.

The provost further revealed that the syndicate collected about N3,650 from prospective students for pre-NCE. Four of the students they 'arranged' to be admitted through JAMB turned up to inquire about their possible enrollment into the college.

News

Benue commissioner frowns at LG staff attitude

From Hir Joseph, *Correspondent Makurdi*

The commissioner for local government in Benue State, Barrister Emmanuel Udende has frowned at the present trend whereby majority of local government staff report to their respective offices only on pay day.

Similarly, the local government chairman for Ohimini, Mr. Ezekiel Awulu Adajo, has warned that his administration would no longer tolerate any act of indiscipline particularly truancy among staff, describing it as detrimental to the development of the area.

The commissioner who expressed displeasure at the attitude of local council staff to office while receiving members of state Association of Local Government Secretaries (ALGS), said indiscipline in the council offices slows down development at the grass root and called on the association to assist his ministry in checking the negative attitude with a view to restoring the image of the third tier of government.

Barrister Udende also appealed to the council secretaries to impress it on the council chairmen to take regular and prompt payment of salaries as their priority, saying that owing to the near absence of the organised private sector in the state, the people depend on public servants for survival.

He asked the secretaries to also influence the local government chairmen to execute projects for the welfare of the people.

Ohimini local government chairman who spoke to staff of the area at a party, assured that within the available resources, staff welfare would be accorded priority and urged the staff to reciprocate this gesture by being dedicated and committed to their work.

Kwara gives transport scheme defaulters ultimatum

From AbdulRazak Adebayo, *Correspondent Ilorin*

Kwara State government yesterday issued a seven day ultimatum to defaulters of former governor Muhammad Lawal's transport scheme to honour their terms of agreement and avoid embarrassment.

Special assistant on poverty alleviation programme to governor Bukola Saraki, Alhaji Bibire Ajape, gave the ultimatum at a press briefing in Ilorin, where he announced 43 names of beneficiaries of Lawal's transport scheme which include a former general manager of Radio Kwara, Hajiya Mairo Mustapha with over N1 million on her neck.

The special assistant said "government has been pushed to the wall hence the need for a tougher measure to recover all poverty of government in private hands."

"Government will deal decivesively with all persons or groups irrespective of their status in the society and no amount of intimidation would bar government from carrying out its statutory duty," Alhaji Ajape added.

He said despite concerted peaceful means to persuade beneficiaries of the transport scheme to honour their terms of agreement, only few responded, a development he explained had debarred others from benefiting as a revolving loan scheme.

The special assistant vowed that the new recovery drive would entail tougher measures because diplomacy had not succeeded, adding "legal means are in top gear to recover government properties carted away by people."

Other prominent defaulters of the scheme include the state chairman of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), Alhaji Abiodun Usman with N2 million outstanding for a Toyota Hiace 18 seater bus, Alhaji Oba Wankasi with N349,000 to balance payment and Captain Abdullahi Lokoja with N2 million to balance.



Cross section of Islamic scholars at the joint meeting of Islamic leaders held in Kaduna recently.

Goje warns contractors over delay

From Muhammad Abubakar, *Correspondent Gombe*

Gombe State governor, Alhaji Muhammad Danjuma Goje, has warned the company handling the construction of most of the roads in the state, Triacta (Nigeria) Ltd, against unnecessary delays or requests for variation on the 5 kilometre Dukku township road recently awarded to the company.

The governor was speaking at a ceremony to flag-off the construction of the roads in Dukku awarded to the construction company at the cost of N335 million with a completion period of seven months.

According to the governor, his administration was not only going to open up ensuring road networks, provision of electricity, pipe born water, quality healthcare and functional education to all the people of the state without discrimination but, "also make the state investor-friendly and boost the productive capacity of our rural populace"

Triacta (Nigeria) Ltd has enjoyed patronage from the state government having been awarded and executed the construction of more than six township roads in the state capital, the dualisation of the Tumpure-New Liji road and the construction of roads and runways for the state airport just being constructed.

BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC

B. C. C. PLC - GBOKO RESUMES OPERATION

With effective take-over of the Management of Benue Cement Company Plc. - Gboko, by the Dangote Group in 2004, the management of the company, without delay, embarked on total re-engineering and refurbishment of all obsolete machinery and equipments. This was backed up by the restructuring of the company's management.

The management of the company is therefore pleased to notify its valued customers and the general public that we have resumed production.

The BCC Lion brand cement, which had been very popular in the country, is now available, in higher quality of Portland Cement .

Transporters are also advised to take advantage of this opportunity, as the evacuation of the product is by self-collection only.

Signed:

Management

GROUP

KADUNA STATE GOVERNMENT

WHITE PAPER ON THE REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TO UNRAVEL THE UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT AT THE BACHAMA ROAD CEMETERY T/WADA, KADUNA, FEBRUARY, 2005

1.0.0 INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of Monday 18th October, 2004, there was pandemonium in Kaduna metropolis and environs. Investigation later revealed that the Police had buried some corpses at the Bachama Road Cemetery T/Wada, Kaduna. Some youths in the Tudun Wada area exhumed the corpses on suspicion that they were of those arrested by the Police on the 11th October, 2004 during the sit-at-home strike organized by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to protest increases in prices of petroleum products.

Government responded swiftly by setting up an Administrative Commission of Inquiry to Unravel the Unfortunate incident. The instrument constituting the Commission is Kaduna State legal Notice No.9 of 2004 published in Gazzette No.22 vol.38 of 4th November, 2004 pursuant to the powers conferred on the Governor by S.2 of the Commission of Inquiry Law cap.34 of 1991 laws of Kaduna State of Nigeria with the following terms of reference.

1.0.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

(i) to confirm whether the corpses were of those arrested during the sit-at-home strike action ordered by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to protest the recent price increases on petroleum products;
(ii) to investigate the circumstances that led to the death of a 12 year old school boy Mohammed Sani Idris during the strike ordered by the NLC to protest the recent price increases on petroleum products;
(iii) to ascertain the truth about the entire two episodes above; and
(iv) to make any other recommendations that can assist Government in taking decisions.

1.0.2 MEMBERSHIP

(i)	Alhaji Usman Faruk	-	Chairman
(ii)	M. S. Aminu, Esq	-	Member
(iii)	Mr. Danladi Nyam, Sarkin Yakin Jaba	-	Member
(iv)	Sheikh Zubairu Sirajo	-	Member
(v)	Alhaji Sule Bako	-	Member
(vi)	Simon N. Chukwurah, Esq Representative of Nigeria Bar Association, Kaduna Branch.	-	Member
(vii)	Adamu Mohammed Mansur	-	Secretary
(viii)	Mohammed L Aliyu Esq.	-	Counsel.

1.0.3 MODUS OPERANDI

The Commission invited memoranda from members of the public in addition to specific requests and demands for memoranda from individuals, relevant and interested institutions of the government. On the 22nd October, 2004, it visited the 44 Army Reference Hospital Kaduna where the 10 exhumed corpses were deposited. It also received a total of 29 memoranda and heard oral testimonies or evidence from 40 witnesses. (The memoranda are contained in Annex II, while the total testimonies as recorded by the Commission are in Annex III of the Commission's Report).

The Commission completed its assignment and submitted the report which was exhaustively deliberated by the State Executive Council at its meeting held on Wednesday 2nd February, 2005 and the following DECISIONS were taken.

1.0.4 DECISION

Government notes the introduction.

CHAPTER I
TERM OF REFERENCE 1

2.0.0 TO CONFIRM WHETHER THE CORPSES WERE OF THOSE ARRESTED DURING THE SIT-AT-HOME STRIKE ACTION ORDERED BY THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC) TO PROTEST THE RECENT PRICE INCREASES ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

2.0.1 FINDINGS

The Commission found as follows:-

(i) 33 persons were arrested at Tudun Wada, Kaduna South Local Government Area on 11th October, 2004;
(ii) that they were arrested for "criminal conspiracy, unlawful assembly and inciting public disturbances" on 11th October, 2004;
(iii) they were all arraigned before Chief Magistrate Court No. 2 Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Kaduna on 12th October, 2004; (For the proceedings of the Court refer to Annex IV of the Report);
(iv) the Court granted bail to the 33 accused persons on 12th October, 2004 and they were subsequently released to their various Sureties between the 13th and the 20th of October, 2004;
(v) the Case was adjourned to the 10th of November, 2004 for mention to enable the police complete their investigation;
(vi) the Chairman, Kaduna South Local Government Council engaged the services of one Sadau Garba, Esq as Counsel to the accused persons and also confirmed that all the 33 accused persons are alive and had been released on bail after satisfying and fulfilling all conditions set by the court; and
(vii) the names of the 33 accused persons, the dates of their arrest, arraignment, bail and actual release and the addresses of their sureties are contained in Table I of the Commission's Report.

2.0.2 OBSERVATIONS

(i) that all the 33 accused persons charged to Court were arrested in order to forestall the breakdown of law and order within Kaduna Metropolis and environs;
(ii) that 24 Sureties of the 33 accused persons appeared before the Commission and testified that the suspects are alive and none of them was killed by the Police;
(iii) that 28 accused persons were physically seen by the members of the Commission during the hearing of the matter on 10th November, 2004 at the Chief Magistrate Court No.2, Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Kaduna;
(iv) that the remaining 5 accused persons or their sureties were not present at the court. The case had been adjourned to 14th December, 2004 for mention; and
(v) those arrested during the sit-at-home strike action ordered by the NLC were not killed.

2.0.3 RECOMMENDATION

The prosecution of the 33 accused persons should be taken over by the State Attorney – General and those found guilty in the matter before the Court should be appropriately punished according to the law so as to serve as a deterrent.

2.0.4 DECISION

Government accepts this recommendation and **DIRECTS** the Attorney – General and Commissioner of Justice to take over the prosecution of the 33 accused persons.

CHAPTER TWO
Term of Reference II

3.0.0 TO IDENTIFY THE CORPSES AND EVENTS LEADING TO THEIR DEATHS AND WITHIN THREE (3) DAYS ARRANGE FOR THEIR RELEASE AND APPROPRIATE BURIAL

3.0.1 OBSERVATIONS

The Commission observed as follows:-

(i) that the timing of the death and burial of the 12 corpses fuelled the speculation that the corpses were not of armed robbers but of those arrested during the 11th October, 2004 NLC strike action;
(ii) that the relationship between the Tudun Wada Community and the Police was characterized by mutual suspicion and distrust;
(iii) that the undue exposure of the corpses and the use of Police Pick Up vehicle to convey the corpses to the burial ground created the fertile ground for the miscreants and mischief makers to threaten the peace under the guise of protesting the killing of suspected rioters in the metropolis;
(iv) that all the forms concerning to "Death Report to Coroner", "Police B13", "Post-Mortem Examination" and "Report of Medical Practitioner" were filled and stamped by the Police;
(v) that the "Warrant to Bury" i.e form '23' was signed by the Chief Magistrate, Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Kaduna on 18th October, 2004;
(vi) that the exhumed 10 corpses were reburied on Friday 23rd October, 2004;
(vii) that the remaining 2 corpses were earlier reburied by their relatives on Monday, 18th October, 2004;
(viii) that the suspected 12 armed robbers were not handcuffed during their movement and relocation to the Rigasa Police Division;
(ix) that the timing of the movement of the 12 suspected armed robbers from the SCID cell to the Rigasa Police Division was not conducive; and
(x) that some segments of the society have the belief that the Police are engaged in extra judicial killings and had expressed serious concern on the matter.

3.0.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

(I) the Law Enforcement Agencies be advised to ensure that henceforth, such "Mass Burial" of dead criminals be done at a period that will not arouse public curiosity and preferably at the outskirt of the town;

3.0.3 DECISION

Government rejects the proposal to provide and designate a separate cemetery outside the metropolis for the burial of dead criminals as this could be abused and directed that the proper procedures for burial of dead criminals should be adhered to.

3.0.4 RECOMMENDATION

(ii) henceforth, the legal laid down procedure for exhuming dead bodies must be strictly adhered to. Whoever is caught doing so illegally should be dealt with in accordance with the laws of the land;

Continued on Page 35

Continued from Page 34

3.0.5 **DECISION**

Government accepts this recommendation and DIRECTS that the laid down procedure for exhuming dead bodies should be followed and anybody found violating the laid down procedure should be dealt with according to the Law.

3.0.6 **RECOMMENDATION**

(iii) the Law Enforcement Agencies should embark on Police/Public dialogue Forum with the leadership of various communities with a view to addressing any grey areas in order to achieve better understanding between the Police and the public;

3.0.7 **DECISION**

Government accepts this recommendation and further DIRECTS that the Law Enforcement Agencies (Police) should always work towards ensuring harmonious working relationship with the general public.

3.0.8 **RECOMMENDATION**

(iv) The Law Enforcement Agencies should expedite action on the arraignment of armed robbery suspects before courts of competent jurisdiction henceforth;

3.0.9 **DECISION**

Government notes this recommendation and observes that there are adequate laws in the statute books dealing with the arraignment of armed robbery suspects. The Police must ensure compliance with the law in the prosecution of suspects.

3.0.10 **RECOMMENDATION**

(v) the Law Enforcement Agencies should adequately equip and train their personnel to check the activities of mischief makers and criminals operating in the State;

3.0.11 **DECISION**

Government noted this recommendation and observes that even though this is the statutory responsibility of the Federal Government of Nigeria the State Government has been assisting tremendously in terms of logistics and DIRECTS that a copy of the Report be made available to the Inspector General of Police to note this recommendation and take necessary action.

3.0.12 **RECOMMENDATION**

(vi) the Nigeria Police as a civil force should under normal circumstance shoot to disable fleeing criminal(s) or rioter(s); and

3.0.13 **DECISION**

Government notes this recommendation and urges the Police to exercise this power with the highest sense of responsibility.

3.0.14 **RECOMMENDATION**

(vii) in view of observations (viii)-(x), the Federal Government should investigate the alleged extra judicial killings by the Police in order to ascertain the veracity of such allegations accordingly.

3.0.15 **DECISION**

Government accepts this recommendation and DIRECTS that a copy of the Report of the Administrative Commission of Inquiry be forwarded to the Inspector General of Police and the Attorney - General of the Federation for further investigations of alleged extra judicial killings by the Police.

CHAPTER THREE

Term of Reference III

4.0.0 **TO INVESTIGATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE DEATH OF A 12 YEAR OLD SCHOOL BOY MOHAMMED SANI IDRIS DURING THE STRIKE ORDERED BY THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC) TO PROTEST THE RECENT PRICE INCREASES ON PETROLEUM PRODUCTS**

4.0.1 **FINDINGS**

The Commission found as follows:-

(i) that the rioters, who molested innocent commuters, were armed with dangerous weapons, such as broken bottles, clubs and petrol bombs with which they made bonfires with old tyres;

(ii) that the armed mobile policemen deployed to the scene used tear smoke canisters;

(iii) that there is circumstantial evidence that firearms were also used in dispersing the rioters;

(iv) that in the course of dispersing the rioters a 12 year old school boy Mohammed Sani Idris was shot by the Police which resulted to his death;

(v) that the deceased was not part of the rioters but must have innocently been within the area, otherwise he could not have been hit by a stray bullet;

(vi) that no post mortem examination was conducted to ascertain the cause of the death of the deceased, Mohammed Sani Idris before his burial. However from the photographs of the deceased boy attached to memo No. 5, there is evidence that he was shot on the right side of his fore-head;

(vii) that the Police denied killing the said Mohammed Sani Idris and there was no eye witness to the shooting. However, the people in the area stated that they heard gunshots by the Police at the time of the riot on the 11th October, 2004;

(viii) that though there was no direct evidence linking the Police with the killing of the 12 year old boy (Mohammed Sani Idris) there was circumstantial evidence that he died as a result of the use of firearms by the Police.

Note

(i) It is imperative to note that the Commissioner of Police in his evidence stated that the mobile police men deployed to the scene used tear smoke and were also armed with firearms. Witnesses Nos. 33 and 34 stated in their evidence that they heard gunshots and saw the dead body of the deceased on the ground which they conveyed to the residence of Sheikh Abubakar Tureta at first before his burial;

(ii) according to the Department of State Services in their Memo No. 26, the arrival of the Police at the scene triggered the commotion which resulted in the death of Mohammed Sani Idris. It is however pertinent to note that it is the constitutional duty and responsibility of the Police to maintain law and order in the country;

(iii) the Commission observes that there had been widening rift between some youths in Tudun Wada area and the Police. There were allegations that actions of the Police in the area had centered on intermittent and indiscriminate arrests, brutality, extortion, intimidation and lack of respect for human lives. According to Witness No.34, Sulaiman Aliu, many innocent citizens including amongst others one Rabiu Alin Malumfashi of Kaje Road Tudun Wada had allegedly lost their lives from accidental discharge from the Police in the area.

This indiscretion by the Police which had also led to the death of a Policeman sometimes ago at Tudun Nupawa, Tudun Wada District had become a source of concern. The recent death of the 12 year old school boy on the 11th October, 2004 only triggered the agitations and the deep rooted suspicion on the activities of the Police in the area.

4.0.2 **RECOMMENDATION**

(i) The Police Community Relations Committee should be revived to promote dialogue and restore the confidence and mutual respect between the Police and the citizens of Tudun Wada in particular and the State in general;

4.0.3 **DECISION**

Government accepts the recommendation and urges the Kaduna State Police Command to revive the Police Community Relations Committee in order to promote dialogue and restore confidence and mutual respect between the Police and the civil society.

4.0.4 **RECOMMENDATION**

(ii) District, Village and Ward Heads should endeavour to create the enabling environment that would minimize conflict areas and crisis spots in their domain.

4.0.5 **DECISION**

Government notes this recommendation and observes that it is in this spirit that additional traditional institutions were created in the State.

4.0.6 **RECOMMENDATION**

(iii) Community/religious leaders and Elders should foster cordial relationship amongst themselves to enable them successfully handle crisis situations.

4.0.7 **DECISION**

Government notes this recommendation and observes that the State and the 23 Local Governments have standing committees on religious harmony.

4.0.8 **RECOMMENDATION**

(iv) they must work extra hard to establish their authority and create a reputation and image that would attract legitimacy and loyalty to themselves.

4.0.9 **DECISION**

Government notes the recommendation.

4.0.10 **RECOMMENDATION**

(v) crisis prone areas should be identified by the security personnel for appropriate action rather than the general approach whereby innocent citizens are subjected to intimidation and other forms of abuses.

4.0.11 **DECISION**

Government accepts this recommendation and DIRECTS that a copy of the Report be forwarded to the Inspector General of Police, the Attorney – General of the Federation and the State Commissioner of Police for their appropriate action.

4.0.12 **RECOMMENDATION**

(v) the habit of mass arrests of innocent victims and passersby in crisis spots must be discontinued henceforth to promote better understanding between the police and the public in the State.

4.0.13 **DECISION**

Government notes this recommendation and urges the Security Agencies to exercise restraint in the course of their duties.

4.0.14 **RECOMMENDATION**

(vi) in time of civil demonstrations and riots within the State, the Police be advised to desist from the use of life firearms, instead they should use rubber bullets, hot water bottles or tear smoke canisters;

4.0.15 **DECISION**

Government notes this recommendation and urges the Police to be guided by the Act relating to containing civil disorder(s).

4.0.16 **RECOMMENDATION**

(vii) the community be encouraged to maximally resort to and exhaust all the legal and constitutional means of seeking redress through the law courts etc rather than the resort to violence.

4.0.17 **DECISION**

Government notes this recommendation.

4.0.18 **RECOMMENDATION**

(viii) the family of the late Mohammed Sani Idris be compensated by way of payment of Diyya.

4.0.19 **DECISION**

Government observes that this recommendation was not specific as it did not specify the source of Diyya. However, Government **Resolves** to meet with the parents of late Mohammed Sani Idris for a dialogue on the options available to him on the matter, namely, to go the whole hog and pursue the case to its logical conclusion, through investigation and prosecution or accepting financial assistance from Government and thereby bringing the case to a close.

4.0.20 **RECOMMENDATION**

(x) the Federal Government should conduct a further inquiry with a view to identifying the Police who shot the bullet that killed the 12 year old Mohammed Sani Idris and mete out an appropriate punishment to serve as deterrent.

Continued on Page 37

Career Opportunities

At Our Manufacturing Plant

Who We Are

Procter & Gamble is one of the world's largest and most innovative international companies, operating in the extremely competitive fast moving consumer goods market. . We develop, manufacture and market high quality products designed to meet consumer needs worldwide. Our products, over 300, are recognized and relied upon by people all over the world. They include Always, Pampers, Crest, Zest, Camay, Oil of Ulay, Head & Shoulders, Vicks, Tide and Ariel. Our world headquarters is in Cincinnati, Ohio USA. From our origin in 1837, P&G has grown into a multi-billion dollar business, employing more than 100,000 people worldwide.

Procter & Gamble in Nigeria

P&G started operations in Nigeria in 1992. We have our Head Office in Lagos and a plant in Ibadan. We have major distributors all over the country and some of the products we produce and market locally include Always, Pampers, Vicks Lemon Plus, and Ariel.

What we are looking for

- Technicians at our Ibadan Plant (with Sciences, Mechanical, Chemical, Industrial/Production, Agricultural and Electrical Engineering background).
- Outstanding young men and women between 22 and 28 years of age, with excellent communication skills.
- People with strong academic record with diplomas in Engineering, Sciences, Medical Sciences, or any related discipline.
- Intelligent, ambitious and dynamic people with a marked ability in leadership, working effectively with others.

Educational requirements

- Technical School certificate or its equivalent
- NCE (Technical)
- OND (completed 1 year internship or not)/upper credit
- HND (completed YC or not) upper credit
- Technical Mastery & qualification in the following:

PLC programming (Allan Bradley) Hardware & Software

- Drive control analysis
- Basic Trouble shooting skills
- PLC Troubleshooting
- Gemco Controller & Cams application
- Instrumentations such as proxes, sensors and photoeyes
- Servodrive systems.

Why Procter & Gamble?

We offer you a range of very attractive benefits including:

* Immediate Responsibility
* Excellent Training
* Competitive Compensation Package
* Promotion Only From Within
* Creative Working Environment

How to Apply

All applicants interested should send a text with the following parameters to **08034352441**

First Name
Last Name
Tribe: H-Hausa, Y-Yoruba, I-Ibo, O-Others
Age:
Sex: M-Male F-Female
Course: Eng-Engineering, S-Sciences,
GPA: Convert to a scale of 5 if not already scaled
Tertiary institution: Use first letters of name leaving out "of"
Preferred contact phone: Fill number if different from one in use, otherwise type 1
Email address: If applicable - Use % sign for underscore (_)
Leadership record: Number of times you have led people to achieve significant goals
Preferred test center: IB: Ibadan, PH: Port-Harcourt or AB: Abuja
Present Employer: Abbreviate, If none write none
Institution: PT: Polytechnic, CT: College of Education (Technical)
NYSC: NY-Not Yet, S-Serving, C-Completed
Separate items with #
E.G
Danladi#Akintoye#y#22#M#Eng#4.40#Kadpoly#1#danladi%akintoye@yahoo.com#4#AB#P&G#PT#C

Only Short listed candidates will be contacted via identified SMS number or email address.

Candidates who have taken a P&G test in the past 18 months need not reapply.

Continued from Page 35

4.0.21 DECISION

Government accepts this Recommendation and DIRECTS that a copy of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry be made available to the Inspector General of Police and the Attorney – General of the Federation for further investigation and necessary action.

CHAPTER FOUR
Term of Reference IV

5.0.0 ASCERTAIN THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TWO ENTIRE EPISODES

5.0.1 OBSERVATIONS

(i) the Commission noted and viewed the behaviour of the Kaduna North Local Government Council in the episode of the 18th October, 2004 with serious concern;

(ii) the Commission strongly believed that had the officials of the Kaduna North Local Government Council provided a vehicle for the conveyance of the corpses to the burial ground the incident of the 18th October, 2004 would not have occurred in the first place;

(iii) all efforts made by the Commission to get the Chairman of Kaduna North Local Government Council or his representative to come and explain the reason(s) or even submit a memorandum for such failure proved abortive; and

(iv) this irresponsibility displayed by some functionaries and institutions of Government which in turn seriously causes embarrassment and bad publicity to the Government is unacceptable and should not be condoned because of its serious security implication.

5.0.2 RECOMMENDATION

(i) the Chairman and other affected officer(s) of the Kaduna North Local Government Council be appropriately disciplined/sanctioned in order to serve as deterrent in future.

5.0.3 DECISION

Government accepts this recommendation and DIRECTS that the Chairman of Kaduna North Local Government Council be asked to explain why the Local Government Council refused to provide vehicle to convey the corpses of the dead criminals to the cemetery and his refusal to appear before the Commission to testify on the matter.

5.0.4 RECOMMENDATION

(ii) in view of the fact that ABU Teaching Hospital is situated in Kaduna North Local Government Area, the Council should as a matter of deliberate policy be directed to provide a vehicle to be used in conveying all corpses from the mortuary to the burial ground. This recommendation should also be extended to other Local Government Areas in the State.

5.0.5 DECISION

Government notes that the Local Governments have been empowered under the relevant laws dealing with such matters to evacuate and bury unclaimed corpse(s).

5.0.6 RECOMMENDATION

(ii) the Police should **NEVER** use their vehicle in conveying corpses of this nature to the Bachama Road burial ground or any other cemetery in the State.

5.0.7 DECISION

Government accepts this recommendation and urges the State Police Command to ensure that it contacted the appropriate Local Government Council for provision of vehicle to convey corpses of this nature.

5.0.8 RECOMMENDATION

(iv) Government should provide and designate a burial ground for such exercises outside the metropolis in order to avoid such occurrences in future.

5.0.9 DECISION

Government REJECTS this recommendation as it can be abused.

CHAPTER FIVE
Term of Reference V

6.0.0 TO MAKE ANY OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAN ASSIST GOVERNMENT IN TAKING DECISIONS

6.0.1 OBSERVATIONS

A lot of the memoranda and witnesses presented numerous recommendations that are worthy of consideration. The Commission has considered some of these recommendations. However there seemed to be general consensus that pervading unemployment amongst the youths and indifference from some parents in Tudun Wada area in particular and the State in general was responsible for the restiveness.

The youth unemployment has been compounded by lack of enough industries to absorb them and reduce joblessness and idleness. It has provided a sure or guaranteed reservoir for their recruitment into unsavory and undesirable activities by mischief makers.

Poverty has also contributed a lot to the problem in the area. Parents are not able to sponsor their wards and children's education or to acquire skills that would empower them to contribute to economic activities in the area. Where the structures are provided, the necessary training facilities and equipment are not always provided as it is presently the case with the Youth Skill Acquisition Center at Tudun Wada.

The effects of the sectarian crises which led to segregated settlements in the metropolis and environs coupled with lack of requisite qualifications invariably made it difficult for the youths to move to the [illegible] of employment.

The Commission has noted with concern the dilapidated state of [illegible] State. There is an urgent need to provide these mortuaries with facilities in order to enhance their operations and service delivery to the public.

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a vital role in security surveillance in the Country. Kaduna State is not an exception. From pieces of evidence made available to the Commission, we found that some of the NGOs are terribly disorganized. A reasonable number of our youths should be recruited into such NGOs in order to assist in checking the activities of criminals.

Though the introduction of motorcycles as means of public transportation has provided employment opportunities to our teeming youths, there is the urgent need for proper control and streamlining of their activities in the State.

6.0.2 RECOMMENDATION

(i) the State and Local Governments should as a matter of urgency establish and equip Skill Acquisition Centres and Workshops and go into partnership with professional guilds in the informal sectors of the economy to absorb and train the redundant youths that have now become recruitment ground for selfish elites and mischief makers.

6.0.3 DECISION

Government notes this recommendation and observes that this is in line with the State Government policy on poverty alleviation. However Government had approved the setting up of an Inter-ministerial Committee to study the existing facilities at the 12 Business Apprenticeship Training Centres spread across the State with a view to revitalizing and reinvigorating them to be in tune with the State Government policy on poverty reduction.

6.0.4 RECOMMENDATION

(ii) public spirited individuals or groups from within and outside the area be encouraged by Government to establish industries and open up commercial ventures to provide gainful employment to the youths.

6.0.5 DECISION

Government notes this recommendation and observes that it is the policy of the State Government to facilitate investment in medium and small industries by providing an enabling environment for local and foreign entrepreneurs.

6.0.6 RECOMMENDATION

(iii) The Kaduna South Local Government Council should as a matter of urgency fund the skill acquisition and vocational centres along Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Tudun Wada and other areas with a view to training the youths to be self reliant. Graduates of such centres be provided soft loans to enable them put what they learnt into practice.

6.0.7 DECISION

Government accepts this recommendation and DIRECTS the Kaduna South Local Government to implement as in above.

6.0.8 RECOMMENDATION

(iv) an all inclusive Development Programme be established to address the ever increasing volatility amongst the youths generally.

6.0.9 DECISION

Government notes this recommendation and further observes that it is the State Policy to carry all interests in its developmental programmes.

6.0.10 RECOMMENDATION

(v) there is the need for the formation of community consultative committees and cells at the ward, village and district levels comprising the youths, elders, religious and community leaders which would meet regularly to dialogue over and appropriately intervene in matters that have the potentials of causing the breach of peace.

6.0.11 DECISION

Government notes that such committees are already in place and DIRECTS the Ministry for Local Government to ensure that they function optimally.

6.0.12 RECOMMENDATION

(vi) mortuaries in the State should be adequately equipped with the necessary facilities and consumables for effective service delivery to the public in the State.

6.0.13 DECISION

Government notes that the rehabilitation of hospitals and provision of facilities in the State are geared towards improved service delivery.

6.0.14 RECOMMENDATION

(vii) Government should assist in the reorganization of such NGOs that had been officially registered as quasi security outfits such as the Vigilante Group etc.

6.0.15 DECISION

Government notes this recommendation.

6.0.16 RECOMMENDATION

(viii) in view of the untoward activities of some of the Commercial Motorcyclists operating in the State, we recommend as follows:-

(a) Government should direct the Federal Road Safety Commission and Vehicle Inspection Officers working under the State Ministry of Works and Transport to insist that only persons from the age of 18 years who passed driving test are allowed to operate motorcycles in the State;

6.0.17 DECISION

Government notes the recommendation and observes that efforts are being made by the State Government to sanitize the operations of commercial motorcyclists in the State.

6.0.18 RECOMMENDATION

(b) all motorcycles operating in the State must be fully registered and licensed. In addition, mandatory uniforms for easy identification of the commercial motorcycles should be introduced.

6.0.19 DECISION

Government notes as in paragraph 6.0.17 above.

6.0.20 RECOMMENDATION

(c) the use of crash helmets by both the rider and his passenger should be made compulsory in order to minimize head injury related accidents that has now become very rampant.

6.0.21 DECISION

Government notes as in paragraph 6.0.17 of page 19.

6.0.22 RECOMMENDATION

(d) Government should direct law enforcement agencies to counsel the commercial motorcyclist to desist from taking the laws into their own hands and to always forward their grievances to the constituted authority for appropriate action.

6.0.23 DECISION

Government notes as in paragraph 6.0.17 of page 19.

6.0.24 RECOMMENDATION

(e) enlightenment campaigns on proper traffic conduct and the use of the road should be vigorously pursued by all the relevant departments in order to minimize road accidents in the State.

6.0.25 DECISION

Government notes that this is already being done by the Federal Road Safety Commission.

Inside Politics

Osun Assembly to outlaw cultism

Osun State House of Assembly has begun public hearings on a cultism prohibition bill, which focuses on tertiary institutions, says the speaker, Mr Adejare Bello.

Bello said, at a public hearing in Osogbo on Tuesday, that the assembly would consider "any contribution that would not only curb secret cults in the civil service and tertiary institutions but also eradicate it."

He said the bill, sent to the house by Gov. Olagunsoye Oyinlola, was aimed at prohibiting the existence, membership and activities of secret cults in both the public service and the educational sector.

According to Bello, "the governor noted that the bill had become necessary in view of the increasing wave of cultist activities within the state, especially in tertiary institutions, and attendant destruction of life and property."

He said the house had therefore invited university administrators, such as the vice-chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, to address it on how best to curb cultism.

In their responses, the Rector of Osun State Polytechnic, Prof. Benjamin Adeleke, acting Rector of Osun State College of Technology, Mr Ayodeji Esho, and provost of the College of Education, Ilesa, Prof. Isaac Abimbola, agreed that cultism was a plague that must be wiped out.

For their part, the police, represented at the public hearing by ACP Emmanuel Obiakor, described the bill as "the much expected legal document, needed by the police to prosecute cultists".



The Speaker, House of Representatives, Honourable Aminu Bello Masari discussing with Honourable Sani Sha'aban, chairman House committee on pensions during an interactive sessions with stakeholders in the pensions matters at the National Assembly …recently.

INEC refutes report on Ngige

By Abdu Labaran, *Group Political Editor*

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has refuted media report alleging that it is under pressure from the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to revoke the mandate of Governor Chris Ngige of Anambra state.

A national daily (not *Daily Trust*) had on Monday March 21, 2005 alleged that the National chairman of the commission had held a "lengthy" discussion with the chairman of PDP Board of Trustees (BOT), Chief Tony Anenih so as to pressurise INEC to declare Ngige's seat vacant as a result of his expulsion from the party.

But refuting the report, INEC's Public Affairs Director, Steve Osemeke said in a statement that the story "is the reporter's figment of imagination and an unmitigated relic of concocted fairy tale" adding that there is no truth in the report.

Denying that the INEC chairman had received Chief Anenih in his office or anywhere in the commission last Friday, the commission s spokesman disclosed that the last time the PDP BOT's chairman visited INEC was "sometime last year."

Admitting receiving a letter from the PDP notifying it about the expulsion of Dr. Ngige from the party, the commission however, maintained that the removal of the governor was not canvassed in the letter, adding that even as it has no legal role to play in the issue, the constitution does not empower INEC to declare vacant the seat of a governor or any elected official.

"The constitution does not empower INEC to declare vacant the seat of a governor or any elected official. The chairman could not have engaged in any meeting on any issue which the law excludes INEC from dabbling into" the statement declared.

Suspected political thugs attack LG chairman

A group of unidentified men, suspected to be political thugs, on Tuesday in Ibadan attacked the Egbeda Local Government Chairman, Mr Olasunmbo Oyediji in his office.

The men, who were said to have arrived at the council's secretariat in two buses at about 2 p.m., also attacked the leader of the council's legislature, Mr. Dauda Raimi, other councillors and some officials of the council.

A correspondent on the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), who visited the council secretariat after the incident, reports that doors and burglary proofs to the office of the chairman were damaged while the car belonging to Raimi was burnt.

The chairman, who is now lying critically ill at a private hospital following machete injuries he sustained from the [illegible] came with the intention to kill him.

In his comments the Special Adviser to the state governor on security matters, Chief Bola Alphonso, condemned the attack and promised to bring the culprits to book.

While describing the attack as sponsored and premeditated, Alphonso said that the government had directed the police to fish out the attackers.

MBF displeased with PDP probe on Dariye

The FCT chapter of the Middle Belt Forum (MBF) has expressed [illegible] at the recent probe instituted by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) against Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau state over the alleged donation of N100 million to the South-West zone of the party.

In a press statement signed by its chairman, Hon. Yakubu Pam Gam JP, and made available to *Daily Trust*, the MBF said the move was "a calculated attempt to smear not only Chief Joshua Dariye's image but also the integrity of Chief Solomon Daushop Lar.

The forum said it was unhappy at the way the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is hunting governor Dariye without due regard and respect to the office he represents pointing out that the manner the governor is being hounded by the EFCC violates the immunity clause of the Nigerian constitution.

The FCT chapter of the MBF argued further that even if he had donated money to the PDP, the governor "is not the only governor in Nigeria that has donated to his party," wondering why the [illegible] ers in similar manner.

"Except the Nuhu Ribadu led EFCC has a personal vendetta against the people of the Middle Belt as is being depicted in Dariye's case, then they (EFCC) should stop trailing Dariye and wait until he leaves office in 2007" added the statement believing that is the only way that government neutrality in the matter and respect for the Nigeria constitution by EFCC can be believed.

Vice President did not abandon me – *Former NAPEP Bo[illegible]*

From Abdullahi Bego, *Regional Editor (North East)*

Former Head of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) gubernatorial candidate during the 2003 election in Yobe State, Alhaji Adamu Maina Waziri has said that there was no substance in allegations made in certain quarters of the PDP in Yobe State that he lost the 2003 election because of fundamental disagreement between him and the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

In a chat with *Daily Trust* in Potiskum at the weekend, Alhaji Adamu Waziri said that although the President or Vice President may decide to help his party or its candidate win an election, the main onus is on the candidate's supporters to elect him into office by massively voting for him.

"So, I am not one to say that the Vice President did not make me governor of Yobe State. I contested vigorously to become governor…. I have never tied my electoral fortune or misfortune to the office of the Vice President but it is all part of the smear campaign that followed the last election", he said.

Alhaji Adamu Waziri explained that a lot of things had been said as to why he lost the 2003 election and the court case that followed it, adding however, that he personally knows why it was that the election did not go his way or that of his party in Yobe State.

Maintaining that everything has become history now, the former NAPEP boss added that he and his party had learnt lessons which will be useful in future electoral engagements.

For instance, he explained, it was not only the gubernatorial seat that the PDP lost in Yobe State but also almost all other seats it contested for at the last elections in both [illegible] state levels.

If the party is to adjust itself for future challenges, Waziri said, "It must therefore look at the totality of elections it contested for and understand the reasons why there was failure in terms of resources available, in terms of moral support etc".

Alhaji Adamu Waziri also said that come 2007, the PDP in Yobe State would work to avoid past mistakes and ensure that it emerge successful in the elections it will contest for in order to rid the state of what he called "the misrule" of the present administration in the state.

Rep lauds Obasanjo's fight against corruption

Rep Farouk Aliyu (ANPP-Jigawa) has commended the efforts of President Olusegun Obasanjo and the EFCC in fighting corruption in the country.

Giving the commendation in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Aliyu said that the recent actions taken on highly placed public officers by the President and the EFCC would stem the tide of the cancer.

"Mr President is now demonstrating that his administration was ready to curb corruption at all levels of public life. He and the EFCC deserved a special acknowledgment as a way of encouragement," he said.

Representing Birnin Kudu/Buji federal constituency, Aliyu urged Nigerians to support the crusade against economic and financial crimes for the economic growth of the nation.

The lawmaker, who claimed that it was ANPP members in the National Assembly (NASS) who were spearheading the crusade against corruption in public life, also advised

Nigerians to embrace the party because of its "transparent, responsible and accountable leadership principles".

Aliyu, who is also the deputy House committee chairman on media and public affairs, further disclosed that he and other like-minded legislators were compiling a dossier on the activities of the NDDC with a view to petitioning the EFCC and ICPC.

"We must all join hands to end this era of massive corruption and misgovernance in the country by way of giving useful and factual information to relevant authorities," he charged.

SPORTS

Missing CAF Award shattered me - *Okocha*

Super Eagles skipper Austin 'Jay Jay' Okocha has spoken for the first time about his missing out on the 2004 CAF African Footballer of the Year Award, telling only *KICK OFF* that he was "devastated" not to win the honour but at the same time consoled by Pele's acknowledgment of his talent.

"I was devastated more so as this was not the first time such a thing would happen to me. I felt some sense of injustice because there was no transparency in the whole arrangement. There is no fairness in the ways we do things in this part of the world, which is sad," Jay Jay told *KICK OFF*

"However, I am consoled that a top star like Pele recognised me as one of the world's best 100 players. That to me is more than enough. If CAF had handled this assignment in which Pele credited me as one of the best players he has ever met, I do not think I would have been listed considering the way things are done in Africa."

Jay Jay also said that former Eagles skipper Sunday Oliseh is still very relevant to the national team and should be recalled.

"As a player and captain of the team, I think Oliseh still deserves a place in the Super Eagles. Both of us played very well in the midfield and we had quite a strong department when he was around," he said.

The Bolton Wanderers skipper told *KICK OFF* he is also very confident the Eagles will fly all the way to the World Cup next year in Germany despite the recent changes at the Nigeria Football Association He said:

"Changes at the NFA are not new to we the players. We have learnt to live with these changes and the current developments are no exception. We are committed to seeing Nigeria play at the World Cup finals in Germany. I strongly believe we will make it."



Okocha...devastated by not winning the CAF Award.

Amodu denies warning story

Sharks coach, Shaibu Amodu has denied ever being warned by Rivers State Governor Peter Odili about improving on the team's poor run in the Premier League.

The former Super Eagles handler told *KICK OFF* he had not met with the Governor at all this year.

"I am not sure those reporters got their information correct. I have not seen Peter Odili eye to eye since the reception of both Sharks and Dolphin last year.

"In fact, I have not even signed my contract for the season," he added.

Amodu stated that he intends to meet with the Commissioner of Sports, Allwell Onyesoh on how to move the team forward.

"I would like to meet with the Commissioner when he returns from Ghana, to let him know that Sharks have been in limbo, while Dolphin's continental assignment seems to have been given priority.

"I admit that since Dolphin FC are playing in the continent, they ought to attract more attention, but Sharks too deserve serious backing to make an impact," he said.

Taiwo desperate for World Cup action

Eagle's defender Taye Taiwo has told *KICK OFF* that he is desperate to play at the World Cup next year.

"I want to play at the World Cup," Taiwo told *KICK OFF* on arrival in Port Harcourt on Tuesday. "I am happy with the way my career has progressed so far, and I want to go higher.

"My ambition is to play in the English Premiership soon and I believe that the World Cup will enhance my value."

Taiwo also said that he has learnt a lot in the short period he has been in Europe, "There is a huge gap in the level of football played in Europe and here at home. I have learnt so many things at Marseille."

Taye Taiwo gets Nike endorsement Nigeria defender Taye Taiwo is already enjoying the rewards of his talent and early move to Europe.

The imposing left back said that he has secured a boot endorsement deal with sportswear manufacturers NIKE.

"I have a deal with them, but I can't disclose what it is worth now," Taiwo said.

The player arrived with his spoils of battle, two brand new NIKE 90s, and told *KICK OFF* he would be helping his friends in Nigeria with boots.

"I got the contract just before I came here so I came with just two pairs of boots. But by the time we get everything sorted out, I hope to help out some of my friends at home with boots to train with."

Kaduna Utd hitman vows to destroy Adamawa

By AbdulRaheem Audu, *Sports Reporter*

Kaduna United top scorer, Sunday Gabriel says Adamawa United should forget the three points at stake when the two teams clash this weekend.

Gabriel, who scored his side's winning goal against Buffalo FC of Kano, to take his goals tally to three, said Kaduna United will take nothing less than the maximum points when it visits the Abubakar Atiku Stadium in Yola on Saturday.

He said his team intend to maintain its winning streak and consolidates its position atop the Division One A table.

Having gotten over the knee injury which nearly kept him out of the Buffalo game, the goleador added that he will make up for the lost time by scoring against Adamawa in Yola.

"I am glad to have scored the winning goal against Buffalo last Saturday. I thank the coach for allowing me to come in and score such a crucial goal to our promotion aspirations.

"Last Friday, during the morning training, I twisted my knee when I attempted to meet a high cross and I could not continue with the training. So I thought I will not play against Buffalo. Surprisingly, I was dressed for the match and I came in to get the winning goal.

'My knee felt better after the game, and I am now looking forward to our match in Yola. We want to remain on top of the table and we know we have to win our matches to achieve that. So, we are going to Yola to win. And I hope to score in the match to keep us in the hunt for promotion at the end of the season," he said.

Zamfara pay homage to Amaechina

Players and officials of Premier League debutants, Zamfara United last Saturday paid an unscheduled visit to their former coach and former national team handler, Eto Amaechina, at his home in Enugu.

The team, led by its Team Manager Shehu Garba Gusau, told *KICK OFF*: "When we learnt that our former coach was in town and was almost going blind, we thought it wise to visit him to show our respect.

"It is very sad that he is in such a state of health without any help from any authorities especially the NFA which he served meritoriously in the 80s."

"Having learnt about his condition, we decided to contribute our own widow's mite towards bettering his condition. I just hope that the higher authorities will act quickly and come to his aid."

Reacting to the visit by Zamfara, Amaechina, fondly known as "Coach Eto" in his days as a national handler, told *KICK OFF*, "This is surely one of my best moments this blind condition began to affect me.

"I feel greatly honored that a club I served in the last 20 years can still remember the good times. It is something worthy of emulation by our national football authorities. I am only living on the good will of friends who come just as this team came."

Amaechina served as coach of Zamfara United in 1985 and 1986.

The "Sharia Boys" who lost their rescheduled Week Four fixture to Rangers on Wednesday, stayed back in the 'Coal-City' for three days before travelling to Owerri for another league engagement against Iwuanyanwu Nationale.

My fitness? No problem - *Enyeama*

Super Eagles first choice keeper, Vincent Enyeama has said that he is very very fit for Saturday's World Cup qualifying match against Gabon in Port Harcourt despite fears over his clublessness.

Vincent told *nigeriasports.com* that Nigerians are bothering about nothing since he is sure he would not disappoint on the night.

"I have been training with Bolton Wanderers, Crystal Palace and now Iwuanyanwu Nationale so I do not understand why Nigerians think I am not fit for the game."

"I also look forward to a victory over Gabon even though I will not readily say it will be a goal feast. At this point all that matters is the three points at stake."

Vincent has been the subject of intense criticisms since he left Enyimba after their Champions league campaign last year.

He has remained clubless ever since after failed spells at Bolton Wanderers and Charlton Athletic.



Enyeama

Enakarirhe in flight trouble

Sporting Lisbon defender Joseph Enakarirhe will be the last player to arrive the Super Eagles camp in Port Harcourt after he ran into flight problems in Portugal.

"Joseph called me from Portugal to say he missed his flight yesterday," coach Christian Chukwu told *KICK OFF*. "So he will catch another one on Wednesday and get to Nigeria later in the day."

That means the big defender might not be in Port Harcourt until Thursday morning.

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DAILY TRUST

THURSDAY COLUMN

Thursday, March 24, 2005

EDITORIAL

Oloyede's appointment and related matters

In appointing Professor Ishaq Oloyede, deputy vice chancellor of the University of Ilorin and a delegate to the on-going National Political Reform Conference, as co-secretary of the talks, President Olusegun Obasanjo displayed a praiseworthy attribute of leadership that Nigeria can only benefit from: Oloyede's appointment is laudable because there have been times when Nigerians concluded as one that the president does not listen to the cries of the people. We therefore commend Mr President for this singular deed for it stands to reason that if we decry his errors, we should not fail to recognise his responsiveness. For it is well known that Oloyede's appointment came about because of persistent complaints among Muslims over the unfair composition of the national conference as a whole and its leadership in particular.

We are aware of the complexity of Nigeria and the equally complex and difficult task involved in presiding over the nation. The issues that seem to divide Nigerians tend to appear larger and more plentiful than those that unite us. The tools for managing the perennial cries of marginalisation may not be as abundant as we may all wish. And even where they may seem sufficient, the act of balancing in itself will always be an intricate art that ostensibly may be beyond total human comprehension and application.

These, arguably, are veritable elements of a keg of gunpowder always waiting to be ignited. The president, certainly, is not unaware of these facts. Indeed, he knows them well enough having served this country in her most senior capacity as a soldier in uniform and as a retired general he is once again rendering service till his last tenure runs out in 2007.

With these factors in the mind, we wish to encourage Mr President that he should always do his best to avoid the uneasiness of widespread disaffection, whether within a particular group or across the entire country. We recognise that sometimes the president may be faced with what in effect amounts to a Catch 22 situation—damned if you do; damned if you don't. But this is one area where the beauty of democracy comes into play. Extensive consultations and deliberations involving all elements of the political spectrum may not necessarily guarantee all-round acquiescence, but where these efforts are generally seen to have been pursued fairly, decisions reached would certainly prove more acceptable.

Moreover, the principle of federal character as enshrined in the constitution should always be uppermost on the president's mind. Where violations of the principle or spirit of federal character are immediately discernible, those affected would not be persuaded to gag themselves in the face of injustice.

Furthermore, Mr President ought to realise that fears within the general populace of bias and/or insensitivity on his part have come about because of a trail of his own actions and/or inactions. In this regard we recall with regret that recently the president more or less snubbed Muslim leaders led by Sultan Muhammadu Maccido of Sokoto in a way that seemed contemptuous of the millions of Nigerians that are their subjects or followers. Similarly, Mr President once publicly abused the leader of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Plateau State, Reverend Yakubu Pam, in a way many Nigerians found most unbecoming as it seemed to reflect not only his mindset towards Reverend Pam but Christians as well, regardless of his much-vaunted born-again Christian status. Also of note, the generality of Nigerians found the president's words and attitude towards victims of the 2002 Ikeja bomb blast most improper. It is deeds such as these—and this list is by no means an exhaustive one—that not only created an unfavourable impression of the president among the populace but damaged his reputation as a fair arbiter.

Nevertheless, it is not too late for Mr President to make sincere efforts to repair the damage and in this regard we reiterate that Professor Oloyede's appointment is a commendable start. Yet, much remains to be done. Membership of the national conference still remains uneven in religious terms, even if we apply the president's own debatable assertion that Nigeria is made up of 50% Muslims and 50% Christians. Figures of commanders of military formations and other federal appointments indicate that there are still instances of unevenness, and the president cannot fail to recognise that balancing the element of religion is also an aspect of the spirit of the federal character principle. We therefore urge Mr President to continue in the path of responsive leadership as this can only augur well for the nation.

Obasanjo and Wabara: The road show comes to town

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... a total bribe of N55 million ... was collected by the Senate President, Adolphus Wabara .... Fellow Nigerians, it is a disheartening event that the number three man in the government hierarchy in the country is involved in this sordid matter. It is an action that violates all known norms of good governance, progressive leadership, integrity and credibility.

-President Olusegun Obasanjo

Pardon my Dickensian flight of fancy, this week, but I believe that most of my readers will accept with me, that these, indeed are "the best of times and these are the worst of times" in Nigeria. Almost with a fire-spitting efficiency President Obasanjo this week dusted up his anti-corruption toga, seemed to have gone beyond his routine and perfunctory denouncement of corruption, to reveal fangs that reflected some bite of erstwhile sacred cows.

Nigerians had started yawning every time "crusader" Obasanjo re-iterated his commitment to a corruption-free process of governance. The reason was simply the huge credibility deficit Obasanjo's government has consistently run, since his election in 1999. There were too many examples of corruption at the heart of the hypocritical and quixotic tilting at the windmill of corruption.

The monster of corruption seemed to have successfully entrenched itself, almost like an ancient pagan god, that was propitiated in the various levels of Nigeria's ruling clite. I'll take one example; the infamous Defence Ministry Permanent Secretary, Makanjuola, who stole N400m from his ministry. It was General T.Y. Danjuma, who blew the whistle on this executive thief. A challenge was thrown by that patriotic act of T.Y Danjuma, because the story that has continued to make the rounds is that the thief Makanjuola is infact, Obasanjo's cousin.

I have never read a denial of this popularly believed statement. So when the process of trial commenced, not a few Nigerians were interested in how the event will play. It didn't take too long for Nigerians to reach a denouement! The Attorney General of the Federation entered a plea of *NOLLE PROSEQUI* in court, and the case was withdrawn against thief Makanjuola.

I was invited to Aso Villa to take part in the *PRESIDENTIAL MEDIA CHAT*, not too long after the plea of *NOLLE PROSEQUI*. After the live television broadcast, I asked president Obasanjo DIRECTLY, why the case was stopped, and he had answered me that it was to better prosecute the case in a not-distant future. But up to this moment, nothing like that was done, I gathered that Makanjuola has been forgotten and has also been reported to be cooling his feet abroad, enjoying the loot from the Ministry of Defence. We can cite other examples.

So this is the basis of the cynicism about Obasanjo's anti-corruption credentials amongst the Nigeria people and those foreign constituencies that Obasanjo desperately courts their endorsement in thought and deeds. Finance Minister Okonjo-Iweala said on the BBC the other day that the perception about corruption was actually a 'reputation overhang', however *chere madame*, its far deeper than that!

But surprise, surprise! As I said at the beginning of this column, Obasanjo was presented with a most God-sent opportunity with the N55 million bribery scandal. The sceptic, and I am very sceptical about this government, could be forgiven to say that it was a combination of circumstances that played into Obasanjo's hands, and not the result of a conscientious determination to clean the Augean Stable.

I say this because haven't there been cases of corruption around the disgraced Senate President, Adophus Wabara in the past that did not trigger the anger which was clearly conveyed in Obasanjo's address to the nation? Something clearly is rotten in the state, well not of Denmark as Shakespeare once wrote, but in the state of relationship between Obasanjo and Wabara. It seems that in the past couple of months, the quisling, Adolphus Wabara, picked from the morass, white-washed at Aso Villa, perfumed in the alluring environment of Ghana-must-go, seemed to have taken a few independent steps, almost like his predecessor, Anyin Pius Anyim.

A usually reliable source informed me the other day, that two Bills – the Privatisation Bill and the Lottery Bill – particularly drew the ire of the imperious President Obasanjo. The source added that an angry Obasanjo called in Wabara and his team to Aso Villa, didn't even allow them to take their seats before deploying his well-known opprobrium on them. Obasanjo was reported to have said that at the rate the Wabara Senate was going, given its effort to tinker with the Bills in question, they were beginning to assert an independence – an anathema for Obasanjo. So those adept at reading the presidential footwork knew that Wabara's usefulness was lapsing. So the fact that the fly cant stop perching on faecal matter, and Wabara could not but indulge his propensity for theft and bribery, just made his case such an easy walk over, for the redoubtable General Aremu Okikiola Obasanjo: conqueror of Nigeria, subduer of such enemies as Okadigbo, Na'abba, Audu Ogbeh; the one who conquers from battle to the other, leaving so much ruin in the wake!

So truly remarkable has our president's latest action been that when we reconvened our Editorial team to re-plan the paper for Wednesday, on Tuesday night, an elated Crispin Oduobok, our Group Literary Editor, shook hands excitedly welcoming his colleagues to 'a new Nigeria'. Even Kabiru Yusuf seemed to have been touched by the determination that seeped through Obasanjo's speech and the significant steps taken plus the culprits netted by the campaigning Obasanjo. Kabiru had summed up to me. 'its very healthy for the polity. May be, people would now seat up". To which I answered Amen.

It was that excitement which Remi Oyo, Presidential Spokesperson, could hardly suppress when we discussed soon after the broadcast. I agreed with her, that a Rubicon might have been crossed by Obasanjo – who seemed to have an eye focused on what mileage he can milk with the creditors too, in the area of debt relief, a campaign which our president has shown a passionate commitment for especially in recent weeks.

Obasanjo said inter-alia in his broadcast that "we have never made shy of our undiluted comments to eliminating corruption from our national life because it compromises national development, contaminates collective morality and values distorts national planning, corrodes integrity and discipline, and destroys the foundation of creativity, innovation, and democratic structure and development." The sentiments are superb, but facts are stubborn things, and the facts of Obasanjo's rule in the past six years, do not vindicate him and his lofty sentiments.

For example how elastic is his conception of corruption? Does that include the forgery of the Electoral Act? Is it corrupt not to implement budgets as he has consistently refused to do since he came to power? Is it an act of corruption to spend monies without appropriation? Is it corruption to emasculate other arms of government, stifle the separation of powers and cast an authoritarian pall on the democratic process in the country?

It will be interesting to find out from Obasanjo if his definition of corruption includes acts of impunity, such as taking away Delta Steel Company won 'fair and square' in open competitive bid by a Nigerian company. Then giving away the company by Presidential fiat to an Indian company? Obasanjo should also let us know if his definition of corruption takes in the messy *SOLGAS* deal at Ajaokuta or the *PENTASCOPE* scam at *NITEL*. Obasanjo was also 'disheartened' that 'the number three man in the government hierarchy in the country is involved in this sordid matter'. Haba, Obasanjo, please spare us some of this emotional blackmail! Who put Wabara there in the first place? A charlatan that did not win an election in the first place or didn't you write a congratulatory letter to Elder Dan Imoh, whose mandate was traded away in order that Wabara; colourless , tasteless, philistine and quisling, can be made the President of our nations highest legislative body? An act of vengeance by Obasanjo, to underscore how imperial his presidency has evolved in the years since 1999, but especially after the charade of the 2003 election.

The imposition of Wabara as Nigeria's number three citizen is a reflection of the flaw in the president's own persona; that inability of absolute power to condone dissent, and of an old African chief, groomed in the rural tyranny of a peasant society, who made good as a military dictator. This ex-dictator is suffused with a messianic strain, was imprisoned and humiliated, discovered religion a-new in adversity and walked almost directly from prison to power, as the consensus choice to lead Nigeria, by a military constituency directly responsible largely for the ruination of our country. This sequence of events steeped president Obasanjo in his subjective idealism, philosophically, as being the indispensable source of all wisdom of statecraft.

This is the background that will make him impose a character like Adolphus Wabara on Nigeria. So like the *AGBAKO* child of Yoruba mythology, Wabara came full circle to show why his choice in the first place was such a disaster for a regime that mouths anti-corruption commitments, says it valorises due process but which regularly employs corrupt methods and cant stop using undue processes.

Wabara, while he lasted, made me strongly object to Obasanjo. Each time I saw him on television or on the pages of a newspaper, I wondered why a country with an abundance of human resource can be inflicted with a Senate President of less than feather weight intellect like Wabara, by President Obasanjo. What was expected to be achieved by such a choice, if not to humiliate that arm of government and by extension the Nigerian people? The final act of conquest, especially with the complete surrender to the crazy neoliberal, shock therapy capitalism, that is running riot in our land?

Someone who knows, because he worked closely with him, said that Wabara was one of the most incompetent people he ever worked with. He never developed an interest in the briefing papers, he does not have the time to dot the I or cross the T of a speech; most times, seeing such speeches only when handed to him to read at an event. His obsession they say is to find out which deal will bring in the quick buck! That was where his interest starts and ends! If this was so, why did Obasanjo impose him? Didn't the same security reports tell Obasanjo about the type of person he was in the beginning?

I don't want to end up seeing only the darkness in the silver lining and like my colleagues I do hope that the scandal around the N55 million bribery scandal can make Nigeria's bandit ruling elite to behave a bit more responsibly henceforth.

But something should also give us the pause. It appears that Obasanjo is also priming the opportunity to heighten his leverage over power. By pretending to be the only one really concerned about corruption, the only moral authority of the land as it were, he is also invariably emasculating the political process as well.

So within the certainties of my optimism, I have this nagging doubt about Obasanjo's entire project. It is as if the road show has just arrived town: much fanfare, ticker and tapes, but the audience ends up the loser. You see, in these matters, the more things change, the more they remain the same!

**** This column will be away for four weeks as I commence my Annual Leave.***

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