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NATIONAL CONFAB

Obasanjo rebuffs muslim leaders

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday turned down a request by a high-powered delegation of 40 Muslim leaders to reconstitute the national political reform conference so that it reflects the nation's religious composition.

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter

Obasanjo at a meeting behind closed doors reportedly told the delegation, which was led by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido, that he never considered religion as a factor in putting together the conference.

The Muslim leaders comprising traditional rulers

and Islamic scholars, under the auspices of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), were at the State House in Abuja to express their dismay with the lopsided composition of the conference's leadership and membership.

Daily Trust learnt that this was sequel to a meeting earlier held in Kaduna Tuesday, where it was resolved that the council should ask the president to nominate more

Muslims into the conference.

A dependable source at the meeting told Daily Trust yesterday that the delegation protested to the president that though Muslims constitute 65 per cent of the nation's population, their representation in the confab was 160 against 233 Chris-

tians.

But an adamant Obasanjo reportedly told the gathering that he was "disappointed" that the Sultan has led such a "crowd" to him, when he (the president) had at an earlier meeting February 28 explained to the Sultan that religion was not part of the

factors considered in nominating delegates.

Daily Trust gathered that NSCIA secretary general, Dr. Lateef Adegbite who spoke on behalf of the group told Obasanjo that there was apprehension among Muslims that the conference,

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Senate passes N1.799tr budget

By Isa Sanusi and Hammeed M. Bello, Senior Political Reporters

The senate passed the 2005 budget yesterday authorising the appropriation of N1.799 trillion from the consolidated revenue fund of the federation barely six months after President Olusegun Obasanjo presented the Appropriation Act to a joint session of the two chambers of the National Assembly.

The chairman, senate committee on Appropriation and Finance, Senator John Azuta-Mbata, told the senate that the budget was delayed because of the prolonged consultations with stakeholders in the attempt to arrive at an acceptable revenue framework, adding that the budget was predicated on an average oil price benchmark of 30 US dollars, 2,708,000 barrels crude production level per day and an exchange rate of N133 per dollar.

Senator Azuta Mbata noted that the N200 billion fiscal deficit generated by the total expenditure will be financed by half of the excess crude revenues accrued in 2004, N20 billion to be generated from sale of federal government properties and N63.7 billion privatisation proceeds expected from the sale of ALSCON and NITEL.

Foreign and domestic debts gulped over N355 billion, with a total of N745 billion going into recurrent expenditure while N608 billion has been appropriated for capital expenditure. With the scrapping of the Ministry of

Contd. on Pg 2

... Admits failure over debt relief • Begins another world tour

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday voiced his frustrations in his efforts to get debt relief for the country over the past five years even as he supports the House of Representatives which on Tuesday passed a resolution calling for a stop to further payment of foreign debts.

Speaking when he received a delegation from the House of Representatives led by its Speaker, Aminu Bello Masari, Obasanjo however called for patience as he embarks on a last round of campaigns for debt relief and cancellation from Nigeria's creditors and development partners.

He said: "I would want to appeal to you to say that I take serious note of this motion and I am aware of your concern and I share your frustrations. I will want to

By Reuben Yunana, Senior Reporter State House

appeal to you Mr. Speaker that you allow me to use the best efforts of us in government and those men and women of goodwill out there."

Recalling his frustrations in the debt relief effort, Obasanjo who was presented with the House motion by Speaker Bello Masari said: "As you rightly observed, from the time I won the election in February 1999, I have gone round the world not once. I have met all the people that matter politically in the Group of 8 and Group of less than 8.

"Occasionally, I get good words. Then they prescribe that you must do this, you must do that and one of the things that they wanted us to

Contd. on Pg 2

Conjoined Zimbabwean twins separated

A pair of seven-month-old twin boys from Zimbabwe who were joined at the abdomen and shared a liver are recovering in Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital after a successful separation surgery.

The boys, Tinashe and Tinotenda are recovering in the critical care unit where they are in critical condition

By Elkanah Chawai, Reporter (Foreign Desk) with agency report

on life-support.

Dr. Jacob Langer said the surgery went as planned on Monday, with no unexpected complications, but the boys still face risks.

The operation had been expected to last eight hours



Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido (left) and Shehu of Borno Alhaji Mohammed Ibn-Elkanemi during the meeting of elders of Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs with President Obasanjo at the state House, Abuja... yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye.

Niger demands 80% revenue accruing to NEPA

Niger State representatives at the national political reform conference have called for the setting aside of 80 per cent of revenue accruable to the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), as derivation for distribution to power producing areas.

but went better than expected.

The boys who have cleft lips and palates, will still have to undergo surgery to correct those problems before they go home.

As well, doctors will attempt to straighten their spines, which became curved because of the way they were attached.

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter

The representatives are also seeking compensation on environmental degradation caused by flood.

In a four-page presentation, Professor Shehu Jibril Bida said "Niger state has three electricity generating plants supplying almost 80 per cent of the nation's powers. We pray the conference will support the establishment of HYPPADEC and 80 per cent derivation from revenue accruing to NEPA and the nation.

"Secondly, we deserve compensation on environmental disaster caused by regular flood wiping away some villages like Bussa,

Shiroro and Muregi."

Bida's presentation came in the wake of persistent demands for resource control by delegates from the South-South. They had earlier on Monday and Tuesday been pushing for control of oil wealth to address environmental degradations afflicting the Niger Delta communities.

Bida also called for the development of agriculture and control of deforestation, desertification and erosion.

Speaking on the role of the military in a democracy, Bida urged for respect to the Khaki, whom he said, laid down their lives to fight a war for the unity of Nigeria. The military had been under attack at the confab for their

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News

Obasanjo *Contd. from Pg 1*

which is expected to take far reaching decisions, may not protect their interests since the composition and especially leadership are slanted in favour of Christians.

He reportedly said since independence, no government has manifestly been unfair to Muslims in appointments like the present one.

According to the NSCIA scribe, the source said, in the military, of the 19 army commanders only one is a Muslim, the remaining are Christians; of the 15 in the air force one is a Muslim and 14 are Christians; among the 84 ambassadors, 50 are Christians and 34 are Muslims; of the 45 permanent secretaries, only 16 are Muslims; only 17 of the 41 ministers are Muslims and only four of the 46 heads of parastatals are Muslims.

Adegbite, *Daily Trust* learnt, suggested to the president that Muslims have run out of patience.

In his response, Obasanjo reportedly expressed displeasure with the delegation, saying that since he had made his point to the Sultan, this visit was unnecessary.

According to the source, Obasanjo faulted some of the figures given, contending that "statistics can be dangerous".

He was also said to have reminded the delegation that there was a time when Nigerians across religious divides voted for a Muslim-Muslim ticket and heavens did not fall.

Obasanjo was also said to have quoted the relevant sections to explain to the Muslim leaders that the constitution merely said federal character should be adhered to and that as far as he was concerned religion was not part of federal character.

Besides this, he said he was not responsible for nominating state delegates, and went on to mention states where he appointed only Muslims even though they had substantial number of Christians in their population.

On the 65 per cent Muslim composition as mentioned by Adegbite, Obasanjo said what was widely believed even internationally was that Nigeria is about the only nation with 50-50 Muslim-Christian population. He also emphasised that his only sister is a Muslim.

The president also faulted allegations that nobody had been punished for the Plateau religious clashes, saying 1,166 people had so far been arrested, 13 convicted and 47 are in court.

He, however, admitted according to our source that "well, we are not perfect. We may have made some mistakes, but we should show example to other countries that religion will not divide us."

At this point the delegation was said to have taken exception to Obasanjo's

president that in a dialogue situation, there should be compromise. One of the emirs was also said to have flared up and asked the Sultan to tell the president that Muslim delegates would be asked to pull out of the conference.

He was said to have told the president that if he refused to bulge, there may be no peace.

At this point an apparently furious Obasanjo was said to have interrupted and said "I'm the chairman of this meeting. Enough is enough. Closing prayer."

At this point the Sultan asked Sheikh Shariff Saleh to say the prayers and the president afterwards stood up, shook only the hands of the Sultan and walked out of the room.

Besides Maccido, other tradition rulers on the entourage were the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero; Emir of Katsina, Alhaji Muhammad Kabir Usman; Shehu of Borno, Alhaji Mustapha El-Kanemi; Emir of Gwandu, Alhaji Mustapha Jakolo; Emir of Zazzau, Alhaji Shehu Idris; Olukare of Ikare; Oba of Agbade; Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Sulu Gambari; Emir of Yauri, Dr. Zaiyanu Abdullahi; and Etsu Nupe, Dr. Yahya Abubakar.

The Islamic scholars

included Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, Sheikh Bashir Sambo, Sheikh Adam Isa Idoko, Sheikh Sanusi Gumbi, Sheikh Sharif Sale, Sheikh Ahmad T. Oriki, Professor Ishaq Oloyede, Malam Ishak Sani and Malam Ismaila Khalifa.

Also present at the meeting were Vice President Atiku Abubakar; Governor Abdullahi Adamu of Nasarawa state; Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara state; Head of Service of the Federation, Alhaji Mahmud Yayale Ahmed; Chief of Staff in the Presidency, General Abdullahi Mohammed; minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Malam Nasiru el-Rufai and Presidential Assistant, Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar.

Earlier the presidency had dropped 12 out of 52 names of the NSCIA delegation that asked to see the president. Among those not permitted into Aso Rock were Dr. Datti Ahmed, Mallam Nafiu Baba Ahmed the president and secretary of the Supreme Council for the Implementation of *Shariah* and Sheikh Yakubu Musa, a Katsina-based cleric, who was once detained on suspicion of supporting "terrorist" activities.

Debt relief *Contd. from Pg 1*

do very much is to reform and as you know, we have a very deep and very comprehensive reform going on."

Though Nigeria was now doing things differently as prescribed by the creditors, this has not transformed into debt relief, Obasanjo said.

"People say to us, you are doing what is right, we can see it. But nothing else is happening, what we have been doing wrong in the past, we are trying to do right now. Not only that Nigeria bears the burden of looking after the situation in Togo and Liberia, before the international community was ready, we were there, even in Darfur," Obasanjo said.

He explained that Nigeria was not only being its brother's keeper, but doing it for the role.

"We have accepted to bear the brunt in this respect, but what do we get out of it, now, when everything seems right then we hear things like how is your budget doing?"

the Federal Capital Territory, its sub-head has now been mopped into that of the office of the Head of the civil service of the federation.

The presidency will in this year's budget, cost the nation over N68 billion for both capital and recurrent expenditures, while the budget as a whole has the potential of a surplus of about N46.7 billion.

After the Appropriation

Obasanjo said and warned the country's creditors to take note of the mood of Nigerians on the issue of foreign debt.

He wondered why countries like India and Pakistan could qualify for almost 100 per cent debt relief while Nigeria does not qualify.

Presenting the foreign debts resolution adopted by the House on Tuesday, Speaker Bello Masari said, "the House was convinced that from 1999 to date," your administration has established sound socio economic structures to attract cancellation of Nigeria's huge foreign debt."

Stressing that the House was dismayed by the refusal of our external creditors to cancel Nigeria's debt and provide necessary economic relief, Masari said the House resolved to "call on Mr. President to cease forthwith, further external debt payment to any group of foreign creditors."

President, Adolphus Wabara, said "I hope the president will this time, implement the budget in full," while Senators Yusha'u Anka and Bode Olowoporoku noted that it is a tragedy that the budget grossly neglected the funding of the agricultural sector.

Similarly, the senate has named thirteen senators for the harmonisation committee that will reconcile the budget passed by the senate and that

Nigeria earned N345.8bn from crude sales in January

External reserves hit \$19.59bn

By Ahmed L Shekarau,
Group Business Editor

Nigeria earned about N345.8 billion through sales of crude oil in January alone, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has revealed.

The apex bank also said in its monthly report on the financial and economic status of the Nigerian economy for January 2005, released yesterday in Abuja, that the nation's foreign reserves rose 15.5 percent to US\$ 19.9 billion at the end of January this year, while inflation rate for the 12-month period the same month was estimated at 14.0 percent, compared with 15.0 percent recorded in December 2004.

Also, the report which is issued by the research department of the CBN, puts total currency in circulation in the economy at N543.3 billion, while accounts on foreign exchange flows in the nation's economy within the month under review showed a net inflow of US\$ 1.6 billion.

According to the report, Nigeria's crude oil output increased by 0.4 percent in January this year over December 2004's level of 2.24 million barrels per day (mbd) or 69.44 million barrels for the month.

The report said further that crude oil export was estimated at 1.79 mbd compared with 1.78 mbd in December last year. It added that in the spot market, the average price of Nigeria's reference crude, the Bonny Light, was US\$46.86 per barrel indicating an increase of 15.1 percent over the level of the pre-

Niger *Contd. from Pg 1*

ignoble role in the nation's malaise.

"The army occupies a strategic position in the life of a nation for it defends, protects and promotes sovereignty, peace and security of the nation," he said.

Bida also canvassed an autonomous third tier as provided in the constitution.

"Our local government system needs to be realistically examined. The frequent replacement of elected councillors and chairmen with appointed caretakers needs to be checked and stopped," he said.

Senate *Contd. from Pg 1*

tives and the committee is expected to complete its work before the end of this month.

The budget harmonisation committee of the senate consist of Senators John Azuta Mbata, Abubakar Maikafi, Jonathan Zwingina, Daniel Saror, Tokunboh Afikuyomi, Farouk Bello-Bunza, Mammam Ali, Iyiola Omisore, Ken Nnamani, Emmanuel Okpede, Ike Ekweremadu, Isaiah Balat and Victor

ing month.

Thus, at an average of US\$46.86 per barrel and with an estimated daily sale of 1.79 million barrels, the nation earned a total of US\$2.6 billion, an equivalent of N345.8 billion from the sale of crude oil alone.

On the foreign exchange market, the CBN report said there was an inflow of US\$2.65 billion as against an outflow of US\$1.05 billion, resulting in a net inflow of US\$1.6 billion. The report said further that sales of foreign exchange to authorised dealers by the CBN within the month amounted to US\$674.33 million, compared

to US\$668.93 million in December 2004.

The weighted average exchange rate of the naira vis-à-vis the US dollar in January this year, according to the report, depreciated from preceding month's level of N132.56 per dollar to N132.90.

In the financial sector of the Nigerian economy, money supply grew as total deposits with the CBN amounted to N1.2 trillion, indicating an increase of N162.3 billion or 16.2 percent, but the banking system's net credit to the federal government declined by N188.8 billion or 97.0 percent to N5.8 billion, and banking system's credit to the private sector also declined by N21.9 billion or 1.4 percent to N1.51 trillion.

Soludo heads new Mint board

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), yesterday dissolved the board of the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting (NSPM) Plc, and constituted a new one with the CBN governor, Professor Charles C. Soludo, as chairman.

Also yesterday, the CBN reconstituted the management of the NSPM Plc otherwise referred to as the Mint, throwing out three of its executive directors and also cutting down the size of its departments from nine to five.

It would be recalled that the apex bank effectively took control of the mint late last month, having successfully acquired 77 percent stake to emerge as majority shareholder in the company.

A dependable source in the NSPM Plc, told *Daily Trust* that at an emergency board meeting held yesterday at the company's Abuja factory, Professor Soludo announced the dissolution of the former board of directors which was headed by his deputy in charge of operations, Dr. Shamsuddeen Usman.

The new board, our source revealed, will have six CBN officials as against three in the former one, while the federal government will be

represented by three people on the new board as against its two seats in the past.

Thomas De La Rue, which hitherto had two representatives on the mint's board, now has no seat as it only retains about three percent stake in the company, while the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), will retain its single seat since the plan to privatise the company has not been completely shelved.

Our source disclosed further that following the restructuring of the company's management, there will only be five general managers in the mint as against nine.

Under the present arrangement, our source said, there will be one general manager each for the Abuja and Lagos factories of the company; a general manager in charge of finance and administration department, another for human resources department, as well as the GM, Special Business Unit, a newly created segment which incorporates former security documents and commercial departments.

These five general managers, the source disclosed further, will now report directly to the managing director since the position of executive directors (EDs), have been phased out.

and Farooq Lawan.

Other members, Masari said, included Hons. Nasiru Dantiye, Bethel Amadi, Bankole Dimeji, Lawan Shuaibu, Clever Iksikpo, Ayo Adesiran and Jeff Ojinika.

Masari said the decision to make the House Leader to head the House harmonisation committee, rather than a committee chairman, was to discourage such committee chairmen from defending only the interest of their committees rather than

News

NITEL: Pentascope asks court to stay proceedings

Pentascop International yesterday prayed a federal high court sitting in Abuja to stay proceedings to allow exploration of arbitration clause in the contract agreement made with Nigeria Telecommunications Plc.

Counsel to Pentascope, Mr. Imole Aladedoye, said that since there was an arbitration clause in the agreement, it should be

From Kemi Ogedengbe
Judicial Editor

explored to solve the dispute otherwise, the court could entertain it.

Nitel Plc, Nigeria Mobile Telecommunications Ltd and Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) had filed a motion on notice against Pentascope over breach of agreement.

The plaintiffs in their statement of claim, said that sometimes in March 2003, an agreement was entered with

the defendant company which registered as a company in the Netherlands.

The plaintiffs contended that apart from the management contract of March 13, 2004, there was no other contract made between the plaintiffs and the defendant or any referable contract giving to it on any legal issues.

They stated that sometimes in October 2004, the defendant started to demand for increase in payment of fees of the management contract from the initial sum of \$10 million to \$16 million per annum.

The plaintiffs therefore ask for a declaration that the management contract agreement executed between the plaintiffs and the defendant dated March 13, 2003, was a violation of the Companies and Allied Matters Decree, 1990.

But, when Pentascope told the court to stay the proceedings, the plaintiffs, through their counsel, Mr. Gbadeyan Oladele, from Alex Izinyon (SAN) Chambers said that they came to the court to challenge the entire agreement.

The court, presided over by Justice Johah Adah, asked both parties to submit their written agreement and adjourned the matter to April 12, 2005.

National Mosque fund raising begins today

The launching of the N5 billion appeal fund for the rehabilitation of the national mosque will take place today at the Eagle square, Abuja.

A statement by the launching and fund raising subcommittee signed by assistant director, information, Salisu Sale Na'inna, said the occasion will be chaired by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido.

The chairman, presidential committee on the rehabilitation of the national mosque, President Olusegun Obasanjo, is the special guest of honour while Vice President Atiku Abubakar is chief guest of honour.

The chief launcher the

From Uthman Abubakar
Senior Reporter (Features)

fund raising is Alhaji Aminu Alhassan-Dantata, the executive chairman, Dantata Group of Companies while the guest speaker is Alhaji Yusuf Maitama Sule.

It could be recalled that last Tuesday in Abuja President Obasanjo stressed his commitment to sensitise all Nigerians to mobilize funds for the rehabilitation of the mosque, saying, "the brotherhood of all Nigerians across religious and ethnic boundaries.

He noted that if the country could succeed in its religious pluralism it would have a lesson to teach the world, maintaining that not many countries in the world have succeeded in that respect.

Robber to die by hanging

From Lawal Ibrahim
Correspondent (Katsina)

The Katsina state high court No. 4 has found one *fulani man named Damau Sani* from Sabuwa local government guilty of armed robbery and has sentenced him to death by hanging or firing squad.

The man was found guilty of taking part in an armed robbery attack on one Alhaji Hashimu Umar at his Rabin Iwa residence in Sabuwa local government on October 21, 1998.

The condemned man who was said to have led robbers, snatched six hundred and fifty thousand naira and other valuables. Two people were also said to have lost their lives during attack others received beating.

In the course of the trial, the prosecution called eight witnesses to prove their case, while five others testified for the convicted person.

Passing judgment, the presiding judge, Justice Ibrahim Musa Saulawa, said the gravity of the offence committed by the convict warrants his sentence to death decried the increasing incidence of robberies in the state and the country.

However, two other accused persons, Sani Abubakar and Lawal Ibrahim, were discharged and acquitted for want of evidence.

Plateau appoints traditional rulers for new chiefdoms

From Jibril Dauda,
Regional Editor (Jos)

The controversy surrounding the creation of a new chiefdom and the appointment of a traditional ruler in Kanam local government area of Plateau state may have been put to rest as the state government has started the installation of chiefs in the newly created chiefdoms and development areas (DA's) in the state.

Controversy had last week engulfed the creation of a new chiefdom out of Kanam Emirate and the appointment of a fresh traditional ruler for the Bogghom people in the area.

While a group, "Concerned Bogghom Citizens," kicked against the development, praying to remain with the present emirate system under the Emir of Kawam, the Bogghom Development Association welcomed the creation with applause.

However, the Plateau stage government yesterday began the installation of all traditional rulers for the newly created chiefdoms beginning with Bogghom in Kanam local government area.

Announcing the appointment of Alhaji Shehu Suleiman as the Pangkwai Bogghom (Chief of Bogghom), in Jos yesterday, the governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, said the government would be guided

by the wishes of the people in the creation of the new development areas and the traditional rulers for them.

He said the creation of development areas was to bring government closer to the people and advised the new *Pankwai Bogghom* to carry all his people along without bias as the custodian of the people's culture.

Commenting, the national president of the Bogghom Development Association, Johnson Paah, commended Chief Dariye for creating a chiefdom for the Bogghom people as well as more districts and villages in the area.



Gov Joshua Dariye



L - R: Emir of Zazzau Dr. Shehu Idris, Etsu-Nupe Alhaji Yaya Abubakar and Emir of Ilorin Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu Gambari during the meeting of the Elders of Supreme Council for Islamic affairs with President Obasanjo at the State House, Abuja... yesterday
Pix: Joe Oroye

Reps reject Obasanjo's amendment to lottery bill

From Hammeed M. Bello and Zainab Allimi,
Political Reporters

The House of Representatives has rejected the amendments sought by President Obasanjo to a Bill for the establishment of the National Lottery Regulatory Commission and Trust Fund.

The bill was reconsidered yesterday in a committee of the whole House chaired by the deputy speaker, Austin Opara and members were anonymous in their refusal to grant approval to the amendments proposed by the president.

The president proposed amendments to six sections which the House upturned in preference for the provisions of the sections as presented to the president for his assent.

The amendments rejected were those of sections 2(3), (a) and (b) and section 12 (9).

The president proposed in 2(3) that the chairman and members of the board shall (a) be appointed by him and are (b) to serve on part time basis while the House insisted that the appointment must be subject to the confirmation of the senate.

In section 12(g), the president proposed amendment was for maintaining general financial reserves subject to general or special directives that may be given in that behalf by the president in accordance with the provisions of the Act, but the House insisted that the clause, "subject to the confirmation of the national assembly" must be included in the section.

Section 19(1) as amended by Obasanjo was also thrown out. "The president may grant license to any person or body corporate to operate a national lottery or any lottery by whatever

licences but upon the recommendation of the supervisory commission. Also rejected were similar amendments by the president to sections 33(1), 36(3) and 43(1).

Northern Speakers visit Lake Chad oil sites

Abdullahi Bego,
Stringer (North East)

Speakers of the 19 Houses of Assembly in the North have paid a visit to sites of oil exploration in the Lake Chad Basin area as part of their effort to mount an intensive campaign for the resumption of exploration activities earlier abandoned by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

The Speakers are in Maiduguri, Borno State to attend the fourth meeting of their Forum of Northern House of Assembly Speakers. The NNPC was engaged in oil exploration in the Lake Chad from the late 1970's but abandoned oil search in the late 1980's under circumstances believed by many to be controversial and political.

Chairman of the Northern Speakers Forum and Speaker of the Kwara State House of Assembly Alhaji Isa Ibrahim Bio who led the Speakers to the oil sites in Magumeri local government area of Borno State yesterday said that the visit is aimed at inspecting sites of federal government projects with a view to knowing the level of progress in the execution of the projects and enacting appropriate legislation which would ginger various northern state governments to campaign for their completion or execution by the government.

Gombe lawmaker dies

From Mohammed Abubakar,
Correspondent (Gombe)

A member of north in the Gombe state House of Assembly, Alhaji Kawu Ibrahim Nafada, has died after a protracted illness at the Federal Medical Centre, Gombe, last Sunday at the age of 48.

An ANPP member and the chairman, House Committee on Information, Alhaji Kawu Nafada, served as the special assistant on information, during the last administration of Alhaji Abubakar Habu Hashidu.

The deceased who had worked with the Hausa Service of Deutsche Wele in

Germany and the then Bauchi Radio Corporation in the 80's was treated at the Saudi-German Hospital in Saudi Arabia and a private hospital in Germany before his death.

He left behind two wives and eight children and was buried according to Islamic rites in Gombe.

The death of Kawu Nafada brings to two the number of lawmakers lost by the Gombe state House of Assembly in the present dispensation after the demise of Mr. Saura Akawu, who died late last year.

NEWS

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



(R-L) Alhaji Mohammed Bello Kirfi (Wazirin Bauchi), Ambassador Mohammed Adamu and Ambassador Mohammed Chadi Abubakar at Bauchi delegates discussing during the sitting of the National Political Reform Conference in Abuja...yesterday
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

FG deliberately 'anti-north'

— Northern Assembly Speakers

As they begin their fourth meeting in Maiduguri yesterday, Speakers of the 19 Northern States Houses of Assembly have called on delegates to the ongoing national political reform conference to pay special attention to what they called "the federal government's deliberate 'anti-north policies', which have remained inimical to the 'political, economic and social well being of the north'".

The Speakers said that the confab delegates should "resist the temptation of being diverted by trivial issues such as the creation of wards, local governments and states" while delegates from the northern part of the country "should not play the ostrich" but look at the problems affecting the region and the country in general seriously.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the meeting of the Northern Speakers Forum, chairman of the forum and speaker of the Kwara State House of Assembly, Isa Ibrahim Bio listed some of the policies of the Obasanjo-led federal government which the Speakers believe are 'anti-north' and inimical to the region's interests.

These, according to him, include the price regime of petroleum products where a liter of petrol sells at 48 naira per liter in the south while the same quantity of petrol sells at 56 naira in the north.

Considering the importance of oil in industrial and economic development, according to Bio, 'investors will prefer to invest in the South due to this price disparity.'

The northern speakers forum chairman also described as anti-north, the recent establishment by the federal government of three thermal power plants in the South West as against the proposed but abandoned Nigeria's hydro-electric dam project, which is capable of generat-

From Abdullahi Bego,
Regional Editor (North East)

ing 5,000 megawatts of electricity in the country.

Isa Ibrahim Bio also cited the poor and low supply of fertilizer by the federal government as another indicator of the extent of neglect of the north, despite the fact that agriculture is the mainstay of the northern economy.

Arguing that the future of the north is in the hands of its people, the Kwara Assembly speaker urged delegates to the National Political Reform Conference to be proactive in their strategy and to

ensure that the north gets a fair share of all national resources.

The chairman of the northern speakers forum also indicated that the ongoing political reform conference will be one of the main agenda of their Maiduguri meeting for the purpose of taking a common stand and forwarding same to the northern delegates at the conference.

Daily Trust also learnt that the speakers meeting will deliberate the abandonment of oil exploration in the Lake Chad basin.

1966 coup killings unnecessary—Aduwo

Former chief of Naval Staff retired Admiral Akin Aduwo, has described the killing of top government functionaries during the January 1966 coup d'etat as unnecessary and a result of overzealousness and selfishness on the part of the military.

Aduwo spoke yesterday in Abuja at the on-going national political reform conference.

Contributing to the debate on President Olusegun Obasanjo's inaugural speech,



Justice Niki Tobi

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter (Senate)

the ex-naval boss who is on the Ondo state delegation, said the bloody experience of January 15, 1966 was a horror that must never occur again.

In executing the coup, several government officers were shot dead. They include the then prime minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa; Premier of the Western region, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola; Premier of Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello; and Brigadier General Zakari Maimalari, among others.

Aduwo, who was among the military top brass of the time, said his colleagues overdid their brief.

"There was some element of selfishness on the part of the military," he said.

The ex-naval chief listed those killed in the coup and lamented that their death were unnecessary.

He said it was a shame and dishonour to use military uniform to perpetrate bloodbath.

Aduwo said he was on leave when the military struck on January 15, 1966.

Confab stalemates on rules of procedure

By Abdu Labaran,
Group Political Editor

After more than two hours of debate yesterday, delegates at the on-going national political reform conference still could not adopt the rules of procedure that will guide deliberations as the conference lasts.

The rules of procedure, or standing orders which were finetuned by Prince Bola Ajibola (SAN), led eight-man committee, were supposed to be debated and adopted yesterday but it was however not to be so as delegates could not agree on the manner of contributing to debates.

While some delegates wanted recognition for individual delegates to be by raising hands, others preferred that the names of those who wish to contribute to discussions be written in advance of the session.

With the debate centered essentially on these two positions, it was little wonder that delegates in their submissions that started at 9:00am and lasted up to 11:10am, when chairman, Nikki Tobi, put an end to the oral submissions and directed that any further contributions on the issue be submitted in writing.

While it lasted, some delegates found the contribu-

tions of some of their colleagues as unnecessary, believing that some (delegates) only spoke just to see themselves appear on television.

A delegate from Rivers state argued that the three months given to the delegates was sufficient for them to conclude the conference but regretted that unless the chairman was firm and resolute, the conference may not meet the deadline.

Prince Bola Ajibola (SAN), who found himself elevated to the high table alongside

chairman Nikki Tobi, Deputy chairman Alhaji Sule Katagum and secretary, Rev. Mathew H. Kukah, lamented the "unruly" conduct of delegates yesterday.

Prince Ajibola who heads the eight-man committee of the conference that finetuned the standing orders, reminded fellow delegates that "rules are made for men and not men for rules," urging that haste be made to move ahead. And with that Justice Tobi put an end to the oral debates that lasted two hours, ten minutes without much progress.

Adamu seek full implementation of confab report

Former minister of agriculture and delegate to the confab, Dr. Hassan Adamu, has urged for full implementation of the confab report for the benefit of all Nigerians.

"I sincerely hope, Mr. chairman, that this conference will find ways and means to ensure that our recommendations are not doctored or rubbished at the end of the day but must be fully implemented for the benefit of all Nigerians," Adamu said in his response to the presidential inaugural address.

He lamented the cost of governance, and called on the confab to reform the presidential system.

"This unique opportunity has presented us another chance to reassess, reform, define and redesign both the economic and political landscape of Nigeria," he said.

Adamu lamented the dearth of industries and called for "serious overhaul" of the nation's industrial policy.

"At present, we are still littered with dead industries, erratic power supply, while our health institutions are in coma. Our educational institutions need urgent attention even as law and order needs to be overhauled and strengthened. While the poverty level in our country is unacceptable, the environmental degradation is alarming and our bio diversity is seriously threatened," he said.

FOCUS ON FURNITURE AND INTERIOR DECORATING COMPANIES IN NIGERIA

Nigeria's furnishing and decorating companies are bracing up to the challenges of the industry by producing and selling of high quality and durable materials that are of global standard.

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To appraise the contributions of the stakeholders in the industry, Media Trust Limited, the publishers of Daily/Weekly Trust newspapers, will publish a special focus on the manufacturers and suppliers of durable and high-grade furniture and furnishing items.

The date of publication is Wednesday, March 23, 2005, while deadline for submission of materials, the company's profile and artworks is three days to the publication date.

For participation and further enquiries, please contact the Special Projects Department on the following numbers:

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Idang Alibi on Thursday

A letter to IGP Sunday Ehindero

My dear IGP, I write this at the instance of my 15-year old son. Last Friday March 4, I was to leave Abuja very early in order to see my family some where in Cross River State.

Just as I was set to leave, a call came through from my younger brother advising me not to travel as he said a friend had called him the previous day saying Makurdi, the Benue State capital, through which I must pass to get to Cross River State, was on fire as a result of the foolish action of one of your men. Once again a policeman had killed a commercial driver, who refused to part with the usual N20, provoking protest and mayhem.

My brother advised that if I must travel, I should undertake due diligence to be doubly sure that it was very safe to pass through Makurdi.

I started working the phones trying to call some friends and relatives I know in Makurdi to find out what the situation was. Due to congestion in the network and the generally poor services of the telephone operators, I could not get through to any one in Makurdi.

It was much later I got to know that the crisis has been doused and that it was now safe to travel through Makurdi.

As a result of this delay in trying to ascertain whether or not it was advisable to travel, I eventually got to my destination quite late that day, to the great consternation of my family.

My aforesaid son queried me why I had to keep them in so much suspense. I patiently explained the situation to them. Makurdi was on fire because a police corporal had shot dead a bus driver and a female passenger who was pregnant because the former had refused to give him usual N20 bribe.

When I told them this story, my son told me that since I am a journalist, I should write to you. I said that thousands of journalists and commentators have written on this matter and that it had not made any impression on the police authorities.

He said I should add one more voice to this popular cry, explaining to you the worries, pains and sorrows which the police cause to families and citizens of this country.

Sir, if my family had not urged us to do so, I would not have bothered to write to you on this matter. I have said so many times on this page that the police is one of the three institutions in this country that devours the citizens. The other two are the law courts and the hospitals.

My prayer every morning before I set out of my home is that: "Lord, prevent anything that will lead me and members of my family to being taken

to a police station, a law court or an hospital". These institutions often devour the peace, prosperity and life of the citizens.

Sir, how many lives will trigger-happy policemen take in this country because of N20 before something is done to stop this detestable practice? How many riots, such as the one that took place in Makurdi, take place before the conscience of the police high command is pricked to do something about this reproach.

As a decent citizen, nothing causes me more shame and sorrow than the taking of N20 by the police at check points. They openly demand this as a right. Any driver that refuses to give is either killed or delayed as a punishment.

When you took over, you reeled out a ten-point agenda, harping on the need not to return "fire for fire" as your predecessors did, but to "protect with integrity." Since then, I have been expecting that you will move vigorously against bribery and corruption in your force. But today, the collection of N20 is still thriving in your organisation. And as the incident in Makurdi shows, the killing of innocent and defenseless citizens by the police who are supposed to "protect them with integrity" is alive and kicking.

As things stand today even with your own ten-point agenda, the mission of the Nigerians police can be defined as one to kill, inconvenience and provoke citizens to riot and destroy property.

When you took over, a friend teased me. He flattered me by saying that since I see things with spiritual eyes, I should tell him whether you will be different from our former IGPs and whether you will give to Nigeria a bribe and corruption-free, disciplined and decent police force.

I told him quite frankly that I do not expect anything much from you. That you will only be lucky if you retire without your integrity being assaulted as was the case with some of your immediate predecessors.

I hinged my prediction on the fact that you are a system's man; that you rose through the ranks in that force and that it would be a serious miracle if you ever emerge to commit system suicide.

To simplify my point, given the attitude and orientation of our police force, no member of that organisation can do anything radically different unless that institution is dismantled and rebuilt reorienting its men and women to have high integrity, to respect the sanctity of human life and to be accountable to the whole society.

Today, the Nigerian police personnel, be he a primary school leaver or a university graduate, is the most powerful individual in the land. He

is even more powerful than the president of the country for he has great authority with little or no responsibility. So enormous in his power that he is often the accuser, the judge and the executor of the sentence. He can, and does, kill without any dire repercussions. Once he kills and provokes further killings and destruction through riots or protests, the sanction he often gets is a quiet transfer to a less lucrative beat or a dismissal from the force as happened in the case of the corporal who killed and provoked the fatal protest in Makurdi.

Sir, I do not know your religious orientation. If you are a born-again Christian, the first step I suggest you should take if you intend to leave the Nigeria police force better than you met it, is to publicly apologise for the pains, sorrows and reproach that our police have brought upon this land over the years. They have killed, maimed and destroyed the property of many innocent citizens. Above all, they have defiled this land through the shedding of innocent blood. You must take responsibility for these atrocities and repent on behalf of the whole force.

Our police have contributed a great deal to the culture of lack of respect for human life. Just imagine the way they kill so-called armed robbers, put them in the boot of their cars and come and disgorge them triumphantly as if these were games killed by hunters! Each time I watch on TV, a display of dead bodies as claims of police success in the fight against armed robbery, I am flattered with deep revulsion. Rather than commend the police, I silently curse them for their impunity and extra-judicial killings.

For me, the success of any IGP is measured by how far he has succeeded or failed in stopping the collection of N20 at checkpoints. For me, this is the height of impunity. It reminds me every time I see it, of how low we have sunken as a nation.

If the police are too depraved to stop collecting bribe, let them do it in a more decent manner. They should not give bribery such a bad name.

Sir, if we were in a better run society, I will expect you to be humble and concerned enough to write me a short letter apologising for the heart ache the action of one of your men has caused an innocent citizen and his family. But here, high public officials like you pay no heed to the heart-felt complaint of aggrieved citizens.

However, I will feel happy if as a result of this tender letter, you are moved to reform our police and make them more responsible to the people they are supposed to serve.

I wish you success in this

SHORT PIECES

With Professor Layi Erinsho
laierinsho@yahoo.com

Weekly

Nigeria's 'most attractive' career path

Not long ago, I conducted indepth interviews around the country to determine our attitude to 419 and also which is the best career path in our country. It is a pleasure to bring the outcomes to readers' attention in this piece.

Nigerian society has grown from the good old days when you could count the respectable professions and occupations on your fingertips. In my days, the most respectable ones were teaching, priesthood, and jobs in the civil service, lawyers used to roam around court premises and police stations in those days looking for suspects to be bailed. No one wanted to join the military and very few wanted to be businessmen or women. To opt for a career in the military in those days was indicative that you were hard up and just wanted to survive and of course the businessmen and women of the olden days were not regarded as straight forward. Remember, that most of the businessmen and women of yester years began their career as moneylenders or middle men and women with ample tricks that enable them to deal ruthlessly with their clients.

But things have changed in our country. The economy has grown and our country is awash with various professions and occupations. We have lawyers, doctors, businessmen and women, top civil servants, university teachers and bankers. We cannot ignore the accountants, town planners, engineers architects and so on and so forth. These professions continue to attract the young and a quick survey would indicate that no Nigerian wants to study the humanities that will lead them to no where everyone wants to be a professional today. Thus, the aim is to study medicine, banking, engineering, nursing etc.

It is against the backdrop of these observations that I sought to gauge the attitudes of Nigerians towards career paths. I wanted to find out from a cross section of our society based on their knowledge/experience which are the best and worst career paths.

The focus is on career paths in the military, civil service, university and banking.

Rising to the top is the career goal of every individual and so the aim is to be a permanent secretary in the civil service, a managing director in a banking establishment, a general in the military, and a vice-chancellor in a university. Our respondents had a lot to share with me on these career paths.

to be very attractive and getting to post of a general meant a lot a few years back.

To be a general was like being a king that had boundless access to state resources and the possibility of becoming a head of state. They argued that every general used to regard himself as a potential head of state. Funds were available and enormous recognition was accorded to the general in our society.

However, things have changed rather quickly and generals are now to be seen and not heard in Nigeria. The chances of rising to the position of head of state recede daily as the political class continues to maintain a stranglehold on key positions in society. For my respondents career in the military is no longer as attractive as it used to be.

The banker used to be important but there are now fears about the uncertain economic situation. Banks are collapsing or being forced to merge and this may mean retrenchment for quite a lot.

First the chances of rising to the post of managing director of a bank today is diminished. In any case, the risks in the pathway to the top of a bank are immense especially in the age of fraud, 419, theft e.t.c. Getting to the top does not necessarily guarantee remaining there because performance is required and that means generating so much for the shareholders. Consequently, my respondents rated the post of managing director of a bank as a high risk one and is only marginally attractive and worth pursuing.

Next comes the post of vice-chancellor which many concluded is the worst job in our country today for a variety of reasons. They argue that it is a thankless job. The holder is at the mercy of students who may invade his/her lodge at any time over any grievance. The junior workers are after the vice-chancellor that fails to ensure parity in salaries paid to them and other staff members. The senior administrative staff are also at the throat of the vice-chancellor if he/she tilts towards the academic staff. Besides, the fellow academics are deeply suspicious of VCs that pander to the dictates of the government of the day because of the fear that the integrity and autonomy of the university would be compromised.

These days, a vice-chancellor is believed to be at the mercy of government of the day because the post is a political one and government expects the VC to dance to its policy regardless of whether it is acceptable to the university community. These factors lead our respondents to rate the VC very low and to conclude that any one aspiring to be VC should have

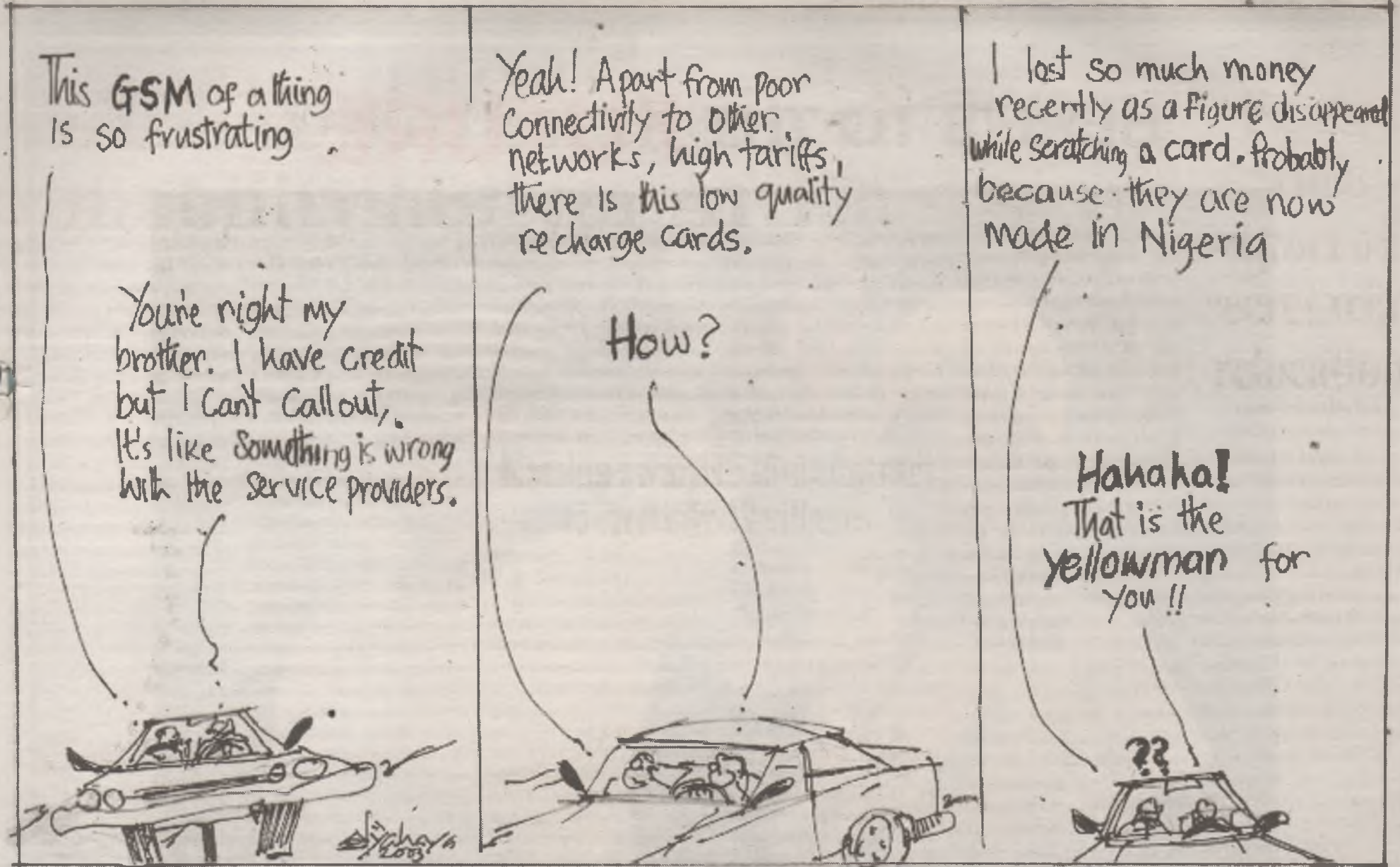
Rather, suitable candidates should be cajoled to take off the assignment.

Perhaps the most attractive of the lot is that of a permanent secretary. But not that of state permanent secretaries who are regarded as a little better than errand clerks because they are bereft of powers. The spending limit of these officers at the state level is low. The state governors run a one line budget which means that the buck stops on their desks. As such, most of the state permanent secretaries are impoverished after their career in the service. They are never in a position to award huge contracts and could therefore hardly muster enough money for their retirement.

Before reporting on their perception of the federal permanent secretaries, let me quickly digress to career path in the federal civil service that they believe are worthless despite its glamour and this is that of the career diplomats. It was amazing that many regard career in the Foreign Service as not worth it for the following reasons, first, it takes time to become an Ambassador. Not only that, career diplomats experienced all forms of humiliation during their career and as such Nigerian diplomats are a miserable lot. They pointed to reports of the eviction of the Nigerian Ambassador from his residence in Malabo for not paying his rent and to efforts of Nigerians in Cameroon to refurbish our Chancery. Our diplomats are not paid on time and/or not readily provided accommodation when they return home after posting. They struggle to be posted to places that are considered juicy, a situation that fuels a lot of backing in their ranks.

Their risk of becoming alcoholics or their wives suffering from acute depression because they are not allowed to work in foreign lands are not remote. All or these factors led my respondents to conclude that career in Nigeria's Foreign Service is a dignified nonsense.

All in all, the kudos go to the federal permanent secretaries whose posts are viewed by my respondents as the best in our country today they are faceless but are "chopping life". They are never on the firing line because they are not responsible for the promotion of their staff which is always a source of problem in any organisations. They travel extensively and therefore access ample estacode. They possess a high spending power and also control enormous administrative powers. My respondents concluded that the federal permanent secretaries are unlikely to leave office as poor



YOUR LETTERS

Re: Is Shekarau carrying vengeance too far?

When I finished reading the rejoinder by Abubakar Babba in *Daily Trust* of 13th January 2005, I concluded that, he is one of the few blind supporters of Mallam Shekarau in Kano that are recruited to write and criticize anything good.

That notwithstanding, I thought we have learnt to respect one's opinion especially on matters that affect personalities in politics. As one that comes from Kano, it is expected that the author possess some level of tolerance when political issues are raised. You should have tolerated Mallam Muhammed Buba from Adamawa, who expressed his opinion on the Minister of Defence, Dr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso by mentioning some of his good achievements while in office as Governor of Kano state, and the unwanted, unwarranted hostility towards Kwankwaso by Shakarau.

These expressions made by Mallam Buba were right and it has pleased many of us the admirers and ardent supporters of Kwankwaso. There is no hiding the fact that Kwankwaso has performed creditably in terms of provision of infrastructure in the length and breadth of Kano state during his well-spent tenure. He has given Kano city a face-lift by construction and re-habilitation of many roads that assisted to ease the heavy traffic in Kano metropolis. He has

revolutionalised the educational sector in the state by rehabilitating all the dilapidated classrooms in our schools and constructed new ones. His focused administration has also rehabilitated many secondary schools in Kano state also built new junior secondary schools that are supposed to absorb the primary school leavers, a situation that has changed today for worse since the inception of Shekarau's administration.

We still remain proud of the 6064 laudable projects undertaken by the Kwankwaso administration. His achievement in rural electrification is second to none in the present dispensation. They are transparent and truly people oriented and people are happy to have them executed for their own benefits and nobody can deny them, not even the Justice Badamasi Panel.

The author should also know the difference between the people's oriented pattern of governance of Dr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso and that of the so-called 'Mallam's' deceptive pattern of administration. 'Mallam' has openly claimed that his administration is not interested in execution of projects but is out to correct the 'minds' of the people of Kano state via the jingles of "Daidaita sahu"?

Abubakar Babba and his sponsors lack political cohesion and tolerance by clearly demonstrating his

immaturity and impatience in his sponsored article in which he tried to castigate Mallam Buba for just saying that 'Kwankwaso is good'. I would request him to go back to the drawing board of Kano politics and try to study its intrigue before he jumps into writing things he is not sure of his article clearly depicts his ignorance about Kano politics and what it takes to be a politician if he is one.

It is no longer secret the demonstration of lack of commitment to do what is due to Kano since the inception of Shekarau.

This is also justified by the composition of his (Mallam's) cabinet. A trace of antecedents of more than half of his cabinet members will shock any well-meaning citizen of Kano. We shall fold our arms and watch how these odd fellows will perform in Kano and the pages of history are there waiting.

There is so far nothing spectacular about 'Mallam's' administration in terms of performance and we challenge the likes of Abubakar Babba to come and show us the justification of his write up' aimed at promoting and protecting Shakarau.

We shall continue to resist and expose deceit wherever it is and for the likes of Abubakar Babba I wish you more happy eye - service to your sponsors whose deceit will not spare even you.

Muhammad Sanusi Mamman, Garki village, Garki, Abuja

Nigeria's post-independence development history has been characterised by distortions, which have stunted the meaningful growth of the nation. These constraints cut across the polity, economy and society. Most important is the dearth of reliable statistics.

Since the inception of this administration, certain actions have been taken by the Federal Government to chart a path to sustainable development. Encapsulated in a comprehensive reform agenda, the policy measures and related initiatives should be commended for their anticipated far-reaching impacts on the nation and people at large.

In line with its commitment to leaving a worthy legacy, the Obasanjo administration will conduct a population census this year. Census in Nigeria has always been very dicey and politically volatile. It has continuously generated much

Re: Obasanjo's war against Islam

I have read the advertorial by INACOMYO in the *Daily Trust* edition of 9th March 2005.

I commend NOCOMYO for taking the initiative to enlighten the people, particularly the grassroots. I suggest you open a website, if you do not have one, for more interactions.

It is not as if we have not been following the activities of Mr President, but as it is in our practice, you give someone time to see how far he goes so that you do not jump into hasty conclusions. Also you allow him to rope himself with enough evidence to prove your case.

We have been silent for a long time almost becoming a little late. We either take action now by enlightening the people or the people will continuously be misled.

The Muslim community has been accommodating for a very long time. This is out of our belief that whatever scheming is in place, the religion of Allah will

Much ado about headcount

heat and controversy, often manifested in mutual distrust, acrimony and threats to the stability of the nation.

Typically, the on-coming exercise is generating heat. Government in its 'wisdom' had expunged religion and ethnicity from the Census questionnaire, a decision that has not gone down well with some segments of the populace.

The conduct of most national projects has often been divided along religious, ethnic and political lines, and unfortunately, this is the premise on which the country precariously seats. Threats to boycott the Census are rife, especially as many people link population with power-sharing and resources allocation.

Census, as statistics, is one of the pillars of development planning. As the popular expression goes, you cannot

plan well without facts, because facts are sacred. The issue of placing unnecessary premium on primordial and such other divisive indices may hamper the ultimate objectives of the census exercise.

Census data is not tied up to revenue allocation, public appointments or the ubiquitous federal character. Such data, as indicated severally, is designed to determine primarily how many we are. In addition, there are many other variables such as age group, gender and the like, which are very critical to the work of development planners and policy makers at the Federal, State and grassroots levels. When an individual, for instance, is registered, his State of origin and place of residence are indicated. The fact that an Imo indigene lives in Kano does not mean that his 'State of Origin' would change.

Census 2005 is a worthy exercise that should attract the support of all well-meaning people. As it is, the European Union (EU) has committed about 113.5 million Euro (N20 billion) to the exercise, which is a measure of their confidence in this project.

While not ignoring the concerns of those who are kicking against the exclusion of religion and ethnicity from the questionnaire, the authorities need to make effort (through sensitisation and public enlightenment) to persuade the majority of Nigerians that the Census is not designed to favour one segment of the country or marginalize another. Let us keep the faith. So help us God.

Onome Okiemute Isoko, Delta State

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

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**Regional Conference on Islamic Faith-Based Organisation in Sub-Saharan Africa
Abuja – Nigeria -14 – 18 March 2005**

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in collaboration with the Nigeria Supreme Council of Islamic Africa is facilitating a Sub-Saharan African Islamic Faith Based Organisation Conference, from 14 to 18 March 2005 in Abuja.

The Conference will allow Ulama and Imams in Sub-Saharan Africa to contribute to the well-being of the population through better understanding and knowledge of Islam's view on issues related to Reproductive Health, Gender and Population and Development. The Conference will also provide a forum for the creation of Network of Islamic Religious Leaders on Population and Development.

The Conference theme is "ISLAM AND FAMILY WELL-BEING" and it focuses on six themes:

- Islam, Family Planning and the fight against Maternal and Infant Mortality
- Knowledge of HIV/AIDS and strategies to fight it
- Female Genital cutting (FGC) and harmful practices against mother and child health
- Rights and responsibilities of women in Islam
- Family Life Education and Adolescent Health in Islam
- Reasons for the creation of Religious Network on Population and Development

Venue is the Conference Hall of NICON Hilton Hotel, Abuja. The official opening ceremony is at 10.00 a.m. on Monday 14 March, 2005.

Among the dignitaries expected at the Conference are:

Ms. Fame Hane Ba, Director, Africa Division, UNFPA Headquarters, New York
Grand Mufti of Alahzar

Ayatola Mahdi – Hadavi Moghadan of Iran

Moustapha Guere – President of National Association of Imam, Senegal

Sheikh Hassan Cisse of Senegal

Abdelaziz Ben Abdallah – Adviser to the King of Morocco on Islamic Affairs

Ezedem Alsawi, Vice Chancellor, University of Alahzar, Egypt

His Royal Highness, Sir Alhaji Abubakar Maccido The Sultan of Sokoto

Dr. Lateef Adegbite, Secretary-General, National Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs

M. Sidi Miodammed Ould Chewa, Head of Delegation, Mauritania

Al-Sheik Tejan Sillah, the Chief Imam of the Central Mosque of Sierra Leone

His Royal Highness, Alhaji Ado Bayero, CFR, LLD, JB, Emir of Kano

Sheik Ibrahim El Zakki Zaki

Jaamatul Nasrul Islam

Federation of Muslim Women Association

Governors/Emirs and National Assembly Members

**Signed
UNFPA/NSCIA**

The Director

**MANUFACTURERS
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Nationwide Forum On Reviving Nigerian Industries

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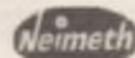
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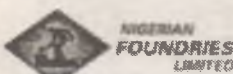
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The Burden On Manufacturers

The debris of dilapidated manufacturing concerns across the country is the outcome of years of harsh operating conditions too well known and unnecessary to repeat. Suffice it to state that weak and at times non-existent infrastructure remains a huge burden.

In addition to policy somersault, funding remains a challenge to all stakeholders in the manufacturing sector, the several palliatives, including Small and Medium Industries Equity Investment Scheme (SMIEIS) and other sector-specific incentives notwithstanding.

Similarly, low industrial capacity utilization has rubbished any degree of competitive edge in the sector while the few surviving companies are now drowning in the flood of globalisation.

Current Status

At independence in 1960, the contribution of the manufacturing sector to Gross National Domestic Product (GDP) was 3.8%. Notwithstanding the growing contribution and dominance of the oil sector since the 1970s, manufacturing recorded impressive performance and contributed on the average about 9.9% while from 1975-1981, industrial capacity utilization was consistently above the 70% mark.

The story today is different. The sector is back at independence level. The manufacturing sector contributed 4.7 to GDP in 2003 while industrial capacity utilization dropped to a paltry 48.8% in 2003.

In summary, based on survey covering 2500 members of MAN, about 30% of industries have closed down, 60% are ailing companies and only 10% operate at sustainable level.

The Challenge

In response to these daunting problems, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has taken up the challenge to midwife new strategies to rescue local manufacturers from the present precarious situation; return the industrial sector to improved productivity; and restore manufacturing to its proper position in Nigeria's economy, especially in terms of contribution to growth and development.

Our New Mission

In the unfolding development, the new mission of MAN would be driven through the **MAN Nationwide Forum For Reviving Nigerian Industries** designed to galvanize all members of the Association throughout the country to take a common stand on major issues that will lead manufacturers out of the present quagmire.

The Forum is further designed to create the opportunity for consolidating the opinion and interests of all MAN members on issues of specific and general interests to their businesses.

Expectation

The outcome of the Forum will empower the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria to promote the formulation and effective implementation of policies that will deliver a virile manufacturing sector in Nigeria.

Modality For The Forum

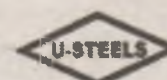
The one-day Forum will take place **simultaneously** in MAN Branches in 12 locations in the country. It is therefore **mandatory** for **CEO/Deputy** of all MAN members to participate at the venue indicated below in their respective Branches:



Unilever Nigeria PLC



JACOBS WINES LTD.



UNIVERSAL STEELS LIMITED



BRITISH AMERICAN
TOBACCO
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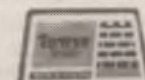
NASCO



DUNLOP



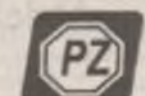
DVC
LIMITED



TOWER ALUMINIUM (NIG.) PLC.



Emzor
Pharmaceuticals Industries Ltd.



PATERSON ZOCHONS INDUSTRIES PLC

Date: Thursday, March 17, 2005 **Time:** 10.00am - 12.00 Noon

Venues

Ikeja: MAN Centre Complex, 5, Eleruwa Street, Wemabod Estate, Off Ajao Road, Off Adeniji Jones, Ikeja.

Apapa: Pegasus Mobil Club, No. 6, Lisabi Street, Off Liverpool Road, Apapa.

Ogun: Gateway Hotel, Kuto, Abeokuta.

Oyo/Ondo/Osun: Kakanfo Inn, Joyce B Road, Oke-Ado, Ibadan

Anambra/Enugu: Kings Palace Hotel Nnobi Road, Nnewi

Edo/Delta: Bishop Kelly Pastoral Centre, Besides St. Paul's Catholic Church,
30, Airport Road, Benin City

Imo/Abia: Hotel de Lapaix, No. 60, Ekenna Street, By Brass Street, Aba

Rivers: Nigerian Engineering Ltd, Trans Amadi Ind. Layout, Port Harcourt

Cross River: Niger Mills Co. Plc, Murtala Muhammed Highway, Calabar

Bauchi/Benue/Plateau: Hill Station Hotel, Jos

Kano Bompai/Sharada/Chalawa: Royal Tropicana Hotel, Niger Street, Kano

Kaduna: NTMA Conference Hall, No. 1, Keffi Close (Kachia Road),
Opp. Diamond Bank, Kaduna South

Jide A. Mike
Ag. Director General.

Trust International

Middle East & Asia

Israelis to leave West Bank towns

Israel has agreed in talks to cede control of two West Bank towns - Jericho and Tulkarm - to Palestinian forces in the coming days.

Israel's army will draw back from the town of Jericho first, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said.

However, a meeting between him and Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz ended without agreement on when and how far the Israeli forces will withdraw.

The talks form part of an effort to revive a stalled peace process.

Contacts between Israeli and Palestinian officials were frozen after a suicide bomb attack by Palestinian militants in Tel Aviv killed four Israelis on 25 February.

The meeting between Mr Abbas and Mr Mofaz, held at

19 bodies found dead in Iraq

The bodies of 19 people who were shot dead have been found near the western Iraqi town of Qaim, police said.

The dead, discovered on Tuesday night, were all wearing civilian clothes, hospital officials said.

In the capital, Baghdad, a suicide car bomb attack has killed at least two people and injured more than 20.

The blast happened when the bomber drove a rubbish truck close to the ministry of agriculture and Sadeer hotel before detonating explosives.

The ministry building caught fire but police said the main target may have been the hotel, which is used by Iraqi police and Western contractors.

In other incidents across the country:

A policeman was killed and three others were wounded when their patrol was hit by a roadside bomb in the southern city of Basra, the Associated Press news agency reported.

The director of al-Furat hospital in Baghdad, Dr Adil Abd-al-Karim, was shot dead on his way to work, al-Arabiya reported.

The son of a police officer, kidnapped on 1 March, was found shot dead on Tuesday in the northern city of Mosul, the AFP news agency reported.

The BBC correspondent in Baghdad said the feeling in Iraq is that the tempo of insurgent attacks is rising again after a lull during February in the wake of elections.

The political process in Iraq is currently stagnant during efforts to form a government, BBC correspondent added, allowing insurgents the opportunity to renew attacks.

The Baghdad attack began at 6.30am with insurgents firing a rocket-propelled grenade onto a checkpoint sealing off the main road to the ministry and Hotel Sadeer.

"I saw a black BMW pull up to the checkpoint and shoot one guard. There was a change of guard at the time. The BMW killed the guard and cleared the way for the garbage truck to enter," Haidar Hamid told the AFP news agency.

the Gaza Strip's Erez Checkpoint, is the most high-profile contact between the two sides since the Sharm al-Sheikh summit in Egypt last month.

At the February summit, the two sides tentatively agreed that Israel will give Palestinian police control over five West Bank towns - Tulkarm, Jericho, Qalqilya, Ramallah and Bethlehem - to test their ability to curb militants.

Israeli forces have kept a tight grip on the towns since 2002 after a spate of suicide bombings. Correspondents said the checkpoints have crippled Palestinian social and economic life.

Mr Mofaz said "we will apparently transfer control over two ... towns, after a meeting of security officers".

"We are talking about Tulkarm and Jericho," he said.

Mr Abbas said all Israeli checkpoints in their vicinity should also be vacated.

"We are not talking about towns, but also surrounding areas," he said.

He said Jericho, built near an isolated oasis some distance away from Israel, would be the first to be vacated.

The town was reportedly chosen after doubts over the immediate handover of Tulkarm, which lies close to Israeli population centres and is seen as a greater security threat.

Earlier on Tuesday, Mr Abbas accused Israel of stalling on agreements to hand over the West Bank towns and release Palestinians imprisoned on suspicion of militancy.



Lebanese President, Emile Lahud

Lebanese president to push for new govt

Lebanon's President Emile Lahud will consult with lawmakers to try to form a new government, emboldened by a pro-Syrian rally in Beirut that drew hundreds of thousands of protesters.

The political horse-trading comes as Syrian troops started to pull back to the east of Lebanon under a two-stage withdrawal announced at a summit between Lahud and his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Asad on Monday.

Syria's ambassador to the

United States said the troops would be out of Lebanon by May, when legislative elections are to be held.

"They are actually being withdrawn today," Imad Mustafa told CNN television on Tuesday. "We will do this as soon as possible, even long before May."

The comment followed a fresh call by US President George Bush for Syria's military and intelligence forces to be out of Lebanon before the elections, and a warning to al-Asad against

Saddam's trial begins Oct

The trial of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein will begin before the nation votes on a new constitution in October, senior officials said.

A special tribunal, set up in 2003, has been trying to amass evidence against Saddam Hussein and colleagues accused of crimes against humanity.

In February, it said was ready to try five of the former leader's associates.

Saddam Hussein has been charged with the deaths of thousands of Iraqi Shias and Kurds during his 1968-2003 rule. He was captured by US forces near his home town of Tikrit in central Iraq in late 2003.

Sheikh Humam Hamoudi, a leading figure in the United Iraqi Alliance which won the majority vote in January's elections, said putting the ex-leader and his senior associates on trial will be a priority for the new government.

Iraq's poll winners are in talks to pick a new government, which in turn will be charged

with creating a committee to frame a new constitution for Iraq.

Iraqis are scheduled to vote on the new constitution in mid-October, before another round of elections in December.

Iraq's national security adviser Mouwaffaq al-Rubaie said he hoped Saddam Hussein's trial will begin "around September, October, well before the general referendum, so we can go to our people and say this is Saddam in the box and this is your constitution, go ratify it".

No official date has been set for the trial of any captured officials from the former Iraqi administration.

However, a special tribunal set up to judge them said in late February that it had gathered enough evidence to frame charges against five top lieutenants of Saddam Hussein.

The trials have been delayed several times because of an apparent deadlock over the appointment of judges and lawyers, as well as security concerns.

US unease over fresh law in Taiwan

The US has reacted with dismay to an anti-secession law that would allow China to use force against Taiwan.

The White House described the planned law as "unhelpful", while a military chief warned about what he termed China's "significant" military growth.

US legislation obliges it to resist any use of force by China against Taiwan, and provide a means of defence.

China sees Taiwan as its territory, and has threatened to use force if the island formally declares independence.

Chinese legislators said that force would only be used as a last resort, if peaceful reunification efforts failed.

In separate statements, White House spokesman Scott McClellan and state department official Richard Boucher criticised the law.

Both branded the proposed legislation "unhelpful". "We oppose any attempts to determine the future of Taiwan by anything other than peaceful means," Mr McClellan told reporters. Ruled by separate governments since end of Chinese civil war in 1949 China considers the island part of its territory.

China has offered a "one country, two systems" solution, like Hong Kong.

Most people in Taiwan support status quo.

Mr Boucher said the state department had made it clear to Chinese and Taiwanese officials that passing legislation "is not going to help solve the problem".

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is reported to be planning a visit to China later this month. Earlier, Taiwanese lawmakers responded quickly and angrily to the proposed legislation, saying it was a pretext for attack.

"It has caused tension in the region," said Chiu Tai-shan, vice-chairman of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council.

"Communist China tries to use this bill to deny the sovereignty of the Republic of China [Taiwan] and unilaterally change the status quo of the Taiwan Strait," he added.

The draft law - known as the "anti-secession law" - is designed to spell out the legal steps required before China would take action against Taiwan.

The proposed law does not give details of what developments might trigger Chinese action.

Delegates to the National People's Congress were told on Tuesday that China "shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures" if hopes for peaceful reunification were "completely exhausted". Some analysts said China's emphasis on "non-peaceful" means appeared designed to include alternatives to military force, such as blockades or sanctions.

No sovereign state can tolerate secession, and every sovereign state has the right to use necessary means to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Announcing the bill, senior

legislator Wang Zhaoguo argued that China's basic policy towards Taiwan remained the "one country, two systems" formula, as employed in Hong Kong.

Also on Tuesday Admiral William Fallon, head of the US Pacific Command, told the Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington that ongoing Chinese military procurement was a "cause for concern".

China has concentrated on building up its maritime capabilities, acquiring submarines and aircraft from Russia, as well as building its own.

"It seems to be more than might be required for their defence," Reuters news agency reported Adm Fallon as saying.

State of emergency to remain in Nepal

The state of emergency in Nepal could remain in force until the end of April according to the country's constitution, a senior minister said.

King Gyanendra sacked the government and imposed a state of emergency in the country on 1 February.

Fundamental rights have been curbed and political leaders, rights activists and journalists have been detained.

The king took direct power because he said the former government had failed to tackle Nepal's Maoist rebels.

There has been international condemnation of the move and

resorting to "delaying tactics and half measures".

Lebanon's caretaker Defence Minister Abd al-Rahim Murad said the redeployment of 6000 Syrian troops towards the eastern Bekaa Valley had begun on Tuesday and would take a week to 10 days.

The withdrawal will also cover Syrian intelligence personnel, including their headquarters in Beirut, a senior Lebanese military official said.

Lahud was to hold mandatory parliamentary consultations to name a new prime minister after the resignation of the government last week in the face of protests triggered by the 14 February killing of former prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Umar Karami, who succeeded al-Hariri, quit last Monday after four months in office but remains caretaker prime minister until the formation of a new government.

Opposition lawmakers have been demanding a pledge for a Syrian withdrawal as well as the resignation of Lebanon's public prosecutor and top security chiefs as conditions for them joining the talks.

Al-Asad on Monday pledged to pull back his country's remaining 14,000 troops in Lebanon towards the Bekaa, where most of the troops are already based, by the end of

March. But he stopped short of announcing a full withdrawal.

Under the 1989 Taif Accord that ended the 1975-1990 civil war in Lebanon, the Syrian and Lebanese governments are to decide the strength of the Syrian force remaining in the Bekaa and when they would be withdrawn completely.

As Syrian troops were dismantling their posts on the mountains outside Beirut on Tuesday, about 400,000 demonstrators swarmed the capital for a pro-Syrian rally called by the Hizb Allah organisation.

"We are united here to above all thank Syria, the Syrian people and the Syrian army which has stayed by our side for many long years and is still with us"

"We are united here to above all thank Syria, the Syrian people and the Syrian army which has stayed by our side for many long years and is still with us," said Hizb Allah leader Shaikh Hasan Nasr Allah.

The rally, which dwarfed some of the recent opposition rallies, coincided with the anniversary of the Baath Party's rise to power in Syria, which has pulled the strings in political and military life in Lebanon for almost three decades.

But the international community kept the heat on Damascus.

calls for democracy to be restored to Nepal.

The vice chairman of the council of ministers in the new royalist government, Kirti Nidhi Bista, told the BBC that the present state of emergency could "constitutionally" remain in force until the end of April.

The Nepalese constitution requires the emergency to be ratified by a two-thirds majority in the lower house of parliament within three months of its imposition.

The lower house of parliament, the house of representatives, has, however, been suspended for nearly three years now.

It is not clear whether the upper house - the national assembly - will be convened.

Correspondents said that even if the national assembly is convened, ratification of the emergency is unlikely because the majority of the national assembly members belong to opposition parties which have formed an alliance against the king.

Nepal plans to relax curbs on civil rights gradually, a minister in the new royalist government has said.

The Maoists have been fighting a nine-year insurgency in which about 11,000 people have been killed.

Trust International

World Report

Clinton to undergo heart surgery

Former US President, Bill Clinton, is to have another heart operation this week, barely six months after he underwent a quadruple heart bypass surgery. He is expected to spend between three and 10 days in a New York hospital to remove fluid and scar tissues under anaesthetic. The procedure is sometimes necessary after heart surgery, a spokesman said.

Mr Clinton first underwent surgery on 6 September last year after complaining of suffering pains in his chest and breathing difficulties. Doctors said that he was in imminent danger of a major heart attack before the operation. Since his last surgery, Mr Clinton has opened his presidential library and toured tsunami-stricken areas in Asia. He also gave a speech endorsing John Kerry's unsuccessful bid to win the US presidency for the Democrats.

Doctors at the New York Presbyterian Hospital/Co-

lumbia University Medical Centre said that the operation, known as a decortica-

tion, would take place on Thursday morning. They said that the procedure was not

'medically urgent' and that Mr Clinton's activities had not contributed to his condition. The scar tissue had formed as a result of fluid build-up causing a compression of the left lung and some discomfort to Mr Clinton, they said. The operation is 'low risk' and should eventually enable the former president to 'resume work without limitations.'

'I feel fine,' said Mr Clinton on Tuesday, adding that he planned to play golf a day before Thursday's operation. According to him, 'All they have to do is drain it... It's no big deal.'

Mr Clinton's highest-profile recent engagement has been as US ambassador to parts of south and south-east Asia ravaged by last December's tsunami. Appearing alongside his predecessor in office, George Bush (Snr), he campaigned to raise funds for the region.



Chechen rebel leader, Aslan Maskhadov, has been killed by Russian troops fighting to quell a long rebellion in the mainly Muslim Caucasus region, the Russian army announced on March 8, 2005.

Chechen resistance 'to continue'

The killing of Chechen separatist leader, Aslan Maskhadov, will not end resistance to Russian rule in Chechnya. This was said by a rebel spokesman, Akhmed Zakayev, who added that a successor would be chosen within days.

Mr Maskhadov, who was elected president of Chechnya in 1997, was report-

edly killed by Russian troops in a raid on Tuesday. He was widely considered the most moderate of Chechnya's rebel commanders, having distanced himself from a string of terror attacks and called for peace talks with Russian authorities. Russian television broadcast pictures of the 53-year-old's half-naked corpse lying in a pool of his own

blood. Mr Zakayev, who is based in London, said, 'The resistance will continue, no doubt about it.' A 'military committee,' he said, is legally empowered to choose a successor to Mr Maskhadov until elections can be held. He added that 'Aslan Maskhadov will be much more dangerous for the Kremlin leadership in

death than he could ever have been in life, when he was calling for peaceful dialogue. It is a very big loss but it is not a death blow to us, as (Russian President Vladimir) Putin thinks.'

Mr Maskhadov, a former Soviet general, was branded a terrorist by Moscow for his involvement in the war in Chechnya. He was ousted from power as the democratically-elected president when Russian troops invaded Chechnya in October 1999 on Mr. Putin's orders. He frequently denied involvement in attacks by separatist Chechen guerrillas, including last year's Beslan school siege and the 2002 Moscow theatre seizure. Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev - Moscow's most wanted man - claimed responsibility for those attacks.

Mr Maskhadov had repeatedly called for talks between the Chechen rebels and the Russian authorities, and said just last week that all he needed to bring a peaceful end to the conflict was one '30-minute, fair, face-to-face dialogue' with President Putin. Moscow rejected his overtures however, refusing to negotiate with what it described as 'wanted terrorists.'

Nikolai Patrushev, head of Russia's internal security forces (FSB), informed President Putin that Mr Maskhadov had been killed. The president thereupon called for further investigations to ascertain how Mr Maskhadov had died in the Chechen village of Tolstoy-Yurt and pledged to honour the Russian forces involved in the raid. Few details of the Russian special-forces' operation near the Chechen capital, Grozny have so far been released.

Chechnya's Moscow-appointed deputy prime minister, Ramzan Kadyrov, told the Interfax news agency that the intention had been to take Mr Maskhadov alive, but he was killed as a result of his bodyguards' 'carelessness' in handling their weapons.

But according to UN diplomats, Perricos had wondered in his briefing to the Security Council whether the Iraq Survey Group's report was the final word or whether there was scope for an independent assessment of Iraq's disarmament - and if so who should do it and how. He said it was still necessary to determine Iraq's biological, chemical, and missile capabilities and render them harmless, which included looking at manufacturing and research facilities, the diplomats added.

Perricos reportedly cited several outstanding questions not answered by the US inspectors, such as what happened to 25 Al Samoud 2 missiles and 326 SA2 engines that UN inspectors didn't have time to destroy before they left; and what happened to the bunkers at the former Muthanna chemical weapons site 55km northwest of Baghdad, which was under UN seal and contained hundreds of damaged chemical artillery rockets and toxic chemicals.

The chief UN inspector also raised the possibility of getting more information from the Iraq Survey Group, but argued that UNMOVIC would be an independent way to assess Iraq's disarmament in the shortest possible time whenever necessary. To confirm Iraq's disarmament, Perricos said that the Security Council would need to decide whether dual-use civilian/military items already monitored by the United Nations should be scrutinised again for a limited period of time to reassure trade partners that the items were not misused and build confidence in the Middle East as a zone that was free of weapons of mass destruction as per the Council resolution of 1991.

UN to review Iraq inspection work

After getting a fresh appeal from Iraq to end the costly work of UN weapons inspectors, UN Security Council members have said that the time to review examining their future was getting closer. UN chief weapons inspector, Demetrius Perricos, raised a series of issues that members needed to address in considering whether to wrap up the operation of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) or change its mandate. According to UN diplomats, he maintained that UN inspectors could still play an important role.

What seemed clear, according to Brazil's UN ambassador, Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg (the current council president) who spoke after the meeting, was that 'the idea that the mandate should be revisited is now becoming a reality.' 'So this is a next step for the council,' he added. When that step would be taken is however unclear.

Saying that it was 'very hard' to give a timetable, Sardenberg believed that it would be good to wait for the election of a permanent Iraqi government under the new constitution, which is expected in December. Meanwhile Security Council members would need to address the issues relating to inspections, such as the verification and certification that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes have been dismantled. 'This is a complex process that is starting,' Sardenberg said. 'It doesn't mean that it will start only by the end of the year. It should start earlier than that.'

The interim Iraqi government has been waging a public campaign to stop using Iraqi oil rev-

enue to finance UNMOVIC, which is responsible for eliminating Iraq's alleged biological, chemical, and long-range missile programmes. It wants to do the same with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is responsible for getting rid of its alleged nuclear programme. In a letter to UN Security Council members before Tuesday's meeting, Iraq's UN ambassador Samir Sumaidai said that Iraq's oil revenue was used to fund two bodies that 'have become irrelevant' at a cost of more than \$12 million annually for UNMOVIC and \$12.3 million over the next two years for the IAEA. He asked the council to invest in the reconstruction of Iraq and address the immediate needs of its people by transferring about \$400 million of Iraq's oil money still held in UN accounts to the country's development fund.

UN inspectors were sent to Iraq after the 1991 Gulf war which ousted the invading Iraqi forces from Kuwait. UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors left Iraq just before the March 2003 US-led invasion and have since been barred from returning, while US teams have been permitting to continue the weapons search. In October however the chief US arms inspector, Charles Duelfer, said in a report that his Iraq Survey Group (ISG) had found no weapons of mass destruction in the country, thus discrediting President George Bush's stated rationale for invading Iraq.

Sumaidai reiterated that the 'new Iraq' had no intention of embarking on any new weapons programmes and therefore 'cannot possibly represent a source of threat.'

Colombia extradites rebel 'Sonia'

Colombia has extradited a top rebel leader and one of the most senior women in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to face drug-trafficking charges in the US. Omaira Rojas Cabrera, known as Sonia, is accused of running a large drug-trafficking ring for FARC. Sonia has taken what is most likely to be a one way trip to the US. She is accused of running a network that earned the guerrillas tens of millions of dollars.

Sonia was captured in

February last year in a helicopter-borne raid by elite Colombian troops. Seized along with her were documents and a laptop computer that provided much of the evidence to be used against her in court.

Not only has FARC lost one of their top female commanders with Sonia's arrest, the rebel movement also fears that she might be pressured by the US authorities and the threat of facing a sentence of more than 20 years in prison to reveal vital information about their finance system.

Odd World

'Don't die in six months'

A man given six months to live by his doctors was told by an Italian court to come back in 14 months for a decision on his insurance claims. Carmelo Cisabella, 39, has an inoperable spine disease and was anxious to pick up some \$596,300 from his insurers in already-agreed damages to ease his final months of life, *Il Messaggero* newspaper reported on Tuesday.

Cisabella turned to the Sicilian courts to speed up the process by putting pressure on the slow-moving insurers, but was told to return next year to hear their decision. In protest, he chained himself to the gates of the law courts to bring attention to his plight.

Il Messaggero said that Cisabella's woes dated back more than a decade when he was left paralyzed by a motorcycle accident. Confined to a wheelchair, he subsequently developed a lethal infection of the spine. The insurance claim dates back to the road crash.

Italian justice is notoriously slow and takes an average of 3,041 days reach a decision in a civil case.

'Free public transport for good dressing'

The Japanese city of Kyoto is offering free public transport and entry to tourist attractions for the next eleven days to anyone wearing a kimono. The scheme is a bid to promote the traditional costume, which most people now wear only on special occasions. About 20 tourist attractions are reportedly offering free entry, including Nijo Castle, Kyoto Tower, and some museums. Those that may not possess a kimono could hire it for 3,000 yen (\$28) a day, said Ami Tsujii, a Kyoto official in charge of promoting traditional industries.

Kyoto is an important centre for the Japanese textile industry. It is one of Japan's most traditional cities and home to hundreds of temples and shrines. It was also Japan's seat of government from the 8th to the 17th centuries.

Man in cold seeking love

A Los Angeles man who sneaked into Canada in February to see his Internet girlfriend will be deported - minus all his fingers and some of his toes - the *Winnipeg Sun* newspaper has reported. Charles Gonsoulin, 41, will have the fingers and toes amputated because of severe frostbite suffered during his 100-hour trek from Pembina, North Dakota across the Canadian border to Emerson, Manitoba where he was found on a golf course on February 23 suffering from hypothermia. 'It is better to have loved and to have lost than never to have loved at all,' the *Sun* quoted Gonsoulin as saying. 'It was all worth it for me. It's the difference between sitting around dreaming about things and going out and getting them.'

Gonsoulin and the Canadian woman met in an Internet chat room in 2002. The woman lives in Quebec, Gonsoulin's lawyer, Mike Cook, told a court hearing. Quebec is about 2,500 kilometres (1,600 miles) east of Manitoba.

Gonsoulin could not enter Canada legally because he was convicted of robbing a Pizza Hut in Arkansas in 1984, the newspaper said, and his girlfriend could not afford to travel to Los Angeles. He therefore took a bus to North Dakota where he crossed the border.

'Mr. Gonsoulin didn't really know that any place on earth could be so cold and inhospitable,' Cook told a court hearing on Monday, adding that his client had never felt temperatures under 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees F). Temperatures dipped below -26 degrees C (-15 degrees F) during his long hike.

Gonsoulin is receiving medical treatment in a Winnipeg jail. He still has not met his girlfriend face-to-face, but they have spoken on the phone and Gonsoulin said they were still in love.



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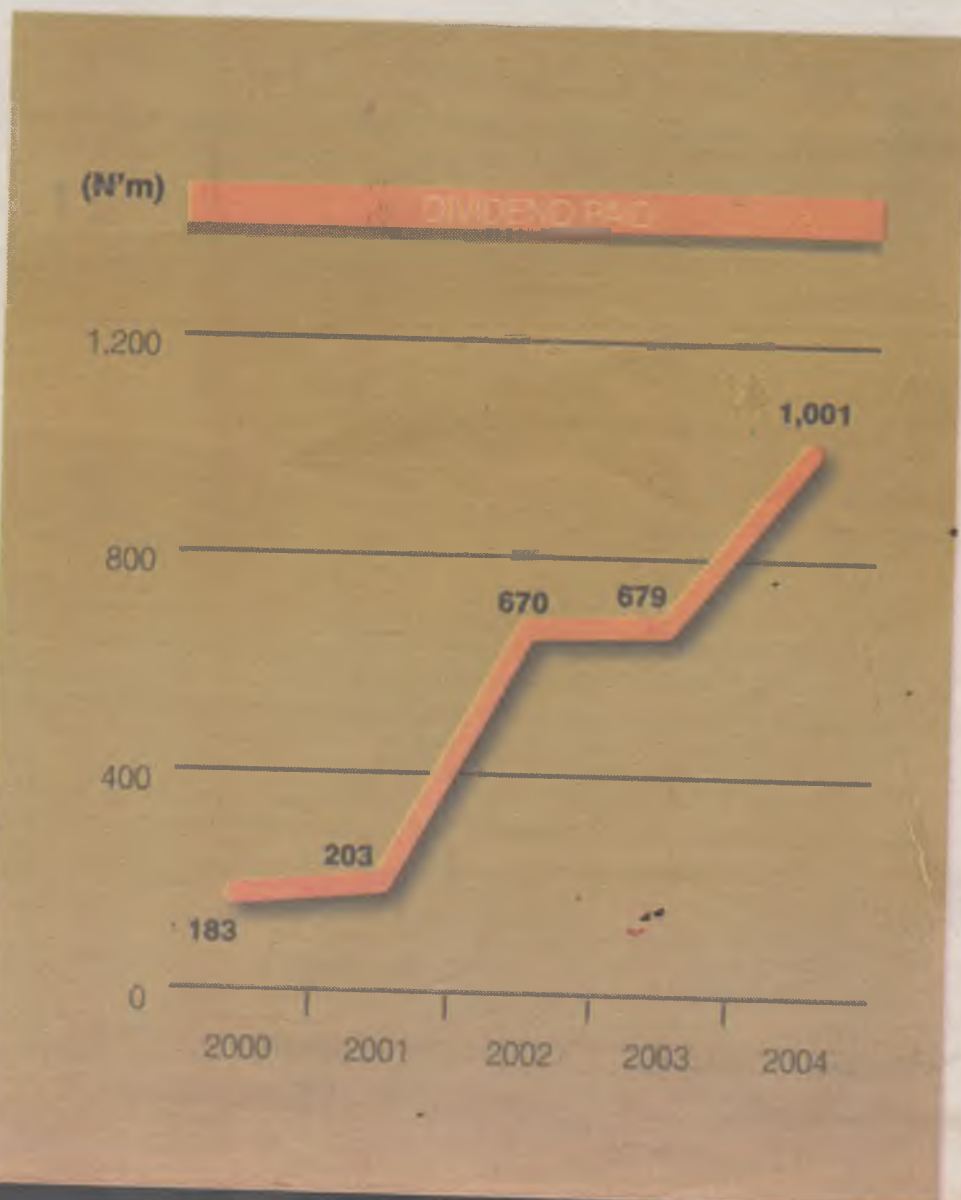
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Business Trust

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	2:30p.m.	
Dasab Airlines		
Auja - Lagos	8:30 a.m.	
Lagos - PHC	10:30 a.m.	
PHC - Lagos	12:30 a.m.	
Lagos - Kano	2:30 p.m.	
Kano - Lagos	4:30 p.m.	
Lagos - Abuja	6:30pm.	
ADC Airline		
Lagos - Abuja	7:15 a.m.	12:45 p.m.
		8:55 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55 a.m.	11:15 a.m.
Lagos - Calabar	11:15 a.m.	7:20 a.m.
Calabar - Lagos	7:20 a.m.	9:45 a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:45 a.m.	

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

In line with its efforts to raise the N25 billion capital base as required by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the management of NAL Bank has resolved to go into partnership with the State Bank of India (SBI).

The Managing Director of NAL, Mr. Ben Akabueze disclosed this during an investors' forum, organized by the bank, in Kano, adding that the bank has also offered for subscription 4 billion ordinary shares of 50 kobo each at N2.50 per share.

According to him, the partnership between the two banks will go a long way to enhance efforts to raise the N25 billion as required by the CBN.

He explained that NAL Bank made a profit before tax of N1.55 billion in 2004 pointing out that the bank has made profit after tax projections of N837 million and N1.31 billion for June 2005 and June 2006

25bn capitalization

NAL partners Indian bank

From Yushau Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent (Kano)

respectively. Shedding more light on the activities of its new

partners, the MD explained that SBI has a network of 14,000 branches with a total asset base of \$126 billion, and it made a net profit in

excess of \$1 billion in 2004.

The bank, he explained further, is also rated as one of the top 10 banks in Asia and is said to be among the top

100 banks in the world.

The public offer of the bank's shares which opened on the 28 of February 2005, is expected to close on the 30th of March, 2005.

... Intercity begins sensitisation on IPO

Intercity Bank Nigeria Plc Tuesday officially opened its initial public offer (IPO) targeted at raising N13 billion to increase its shareholders' funds in compliance with the new minimum capitalisation of N25 billion set by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

As part of this drive, a team of officials of the bank on Tuesday kick-started the sensitisation campaign in Abuja.

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor

Leading the three-man team comprising Mr. Tony Wuyep of Marketing Department in Abuja Regional office and Shina Olajide of Customer Service in Maitama Branch of Intercity, Manager of the Maitama Branch of the bank, Yahaya Yakubu said, they were on the sensitisation campaign to solicit further support for the bank to meet its target.

Yahaya said tomorrow, Friday, March 11, 2005, the bank is holding a customers forum in Minna, the Niger state capital, adding that many more are being planned for various parts of the country.

According to him, series of consultations are being held with Intercity Bank's stakeholders across the country on the offer, adding that the bank is optimistic that its shares

may be oversubscribed.

The Maitama branch manager of Intercity disclosed that the bank is currently in merger talks with like-minded banks, stressing that "we are not in a hurry to merge to avoid the experiences of others whose mergers failed".

The bank has already secured approvals of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) for the IPO.

Briefs

JAIZ

As the proposed JAIZ Bank International Plc, an interest-free and profit sharing bank awaits its approval to commence banking operations, it has embarked on a series of consultation with its shareholders and other stakeholders to work out strategies for the capitalization of the bank in line with the new CBN N25 billion requirement.

Already, the proposed bank held a successful Investors' Fora in Kano, Kaduna and Bauchi, while expecting to hold others in Gusau, Lagos and Ibadan this week.

At a special strategy session held in Abuja, the Board under the chairmanship of Alhaji (Dr.) Umaru Abdul Mutallab, supported by other management and financial experts across the country, deliberated and agreed to adopt the general consensus reached by shareholders at the previous fora that bank should meet the N25 billion CBN requirement through public offer of its shares.

Broad Bank

As part of its efforts aimed at increasing its market share, Broad Bank has opened a new branch at Ibadan, Oyo state.

A release signed by the bank's Head, Corporate Affairs, Mr. Tony Ajiro said the new branch in Ibadan is in line with the strategic plan of the bank to rapidly grow its branch network thereby taking its services closer to more Nigerians.

"It is hoped that the branch, which has already commenced operations, will serve as catalyst for the development of the location and impact positively on the lives of the people" said the statement.

The bank therefore enjoined people in the town to call at the branch to transact business with the bank so as to enjoy its products and services.

Access Bank

Access Bank increased its branch network with the opening of its branch in Birnin-Kebbi, Kebbi state last week. The branch commissioning which was performed by Alh. Adamu Aliero, the governor, had in attendance members of the state executive council and chief executives of institutions operating in the state.

A statement from the bank made available to *Business Trust* said while speaking at the occasion, Alh. Adamu Aliero congratulated the management of the bank for taking the initiative to identify with the state by establishing branch in the state. He enjoined other investors to emulate Access Bank and join in the drive towards the economic development of the state.

Mr. Herbert Wigwe, Deputy Managing Director, Access Bank Plc, in his remarks commended the people and government of Kebbi State for the friendly spirit displayed in welcoming the bank into their midst. He specifically thanked the governor for creating the right business atmosphere in the state and promised to help drive its socio-economic growth objectives.

Belgium eyes Virgin Nigeria

The Belgian ambassador to Nigeria, Dirk Van Eeckhaut, has expressed Belgium's desire to improve bilateral relationship with Nigeria especially in the aviation industry, expressing optimism that a positive negotiation agreement between the Belgian airline and Virgin Nigeria would further cement good relationship between the two countries.

According to a press

From Anas A. Galadima, Reporter (Business)

statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Minister of Aviation, the ambassador made this revelation when he paid a courtesy call on the minister of Aviation, Mallam Isa Yaguda, in his office recently.

The ambassador, who expressed his appreciation of the human and material resources in Nigeria, said

improved bilateral relationship between the two countries, in aviation, would also boost tourism and increase investment opportunities for Nigeria.

The minister, according to the statement, thanked the ambassador for his visit pointing out that Nigeria has state-of-the-art equipment in all her airports comparing them to what obtains in other parts of the world.

Obasanjo urges OPEC to check oil prices

President Olusegun Obasanjo has advised that excessive and indiscriminate increase in prices of oil would not be beneficial in the end.

To this end, he called on members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-oil producers alike to work towards price stability and supply security.

He spoke while declaring open a two-day workshop on mechanisms for capacity building of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and speeding up of key New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Infrastructure Projects, Abuja.

He appealed to OPEC countries and non-OPEC oil producers to moderate the high price of oil in accordance with OPEC price modulating mechanism.


His words: "Excessive and volatile oil prices are not in the best interest of producers and consumers. There is need for price stability and supply security for all concerned. Speculators should also realize that they are doing

By Reuben Yunana, Senior State House Reporter

more harm than good." President Obasanjo who underscored the importance of the workshop, stated that it was another opportunity to respond, in a more concrete

way, to some of the development problems facing the country.

Regional economic communities, he noted, represented essential building blocks for integration and development in the continent. In line with the NEPAD objectives.

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Business Trust

Maritime

Northern speakers visit Lake Chad oil sites

Speakers of the 19 Houses of Assembly in the North have paid a visit to sites of oil exploration in the Lake Chad Basin area as part of their effort to mount an intensive campaign for the resumption of exploration activities earlier abandoned by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

The speakers are in Maiduguri, Borno state to attend the fourth meeting of the Forum of Northern House of Assembly Speakers.

The NNPC was into oil exploration in the Lake Chad from the late 1970's but abandoned search in the late 1980's under circumstances believed by many to be controversial and political.

Chairman of the Northern Speakers Forum and Speaker of the Kwara state House of Assembly, Alhaji Isa Ibrahim Bio, who led the speakers to the oil sites in Magumeri local government area of Borno state yesterday, said that the visit is aimed at inspecting sites of federal government projects with a view to knowing the level of progress in the execution of the projects and enacting appropriate legislation which would ginger various northern state governments to campaign for their completion or execution by the government.

Business Trust also learnt that the speakers intend to

From Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (North East)

use the visit to the Lake Chad in the memo they might send to northern delegates attending the National Political Reform Conference to urge them to argue strongly for the

resumption of oil search in the Chad Basin.

The speakers believed that the abandonment of oil exploration was a result of neglect by successive administrations in the country rather than due to any scientific data disproving the pres-

ence of oil in the Nigerian sector of the Chad Basin.

Sources also told *Business Trust* that the speakers are enamored by the discovery of oil in the Chadian sector of the Lake Chad, and believed that in this era when the political history of the

Customs agents urge NASS to sanitise shipping industry

The National President, Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Chief Ernest Elochukwu has called on members of the National Assembly to rise up and bring sanity into the clearing and forwarding practice.

The ANLCA president stated this while addressing members of the National Assembly on the proposed council to regulate freight forwarding in Nigeria.

According to him, the greatest impediment to the

professionalisation of the clearing and forwarding practice is the activities of touts and impostors.

He lamented that even the vulcanisers who pump deflated car tyres at the Roll on Roll Off (RORO) port suddenly transform to being referred to as clearing agents by presenting themselves as such to the unquestioning members of the importing public.

"It is something of a national shame that touting has continued to flourish in

various aspects of our national economic life for the simple reason that we as a people have disclaimed for norms and standards," Chief Elochukwu said.

While supporting the need for the establishment of a council to regulate the practice of clearing and forwarding, the ANLCA boss stressed that the association refused to be hoodwinked into accepting a situation that would officially up-hold an all-comer affairs where touts would have legality conferred on them albeit, unwittingly.

'Stocks will boast maritime sector'

Chief executive officer (CEO), Japaul Oil and Maritime Services Plc, Nigeria's first maritime company to be quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), Mr Paul Jegede has stressed the need to create awareness on the maritime sector, saying that maritime stocks are for matured investors.

Mr Jegede disclosed this during an exclusive interview

with *Business Trust* recently.

He explained that apart from the money which the company is raising through its initial public offer (IPO), a foreign bank has already approved \$30 million facility for the company.

According to him, \$5 million out of the \$30 million was already in the company's kitty.

"We are building up a business empire that would out-

line the promoters and even the subscribers, that would span over generations."

"So we have enough money to take us to the next level, we have equity, and ship loan which we are going to put together to acquire some equipment to serve as good income generating base for the benefits of subscribers," Mr Jegede said.

The CEO stressed that apart from Japaul, there is no other company doing serious business in ship building, adding that ship building only constitutes about 20 percent of Japaul's business.

He said further that within seven months, the company has built three tugboats each of which would cost N80 million to import, adding that it cost Japaul far more less to build the tugboat.

It was gathered that the first of the three boats, that have capacity range of 500 to 800 tip was sold to a multinational company presently engaged in Shell project in Bonny Island.

No parastatal'll be spared in reforms - Minister

The Minister of Transport, Dr Abiye Precious Sekibo has said that no parastatal under his ministry would be left untouched in the on-going reforms of the federal government.

The minister's declaration which was made over the weekend in Lagos during an interactive session with maritime reporters is coming on the heels of the removal of Mr Ferdinand Agu as

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

director-general of the National Maritime Authority (NMA).

The minister said that the shake-up within the transport ministry actually started with the sacking of the board of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) when Arch. Aminu Dabo was replaced with Chief Adebayo Sarumi.

"We started with NPA where we carried out a lot of changes in the entire transport sector, we are going through a period of reform and no parastatal will be left untouched," the minister said.

To this end, Dr Sekibo said that the National Clearing Forwarding Agency (NACFA) must be in private hands. According to the ministers, anything the private sector can do better, government will hands off.



Transport minister, Dr Abiye Sekibo (right), Managing Director, Nigerian Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Engineer A. Abubakar (middle) and executive secretary, Nigeria Shippers' Council (NSC), Capt. Adamu Biu on board a vessel during an inspection tour by the minister...recently.

International

Oil price stays close to \$55

Crude futures stayed close to \$55 a barrel yesterday, anchored by a weak dollar, cold weather and jitters ahead of next week's meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

OPEC oil ministers have signalled they will not raise output a stance that analysts said was not surprising considering the organization already is producing over its quota.

And even a decision to boost production at the meeting in Iran on March 16 would come too late to compensate for the late outburst of winter in the Northern Hemisphere driving heating oil demand.

On the New York Mercantile Exchange, light, sweet crude rose 14 cents to \$54.73 a barrel in electronic trading by late morning in Europe. Heating oil prices were up less than a cent at \$1.5295 a gallon.

Brent crude was up 7 cents at \$52.91 a barrel on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Ng Weng Hoong, oil editorial manager at Energyasia.com, said traders remain worried about the tight demand-supply situation.

"There's an element of panic buying going on here," he said. "Oil companies are under-replenishing their reserves."

The 10 OPEC countries bound by production quotas pumped an estimated 700,000 barrels a day last month above their joint 27 million barrel ceiling.

With the organization unlikely or unable to go much above that, "we need the weather to get warmer," said analyst Deborah White at SG Securities in Paris.

"OPEC cannot help that we're getting major snowstorms in the (U.S.) Northeast even if they had more capacity they can do nothing to put more heating oil in the Northeast instantaneously."

Also driving prices higher was the strong euro, which rose above \$1.33, its highest level since early January.

Because crude is sold worldwide in U.S. dollars, and because the currency has lost 8 percent of its value against the euro in the last four months, OPEC nations have signalled support for higher oil prices as a hedge to maintain their buying power in Europe.

Several OPEC ministers have said they see no need to raise output.

Continental Airlines summoned over Concorde crash

US company Continental Airlines was widely expected to be placed under judicial investigation over its role in the Concorde crash five years ago which a report found was triggered by a piece of metal that fell from a Continental DC-10.

Ken Burt, the American vice-president of the company's technical division, appeared early afternoon before an examining magistrate for a "first questioning with a view to being placed under investigation," according to judicial sources.

The company itself was also likely to be placed under investigation for "involuntary homicide and injuries," they said.

Under French law a judicial investigation is normally a first step towards eventual criminal charges.

A judicial enquiry into the crash of the supersonic airliner near Charles de Gaulle airport in July 2000 concluded in December that a titanium alloy strip fell from the Continental Airlines DC-10 that took off just before the Concorde.

The piece of metal punctured the Concorde's tyre, sending debris upwards into the fuel tank which then exploded. All 109 people on board as well as four people on the ground were killed.

The report said the strip played a "direct" role in the accident, although a "relative weakness" on the interior surface of the Concorde's distinctive delta-shaped wings which held its fuel tanks also contributed.

It said that the titanium alloy strip installed by Continental Airlines was a replacement part whose usage was not sanctioned by the American civil aviation authorities and that "the rules of aeronautical metal construction were not respected by the employees of Continental Airlines."

A source close to the investigation said these conclusions made it "logical" that the company be placed under judicial investigation.

Continental Airlines has denied responsibility for the crash and said it would fight any criminal charges stemming from a French probe of the accident.

"We strongly disagree that anything Continental did was the cause of the Concorde accident and we are outraged that media reports have said criminal charges may be made against our company and its employees," spokeswoman Rahsaan Johnson said in a statement released after publication of the report.

Business Trust

International

Volkswagen gets off on poor start

German auto giant, Volkswagen said that business got off to an unsatisfactory start in the first three months of the current year.

Europe's leading car maker also promised to step up cost-cutting efforts after its flagship VW brand lost money for first time in a decade last year.

"As in 2004, operating profit for the first quarter of 2005 will not be satisfactory,"

VW chairman Bernd Pischetsrieder told the group's annual earnings news conference here Tuesday.

"However, we are expecting an improvement in the course of the year because important, high-volume models will be available from the second quarter and second half of 2005."

VW said it planned to launch "more than 20 new products and product variants" during the course of

2005 and that would enable the group to increase the number of worldwide deliveries this year.

In the United States, the group was pinning its hopes on the launch of the new Jetta and the Passat to boost unit sales, while the Passat, the Golf Plus and the low-price Fox would help drive European sales higher, Pischetsrieder said.

In addition, VW planned to intensify cost-cutting, with 3.1 billion euros (four billion dollars) earmarked for this year alone.

The belt-tightening would lead to an improvement in operating earnings, Pischetsrieder said, without saying by exactly how much.

Full-year operating profit after special items was set to improve, the chairman said, "although the extent of this improvement depends on external factors that cannot be predicted at present."

Nevertheless, 2005 had not started particularly auspiciously, with unit sales declining in the first two months of the year.

In January and February combined, customer deliveries totalled around 687,000 vehicles, down 0.5 percent from the year-earlier period.

It was primarily the all-important Chinese market that put a drag on overall group sales. Deliveries in China declined by 33,000 units year-on-year, while cumulative sales in all other markets rose by around 30,000 units in January and February.

And the situation in key markets such as Germany, China and the US was expected to remain "difficult" this year, VW continued.

British Airways names Irishman as new CEO

British Airways announced the appointment of Irishman, Willie Walsh, the former chief executive of Aer Lingus, as replacement to BA's departing chief executive Rod Eddington.

Australian Rod Eddington, 55, would leave the British flag carrier at the end of September.

Walsh would start as chief executive designate on May 3 and assume the full role upon Eddington's departure.

Investors cheered the appointment as BA shares gained 2.26 percent to 282.75 pence in afternoon London trade. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares fell 0.12 percent to 5021.0 points.

Willie Walsh a 43-year-old former pilot resigned his post at Irish airline Aer Lingus at the end of January.

"Willie has an outstanding reputation in the airline industry around the world for the way in which he transformed the fortunes of Aer Lingus from a high-cost underperforming carrier into a successful and profitable entity," said BA chairman Martin Broughton.

"Many commentators have rightly said that Rod Eddington will be a hard act to follow but I am completely confident that in Willie we have captured the very best person for the job," Broughton added.

Rod Eddington whose departure has been on the cards for several months arrived at BA in May 2000 and has taken the airline through one of the most testing periods in its history.

Shortly after his arrival, BA's flagship plane, Concorde, was withdrawn following the Air France Concorde crash (news - web sites) in Paris in July 2000. BA subsequently scrapped all Concorde flights in October 2003 after 27 years of service.

Eddington steered BA through the slump in air travel following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in Washington and New York, after which he oversaw a large cost-cutting programme to axe thousands of jobs.

Under his leadership, BA was also hit by the Iraq war, the Asian SARS crisis, trades union disputes and a sharp rise in the price of aviation fuel.

EADS shares drop, as Jumbo Airbus takes off

The European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) reported a 60-percent surge in net profit for 2004 and raised its target for this year.

But it said that the break-even point for its superjumbo airliner, the A380, would be higher than expected, meaning that it would have to sell more aircraft to recover start-up costs because the dollar was weak.

The European conglomerate, which controls the Airbus aircraft manufacturer and has wide-ranging defence aeronautics interests, produces in euros but sells in dollars.

EADS joint chairman, Philippe Camus said the A380 project would reach a break-even point when more than 300 planes were sold, if the dollar remained weak against the euro and other currencies.

"If we fix the euro/dollar rate at 1.30 euros, and based on what we have already done for the programme (in terms of currency hedging), and also taking into account

the higher development costs, we get a break-even point that is well above 300 planes," Camus said.

Last week, Airbus chief executive Noel Forgeard, set to replace Camus later this year, told Aviation Week magazine that the A380 breakeven point was 270 planes, instead of the 250 planes originally forecast, but he said this was due exclusively to cost overruns.

Shares in EADS dropped 1.51 percent to 23.54 euro in midday Paris trading, in a market 0.38 percent higher, amid investor disappointment with the higher A380 break-even point and profit taking, dealers said.

"The hike above 300 aircraft isn't good news," said Harald Liberge-Dondous of brokerage Aurel Leven.

"It's an unpopular announcement, even if it isn't a catastrophe," he added.

Net profit surged by 60 percent to 1.03 billion euros (1.36 billion dollars) from the 2003 figure, fuelled mainly by the Airbus aircraft manufacturing subsidiary, and a switch into profit by

space activities.

The result was higher than the company had expected and the group, which owns 80 percent of Airbus, said it was raising its target for operating profit this year.

Total group sales were in line with forecasts at 31.76 billion euros.

EADS raised its 2005 target for earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) to 2.6 billion euros from a previous 2.4 billion euros, saying that the growth it was achieving reflected improved performance by all divisions, partly offset by less favourable foreign exchange coverage and the weakness of the dollar.

The group expected sales this year to rise by 3.9 percent to 33 billion euros driven by an increase of 10.0 percent in defence activity sales.

The group also said it intended to deliver 350-360 Airbus airliners this year. EADS noted that 2005's modest increase would reflect higher deliveries of single-aisle aircraft.

"The 2005 aircraft mix will be less favourable than in 2004," it said.



FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF X-RAY BAGGAGE SCREENING MACHINES AND WALK-THROUGH METAL DETECTORS

The Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) employs x-ray baggage screening machines to facilitate passenger and luggage movements at the airports. Reputable companies are hereby invited to tender for the supply and installation of these machines and walk-through metal detectors in some designated airports. Details are contained in the tender documents.

REQUIREMENTS:

Tenderers who must have been registered with FAAN will be expected to provide evidence of the following documents along with their tenders.

- Certificate of incorporation
- Records of company income tax payments over the last three (3) years.
- Bank reference from a reputable commercial bank
- Certificate of registration with FAAN
- Records of successful performance on similar projects

SUBMISSION OF BIDS:

The tenders should be submitted by hand or courier, in sealed envelopes, marked "SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF X-RAY SCREENING MACHINES", not later than four (4) weeks from the date of this publications to The Board Secretary, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, Headquarters, Ikeja, Lagos.

Tender documents can be obtained from the Board Secretary on payment of N20,000.00 (Twenty Thousand Naira only) non-refundable fee.

Tenderers will be informed of the date for the opening of tenders.

Signed:
Management

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
ADSWITCH PLC.	2	0.43	20,000	8,600.00
CUTIX PLC	2	1.24	60,000	74,400.00
Sector Totals	4		80,000	83,000.00
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	1	0.81	7,000	5,670.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	5	17.00	84,176	1,430,292.00
PRESCO PLC.	15	8.93	41,352	374,373.80
Sector Totals	21		132,528	1,810,335.80
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	14	1.94	81,358	150,708.95
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	3	5.06	16,528	83,631.68
Sector Totals	17		97,886	234,340.63
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	11	3.42	222,655	761,480.10
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	47	6.63	2,314,669	15,346,255.47
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	2	3.41	8,650	29,496.50
CHARTERED BANK PLC	2	3.90	4,300	16,770.00
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC.	3	1.92	12,050	23,136.00
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.	1	0.75	94,100	70,575.00
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	1	2.26	192,003	433,926.78
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	547	22.91	1,530,099	35,069,314.69
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	29	1.20	243,210	288,473.17
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	255	9.18	1,789,308	16,201,879.37
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	8	0.44	1,430,304	629,333.76
HALLMARK BANK PLC	2	1.77	2,100	3,717.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	37	0.58	3,260,517	1,905,580.05
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	7	1.32	248,867	303,800.40
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	4	7.81	3,283	25,640.23
LIBERTY MERCHANT BANK	1	0.80	100	80.00
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	3	0.59	7,166	4,227.94
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	16	1.18	1,913,670	2,271,111.64
NAL BANK PLC.	3	2.80	31,920	89,376.00
OCEANIC BANK PLC	4	4.93	4,000	19,720.00
REGENT BANK PLC	0	0.81	0	0.00
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	12	7.41	160,150	1,186,711.50
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	22	1.59	876,109	1,332,826.28
TRADE BANK PLC.	1	1.35	30,000	40,500.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	18	10.00	55,930	559,300.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	287	19.20	1,136,879	21,629,719.17
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	11	0.70	78,444	53,995.92
WEMA BANK PLC.	5	3.93	26,269	103,237.17
ZENITH BANK PLC	198	13.60	2,742,795	36,873,253.45
Sector Totals	1,537		18,419,547	135,273,437.59
BREWERIES				
CHAMPION BREWERIES PLC.	1	4.23	5,000	21,150.00
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	207	79.94	651,103	51,571,763.33
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	438	36.10	1,596,039	57,458,713.61
Sector Totals	646		2,252,142	109,051,626.94
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	60	22.48	213,762	4,772,570.29
BENUCE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	10	4.20	31,750	135,368.41
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	6	7.10	26,351	183,821.30
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	43	9.97	223,435	2,224,582.26
Sector Totals	119		495,298	7,316,342.26
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	16	4.65	84,340	406,461.48
CAP PLC.	15	6.32	138,431	877,358.92
D. N. MEYER PLC.	9	4.80	54,554	261,859.20
Sector Totals	40		277,325	1,545,679.60
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC.	1	0.87	100	87.00
Sector Totals	1		100	87.00
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	4	1.00	214,025	213,825.00
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	9	4.35	6,862	29,917.50
JOHN HOLT PLC.	4	0.70	11,429	8,000.30
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	149	15.56	385,324	6,023,831.81
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	64	10.45	196,306	2,051,289.62
S C O A NIGERIA PLC.	1	1.09	1,250	1,362.50
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	93	14.17	555,264	7,868,090.88
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	10	0.96	66,000	63,360.00
Sector Totals	334		1,436,460	16,259,677.61
CONSTRUCTION				
G. CAPPA PLC.	1	2.23	341	760.43
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	4	15.55	5,520	85,836.00
Sector Totals	5		5,861	86,596.43
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
INTERLINKED TECHNOLOGIES PLC.	1	1.21	5,000	6,050.00
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	5	0.70	18,300	13,059.00
Sector Totals	6		23,300	19,109.00
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	21	22.55	117,553	2,653,952.20
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	135	49.99	218,557	10,918,047.10
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	24	16.61	48,282	801,964.02
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	48	50.85	39,542	2,011,654.86
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	60	141.00	40,191	5,703,801.66
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	2	15.00	11,299	161,235.00
Sector Totals	290		475,424	22,250,654.84
HEALTHCARE/KOCORP PLC.	8	0.75	120,500	90,375.00
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	11	2.59	36,350	95,592.00
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	7	4.85	42,500	207,423.15
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	17	2.99	60,661	176,947.50
PHARMA-DEKO PLC.	2	4.09	30,570	125,031.30
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	16	8.20	42,927	353,472.54
Sector Totals	61		333,508	1,048,841.49
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
NIGERIA ENAMELWARE COMPANY PLC.	1	3.40	200	680.00
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	9	0.99	68,900	65,737.08
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	3	2.80	8,551	24,820.30
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	17	3.00	130,629	391,722.00
Sector Totals	30		208,280	482,959.38
INSURANCE				
AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	3	1.66	13,950	23,157.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	1	1.40	40,000	56,000.00
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	3	0.79	296,524	234,253.96
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC.	2	1.19	50,000	59,500.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	1	3.02	17,637	53,263.74
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	2	1.97	253,181	498,766.57
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	12	2.91	3,920,229	10,868,858.83
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	4	0.67	36,529	24,474.43
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	14	0.90	262,302	231,861.34
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	6	2.60	28,615	73,182.75
Sector Totals	48		4,918,967	12,123,318.62
MACHINERY(MARKETING)				
BLACKWOOD HODGE (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	0.64	100	64.00
Sector Totals	1		100	64.00
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC.	5	1.38	52,008	71,906.04
Sector Totals	5		52,008	71,906.04
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC.	3	0.75	6,500	4,875.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	99	50.30	694,608	34,826,374.20
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	20	2.04	323,450	659,838.00
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	34	166.03	106,760	17,722,693.14
CONOIL PLC.	47	105.50	38,543	4,044,993.49
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	37	157.10	56,241	8,980,495.00
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	51	165.00	80,282	13,484,508.10
OANDO PLC.	185	89.55	229,994	20,676,168.64
Sector Totals	476		1,536,378	100,399,945.57
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
ACADEMY PRESS PLC.	1	1.90	100	190.00
Sector Totals	1		100	190.00
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	32	8.52	196,700	1,678,608.18
Sector Totals	32		196,700	1,678,608.18
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	1	2.10	4,932	10,357.20
Sector Totals	1		4,932	10,357.20
Overall Totals		3,675	38,946,844	409,747,078.18

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
UBN	1,136,879.00	21,629,719.17	287
GULFBANK	1,430,304.00	629,333.76	8
FIRSTBANK	1,530,099.00	35,069,314.69	547
NB	1,596,039.00	57,458,713.61	438
GUARANTY	1,789,308.00	16,201,879.37	255
MANNYBANK	1,913,670.00	2,271,111.64	16
AFRIBANK	2,314,669.00	15,346,255.47	47
ZENITHBANK	2,742,795.00	36,873,253.45	198
IMB	3,260,517.00	1,905,580.05	37
ROYALEX	3,920,229.00	10,868,858.83	12

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
PZ	10.11	10.45	+0.34
UAC-PROP	8.22	8.52	+0.30
NOLCHEM	105.30	105.50	+0.20
UBN	19.04	19.20	+0.16
GUARANTY	9.03	9.18	+0.15
PFIZER	2.85	2.99	+0.14
NIGERINS	2.88	3.02	+0.14
NB	36.00	36.10	+0.10
DUNLOP	1.85	1.94	+0.09
SKBEECHAM	8.11	8.20	+0.09

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	173.00	165.00	-8.00
NESTLE	142.50	141.00	-1.50
7UP	23.49	22.55	-0.94
PRESCO	9.40	8.93	-0.47
UNIPETROL	90.00	89.55	-0.45
CAP	6.65	6.32	-0.33
RTBRISCOE	5.32	5.06	-0.26
MAY&BAKER	5.10	4.85	-0.25
ASHAKACEM	22.70	22.48	-0.22
LEVBROS	15.76	15.56	-0.20

FG worried about high cost of LPG - Paki

Special Assistant to the president on petroleum matters, Alhaji Ja'afaru Paki, says government is concerned about the rising cost of cooking gas.

"We are as worried as the consumers and in no time we will solve the problem," Paki said in a chat with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja.

NAN reports that the cost of the source of energy for the urban elite has been on the increase since the last quarter of last year.

A NAN market survey showed that a 12.5kg cylinder of cooking gas is selling at between N2,500 and N2800 depending on the retail outlet.

The figure is higher than the N1,700 for which it sold in December.

The commodity is available at most usual selling points and retailers could not give convincing reasons why the incessant increase.

Many attributed the rising cost to shortage of supply from the NNPC.

Paki said government was seriously looking at the causes of the high cost holistically with a view to proffering solutions in the interest of consumers.

"Ensuring availability of cooking gas is a serious challenge to us and we are leaving no stone unturned to make the commodity available and affordable," he said.

He assured that government has taken a number of measures that would ensure availability and affordability of the product.

Paki listed some of the measures to include massive importation, encouraging local production and supply from the refineries among others.

Regional securities body elects Al-Faki as chairman

The Director-General of the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC), Musa Al-Faki, has been elected the Chairman of the International Organisation of Securities Commission (IOSCO), African and Middle East Regional Committee (AMERC).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Al-Faki emerged chairman through a consensus among members at the IOSCO regional body's general meeting hosted by Nigeria in Lagos at the weekend.

According to a statement, signed by SEC's Head of Corporate Affairs, Ismaila Ville, with the appointment, Al-Faki will oversee the affairs of the Africa and Middle East jurisdiction of IOSCO for the next one year.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

We represent an equal opportunity employer, established with responsibility for supporting the reform agenda of Government. This agency requires the services of experienced personnel to fill the following two (2) vacant positions in the organisation.

POSITION 1: Head, Central Accounts Unit

AGE: Over 35 years

EDUCATION:

- Must have a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Accounting degree and
- A professional accounting qualification from a recognised institution/body.

EXPERIENCE:

Candidate must have worked in a medium to large private sector company for a minimum of 15 years and in a senior management position for at least 5 of those years. He / she must also be computer literate, familiar with IT accounting systems, controls and security. It is expected that the successful candidate will have experience to improve the quality of the financial accounting and reporting within the organisation and developing both financial and 'management information systems' (MIS) to support organisational and departmental accountability.

KEY TASKS

1. Provide Monthly MIS Statements

Provide all departments with the critical management performance and financial information in a reliable and timely manner. Establish the necessary operational decision making structures and procedures to ensure the MIS is an effective working document and report mechanism.

2. Annual Audited Financial Statements

Coordinate the preparation of annual financial statements for audit in a reliable and timely manner.

3. Financial Standards & Controls

Put in place suitable procedures, controls and systems to ensure that all transactions (historical and future) are accounted for in a manner that is consistent with the founding legislation, legitimate amendments thereto, and best practices.

4. Business Plans & Control Budget

To have the specific detailed operational responsibility for initiating and coordinating the business planning and control budget process for the organisation and ensuring that the process is a valid reflection and quantification of the plans.

5. Resourcing

To identify in advance and set out in clear terms the resources and support required to meet the project plans for the organisation. In addition, plan, monitor, evaluate and review all aspects of the project activities.

POSITION 2: Head, Information Technology Unit

AGE: Above 35 Years

EDUCATION:

- B (Sc.) in IT/Computer Science/Engineering or any other qualifications in related field from a recognised University. A Masters degree would be an advantage.

- Professional certification on network administration and security e.g. CCNP, CCIE, CCSP, MSCIE etc or any related certification would be an advantage.

EXPERIENCE:

Candidate must have not less than 10 years work experience five of which must have been on a managerial post in a medium/large organisation, covering the following areas;

- At least 5 years experience in network design and implementation
- Experience of Help Desk/Support Management
- Proficiency in Linux, Windows, Lotus Notes/Domino, Network security, VPN, business continuity and support to office staff in PC related help.
- Windows NT, 2000, VOIP, Cisco equipment and MIS packages.
- Skills in SQL Server, and Lotus Notes/Domino version 5 or 6.5.
- Collaboration tools like Microsoft Project Central/Server and document management systems such as Lotus Domino.Doc would be an advantage.
- Strong hands-on people management experience is essential.

KEY TASKS

The organisation is looking for an individual with a solid infrastructure background who will be able to build excellent working relationships, be innovative, energetic, reliable and able to work well under pressure and multi-tasks under its IT program.

His/her duties will include the strengthening and expansion of the existing network infrastructure, and the development and implementation of software application.

The candidate will assist in strengthening the IT unit in its quest to deliver reliable services to the organization. He/She will manage 3rd party suppliers, new Software (Human Resource Management and Accounting systems), as well as email and Web activity.

COMPENSATION PACKAGE

The proposed remuneration for both positions falls within the Federal Civil Service salary structure, however the package is significantly enhanced in recognition of the intellectual operating environment, and the special assignment the agency is undertaking. The starting point for each successful candidate shall be a function of qualification, experience, and current status.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

All applications indicating the position at top left of envelop, should be received by the advertiser (address below) not later than two weeks from date of this publication. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

The Advertiser,
P.O. Box 12970, Wuse,
Abuja.

To our esteemed Readers and Advertisers

Advertorials, petitions and related materials in Weekly & Daily Trust Newspapers

Media Trust, publishers of *Weekly and Daily Trust* take very seriously, its responsibility to the public to publish all points of view, including those we do not share. We think this is the function of an independent, liberal newspaper dedicated to the pursuit of the common good. We are also conscious of the fact that it is a shortsighted business policy for a newspaper to shut out a particular point of view for its own reason or due to pressure from powerful institutions and advertisers.

But we are also aware that professional agitators can use the pages of newspapers to malign governments, companies and individuals on spurious grounds.

Caught between our desire to give voice to the concerns of the voiceless and to protect public and institutions from unfair and demoralising attacks, we have been forced to develop a more stringent policy for the placement of advertorials, petitions and other related materials in the pages of our newspapers.

The new policy is as depicted hereunder:

1. The writer(s) of such advertorials must not be anonymous but people who can stand by what they say, with their full names and addresses.
2. If there is any accusation at any person or organisation, such writer(s) must substantiate the claims with evidence, which can stand before a Court of law. For example, **if they claim that a contract was inflated**, they must show Media Trust, relevant documents to back this up.
3. The placement must be fully paid for, before it is carried.

4. The author(s) should be prepared to accept corrections or alterations made by us but the corrected version would be shown to the author(s), before publishing.

5. In the alternative, we are prepared to enter into an indemnity agreement with those who place such advertorial which will put the onus of proof squarely on them.

6. The publishers have the right to reject any piece considered to be libelous, containing assertion without supporting facts and figures to prove the authenticity of such claims.

7. Media trust employees that collect such materials have been instructed to contact the advert manager, who will also consult further with the relevant superior officers to analyse the piece before placement is made.

8. If the publishers of *Daily Trust/Weekly Trust* reject any materials regarded as unprintable based on the above considerations, they will not enter into any correspondence with the author(s).

Finally, we wish to assure our readers that we will not shy away from publishing fair and balanced criticisms of any government or individual, which is in the nature of free exchange of ideas.

This, we will continue to do in our free opinion columns and with advertorials where some readers feel strongly enough to pay for them. We thank you for your support and assure you that we will do our best to keep your trust.

Signed:
Management.

Nagarta radio: Building on listenership tra

Since Nagarta Radio started test transmission on March 7, 2004 it has made significant impact on information dissemination in its area of coverage which includes the 19 northern states. Listeners have testified that its signals are received in Niger Republic, Cameroon and Chad beyond the country's borders and as far south as Lagos and River States within.

The private radio station has a digital 60 kilowatt transmitter which is received on 747 kilohertz on the medium wave band. Originally, Nagarta Communication Ltd was granted a frequency modulated (FM) license in 2002 to operate from Gusau, the Zamfara state capital, but according to the Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Dr Silas Yisa, the management was advised to move to a more central location in Kaduna and have a medium wave licence for a wider coverage.

Technical quality and location is not what Nagarta Radio listeners say has endeared it to them. The birth of the radio station at this point in time has brought a gladdening wide choice to a large percentage of radio listeners, especially in Northern Nigeria. Most radio stations in the North, especially the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Kaduna, are government owned and are likely to produce programmes not necessarily tailored to the needs and aspirations of their listeners but to the needs of the government in control.

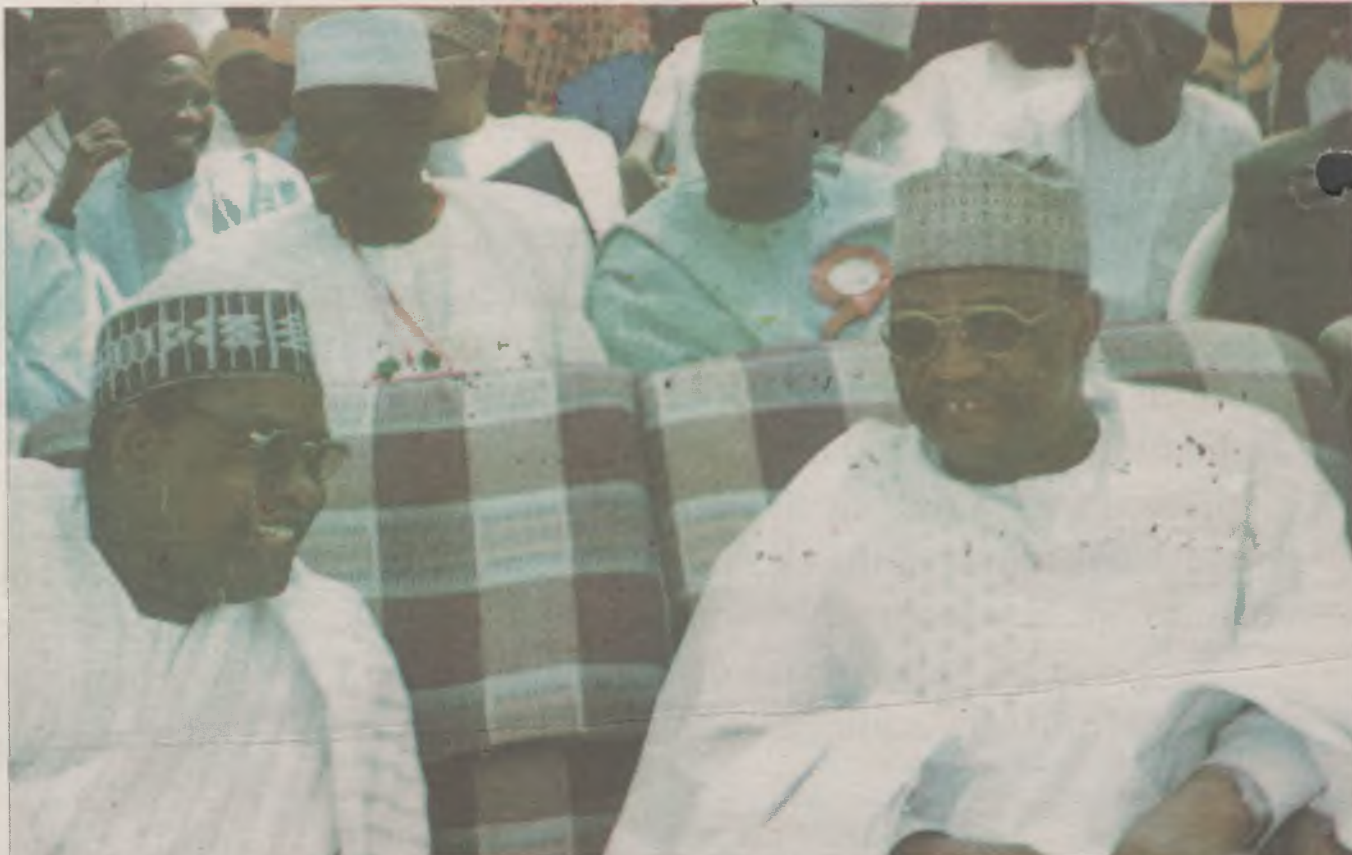
Since the liberalisation of

By Sani Babadoko (Kaduna Bureau Chief)

the broadcast industry in Nigeria in the 1980s, and the exit of government monopoly, northerners have waited and hoped that private investors in the north will invest in the sector with speed to create a vibrant network of private radio stations that would be tailored, not only to the satisfaction of their appetite as northerners but also designed to pursue the crucial and strategic needs of the people for social, cultural, economic and political growth and development. This expectation was not based on the fact that information is wealth but because radio broadcasting still remains the most popular means of imparting mass information to the people in both the rural and urban areas. However, this expectation could not be met because since the 1980s only Freedom Radio and now Nagarta have taken up the challenge in the north.

This situation points to a wide shortcoming between economic and political needs of the people and the initiative and patriotism of northern investors who, out of sheer short-sightedness, will rather invest in ventures with quick returns than in strategic sectors.

Yet Nigerians, especially northerners, listen more than they read and they maintain radios in their homes, market stalls, private and commercial vehicles, in their pockets and even while they tend to their cattle in the bush as their inseparable companion. It is the radio that gives them first hand



Former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, right, with chairman of the commissioning ceremony of Nagarta Radio, General Muhammadu Wushishi

information about their country and the world they live in. They get to know about goods and services from the radio, and above all, most of their entertainment in music and drama as well as spiritual guidance come through the radio.

The Northerner's avid interest in the radio is a direct consequence of historic development of radio broadcast services in Nigeria. The British colonial rulers introduced radio service, then known as rediffusion, into Nigeria in 1932. It became really popular during the Second World War. The need to mobilise Nigerians, especially Hausa language speakers, to support the British war effort against Hit-

ler's Germany, made the British to put radio into more effective use in the colonies. They introduced programmes in Hausa, which they beamed to all Hausa speaking areas of West Africa. It was the British that popularised the resonating voice of two distinguished Nigerian broadcasters. These two, Alhaji Isa Kaita and Alhaji Sani Kontagora, warmed the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa service to the hearts of many Hausa listeners from its base in Accra, Ghana at that time.

Those who can remember those days can recall how the voices of these eminent broadcasters during the Second World War actually popular-

ised the war against Hitler as well as idolised the bravery of the allied forces. Since then all the major ideological, economic and political powers of Western Europe, Asia, the United States of America as well as Russia made it their policy to pursue external radio broadcasting services to Africa. Through it, they are able to penetrate and influence the opinion and attitude of decision makers and the general public. The radio made them gain inroads into the minds of the people who in turn began to believe or at least share in the causes being pursued by the foreign powers.

This situation continued even more vigorously in the cold war years between the Western and the eastern world. Africa became one of the main targets of the struggle for the minds of the people. Major African languages, notably Swahili and Somali in East Africa, Arabic in the north and Hausa in the West, were carefully chosen for broadcasting services. These languages are still used by the BBC, Voice of America (VOA) Radio Deutch Welle, Radio Moscow and Radio Beijing among others.

It is significant to note that Northerners have become fond of these foreign radio stations, not because they prefer things foreign but they became addicted to them because they have grown to realise that any piece of information they receive from these foreign radio stations must have been subjected to the highest standard of broadcast journalism. In other words the information

received from these stations is reliable, authentic and timely. In contrast, they regard the information from the radio stations within the country as often jaundiced, misleading, inaccurate or tailored to suit the caprices of the powers that be. In deed, news of what is happening in Kaduna is often learned through the BBC or VOA and not from local stations. According to most northern listeners, local stations report only what the government has done and quite often even that may prove to be misleading or exaggerated. They believe that the foreign stations using high professional expertise, human and material resources, which they deploy to information gathering and dissemination, enabled them to dominate the airwaves.

Yet much as the foreign radio station are able to satisfy the peoples' thirst for credible information, some yawning gap exists in the limited extent to which foreign programmes are able to cover crucial areas of interest to Nigerian listeners. This is the gap Nagarta Radio seemed to have committed itself to filling.

At this point, it bears repeating that the response of northern investors to the liberalisation of the broadcast industry, nay the media in general has been quite disappointing. So far, only two of the 17 private radio stations, Nagarta and Freedom, are owned by northern investors while only one television stations, Desmims Independent Television (DITV) is located and run



(L), Emir of Zazzaru Alhaji Shehu Idris (R), the 18th Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki at the commissioning of Nagarta Radio.

Condition

in the north.

Nagarta Radio was born in this northern situation with the aim of quenching the thirst of Northerners for a credible radio station of their own. Northerners yearned for long for a radio station that will spring up directly from their culture, which understands their way of life and which responds actively to their social, economic, cultural, religious and political needs and aspirations. Nagarta is said to have been established as a response to the fact that government alone cannot possibly provide the entire infrastructure for the dissemination of the information needed by the people. The diversity of the political and economic interests of government, whether federal or state, places enormous constraints on the broadcast stations they own. Inevitably, there is bound to be wide differences in the operational methods and strategies between private and government owned broadcast institutions.

So, listeners expect Nagarta Radio to seek, among others, to develop and provide programmes on political issues, as well as agricultural, health, arts, science technology and culture: Issues of religious and cultural relationships need to be tailored to strengthen the moral and traditional bonds of unity among Northerners in particular and Nigerians in general.

The listening public today is already sophisticated. They can distinguish between good and bad stations, and between credible and unreliable ones. The public therefore, expect the quality of programme production and presentation of Nagarta Radio must seek not only to match the existing standards in its operating environment but to surpass it. Its newsgathering must be based on unalloyed industry while its news reporting must be anchored on credibility and integrity and never sycophancy. Its credo in news reporting is: Truth no matter how bitter.

They also expect Nagarta Radio should make it a cardinal objective to win back lost radio audiences who have developed a sophisticated taste for foreign radio broadcasts. It can do this by giving them credible, home-grown programmes which they have done through such programmes as: *Kowane Allazi* and *Kasar mu a yau*

According to the chairman of Nagarta's board of directors,



A cross section of guest at the commissioning of Nagarta Radio...recently

Alhaji Magaji Dambatta, Nagarta Radio aims, "to raise the standard of broadcasting in Nigeria to a very high level of excellence by utilising the knowledge, skills and creativity of our staff in enriching the lives of our listeners and widening their horizon.

"We will promote to the fullest our cultural, moral and religious values and will be uncompromising in the fight against all the evils manifesting in our society; against decadence and against indolence. We will try to inspire the confidence of our audience by identifying with their aspirations and being factual, objective and current," Alhaji Dambatta declared in his mission statement at the official commissioning of the station.

Giving an insight into the objectives of the station in an interview, the general manager of the station and a veteran of the Voice of America, Mallam Shehu Yusuf Maitama Kura said, "Our number one goal is that Nagarta Radio station will play a very important role in ensuring national unity, peace and stability. Number two, we have to educate our listeners on basic health issues like the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and about general hygiene. How to keep their homes clean and tidy. On educational institutions and responsibilities, what can parents do to help their kids get go school?"

"We are going to do anything to help people understand the social problem of *almajirai*, because this is a social problem. It has nothing to do with religion. It has nothing to do with ethnicity. Although the majority of our

almajirai are Hausa speaking people it has nothing to do with religion. So we are going to do everything possible to enlighten parents about their responsibilities to their children."

Nagarta Radio, which broadcasts mainly in Hausa, according to its general manager, Mallam Shehu, will also focus on one of the problems that has caused a lot of violence among communities in the north, that is the indigene/settler dichotomy. "I think the issue of settler or non-indigenes is being used by politicians who want to score political points. But Nagarta Radio will do everything to unite the people and in fact that is our motto, that the north must be united because if the North is

united Nigeria as a whole will be united, and if the North has a problem Nigerian will continue to have problems because it is only in the North that we have more than 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria and until and unless these ethnic groups unite and have a purpose or goal there will never be any peace.

"We are like a family in the North there is nobody that is a settler and nobody who is an indigene not only in the North but in Nigeria as a whole and we have programmes tailored and targeted towards sensitising people to know that nobody is a settler and nobody is trying to get rid of anybody or displace anybody. Everybody has a responsibility as a citizen and also as a member of

the community."

Mallam Shehu assured that Nagarta Radio would be a social crusader." Nagarta Radio has a strong message of unity in diversity because if God wants us to be one ethnic group or one religion he would have created us so. God has the power to make everybody to be Christians or Muslims, Hindus or Budhists. He did not do that and God created us into various ethnic groups with different religions for you and me to understand each other better. Whether you like it or not there are Muslims and Christians in Nigeria and the Nigerian constitution guarantees freedom of worship, freedom of thought, freedom of association and freedom of movement."

Mallam Shehu was however evasive as to the ownership of the radio station, "I want us to be judged by what we do. I always tell people that the most important question to ask is what will Nagarta Radio do and our motto is, telling the truth no matter what." Some sources have pointed to the former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida as the owner while some pointed to the National Security Adviser, General Aliyu Gusau. Both were present at the official commissioning ceremony of Saturday, February 26, 2005.

However, this is how Nagarta Radio brings the advantages inherent in a private station to bear in giving its listeners what they want to hear that will matter most.



General Muhammadu Wushishi, Chairman at the commissioning of Nagarta Radio.

Science & Education



Nassarawa State commissioner for local government affairs, Alhaji Halilu, Bala Usman (L) acting Rector of the Federal Polytechnic, Nassarawa, Mr Pius O. Salami, registrar of the school, Dr A. H. Ahmed II and dean students' affairs, Mr Arowolo at the 2004/2005 matriculation ceremony of the institution held recently

UBE expends N3.12bn on 9,650 primary schools

The Universal Basic Education has expended N3.12 billion in executing 9,650 projects in primary schools throughout the country under its community initiated self-help project scheme.

A breakdown shows that the UBE executed at least 10 projects in each of the 774 local government areas in the country, with the various communities where the benefiting primary schools are located contributing N624 million as counterpart funding.

According to a statement by the UBE, the community initiated self-help project scheme was institutionalised as a process of making communities contribute meaningful to the improvement of education service delivery system.

Each of the 9,650 executed projects, the UBE said is targeted at improving access, equity and quality in schooling resulting in increased primary school enrolment figures, gender balance and a mutual sense of success between the school and the host community.

The community initiated self-help project scheme now in its second phase, the UBE added enhances the capacity of host communities to implement projects according to specified criteria, improving

By Henry Omu, Senior Reporters (Education)

the infrastructure of their schools by addressing areas of greatest needs, willingness to participate in projects with minimal support and supervision from government while the involvement of communities ensures that projects are sustained.

Rep. sponsors workshop for maths, English teachers

Chairman, House of Representatives committee on media and publicity, Rep. Abike Dabiri has opened a workshop for the training of mathematics and English Language teachers in Ikorodu local government as part of her contribution to education development in Lagos state.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the workshop in Lagos, Rep Abike Dabiri said she was motivated by the poor condition of schools and poor performance of students in mathematics and English language.

She said the phobia for mathematics by students has resulted in large scale failure in the past.

Rep. Dabiri said the mathematics teachers needed to be trained to be able to teach their students properly.

While only 132 projects were executed during the first phase of the scheme, the UBE said the benefits of the scheme include consolidating the gains of participation with self-help community initiative, involving and empowering more communities to help realise the objectives of the UBE and encourage community to own schools.

By Bukola Oladiji (Intern) Lagos

In her speech, the wife of Lagos state governor, Mrs Oluremi Tinubu said the project will be for the ultimate benefit of people in Ikorodu local government and Lagos state.

"I believe very strongly that a turn-around of the current situation could be achieved if more exciting and participatory method of teaching English language and mathematics and developed," she added.

Speaking at the event, the national marketing manager of Promacichor Nigeria Limited a co-sponsor of the workshop, Mr Chris Elumu, said the project is a wonderful one that is why cowbell has been a part of it. He said Promacichor supports qualitative education in both primary and tertiary institutions.

Higher Education This Week

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

Proposed de-nationalisation of ASUU

In the *Guardian* of Tuesday, March 1, 2005, President Olusegun Obasanjo was reported as expressing the determination of his administration to 'end the monopoly of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) by ensuring that each university has its own academic staff union'. According to the newspaper, the President made this known recently in an interactive radio phone-in programme where he was quoted as saying that 'it is unfortunate that things have been the way they are regarding FG/ASUU relationship. I have said it times without number that there is nowhere in the world where one union paralyzes the whole tertiary institutions of a nation'. The President conclusively said that 'each university will have its own union and if the union of the university wants to close down its institution, good luck to it' (<http://www.guardiannewsngr.com/news/article03>).

This was not the first time that the government made this intention known. Close watchers of the dynamics of FG-ASUU relations are aware that what the President did was simply re-iterating a long-standing intention of his administration. And when seen within the context of government wider plan to denationalize and then decentralize powerful (read 'irritating') national unions in the industrial relations system, it becomes clear that the President was not merely issuing a threat.

About nine months ago, (precisely on Monday, 28 June, 2004) the BBC News (UK edition) reported that 'Nigeria seeks to curb union power'. And furthermore it reported that President Obasanjo said that 'Nigeria's powerful umbrella trade union body will be broken up' (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3846807.stm>). Interestingly, it also reported the President as saying that 'we forced the people to belong to the union because we were military. We are now in a democracy and we want Nigerians to do things democratically, but labour does not want to be democratic'. Also in August last year, while declaring open a three-day Retreat of the House of Representatives in Minna, the President (we are quoting the *THISDAY* Newspaper) 'restated the resolve of his administration to decentralize Labour as he urged members of the House of representatives to pass all pending executive bills, including the Trade Union reform Bill, into law' (<http://www.thisdayonline.com/news/20040817news08.html>).

Labour leaders are not in doubt as to why the government wants to clip the wings of NLC. In the opinion of the government, NLC has become too 'stubborn', 'confrontational' and perhaps too 'radical' for its liking. In a more political sense, one labour leader (the president of the National Union of Food Beverage and Tobacco Employees, Comrade John Onyenemere) opined that the Labour Bill was 'aimed at ensuring that it not only disintegrates the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), but to also stifle labour which has emerged as the only credible opposition in the polity'. What the bill wants he continued is that 'there should be multiple labour centers and by that government feels that labour cannot speak with one voice again because there would not be only one central organization by removing the automatic check-up (see <http://www.thisdayonline.com/news/20040806news19.html>). This is the background against which the proposed de-nationalization and eventual decentralization of ASUU should be seen. However unlike the industrial unions presently under the NLC which can still legally form multiple central organizations along industrial lines if ASUU is decentralized, a central body can only exist underground (illegally) since it would not be permitted by law.

Before we go further, let us re-state that this column wishes, hopes and prays for a better FG-ASUU relations and it will try very hard to encourage that through periodically calling both sides to respect a culture of dialogue and collective bargaining. It is along this line that one calls on ASUU again to have

a serious re-think of its use of strikes as an effective weapon of achieving its objectives. On the other hand, the government should show good faith in the use of dialogue and due process in its relations with ASUU. This was why this column was sad some weeks ago at the inability of the government to appear in court on two occasions when its case with ASUU was to be heard. This is not a demonstration of good faith. But having said all these, it is not proper for the government to decentralize ASUU by de-nationalizing it through legal means?

We do not think it is advisable to de-nationalize ASUU in the interest of democracy. The right to freedom of association and assembly under a democratic dispensation (which the President rightly mentioned earlier in the BBC news under reference above) is an important one in the history of people's struggle against the authoritarian tendencies of the states in Europe and America and during the period of our nationalist struggle in Nigeria. Over the centuries, three types of rights have been won. According to T.H. Marshall (1950 & 1992) in his *Citizenship and Social Class*, civil rights (eg right to life, own property etc) were won in the eighteenth century. Then political rights (eg right to vote, right to form associations, right to make free speech, join unions etc) were won in the nineteenth century, while social rights (eg right to security through housing, education, health, enjoy acceptable standard of economic welfare belong to the twentieth century (cf. John Kingdon 2000: 'Citizen or State Consumer? A Fistful of Charters', in J. A. Chandler (ed): *The Citizen's Charter*. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company Ltd.).

Consequently, if for any reason the government wants to decentralize any national union, it should leave such to the rank and file of the members of the unions themselves to decide. It should not be imposed on the union through government legislation. That in itself means stifling the right of the unions to form an association. We cannot say that people have right to form a legitimate association and still go about abridging that right through dictating the form it should take. In any case, the need to form either a local (ie branch or plant level) union or a national one, is usually dictated by the reality on the ground. If for instance, there is a national employer, then there would be need to have a corresponding national union to relate with national employer and through it address issues of national significance from the employer that affect the local union members. If on the other hand, there is no national employer, then the unions would restrict their activities locally. I guess this an important principle of industrial relations, which the government should not overlook.

We humbly and respectfully wish to request Mr. President to privately ask one of his fine and brilliant Policy Advisers in the person of Prof. Julius Obonyere how the world would react if he goes ahead to abridge a political right won in the 19th century, in this 21st century. We are sure the Julius we know, would have some reservations but we would be surprised if he thinks differently. The challenge before all of us both the government and ASUU, is to find a better way of resolving their long-standing conflict in a more constructive way. This is a challenge this column faces from time to time. And there would be no rest in this column until both the government and ASUU begin to speak the language each side would understand even when there is a problem.

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

Science & Education

Don charges media to give more attention to scientists

The president of the Nigerian Academy of Science, Prof. Gabriel Ogunmola, has urged the press to bring scientific developments by Nigerian scientists to the limelight.

Addressing a news conference today in Lagos, Prof. Ogunmola expressed regret that the press lay more emphasis on negative things than on scientific discoveries.

"You did it for politics and for politicians by elevating them and bringing them to limelight. Why will you not do same for scientists discovering and looking for solutions to problems facing the country," he queried.

Ogunmola, a Chemist, cited the example of Fela and Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, saying that while Fela's death was celebrated by the press, nothing was done when Olikoye died, whereas the latter achieved a lot more for Nigeria in terms of community health.

He also accused government of paying more attention

to less important things, saying: "Footballers are rewarded for playing for one hour with millions of Naira, whereas scientists are hardly ever mentioned or rewarded when they achieve a feat."

On agricultural development, Ogunmola said it was unforgivable for Nigerians to be hungry in spite of all its resources, including land that God bestowed the country with.

He added that by not addressing the energy needs of the country, the government had not tackled the problem of hunger.

He said the Nigerian government must, as a matter of urgency, shift its emphasis to solar energy, agricultural revolution and set up standards in agriculture.

"Until we are able to put energy into agriculture, we will never be able to feed ourselves and solve the problem of hunger," Ogunmola said and urged rich Nigerians to establish scientific demonstration centres.



Chairman Universal Basic Education (UBE) commission, Prof. Anezi Okoro (l.), the executive secretary of the commission, Prof. Gidado Tahir and other board members during the inauguration of the board by the minister of education, Prof. Fabian Osuji in Abuja...recently.

Sokoto requires N35bn for primary education

The sum of N35 billion is said to be required for the proper positioning of primary education in Sokoto State.

Speaking recently in Sokoto while presenting the reports of the 23-member committee for the repositioning of primary education in the state, the chairman, Alhaji Muhammad Bello Dogon-Daji, said this amount will be required in order to address all the lingering problems plaguing primary education in the state.

Alhaji Dogon-Daji, while presenting the committee's report to governor Attahiru Bafarawa that although there has been appreciable increase in enrolment at all levels of education in the state in recent years, but that the gross enrolment of primary school present level stood at only 60 per cent while two-fifth of school-age children were still out of school.

Gov. Mu'azu lauds NTI over teachers' education

Governor Ahmadu Mu'azu of Bauchi State has lauded the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Kaduna for its contributions to the development of teachers' education.

Mu'azu made the commendation on Monday, in Bauchi, while declaring open a two-day retreat on service delivery, organised by the NTI for its management and senior staff at Zaranda Hotel, Bauchi.

The governor said many teachers in Bauchi State have benefited from the

Distance Learning Programme (DLP) of the institute, noting that "we are satisfied with the performance of its product."

He reiterated the Bauchi State government's determination to ensure that all primary school teachers attained the prescribed minimum teaching qualification of NCE within the shortest possible time.

He directed all teachers,

From Abdulfatah Abdulsalami, Correspondent (Sokoto)

The committee also disclosed that there is a disturbing disparity in school enrolment between local governments, with Gudu and Binji having the lowest figures while Gada, Kware and Tambuwal have the highest number of children who are out of school.

The committee stressed further that the existing pupil/teachers of 1:43 could be said to be reasonable when reviewed from a wide perspective, adding that the problem is becoming glaring when considered on the basis of those with requisite qualification.

Alhaji Dogon-Daji said 6,973 qualified secular teachers are urgently required in addition to 6,300 others between now and the end of the year, revealing that there is too much congestion

in some schools, particularly in urban areas.

He pointed out that on the whole, newly 4,500 additional classrooms were repaired across the state in order to ensure a more conducive teaching and learning atmosphere.

The chairman stated further that there is still an urgent need for the provision of 123,000 additional two-seater desks in order to ensure that pupils no longer sit on mats or on the bare floor, adding that assorted books in various subject areas and other instructional materials were also required to make teaching easier.

Alhaji Dogon-Daji said his committee also discovered that community participation in the running of primary schools is rather low including the participation of traditional rulers, adding that teachers' morale is very low due to low pay and heavy work burden.

who required upgrading to NCE level to register in the courses offered by the NTI. He noted that teachers' welfare had been receiving prior attention in the state, alongside the provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning.

Mu'azu explained that the state government's efforts had started paying-off, based on the improvement in the performance of the state students in SSCE and NECO examinations.

Earlier, the NTI Director, Dr. Ahmed Modibbo, said the choice of Bauchi for the retreat by the NTI was not only for its hospitality but as a mark of identification with the state for its laudable education programmes from which the NTI operations in the state had benefited immensely.

Modibbo said the retreat was organised in response to government's directive that each ministry/parastatal agency should produce its Service Charter.

He explained that the



Governor Mu'azu

19 northern states to fund ABU - Gov.

From Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent (Katsina)

The governing council and management board of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, is to address the northern governor's forum on the shortage of funds that is currently crippling smooth operations in the institution.

Katsina State governor, Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua gave the hint while playing host to the management of the school led by its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shehu Usman Abdullahi.

He advised ABU authorities to come up with a feasible, independent and sustainable source of funding for onward consideration by the 19 northern governors.

The governor who was responding to complaints of lack of fund said its effect on the academic viability of the institution, said any problem facing ABU is the "problem of the entire north because it is the leading light of educational development in the entire region.

"Apart from their traditional roles of supporting the school as governors, they must join hands together to sustain the school in order to enable it mid-wife the springing up of other institutions and universities in the country."

He said most of the universities in the country were mere glorified secondary schools, hence the need to support ABU to retain its leading role.

Earlier in his address, the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Professor Shehu Usman Abdullahi mentioned some of the problems facing the institution and urged the government's intervention to enable the institution compete favourably and stand sustainably on its feet.

He also thanked the Katsina State government in its effort in establishing the School of Basic and Remedial Studies (SBRS), Funtua which he said has gone a long way in improving the students intake into the university from the 19 northern states.

He hoped on the need to construct more lecture theatres, language, laboratory and other science libraries to improve the quality of teaching in the school.

Gov. Goje assures ATBU of assistance

Gombe State governor, Alhaji Muhammad Danjuma Goje, has assured Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi of his government's continued support.

The governor, who was speaking when the vice-chancellor of the university, Professor Garba Aliyu Babaji, paid him a courtesy call, said the establishment of Gombe State University did not mean the state would neglect ATBU in terms of assistance.

He promised that his government would continue to give necessary support to the university, as "it is in our collective interest that ATBU succeeds."

Governor Goje said indignities of the state would still continue to patronise the university and other universities in the country, so as to benefit from a variety of cour-

From Muhammad Abubakar, Correspondent (Gombe)

ses being offered. The governor called on students not to dabble into religious fanaticism or be influenced by detractors saying they should oppose anything that would slow them down.

In his address, Professor Babaji, who commended the governor for establishing a state university said Nigeria has room for more universities and as such the Gombe State University is a welcome development.

He pointed out that Bauchi and Gombe States are still the key catchments areas of his university.

The newly established Gombe State University whose governing board was inaugurated recently is on the process of admitting its first set of students.

Katsina ETF seeks private collaboration to revive education

The Katsina State Education Trust Fund (ETF) has appealed to wealthy individuals, other stakeholders as well as the people of the state to help salvage the educational system in the state.

Chairman of the board, Alh. Moh'd Dalhatu, made the appeal in a chat with newsmen shortly after donating N1 million worth of reference library text books to the Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic.

He said the response of people in the state towards the development of education has been anything but encouraging.

Alhaji Dalhatu said the provision of adequate and qualitative education to the society is a collective respo-

From Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent, (Katsina)

nsibility of everyone in the state and promised that the state education trust fund will donate more books to the polytechnic library to enable the school meet some of the requirements laid down by NBTE for the accreditation of some courses offered by the school.

In a response, the Rector, Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, represented by the school's Bursar, Abbas Tukur, thanked the management of ETF for the remarkable gesture, saying attempts by the school to secure the books in the past have failed and assured that the school would put the books to judicious use.

Science & Education

Mathematical Centre designs programme to enhance maths study

The National Mathematical Centre in collaboration with the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is to design a mathematics improvement programme to improve the performance of mathematics students.

The director-general of the centre, Professor Samuel Ale, disclosed this at a one-day national seminar on 'Recent Numerical Methods for Solving Differential Equation,' held recently in Abuja.

The seminar which had mathematicians and postgraduates students drawn

By Salaudeen Ozigi (Intern)

from over 13 of the nation's universities considered prospects for cooperation and collaboration amongst Nigerian mathematical scientists, especially between young and advanced scientists within and outside the country in order to develop initiatives and resources of international standing for re-awakening and sustaining interest in the mathematical sciences.

In his welcome address, Prof. Ale commended the commitment and continued support of the resource persons drawn from the nations universities for their efforts aimed at strengthening young academics, lecturers and researchers in the mathematical sciences, stressing that he hopes that such efforts would yield the desired results by broadening the appreciation of mathematics and improve the competence of the participants.

He assured the participants that given the role the centre and mathematical scientists can play in the nation's development, and in making the people of Nigeria and the West Africa sub-region mathematically literate and technologically developed, the centre would continue to work with determination towards ensuring the effective functioning and development of the centre.

The director-general said the Joint Higher Degree Programme (JHDP) which is the first of its kind in the country established by the centre will commence by the second quarter of this year in collaboration with six other universities.

"What the National Mathematical Centre, was established to do must be done. The emphasis before was on the postgraduate courses, workshops and research.



The Education Tax Fund (ETF) assistant director (public relations), Mr. Jacob Alada (l), assistant director funds generation, Mallam Aliyu Naiya (m) and executive secretary ETF, Mallam Mustapha Jaji making a point at the two-day "Leadership and effectiveness workshop" held by the ETF for its management staff in Abuja...yesterday.

Provost warns students against vices

From Waziri Isa Gwantu, (Stringer), Zaria

The Samaru College of Agriculture has admitted and matriculated 307 students out of the 760 that applied for admission in the institution for the 2004/2005 academic session.

Speaking at the matriculation ceremony, the provost of the college, Dr. D.A. Labe, told the newly admitted students that "some of you might have faced frustrations of rejection by or in other schools, but the college has adopted you to form, inform and reform you academically and morally. It is therefore our hope and wish that you make your stay here worth while so that you will graduate at the end of your course in flying colours of academic and characters."

The provost advised the students to be focussed in their mission while in the school and should always allow their activities, aspirations and ambitions in life to be guided by the college's philosophy of "centre to learn, leave to serve," "to remain focused, you must shun such vices as cultism, marauding activities, drug addiction, examination malpractices, religious fanaticism and seductive dressing."

He regretted that the dressing mode of most female students in the college, like in other tertiary institutions, is getting closer to nudity which does not make them good ambassadors of their parents, states, the nation and their institutions.

In his address, the director of the division of agricultural college, Ahmadu Bello University, Dr. Salihu Dadari, said the Samaru College of Agriculture has graduated students the world over in various disciplines of agriculture.

"Most of the middle level manpower requirement in the areas of agriculture of 19 northern states and others have passed through the college. It is therefore our hope that you will make good use of the opportunity offered you to be here," he admonished.

In his speech, the vice chancellor of the university, Professor Shehu Usman Abdulahi, announced that the federal government has mandated all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, to supplement about 25 per cent of their financial requirements for adequate teaching/practical assignments.

"It is because of this reason therefore that we had no option other than to review our school fees so we can get little money, at least for the maintenance of your classrooms, hostels and environment for conducive learning" he disclosed.

Three schools win Nestle Milo arts competition

Nestle Nigeria Plc has declared three schools in Lagos state as winners of the star prizes of its year 2004, Nestle Milo School's Art Competition with the schools carting home 15 Internet-ready computer sets and N400,000 each.

Addressing the press in Lagos, the marketing manager, Nestle Nigeria Plc, sponsors of the competition, Mrs. Iquo Ukoh, announced the winner as the NITEL Staff School, Oshodi, St Louis College, Idumu Lagos, and St Leo's Catholic Nursery and Primary School Ikeja.

According to her, NITEL Staff School Oshodi, won the first prize of 10 Internet-ready computer sets, while St Louis College Idumu, Lagos, and St Leo's Catholic Nursery and primary school, Ikeja, won the second and third positions that earned them five internet-ready computer sets and N400,000 respectively.

She said 'to reward these schools for their efforts, all participating schools will be going home with Milo products while

NUC issues guidelines for non-degree courses

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has released fresh guidelines to regulate the running of non-degree programmes and the award of diplomas and certificates by Nigerian universities.

The executive secretary of the NUC, Prof. Peter Okebukola, who announced the release of the new regulations in Abuja, said the need to streamline the running of such courses arose because of the disparity among the various

By Henry Omu, Senior Reporter (Education)

universities in the country in their modalities for admission into sub-degree programmes, curriculum content, curriculum implementation and conditions for transition to degree programmes.

Henceforth, the NUC said all such programmes can only be own by any university after the approval of the senate of the institution, while the minimum entry qualification must be five credits obtained at two sittings and that teachers on such programmes must possess a minimum of a Masters Degree.

The NUC has also directed that students who successfully complete non-degree awarding programmes must register with JAMB before transiting to degree programmes, and that final examination must pass through an external examiner.

Similarly, the NUC says the award of diplomas should be for duration of two years, that universities should stop conducting preparatory courses for SSCE and UME on campus. It added that consultancy units of universities can from now onwards only run short proficiency training courses leading to the award of certificates and have been barred from running sub-degree programmes.

The NUC arrived at the new guidelines after meeting with officials of universities offering non-degree awarding courses in Abuja, last Thursday.

Prof. Okebukola in his address at the occasion, said while 95 per cent of Nigerian universities run non-degree courses with enrolment for such courses constituting a quarter of the student

population, the mode of implementation of such programmes however lead to the admission of students of doubtful quality into the university system.

This development, he said is partly responsible for the declining quality of Nigerian graduates, adding that the 'NUC in line with its statutory mandate of setting minimum standards and ensuring quality of university education in Nigeria is obliged to rise up to its responsibility in that regard.'

Also speaking at the meeting, Prof. Ignatius Uvah, the NUC director for academic planning and research, said in the 1990s, most universities were persuaded to give up their

non-degree programmes because compliance with this directive made it possible for a university to be eligible for the 1992 World Bank University Sector Adjustment Credit Project.

'Today, almost all universities offer non-degree programmes both in science-based and arts-based disciplines.

'It is against this backdrop that the NUC, the regulatory body, for orderly development of university education in Nigeria, and concerned about the uncoordinated proliferation of these non-degree programmes, decided that an instrument be put in place for regulation of their operation in Nigerian universities,' he said.

Gov Shekarau wants demonstrating students suspended

The Kano state ministry of education has been directed to suspend students who participated in a demonstration in the state capital. Governor Ibrahim Shekarau gave the directive, warning that his administration will not tolerate any form of indiscipline from students.

Governor Shekarau was speaking after receiving a report of the demonstration staged by the students of Gwale secondary school over the closure of the school gate by the principal after the opening time of 8.00am.

According to him, the act is a sign of irresponsibility despite the effort to uplift education in the state.

'At the wake of government's determination

to restore the glory of education in the state, any student who misbehaves will be dealt with accordingly,' he said.

The governor further urged all principals in the state to make it a policy that any student who comes to school after 8.00am should be sent back, calling on them to ensure strict adherence to the principles of discipline and teaching.

He then advised the principals to live by example by being punctual to their duty posts for the students to emulate them, adding that teachers are the best category to help in human development through teaching and guidance.

By Samson Ojo, Correspondent (Lagos)

the schools that come 3rd, 2nd and 1st will be going home with library books worth N400,000, 5 sets of computers with Internet access and 10 sets of computers with Internet access respectively.'

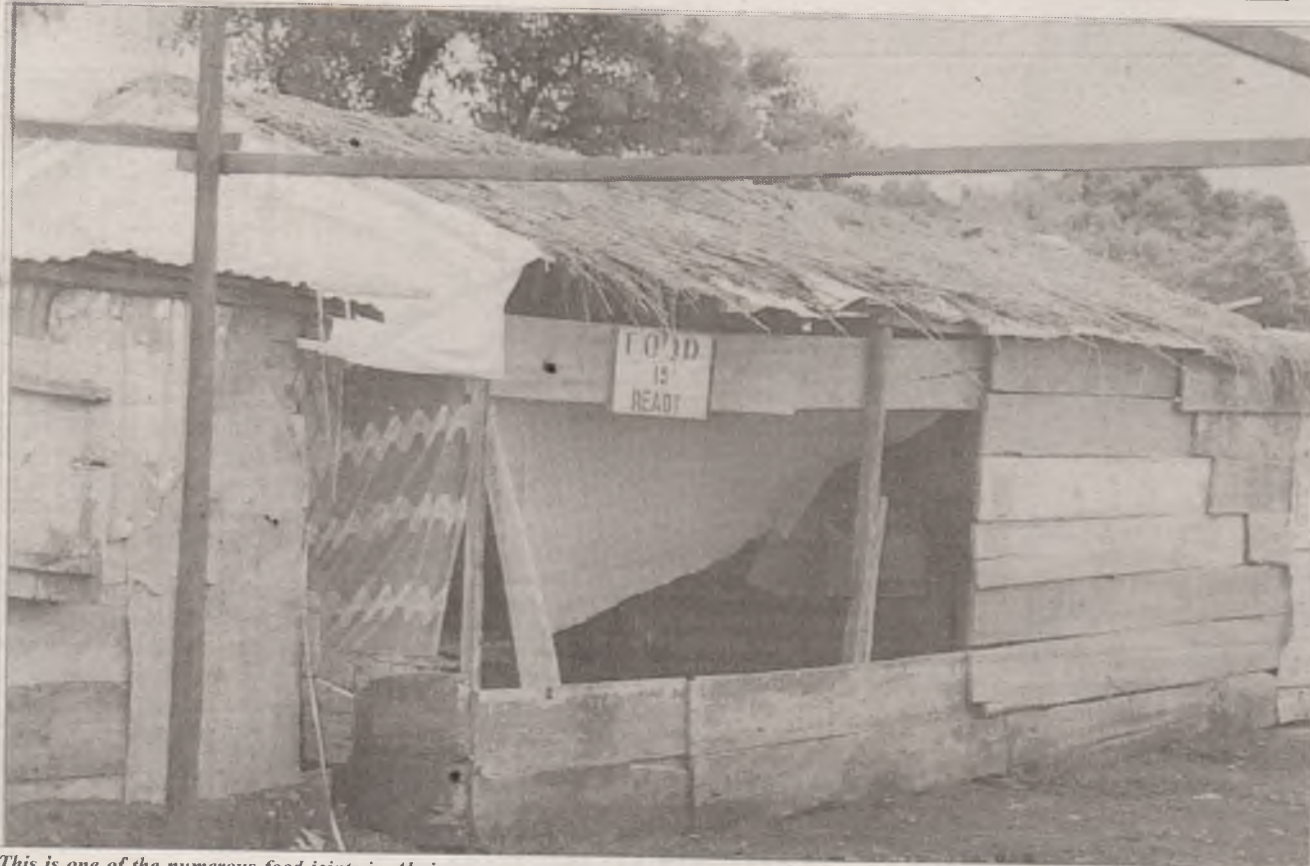
On the aims and objectives of the arts competition which started in 2003, she said the competition has three key objectives: by inculcating and enhancing the study of arts in children through creative arts, to create wealth (by selecting master pieces) from supposed wasted branded foil materials of Milo and to contribute to the development of the educational sector and sports.

For the 2005 edition, which will commence this week till end of October, 2005, Mrs. Ukoh stated that the competition will be opened to all the primary and secondary schools in the country.

The primary school pupils are expected to use 500 branded Nestle Milo foils obtained from either the 450 grammes or 900 grammes tin, while secondary schools participants are to use 1,000 branded Nestle Milo foils for the same purpose.

By Aliyu S. Machika, Correspondent Kano

ABUJA TRUST



This is one of the numerous food joints in Abuja.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

FCDA shuts Herbert Macaulay Way • evicts road side traders

Commercial and vehicular activities came to a halt yesterday when the Department of Development Control of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) again closed the Herbert Macaulay Way, the major commercial transport route in Abuja.

Also another major thoroughfare to the old Wuse Market was closed to traffic as bulldozers were seen demolishing goods of makeshift traders, some of whom relocated to the pedestrian lanes along Herbert Macaulay Way, Wuse Zone 5 penultimate week after their evacuation from the old Wuse and Bakassi markets.

Our correspondent reported that goods worth millions were destroyed in an operation that lasted several hours amidst tight security.

Eyewitnesses told our correspondent who went to the scene few hours after the operation started that there was no previous warning as to the demolition exercise while several motorists and passengers complained of the frequency of the closure of the city's main commercial transport route.

Distressed by the sudden interruption in their activities, bus drivers converted Mombassa Street, Wuse Zone 5 to a bus stop while many traders besieged the

premises of the shopping mall along the street to save their wares from destruction.

Officials of FCDA were seen clearing the debris of the demolition when our correspondent arrived the scene while the main road remain

deserted as police and members of the Civil Defence Corps were seen at strategic points.

Efforts by our reporter to speak with some FCDA officials failed as the declined comment.

FCT CJ swears-in 19 new magistrates

The FCT chief Judge, Justice Lawal Hassan Gummi, has sworn in nineteen new magistrates into the FCT judiciary.

In his speech during the ceremony, Justice Gummi, who urged the new magistrates to approach their work with honesty and decency, said fifteen out of the nineteen magistrates sworn in will be engaged in mobile court operations within Abuja, Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) as well as the Abuja municipal and Gwagwalada area councils.

He urged them to handle the assignment as a special one and to be civil in their approach and not act as a military tribunal.

According to him, "we will recognise and reward hard work and similarly we shall punish laziness, corrup-

tion and indiscipline."

The FCT Chief Judge also asked the new magistrates to ignore the police and other government agencies that want to push them to negate their constitutional duties.

Abaji LG awards N13m contract for primary schools

The chairman, Abaji area council, Alhaji Mohammad Augulu Loko, has awarded a contract of N13 million for the construction of two blocks of classrooms each for primary schools in four communities in the area council.

This was made known by the head of works department of the council, Alhaji Jibrin Gani, recently in the area council.

Alhaji Gani said that the council's effort was intended to create a more conducive learning environment for rural children.

He said the communities to benefit from the new construction of primary schools include Pandagi, Gbako, Gbogbodo, Kekeshi and Mawogi.

Alhaji Gani observed that most rural communities in the area lack adequate classrooms and had to study under trees, a condition he said undermines the pupils' concentration and comprehen-

'MFCT doctors have no cause to fear'

Resident doctors in the FCT ministry have no cause to fear about the recent dissolution of the FCT ministry, a spokesman of the doctors has said.

The FCT ministry's dissolution announced last week had plunged several employees into panic despite repeated assurances about their jobs' security.

Dr. Abdullahi Kudani, a spokesman of the FCT resident doctors told the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* on Tuesday in Abuja, that the de-merger of the FCT ministry from the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) would not affect the jobs of his colleagues.

He said that the health department was one of the four newly created mandate secretariats under the FCDA, with each headed by an executive secretary.

"Other secretariats created with that of health, included those of Agriculture, Education and Transport. They are like the ministries in the states and their heads are like the commissioners, so what is the problem?" he said.

He regretted that the recent statement credited to one of the NARD national officials was unfortunate. "That official ought to have clarified the status of our colleagues. He did not study the contents of the instrument dissolving the FCT ministry, which is very clear about the status of staff.

"The instrument clearly stated that the minister could retain the services of any staff of the former FCT ministry in the interest of the public," he said.

He confirmed that last month, prior to the dissolution, a form was circulated to all MFCT and Federal Capital Development Authority

(FCDA) staff, to indicate which they would prefer as their employer.

Kudani denied that all NARD members indicated preference for the MFCT, not knowing that the days of the ministry were numbered.

"They cannot deny the knowledge that the creation of mandate secretariats more than six months before was to signal the dissolution of the FCT ministry.

"People resort to all sorts of things to discredit the on-going reform programme in the FCT by saying that they were blackmailed, because nobody told them what the form was meant for and the implications of choosing either of the two employers," he said.

Also speaking on the issue, the FCDA acting director of Health and Human Services, Dr. Abubakar Koro-Mohammed, said that there was no cause for alarm because his mandate secretariat is under the FCDA.

"If our mandate secretariat is under FCDA and any of the doctors working in our hospitals wants to work elsewhere, no one is bound to stop him. In any case, the tension had been depleted by a circular issued today (Tuesday) indicating that our staff have the whole of this week to indicate where they want to belong," he said.

On the allegation that NARD members who opted for transfer out of FCDA would be denied their 22 per cent call duty medical allowances, Koro-Mohammed said that each would be paid irrespective of where he is serving.

"Once the federal government agrees to something on the NARD members, it becomes applicable to all its members working in any government outfit," he said.

MTUN collections for union's welfare - chairman

The chairman, Motor Cycle Transport Union of Nigeria (MTUN), FCT chapter, Comrade Obi Nwaogwugwu, has said that money generated from the sale of the union's daily ticket is used for the welfare of the union.

Comrade Nwaogwugwu told our correspondent that the money, N10 daily, is collected to help members of the union who might need any form of assistance from the union.

He also said that the money so collected is also used to organise lectures, seminars and rallies.

Comrade Nwaogwugwu frowned at a situation where members are made to make multiple payments for the ticket saying that members should insist on paying once.

He called on motorcyclists to report anybody or

By Benjamin Auta, Crime Reporter

the ticket more than once a day.

Recently, some motorcyclists complained about multiple payments for the tickets forced on them by some officials of MTUN, which resulted quarrels and fighting.

TV station for Abuja, soon -el-Rufai

The minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai, has said plans are on the pipeline to introduce a television station known as Aso Radio and Television Services in the territory.

The minister made this revelation while chatting with newsmen in his conference room yesterday.

According to him, the proposed television station is

By Ebenezer John Buoro, (Intern)

corded by Aso Radio. He added that the company, Aso Radio and Television Plc will be provide basically commercial service when it becomes fully operational.

The interim board of the television station is be composed of Mohammed Alhassan, Ikenna Ndaguba, Tijani Abdulahi, Bola Onagorua and the general manager of Aso Radio, Bashir

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News

Women tasked on campaigns against HIV/AIDS, others

Nigerian women have been told to rise to the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS, malaria, polio, and the sale and consumption of fake and adulterated drugs in the country. Making this appeal recently in Abuja at the opening of a national health summit for wives of local government chairmen, the national president of the Association of Local Governments in Nigeria (ALGON), Hon Baver Dzeremo, said the time had come to rise in unison in the defence of people threatened by diseases and socio-economic problems.

According to Hon Dzeremo, ALGON, in collaboration with the Office of the First Lady of the Federation, put together the health summit as its contribution to the improvement of health status of the country. The theme of the summit was, 'The health of the nation:

Bauchi govt provides succour to railway women

Foodstuff worth over N1 million was donated by the Bauchi state government to the wives of railway workers and pensioners who for the past twenty seven months had not been paid salaries, pensions, and their other entitlements. The donated food items included 100 bags of rice and 100 bags of maize.

Donating the items to the women, the Bauchi state head of service, Umar Bello Gamawa, said that it was part of the state government's gesture to alleviate the sufferings of the railway staff in the state. He explained that the government would equally pursue the issue of their husbands' unpaid salaries and pensions with the Federal Ministry of Transport. He assured them that the state would not relent in its efforts to ensure that the salaries, pensions, and other entitlements due to the workers were paid when due.

Receiving the items, the leader of railway women, Mrs. Rhoda Ali, expressed her appreciation of the state government's gesture to alleviate the plight of railway workers. She appealed to the state government, requesting the Federal Ministry of Transport to pay their husbands' salaries and pensions.

Mrs. Ali explained that their unpaid salaries had caused hardship to their families as some of their children were expelled from school for their inability to pay their fees while others had fallen ill due to the hardship they experienced.

It would be recalled that *Daily Trust* had reported the protest march of railway workers' wives in Bauchi to Government House. The women, who numbered over 1000, strapped their starving children on their backs. They defied the scorching sun to march the distance of seven kilometres to lodge their complaint.

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin,
Health reporter

Roles of wives of local government chairmen in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, polio, and other vaccine preventable diseases. He expressed optimism that the summit would enlighten delegates, as well as the generality of Nigerians, on the need to find common grounds in the effort to combat the prevalence of deadly diseases in the country.

Hon. Dzeremo said that the summit would serve as a platform for mobilising, energising, and training of women in various communities to rise up against the diseases ravaging the country.

The ALGON national president also called on the media to join relevant agencies and organisations in the fight to save Nigerian women and children from vaccine preventable diseases. He expressed the association's readiness to enter into partnership with appropriate authorities to save lives in the country.

Also addressing the opening ceremony of the summit was the wife of ALGON's national president, Mrs Justice Dzeremo, who pointed out that the nation's efforts could only yield meaningful results if women at the grassroots were mobilised in the same direction. She challenged stakeholders in the health sector to do everything possible to prevent a monumental catastrophe and the collapse of the nations' healthcare system.

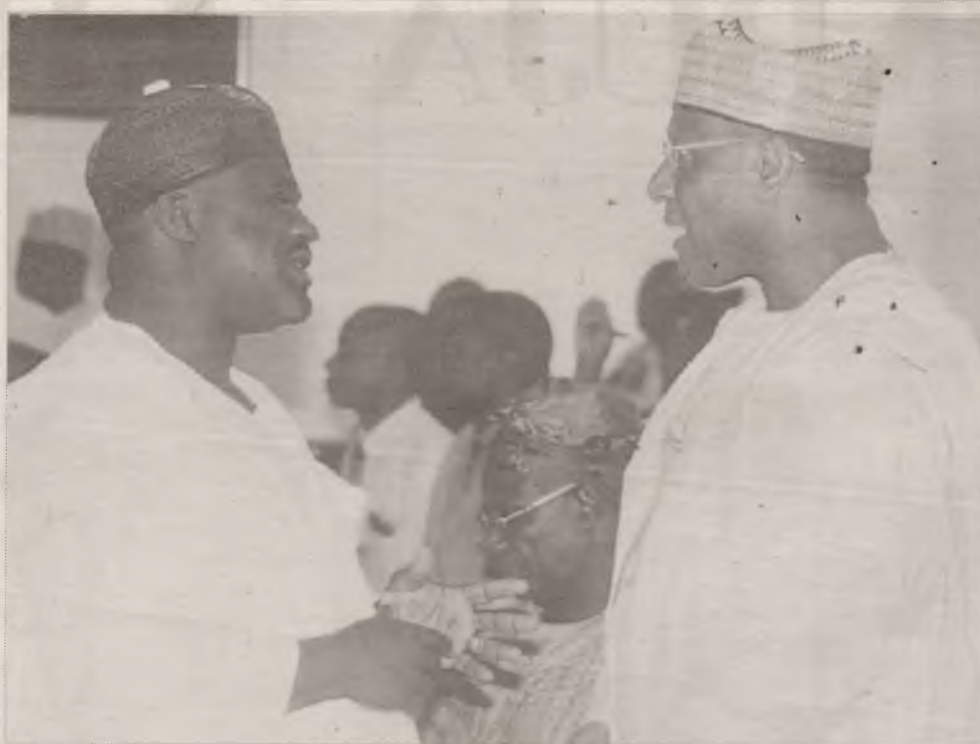
North must develop itself, Gov. Mu'azu

The governor of Bauchi state, Alhaji Ahmadu Adamu Mu'azu, has said that the future and industrialisation of the north rested squarely on the people of the region, as no other person from any region would develop it. He disclosed this at a meeting with the board of directors of the Bank of Industry at Government House, Bauchi and noted with sadness the poor level of industrialisation in the north. He blamed northern leaders for not showing interest in developing their region.

Governor Mu'azu explained that the allegation that the bank was very discriminatory in giving out loans to small-scale industrialists was not true, saying that no preferential treatment was given to any zone or region. 'All that was required is for any person to fulfill the necessary conditions needed for obtaining loan.'

Governor Mu'azu disclosed that his government was planning to establish functional cottage industries across the twenty local government areas of Bauchi, for which project the sum of N1 billion has been set aside. He added that provisions were made in the 2005 budget to accommodate the project.

The governor noted with



Member House Committee on Education, Hon Dahiru Bornoma (left) and UBE commission executive secretary, Professor Gidado Tahir, during the public hearing on a Bill for an act to establish the Nigeria UNESCO commission, held at the National Assembly complex, Abuja...recently.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Obasanjo urges NASS to expedite action on environmental bill

By Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday said that Nigeria needs to carry out a critical self-evaluation on domestication of global environmental agreements to maintain her leadership position on global environmental agreements. He also appealed to the National Assembly to collaborate with the executive in expediting action on environment preservation bills to ensure good environmental management in the country. The president, represented by the secretary to the federal government, Mr Uffort Ekaette,

made the call while declaring open the second annual International Summit on Environmental Management in Nigeria at *Le Meridien* Hotel in Abuja.

Chief Ekaette disclosed that Nigeria has signed a number of conventions to protect the marine environment and prevent the dumping of hazardous and toxic materials, as well as to ensure that maximum advantage of the natural endowment of Nigeria's biological resources was taken. 'For the ozone layer protection, Nigeria maintain its 1996 consumption level of ozone-depleting substances by the end of this year, some of which will be completely eliminated by 2010 as required under the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-depleting Substances,' he stated, adding that more than 200 ozone-depleting-substance-based industries will be retrofitted in this regard.

He disclosed that the government has spent over N10 billion over the last three years to tackle erosion problems in almost all parts of the country, with special attention focused on the Lagos Bar Beach erosion issue.

He listed the establishment of a National Council on Shelter Belt, Aforestation, Erosion, and Coastal Zone Management under the chairmanship of Vice President Atiku Abubakar, the commissioning of feasibility studies

for the provision of integrated waste management facilities in 15 cities of the country, and the approval of the national environmental sanitation policy and programmes by the Federal Executive Council as some of the measures taken by the federal government to address various aspects of the environmental problems of the country to ensure improved quality of life.

Atiku condoles Benue over death of first republic politician

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

The Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, has sent a condolence message on the death of first republic politician and member of the then Federal House of Representatives, Chief Peter Tarkende, to the immediate family of the deceased as well as to the governor and people of Benue state, Dr George Akume. The vice president's message was delivered by his special assistant for special duties, Hon Shima Ayati, who led a 40-man delegation to the Makurdi residence of the deceased. He lamented that the Tiv politician died early.

Ayati said that while the counterparts of Chief Tarkende lived on in other parts of the country, particularly the south-west, first republic politicians in Tivland have all passed on. The deceased was the last of the seven

members that represented the defunct United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) at the Federal House of Representatives in 1959.

'On behalf of the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, I condole the immediate family, the *Ter* (second class chief) of Guma, Chief Ivokor Nongo, the *Tor Tiv*, HRH Dr Alfred Torkula, the Benue state governor, Dr George Akume, and the entire people of Benue state on the death of an illustrious son,' said Hon Ayati. He named the other six members of UMBC at the 1959 Federal House of Representatives as the late J. S. Tar, C. T. Gaza, E. T. Orodi, Vincent Shisha Dzungwenen, Iyorkyaa Ako, and Kundu Swem.

Jigawa blames police for communal clash

From Hassan A. Karofi,
Correspondent (Dutse)

The Jigawa state government has blamed the police for alleged complicity in last weekend's communal violence along the state's boundary with Bauchi in which eight persons died. The Jigawa state deputy governor, Ibrahim Hassan, apportioned the blame when he visited Maruta, the scene of the violent clash. 'The police aided the Gurumi community in the Shira council area of

can perpetrate such atrocities.'

Hassan stressed that the Jigawa government would present its case before the federal government to find a solution. In his words, 'the situation has gone beyond the powers of the state government. We will therefore seek the federal government's intervention as a way of ensuring lasting peace in the area.'

Hassan visited 28 the

victims on admission at the Gwaram hospital and the Birnin Kudu medical centre. He was shown about 100 canisters of tear gas and bullet shells believed to have been used by the police.

A bitter dispute has raged between the two communities in the past two years over the relocation of a 250-year-old market from Maruta to Gurumi village. Violence erupted again last Sunday.

Argungu festival gets N180m boost

By Godwin Tyonongo,
Stringer (Abuja)

The annual Argungu Fishing and Cultural Festival has received financial boost from the corporate world, with Cosharis and Globe Motors jointly doling out N180 million from their coffers for the fiesta. Maltina, another corporate firm, has donated the sum of N20 million in cash and N65 million worth of items, as well as a supply of its brand of drinks throughout the duration of the festival.

The Kebbi state governor, Alhaji Adamu Aliero, who disclosed this in Abuja, said that financial institutions have indicated interest in sponsoring the festival.

He disclosed that one of the telecommunication outfits in the country, MTN, has promised to fund the hosting of the 2006 edition of the festival, which will henceforth be staged in the third week of March. Aliero said further that a contract has been awarded to expand the river for the fishing competition, and that construction work would commence after this year's festival.

He announced that the person to net the biggest fish would drive home a brand new bus, while the next person would win N1 million.

EKO TRUST

International Women's Day: Tinubu preaches gender equality

The issue of gender equality and campaign against all forms of discrimination against women and girl child on Tuesday attracted attention as women across Lagos joined their counterparts all over the world to mark the 2005 International Women's Day.

With the theme; 'Thirty years of United Nations efforts to promote gender equality', the Lagos governor, Bola Tinubu, who led the state executive to celebrate with women in the state at Ikeja police college, said injustice against women was injustice against all.

Tinubu called on government at all levels to give women the opportunity to play their unique roles. This, he said, was necessary for the stability of democracy.

According to him, this year's women's day presents the nation with the opportunity to reflect on all issues bordering on the complaints by women like lack of equal opportunity.

The governor stated further that Lagos State was in full support of women agitation for equal opportunity adding that this informed the appointment of more female judges and permanent secretaries in the state civil service.

Justifying the creation of a separate ministry for women affairs and poverty alleviation as part of efforts to integrate women into the

polity, Tinubu said government would continue to do more by raising the standard of living of women and children.

Speaking at the occasion, the wife of the governor, Chief Remi Tinubu, called on women to rededicate themselves to upholding all the core values and virtues of womanhood both as wives and mothers. She thanked the state commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA), Mrs. Joke Adefulire and the ministry for organising the event to celebrate womanhood.



Pix caption: Mrs. Funke Fadugba (left), chairperson, Lagos chapter of NUJ, presenting a gift to Mrs. Iboranke Mojisola, ICAN president, during a courtesy visit to the Lagos NUJ secretariat. In the middle is Mr. Fola Akinyode, Ikeja district chairman of ICAN. Pix: Oluwadapo Olanrewaju

LASG donates 50 cars to magistrates

The Lagos State government on Tuesday donated 50 cars to the state's judiciary for the official use of magistrates. The gesture followed a similar donation of 40 vehicles to the Lagos State Board of Internal Revenue (BIR) to boost the performance of revenue officers at the state's 36 tax offices.

The vehicles, all manufactured by Korean auto firm, Kia, are estimated at over N75 million.

Presenting the cars, Governor Bola Tinubu said his administration's reforms of the judiciary were informed by the need to re-engineer the vital institutions of democracy adversely affected by the military.

According to him, over N600 million has been set aside to rehabilitate the

By Olumide Bajulaiye, correspondent (Lagos)

magistrate courts in this year's budget and a committee has been set up to visit the courts to assess those to be handled immediately.

The governor said further that the improvement in the welfare of judicial officers, rehabilitation of existing courts, provision of decent vehicles, fundamental legislative reforms and enhancement of the speed of judicial process are steps to ensure the fulfilment of the planned promotion of the rule of law as a core sustainer of democracy.

The governor added that with the provision of on-line services in the court along with the automation of the court registry, the courts have been upgraded to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The vehicles are the first batch of 90 cars to be

given to the magistrates to fulfil the administration's commitment to make the judiciary in Lagos State the best in terms of motivation in the country.

Sanitation: Ministry gives Computer Village traders ultimatum

The Lagos State government on Tuesday gave traders in the Computer Village in Ikeja a 72-hour ultimatum to sanitise their environment and rid it of illegal street traders or face indefinite closure.

The state ministry of Environment in a letter to the president, Computer and Allied Dealers Association of Nigeria, Mr. Balogun, said the state was not pleased with the environmental state of Computer Village and may be forced to shut it down.

The letter made available to our correspondent in Alausa on Monday said the executive members of the IT village were given 72- hours to move every trader from the roadside into their respective shops, move phone sellers with no shops to the GSM Village, Stop the roadside sales of phones and computer accessories in show-glass, tables and boots.

Other activities to be stopped are the illegal dumping of refuse on Kodeshe Bridge footage, Simbiat Abiola Road and the surroundings of the Kodeshe area.

The special adviser to the governor on Environment, Mr. Bola Ilori, signed the letter dated March 4, 2005 while the office of the commissioner for Environment Mr. Tunji Bello was copied.

Ilori in the letter said that

he was surprised that after the evacuation exercise of last month and several appeals from the traders and their executive that sanctity would be brought to the area, the reverse was the case.

Ilori said, "After the operation, we held a meeting with your association in which we handed down our directives with a 48-hour ultimatum to either internally cleanse the village or we may have to shut down the village pending when you are ready to restore environmental sanity to the village and you chose the former.

"It was observed by our investigation unit that you actually made an attempt to comply and the association shut down the village for one day on Monday 28th February, 2005 and sanity prevailed on Tuesday and Wednesday. However, we discovered that by Thursday 3rd March 2005, all the illegal activities have resurfaced with vigour.

"Your Association pleaded for the release of those we caught with an assurance that they would not come back to the roadside and that you shall put in place appropriate security measures to prevent street trading and dumping of refuse on the roadsides around the village. However, it is becoming apparent that you are either unable or unwilling to control the ugly development."

He said the Computer Village is the main IT market in Nigeria and should therefore be the pride of the nation, but street traders and some greedy shop owners have conspired to turn the village into an eyesore that daily attracts negative comments from local and foreign IT enthusiasts.

When our correspondent visited the Computer Village on Tuesday to verify the claim of the state government, traders in the area confirmed that members of the state Kick Against Indiscipline had visited their area to complain about their environment. One of the trader that spoke with our correspondent said that the traders agreed that the area was congested due to several business activities going on in the area at the same time.

He said, "This is a place where we have been selling for many years now, the government cannot just close us down. I think the real issue is that they are looking for money in the state and they oppress the masses in the process."

"Some other traders however agreed that the surroundings were dirty and confirmed that the computer village had be closed down last Monday to allow traders clean the environment and that the environment was now the better for it.

Police arrest fake officer in Agege

A fake policeman who was out to extort money from unsuspecting Lagosians has been arrested in Agege area of the state after he ordered a Lagos based accountant to bail himself out for driving a Tokunbo (fairly used) car at the weekend.

The suspect identified as Olarenwaju Lawal was said to have taken to his heels the moment some policemen came on the scene.

Sources told *Eko Trust* that Olarenwaju in whose possession a police warrant

By Bola Ojuola, Stringer, (Lagos)

card with his photograph was found was operating at Fagbola area of Agege last Friday before he was caught.

The Lagos State police public relations officer, Mr. Ademola Adebayo, who confirmed the arrest of Olarenwaju, told our correspondent that a team of policemen from Elere police station pursued him and picked him up after he fled the scene. He said the case was however still under investigations.



Gov. Tinubu

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KANO TRUST

KNSG to transform Quranic school

The Kano state government is to transform its Quranic schools to the levels of primary and secondary schools. Disclosing this while receiving Sudanese delegates, the state governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, described Quranic schools as the oldest form of education in northern Nigeria. He said it would be wiser to raise Quranic schools to the level of modern schools in order to integrate them with Western education. According to him, Muslims could only worship Allah when they are well educated. He added that Quranic schools constituted an important base for Islamic knowledge and provided guidance in understanding the principles of worship. They therefore deserved the utmost support of all Muslims.

Governor Shekarau also pleaded that those guarding the survival of the Quran

By Aliyu S. Machika,
Correspondent Kano

(that is, the memorisers), who are largely students of Quranic schools (*tsangaya*), should be given adequate care, courage, and support. He commended the efforts of the Sudanese government to transform Quranic schools to level of higher education institutions, which has encouraged Muslim communities in other countries to emulate their example. He assured the delegates that the Kano state government would collaborate with the Sudanese government in supporting Quranic schools in both countries.

Earlier, the head of the Sudanese delegation and director of a Quranic school, Sheikh Hussaini Ali Adam, said that they were in Kano to observe the level of government support for Quranic schools and how they en-

hanced the level of education in Nigeria. He said that the transformation of primary schools, secondary schools, and universities to Quranic schools did not mean that Sudan neglected Western

education, for the objectives of the two could be integrated. He added that the Sudanese experience in marrying both objectives has drawn international interest. Sheikh Ali Adam further

stated that Sudan was ready to support to Kano state government in transforming their secular schools into Quranic schools. He disclosed that Sudan will sponsor six (6) people in collaboration with

Kano state, two each of which will study at the secondary, undergraduate, and the master's degree levels in Sudan to further strengthen the relationship between the two governments.



Alhaji Ado Bayero Emir of Kano



Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau Gov. of Kano

College deterioration worries speaker

The speaker of the Kano state House of Assembly, Alhaji Balarabe Saidu Gani, has expressed concern about the deterioration of Rumfa College, Kano and pledged to assist in the restoration of its lost glory. He made the statement while receiving the executive committee members of Rumfa College Old Boys Association. He directed them to assess and bring all the needs of the college to the attention of the House of Assembly for further action.

Alhaji Gani regretted that Rumfa College, which was established in 1972 and was among the best and most popular colleges in Africa, was in such a terrible shape. Speaking as an old boy of the college, he said that restoring its lost glory was their collective responsibility. He pledged to solicit assistance from his colleagues to assist the college.

In an earlier address, the national president of Rumfa College Old Boys Association, Professor Dandatti Abdulkadir, told Alhaji Gani that they were in his office to register their solidarity as well as to seek assistance for their former college. He said that the college was facing serious problems, including the lack of adequate classrooms, laboratories, and sporting facilities. He charged Alhaji Gani to do everything possible to assist, as colleges in Katsina, Kaduna, and Sokoto were all receiving assistance from their old boys. He stressed that the assistance was necessary because government alone could not shoulder all the responsibil-

From Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent Kano
ity. Prof. Abdulkadir added that restoring the former status as a boarding school would help restore its renown. He advised Alhaji Gani to continue to address issues that have direct impact on the people's lives, particularly issues of health, agriculture, education, and business.

Kumbosto expends N20m on computers

Over N20million was expended by the Kumbosto local government council on the procurement of 20 computers and building of a computer centre. While commissioning the computer centre, the Kano state governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, said that the computer was a necessity to world development and

From Ahmed Abubakar,

that the centre would help to impart computer know-how to the youth. He commended the chairman of the council for the project and assured him of the government's continuous support for projects that have direct bearing on the people's lives.

The chairman of the coun-

Takai disburses N1m materials on girl child education

Over one million naira has been spent by the Takai local government council on the purchase of materials for the 190 female students that gained admission into various boarding schools in Kano state. While distributing the materials to the students, the chairman of the council, Alhaji Inusa Abdul-lahi Dambazau, said that the gesture was intended to assist the parents of the beneficiaries by reducing the weight of their expenses in sending their wards to school. While calling on the students to reciprocate the gesture through discipline and hard-work, Alhaji Inusa Dam-bazau reit-

From Ahmed Abubakar,

erated his council's commitment to give priority to the education sector.

The items presented to the students included mattresses, suitcases, dining plates, buckets, and books. The council chairman, who said that education was the back-bone of social development, disclosed his keen interest in developing the education sector.

Meanwhile, the local government council has employed and posted more than 70 primary and *islamiyya* school teachers to various schools in the area.

KNSG woos Chinese investors

The Kano state government has appealed to Chinese investors for more investments in the state. It pledged to provide an enabling atmosphere for foreign investment with a view to enhancing the socio-economic status of the state. The state's deputy governor,

From Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent kano
Engineer Magaji Abdullahi, made the pledge while declaring open a Chinese photo exhibition tagged 'Vision into China,' which was jointly organised by the Chinese embassy and the Kano State History and Culture Bureau.

cil, Alhaji Sagiru Abdulkadir Panshekara, disclosed that his council embarked on the project in line with the state government's policy on human development and to save the youth from the detrimental snares of idleness. He said that the council decided to site the computer centre in Zawachiki, which was named after the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero.

While the commissioned computer centre will have an initial intake of 45 students, another centre was expected to be commissioned at Maikalwa in the near future.

Engineer Magaji stated that the incumbent administration in Kano state has focused its attention not only on improving the existing economic infrastructures, but also on providing new ones for the benefit of the business sector. 'Our people are very industrious and, given the right atmosphere, their entrepreneurial capacity would immensely increase.' Engineer Magaji stated that Kano state had one of the largest markets in Nigeria. He gave the assurance that the state government would continue to accord priority to the culture and history of the state, for culture was not only a means of attaining sustainable development but also of forging greater cohesion and unity among the people. Re-affirming that the Shekarau administration was ready to restore the lost glory of the state at all levels, he called on the people of the state to support government in that re-

spect.

Also speaking also at the occasion, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Nigeria, Mr. Wang Yuu Chu, disclosed that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China 34 years ago, their friendship' has yielded positive results for the two countries. Mr. Yuu stated that China/Nigeria trade amounted to over 2.18 billion US dollars in 2004, a development which he attributed to the existing cordial relations between the two countries. He appealed for the maintenance of this cordial relationship. Pointing out that China and Nigeria shared a lot in terms of their economic, cultural, and technological requirements, he believed that Chinese investors could be persuaded to invest more in Nigeria. Mr. Yuu Chu described the exhibition, which is also to hold in Abuja and Lagos, as a way of portraying the development of China.

200 women in Garun Malam benefit from goat loan

Two hundred women have benefited from an 800-goat revolving loan offered them by the Garun Malam local government council of Kano state. The chairman of the council, Alhaji Abdullahi Mohammed Maikano, said that the measure was intended to empower the women in the area. He disclosed that local government intended to improve the welfare of women to enable them reap the dividends

From Jamilah Nuhu Musa,
Correspondent kano

of democracy. 'That is why we are giving the women this loan,' he stated.

Alhaji Maikano urged the recipients of the loan to look after their animals in order to reap maximum benefits. He reiterated that the state government was concerned about the welfare of women generally and has embarked on various projects for the purpose of improving their lot. He therefore called on the women in Garun Malam to

give the council the necessary support.

On his part, the head of the council's agriculture department, Mallam Ado Shehu Rimi, noted that women were the mothers of future leaders and urged them to look after their children properly. He said that the council would carry them along in all its schemes.

Responding, the women thanked the council members for the loan, stating that it would help to cushion them from hardship.

News

Kwara DPMs indicted, to refund N23m

Former chairmen, treasurers and directors of personnel management of the 16 local councils in Kwara State indicted by the Justice Oluyemisi Ajayi judicial commission of inquiry are to refund over N82 million to the coffers of government and face prosecution.

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

awaiting them after refunding the monies to the government.

Commissioner for information, Alhaji Rahim Adedoyin

also corroborated his counterpart's submission saying political office holders indicted by the commission would also forfeit their severance allowances and face prosecution.

Plateau gets Solomon Lar library foundation

An International Library foundation is to be established in Plateau State in honour of the first civilian governor of the state, Chief Solomon Lar.

President and founder of the foundation, Hon. Moorey Dalen, who is also commissioner for science and technology in the state disclosed this at a press conference in Jos on Tuesday.

According to Hon. Dalen, the library which is intended to be specialised one is aimed at creating impact on learning and to have a lasting effect on good governance.

He said the idea to establish the Solomon Lar international library foundation was promised on the fact

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

that since 1958, Chief Lar has remained a relevant pillar in Nigeria's political realm through his politics and philosophy of emancipation of the down-trodden.

"Chief Lar is not just a politician, but a vibrant progressive elder statesman whose contributions to Nigeria had catalysed mass political and social consciousness, national unity and stability! The foundation president observed.

He added that Lar has also remained resolute in the struggle for the self-determination of the middle belt region as a distinct geopolitical entity.

Threat to demolish NPA mosque worries PHC Muslims

Muslims in Port Harcourt have raised loud voices in resistance to the threat by the Nigerian Port Authority (NPA) to demolish the only worship house for them in the ports.

Some of them who spoke to *Daily Trust* have vowed to take their lives into their hands if the demolition threat was not reversed.

According to the Deputy Chief Imam (DCI) of the NPA mosque, Alhaji Abubakar Dan Asabe, the demolition threat was contained in a quit notice posted all over the mosque and its neighbourhood that the worshippers should vacate the building within seven days.

Imam Asabe noted that the managing director of NPA who came to inspect the Port Harcourt ports few weeks ago had ordered the demolition of the mosque within two weeks.

According to him, the mosque committee has already written the presidency and has copied the River State governor, the leader of the River State branch of Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NCIA), Alhaji Ahmed Okiri, who is currently representing the state at the National confab, asking them to intervene and secure their only worship house in the port.

Investigations by *Daily Trust* revealed that the mosque situated between the Port Health House and the joint maritime industrial labour council house within the Port Harcourt complex has been in existence for 14 years even as more than four managing directors of NPA have inspected the port in the

From Muhammad Ajah, Reporter (Port Harcourt)

past without interference with the mosque.

The Muslim community, according to a document, had in 1991 applied to the Port Authority for a parcel of land to build a mosque which was granted and thus the building of the mosque in the same year.

It was further observed that the mosque is in an area from the road and that the Muslims in the employment of NPA and others in other corporations operating within the Port Harcourt port complex such as Nigerian Custom, National Maritime Authority Staff, NAFDAC staff, licensed customs operators, JOMALIC staff who are not less than 1,000 observe their daily congregational prayers and Juma'at service on Friday in the mosque.

"We regard this decision to demolish the mosques as one made malafide because it is between two buildings which are curiously not affected by the road to be constructed by NPA. Again no alternative place of worship has been provided," the deputy Imam averred.

He therefore warned of the negative effect the demolition might have on the entire Muslims in NPA and also the religious sensitivity it may have on other Muslims particularly in Port Harcourt and especially in the Muslim dominated parts of the country.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly MISS JUMMAI EMAIKU, now to be called MRS JUMMAI GANA. Former documents remain valid. N.Y.S.C. and public to note.



Pix show from right: Dr. Adetunji Oredipe, national project coordinator FADAMA II, Mr. Hezion Fada, permanent secretary, Adamawa State ministry of agriculture, Mr. Yakubu Dauda Bake, one of the facilitator, Dr. Chudy Okafor, an economist with the World Bank at the presentation of the motorcycles in Yola Adamawa State.

Poverty Alleviation: State managers converge in Damaturu

The general managers of Community based Poverty Reduction Programme (CPRP) for Cross River, Kebbi, Abia, Yobe and Kogi States, yesterday converged in Damaturu, Yobe State capital, to rub minds together with a view to devising strategies aimed at ensuring the success of poverty alleviation in Nigeria.

Speaking yesterday, the chairperson of the general managers, Mrs. Edet Okechukwu, the general manager, community poverty reduction programme, Cross Rivers State said their meeting in Yobe State was informed by the position of the state towards poverty alleviation.

She said Yobe State had been in the lead in drafting poverty alleviation map aimed at coming up with strategies that would ensure the upliftment of the standard

From Isa Umar Gusau, Correspondent (Damaturu)

of living of people in the state.

Mrs. Okechukwu noted that the CPRP which was established by the World Bank, was aimed at changing the Nigerian society into that free from overwhelming poverty.

She commended Yobe State government for what she referred to as overwhe-

lming hospitality accorded them on their arrival on Monday into the state, while thanking the government for supporting the poverty alleviation programme.

The team of the general managers also included private consultants and other affiliates engaged in technical human resource services to the various states as part of the strategies aimed at ensuring the success of the programme.

Policeman detained for assaulting 7-year old

A policeman (name withheld) is in police custody for claiming to be a prophet after he went berseck and beat a seven year-old boy to coma.

The incident happened on Monday in the Bokoto quarters of Dutse, the Jigawa State capital.

From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent (Dutse)

According to *Daily Trust* investigations, the police corporal earlier had a disagreement with the boy over an unknown matter which led to his loss of control and beat the boy to coma.

When *Daily Trust* visited the hospital the boy was lying critically ill with three of his teeth broken.

Eyewitness account says the policeman sensing the an angry mob might descend on him began to shout slogans claiming he is a prophet of Islam sent to the people.

This further infuriated the crowd who later besieged his residence threatening to kill him for blasphemy and burn down his house.

However, timely intervention of elders in the quarters with police presence saved the situation and brought tension in the area under control.

Daily Trust learnt from police authorities who confirmed the incidence that the police corporal is in custody.

According to the Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO), DSP Sunday Digha, the policeman is believed to be having a mental problem and would soon be taken to hospital after preliminary investigations.

He assured the public that

Goje pledges to investigate Ashaka Cem over marginalization allegations

The Gombe State governor, Alhaji Muhammad Danjuma Goje, has promised to investigate allegations of marginalisation levelled against Ashaka Cement Company by its host community of Funa Kaye local government area of the state.

Leading a delegation of prominent personalities from the area, the chairman of the local government, Alhaji Abubakar Abubakar, told the governor that Ashaka Cement Company has stopped buying gypsum from indigenes of the council preferring to buy its gypsum from Sokoto State.

The chairman also told the governor that the

From Mohammad Abubakar, Stinger (Gombe)

company has refused to put their people in position of authority even when a vacuum is created and they are the next in seniority to occupy those positions.

Governor Goje who told the delegation that he was going to seat with the management of the company to iron things out pointed out that it was not right for the company to deny its host community and the entire North, east region the privileges they deserve.

He observed that Ashaka Cement Company had in the past reneged in its role of providing for its host community saying the company is worse than those in the Niger-Delta area.



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News

Crisis: US to establish air mobility hub for Africa

The Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Jonah Wuyep, has said that the United States is to establish an air mobility hub for Africa to assist the continent in managing and controlling crises. Air Marshal Jonah Wuyep explained that the facility would enhance military operations, especially in the face of expanding demands of peace support and disaster management operations in Africa. He made this remark

By Ruby Rabi, Defence Reporter

while receiving Major General Jonathan Gratton, director of plans and policy of the United States Air Force, who led a team of officers to explore the feasibility of establishing such a depot in Nigeria.

Wuyep said that the US team will also inspect the C-130 fleet and other facilities in Lagos to ascertain their level of capabilities and usefulness for air mobility. He pointed out that the United States, by this gesture, was consolidating the existing cooperation between the two services, adding that the relationship had suffered greatly as a result of the military's involvement in politics. 'It is sad to note that this mutually beneficial relationship suffered as a result of the prolonged period of military rule in Nigeria,' he said, adding that he was happy to note that Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999 was rekindling the relationship.



Air Marshal Joseph Wuyep

According to him, the level of support and cooperation that existed between the two services in the 1970's and the early 1980's was yet to be attained.

Responding, Major General Jonathan Gratton said that the United States was interested in assisting the

African standby force in its peace keeping operation so as to maintain peace in Africa. General Gratton explained that lending a hand to Africa would also boost development in the United States, for it would be wise to help Africans take care of African problems.

Katsina awards 525m contract to electrify 29 villages

The Katsina state government has awarded a contract for the electrification of 29 rural villages across 17 local government areas at the cost of N525 million under the 5th phase of the state's electrification programme in the year 2005. Briefing newsmen in his office shortly after the award of the contract, the commissioner for rural, social development, youth and sports, Engr. Muttagha Rabe Darma, said that the contract will cover a 1000km network including both inter-town connections (ITC) and town development networks (TDN). He said the state has electrified a total of 101 towns and villages at the cost of N2.3 billion from 1999 to date, out of which only nine were yet to be connected with the national grid.

'Twenty one contracts were awarded through the state tenders board,' he said, 'while seven were awarded through the ministerial tenders board. The contractors were given a maximum completion period of 14 weeks, depending on the nature of the works to be undertaken.'

From Lawal Ibrahim Katsina, Correspondent (Katsina)

Engineer Darma said that the ministry considered the people's economic activities as well as political expediencies in selecting the prospective benefiting communities of the electrification project. He hoped that all the connectable villages and towns in the state would be connected to the national grid by the end of the administration's tenure.

The benefiting local government councils include Katsina, Daura, Jibia, Kankiya, Kafor, and Dandume local governments.

Fayose denies report on secretariat relocation

From Femi Oladipo, Stringer (Ado-Ekiti)

The Ekiti state governor, Mr. Ayo Fayose, has described the rumour about his plan to relocate the state's secretariat from the state's capital, Ado-Ekiti, to Afao-Ekiti, his home town, as cheap blackmail and a grand designed by his political enemies to sow the seed of discord in the state. Reacting to the allegation by the umbrella body for Ado-Ekiti indigenes, the Ado-Ekiti Progressive Union (APU), Fayose said that those behind the rumour are members of a particular opposition party who are afraid of the numerous achievements his government has recorded in less than two years in office and were working to put him at loggerhead with the people of the state, especially the indigenes of Ado-Ekiti. 'Their headache is what would happen when the president comes to the state in April and sees my great achievements. So they have figured out all sorts of strategies to disrupt peace in the state and discredit my government,' he said.

Mr. Fayose said that his administration was only trying to create an extension of the ministry of agriculture to be located along the newly

constructed 14 kilometer Ado-Ekiti/Afao-Ekiti road, which has enough land for practical agriculture and extension services. He disclosed that his government's plan to construct a N30 million house between Ado-Ekiti and Ikere-Ekiti to accommodate all agencies relating to education, which will have a multi-purpose hall and a cyber cafe, would portray the state as a true fountain of knowledge.

'How can anybody say I am planning to relocate existing buildings at the secretariat complex to Afao-Ekiti when Afao, my home town, is not even up to a ward. The land mass of the secretariat in Ado-Ekiti is bigger than the whole Afao,' he said.

Jigawa sets up c'ttee on assets of agric supply coy

From Hassan Karofi, Correspondent (Dutse)

The Jigawa state government has set up a 7-man committee to determine the assets and liabilities of the state's agricultural supply company and conduct a census of boarding institutions in the state. Speaking at the inauguration of the two committees, the state's head of service, Alhaji Ibrahim Manzo, drew the committee's attention to the reoccurring problems of the company, which had defied all efforts to render it efficient. While charging the committee to be upright in discharging its assignment, he equally congratulated them on their appointment.

According to the head of service, the committee is to determine the current costs of all assets and property of the company. It is to ascertain the company's debtors and recommend the ways and means of recovering such debts. He equally charged the committee to determine the liabilities of the company and how best to offset them, and also to make any recommendations that would assist in the improvement of the company.

In his response, the chairman of the committee, Alhaji Muhammadu Mu'azu, who is the permanent

secretary of revenue and investment, promised a speedy completion of the assignment.

Meanwhile the committee for the census of boarding institutions will ascertain the actual number of students in all boarding schools in the state. Both committees are to submit their reports before 8th of April 2005.



Islamic new year: Governor Bukar Abba praying for Nigeria

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Inside Politics



L-R Hon. Sani Shaba, Chairman House Committee on Pension, Mr. Mohammed Ahmad, DG National Pension Commission with Hon. Jazuli Imam during the consultative Forum with prospective closed Pension Fund Administrators held at 'Yaradua Centre in Abuja yesterday

Don't politicise census, Kogi deputy gov warns

The Kogi state deputy Governor, Chief Philip Salawu has warned local government chairmen in the state not to bring in politics in the forthcoming national census exercise saying that politicising the headcount will be counter productive.

Speaking during the flagging off of the campaign for the 2005 Census in Ajaokuta local government area, Chief Salawu urged all the various communities to come together to make the exercise a success noting that it is in the interest of every body irrespective of political differences to ensure the success of the 2005 census.

"This is an exercise in which everybody must be involved and an attempt to deliberately exclude somebody will only boomerang on the area" he noted urging council chairmen to put in extra effort to ensure 100 percent success in their respective area.

Also speaking at the occasion, Honourable Moses Ado Okino, who represents Ajaokuta Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives called on all the political stakeholders in the area to ensure that the exercise is hitch free.

Cautioning against conducts that will militate against the success of the exercise, Hon. Okino said that the headcount was for the purpose of national development and that any area that has its population improperly enumerated will only have itself to blame at the end of the day.

The Ajaokuta local government council chairman, Hon. Hassan Balogun appealed for

cooperation from all and sundry in the area so as to make the 2005 census exercise a success.

Meanwhile, nearly N1,5 million, three buses and 14 motor cycles were donated

towards the successful conduct of the exercise with the Deputy Governor donating three buses, 10 motorcycles and N.25 million while Hon. Ado Okino donated four motorcycles and N.25 million.

Group salutes Masari on *This Day* award

The Legislative Monitoring Group (LMG) has



Alhaji Aminu Masari

congratulated the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari on his recent conferment by *This Day* Newspaper as the Representative of the year.

The LMG, in a congratulatory message by its National coordinator, Ibrahim Kaula Mohammed urged the speaker to see his award as a tonic for good legislation that will improve

the lot of the Nigerian people who the House represents.

The group noted that the award symbolised national appreciation of the performance of the Speaker, adding that the award is well deserved and timely.

LMG particularly extolled speaker Masari's political maturity and sagacity saying that these qualities in the speaker have served the

nation in good stead.

The legislative Monitoring Group vowed that in keeping with its creed of never allowing the labour of the nation's heroes past and present be in vain, it will recommend the Speaker to the National Honours Award Committee for a national award of Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger GCON.

Benue PDP chieftain condemns Ali, Anenih's emergence as leaders

Chieftains of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Benue state have taken exception to the emergence of Senator Ahmadu Ali as the Party's National Chairman arguing that the election of Ali by the PDP National Executive Council (NEC) is a negation of the party's zoning formula. According to them, somebody from Benue, the home state of Audu Ogbeh, should have been elected to complete the former chairman's tenure.

Also, the middle-Belt Alliance (MBA) led by professor Ada Ugoh viewed chief Tony Anenih's emergence as chairman of the PDP Board of Trustees (BOT) as a deliberate plan to marginalize the south-east geopolitical zone which according to it (MBA) is to produce the BOT's chairman.

Three chieftains of the party from Benue state, namely chief Simon Shango, Dr. Samuel Ortin, who is also

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

the party's state secretary, and Prof. Ada Ugah, the MBA programme Director, condemned NEC's decision to replace chief Ogbe with Ahmadu Ali from Kogi state. The trio, who spoke to *Daily Trust* separately viewed the development as a deliberate plan to short change Benue state, which according to them, gave president Obasanjo the highest votes both in 1998 and 2003.

Pro. Ugah who particularly accused president Obasanjo of single handedly "engineering the removal of Ogbeh" said Ali's emergence was at the (instance) of the president.

He said "Obasanjo has made himself an incubus, militating against the progress of Nigeria as a family of consensus builder. By that act, Obasanjo has showed himself not to be a

APGA condemns detention of Chairman

by EFCC

The All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) yesterday protested the arrest and detention of its chairman, Chief Chekwas Okorie by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

A statement yesterday in Abuja by the party's deputy national chairman (South), Barrister Maxi Okwu said Okorie was detained on Tuesday after he had honoured an invitation to the commission's headquarters.

Okwu said the EFCC's action amounted to taking sides in the internal leadership crisis rocking the party, and added that the detention was illegal.

"It is obvious to any keen observer that the purpose of this illegal and unconstitutional detention was not only to embarrass but also to put him out of circulation and allow his

By Habeeb I Pindiga, political reporter

traducers opportunity to gain some political advantage.

The EFCC in this case has let itself as a willing tool to political buccaneers who do not wish the party well," the statement declared.

Aide vows to drag Yerima into presidential race

Special adviser of Political Affairs to Governor of Zamfara state, Hon. Jamilu Jams Kaura has asserted that only Governor Ahmed Sani had the credentials to become the president of the country come 2007.

He told *Daily Trust* in Kaduna that the Governor's record as an achiever and bridge builder had led to calls from all over the country for him to contest adding that Ahmed Sani is the president that Nigeria has missed for so long

"I am in person calling for Ahmed Sani Yerima to contest because as Governor he constructed over 1,700 housing units for workers, built Zamfara Television, a stadium and saw to the

From Sani Babadoko Correspondent Kaduna

transformations of the amateur Zamfara United team into formidable premiership club side in the country.

"These developments we believe he can replicate for Nigeria not to talk of the nomenclature economic benefit that can be derived from his personal relationship with Islamic countries," Hon. Jamilu said.

Asked if Sharia will not stand in his ways as Christians are uncomfortable with it, Hon. Jamil Kaura averred that Christians in Zamfara state can attest to the fact that Shari'a has provided them with a more conducive atmosphere to transact their legitimate businesses.

"Sharia is only for Muslims but it has brought sanity to our society and Ahmed Sani will not go and impose Sharia, for instance in Port Harcourt which is a Christian community.

He said Ahmed Sani would be the compromise candidate that the north will be best advised to settle for between Ibrahim Babangida Muhammadu Buhari, Atiku Abubakar and Buba Marwa because he is the candidate the youths readily identify with.

According to him, it is the people that are calling for Yerima's consent to contest that are behind the posters in most cities in the North, noting that such is the mark of the Zamfara governor's acceptance in the region.



L-R Dr. Umar Dikko, Kaduna state delegate and Group Captain Usman Jibrin, and Alhaji Zakari Yakubu Nasarawa delegates, discussing during the sitting of National Political Reform Conference in Abuja, yesterday



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Sports

Majestic Chelsea show Europe they mean business

Even if Chelsea ultimately fail to be crowned kings of Europe this season, nothing will detract from the majesty of their 4-2 Champions League win over Barcelona.

The enormity of Chelsea's victory cannot be over-estimated and it shocked the players themselves.

"It was a strange, fantastic game," striker Mateja Kezman said after Tuesday's first knockout stage match. "To go 3-0 up against a team like Barcelona in less than 20 minutes, knowing there was another 70 minutes to go, was a very unusual feeling."

"We dropped a bit when they came back to 3-2, that was very tough. But the way we then came back proved

the quality we have and proved that we can compete with, and beat, the best teams in Europe."

Trailing 2-1 from the first leg, the Premier League leaders raced into a 4-2 aggregate advantage after just 19 minutes.

Barcelona went ahead on the away goals rule after replying twice before half-time through World Player of the

Year Ronaldinho, the second goal a gem from the Brazilian.

The unrelenting tension of the second half, the stunning skills of both teams displayed on a slippery surface and skipper John Terry's decisive goal 14 minutes from time ensured the match became one of the greatest in Chelsea's history.

Even before kickoff passions were running high following the London side's allegations, Barcelona's riposte and UEFA's intervention after the controversial first leg two weeks ago.

Chelsea alleged Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard had spoken to match referee Anders Frisk at half-time at the Nou Camp.

The Spanish league leaders denied anything untoward had taken place. Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho then suggested Pierluigi Collina - widely regarded as the world's best referee - would officiate the second leg.

Although UEFA said they opted for Collina to take charge without being influenced by the controversy, the backdrop added to the tension before kickoff.

Perhaps that tension told on Barcelona's players who committed a string of woeful mistakes early on.

The opening goal after eight minutes followed a slip by Xavi in midfield which allowed Frank Lampard to feed Kezman the loose ball. Kezman crossed for Eidur Gudjohnsen to score.

Chelsea were 2-0 up after 17 minutes when Lampard put the ball into the empty net after calamitous Barcelona defending.

Two minutes later Chelsea made it 3-0 when Lampard and the outstanding Joe Cole combined to set Damien Duff racing through the wilting Barca defence to score again.

Barcelona finally woke up. Deco, who won the European Cup with Mourinho at Porto last season, began to

exert his influence in midfield and Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o began to run at the Chelsea backline.

Collina awarded the visitors a penalty after 27 minutes when Paulo Ferreira handled for Ronaldinho to score.

Twelve minutes later the Brazilian scored again with a shot that bamboozled even the brilliant Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech. A right-footed toe-punt was in the back of Cech's net before he could move.

Chelsea, almost assured of the English title, seized a place in the quarter-finals when Terry powered in a header from a corner for his fourth Champions League goal of the season.

Barcelona claimed Ricardo Carvalho had impeded goalkeeper Victor Valdes on the line and the goal should have been disallowed. Collina waved away their protests and their hopes.

Strangely both teams defended excellently for 70 minutes in a match that produced six goals, a testimony to the skill of the forwards as much as the tenacity of the backlines.

The only blot on a memorable night came after the final whistle when Eto'o said he was racially abused by a Chelsea steward and a fracas developed as the defeated Barca players trudged towards the tunnel.

However, this could not detract from a scintillating game which put Chelsea, and their Russian billionaire owner Roman Abramovich, just five matches from European glory.

United struggle to find positives after

Manager Alex Ferguson struggled to find the positives after Manchester United's Champions League elimination by AC Milan.

United now have a clearer fixture list as they pursue Chelsea for the Premier League title and lessons learned in two tough games against the Italians will pay dividends in the future,

Ferguson said.

Milan won the first knockout round tie 2-0 on aggregate after a 1-0 home victory in the second leg on Tuesday thanks to a fine headed goal from Argentine Hernan Crespo.

"The result frees up our fixture list a bit. Chelsea still have a lot of matches to play and you've got to remember that football is unpredict-

Milan defeat

able," Ferguson said.

"Just four weeks ago Juventus had a six-point lead in Serie A and now they're level with Milan. The same kind of thing could happen to us."

Second-placed United are eight points behind Chelsea with nine games to play. Chelsea reached the last eight after Jose Mourinho's team eliminated Barcelona after a 4-2 second leg thriller.

Ferguson put United's loss to Milan down largely to a lack of experience of big European games. Only three United players on Tuesday were involved in the 1999 European Cup-winning campaign - captain Roy Keane, Paul Scholes and Ryan Giggs.

Youngsters Wayne Rooney and Cristiano Ronaldo were allowed little room by the veteran Milan defence while striker Ruud van Nistelrooy lacked match fitness after being injured. The Dutchman fluffed a good chance to equalise 20 minutes from time.

"I think the quality... I am happy with that. I am happy with the age (of the team) as well. They can grow up together. We are a good team and we will get better," Ferguson said.

"They are the right age and they can form a forceful team for the next five or six years.

"Experience counted tonight. Players of 19 or 20 are not the final product, it is only games like these that can give you that," said Ferguson who named Milan's over-30 defenders Cafu and Paolo Maldini as the best players in the tie.

Midfielder Keane said United did not deserve to progress because of their lack of punch up front.

"I think not to have scored over the two legs and not to have tested their keeper a bit more is more disappointing than anything else. If you don't score in the two games you don't deserve to go through," he said.



Ferguson...the Manchester United manager attributed his team's Champions League exit to inexperience

Yamusa berates Eagles' handlers

Anthony Yamusa, Team manager of premier league debutants, Nasarawa United

FC has berated Super Eagles' coach Christian Chukwu over the non-existence of a standing national senior team.

"The time Chukwu has spent with the Eagles is enough for him to build a standing team since he has

the support of the authorities," Yamusa said.

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja that Chukwu should change the attitude of "inconsistency" in inviting players for the Eagles' camp.

"Most times Chukwu believes in names instead of fishing out new players.

"He is always afraid of taking risks by inviting home-

based players for training only to dump them at crucial matches," he said.

He criticised the Super Eagles' late build-up to the World Cup qualifier against Gabon on March 26, adding that Chukwu should de-emphasise the use of "ready-made players".

On the draws of the world youth soccer championship which grouped Nigeria in a

tough zone, Yamusa urged Coach Samson Siasia, to seek for technical advice from more experienced coaches.

The Flying Eagles are grouped along with defending champions Brazil, Switzerland and South Korea in the championship billed to kick-off in June in Holland.

"We are in for a tough fight. I hope that our grouping is not an early exit for us," he said.

He called on older coaches such as Chief Festus Onigbinde, to encourage and assist the younger ones especially Siasia, instead of criticising them at all times.

Colleges of Education Games prelim flags off

Gov. Bukar Ibrahim of Yobe on Monday flagged off the North East zonal preliminaries of the Nigeria Colleges of Education Games (NICEGA) in Gashua, BaDe Local Government Area.

Ibrahim commended organisers of the zonal games and charged Colleges of Education to accord attention to extra-curricular activities like sports apart from academic pursuit.

"Such games had relevance especially as sports not only provide a break from te-

dious academic activities but also contribute immensely towards the development of mental abilities, alertness of students, more so as sports was a unifying force," said the governor.

He pledged to rehabilitate sports facilities in the College of Education, Gashua and provide financial and logistics support to ensure that athletes from the institution attended the biennial games regularly.

Colleges of Education from Azare in Bauchi; Jalingo in Adamawa; Waka from

Borno, Yola in Adamawa, Potiskum, Kashini College of Education in Borno are taking part in the preliminaries. Jigawa College of Education is taking part in the games as guests.

Provost of the host college, Alhaji Abba Das Kuru, appealed to participants and officials for a hitch-free competition, adding: "Competitions such as this should be viewed as a unifying event and not a win-at-all-cost games."

Events competed for included Football basketball,

volleyball, handball, hockey, tennis, badminton and

squash are events to be competed for at the games.

Shekarau Babes head to Holland March 25

Shekarau Babes FC of Kano has been invited to take part in an international tournament in Holland from March 25 to 27.

Alhaji Magaji Danbatta, Co-ordinator of the Federation of Youth Soccer (FEYSOC), told newsmen in Kano on Monday that the team was selected following its impressive outing during the last edition of the Senate

President Cup in Abuja.

The team had failed to attend the President's Cup in Florida, USA last month due to visa problem.

Danbatta said, "I am very sure with this development Gov. Ibrahim Shekarau would do everything possible to ensure that the team attended the championship in Holland."

"It is unfortunate that after the government had re-

leased N22 million for the Florida trip, the US Embassy in Nigeria refused to facilitate their visa."

The co-ordinator commended the government for its contribution to the development of grassroots soccer in Kano.

He assured that the team would continue to win more laurels not only for Kano but also for Nigeria.

Sports

ICC to relocate to Dubai

The International Cricket Council has confirmed that it will relocate its offices from England and Monaco to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates in August 2005.

In an e-mail to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos, ICC President Ehsan Mani said the movement staff to one location would enable the organisation to serve its members better.

Over recent years the ICC has operated from split headquarters, with the cricket administrative and anti-corruption elements in London and the commercial and financial operations in Monaco," Mani said.

"The Board has been committed to unifying its administration for some time and after considering a range of offers from around the world, the

Directors were of the view that Dubai provided the best way forward for the international game.

"The package on offer to relocate the ICC to Dubai was very attractive and preparations are now in an advanced stage to move to the Emirate in August this year."

Mani said the decision was made even harder by the sport's deep historical links with

England.

"Clearly, cricket's deep association with England and particularly Lord's as the historic home of the sport was a factor that weighed heavily in the Board's discussions on this matter.

"Nevertheless, like many international governing bodies before us, it is clear that operating in the United Kingdom under the current system is not in the best

interests of our members."

Mani thanked the MCC for providing a home for the ICC since it was founded in 1909.

"I would like to thank the MCC for its role in running and then hosting the ICC over the past 96 years. This support will be recognised in a more appropriate way at a suitable time and we will continue to work closely with an organisation that remains the guardian of the Laws of the Game."

Saeed Al Muntafiq, Director General of Dubai Development and Investment Authority, welcomed the ICC's decision.

"We welcome the relocation of the ICC to the Emirate of Dubai," Al Muntafiq said.

"To have one of the world's major sports choose Dubai for its new Global Headquarters is a significant compliment for the region. It is evidence that leading sporting organisations recognise Dubai as an impressive and suitable location for maximising the impact of their sports."

Lopez better tactician than Ranieri, says Albelda

Valencia are much better organised under coach Antonio Lopez than under former boss Claudio Ranieri, club captain David Albelda said.

"We have improved tactically, and we now go into games knowing much more about our rivals style of play," the Spain international told sports daily Marca on Tuesday.

Lopez succeeded Ranieri last month, after the former Chelsea boss was sacked eight months into his second spell at the club, following their shock UEFA Cup exit to Steaua Bucharest.

Under Lopez, Valencia's performances have improved and they have taken three points from Real Betis, and achieved creditable draws against high-flying Real Madrid and Sevilla.

"We are putting in the same amount of effort as before but the results are different because we are in the positions we should be in on the field," added Albelda.

"Before we always tried, but tactically we weren't well organised.

"Now we are sticking with a fixed line up, and we are also getting some injured players back like (Roberto) Ayala."

Valencia, last season's champions, are fifth in La Liga, one point behind Villarreal though with a worse goal difference.

'Greek league matches are fixed'

The head of Greece's state-run betting company believes some matches in the Greek football championship are fixed.

His remarks could hardly have come at a worse time, having been made in the wake of an investigation by UEFA following allegations of match-fixing in a UEFA Cup match played in Greece in December.

"I cannot prove it and I think it is hard to prove but I believe there are fixed games in the Greek championship,"

government-appointed Anestis Filipidis, chairman of the OPAP gaming agency, told Metropolis radio on Tuesday.

"What we need is clean and civilised football and we do not have that, apart from a few exceptions.

"According to my experience and what I have seen, I do not think it is impossible to fix

games," he added.

The OPAP gaming agency is Europe's biggest betting company by market value.

The comments made by Filipidis have upset the Greek Football Federation (FA), which has been riding the crest of a wave since the Greek national surprisingly won Euro 2004 last summer.

"At the moment, we do not want to say anything about this. Maybe later," an angry FA official told Reuters.

UEFA, European soccer's governing body, is conducting an investigation into match-fixing allegations relating to last December's UEFA Cup tie between Panionios of Athens and Dinamo Tbilisi and possible links to the German refereeing scandal.

Panionios beat the Georgian team 5-2 in Athens after trailing 1-0 at halftime and 2-1 early in

the second half.

British betting companies noted unusually heavy betting on exactly such a scenario prompting the investigation.

In Germany's biggest soccer scandal in decades, referee Robert Hoyzer has confessed to fixing matches in the German Cup and lower leagues in return for money from gamblers and has said the ring also fixed matches in Austria and Greece.

The Greek FA has already asked the Germans for details

regarding Hoyzer's testimony relating to alleged illegal betting and match-fixing activities in Greece.

Although OPAP has previously expressed doubts over the legitimacy of the Greek league, this is the first time its head has openly said some matches were being fixed.

OPAP does not include Greek games in its biggest football betting game "Let's bet" which includes matches from around the world.

Pennant drops drink-driving appeal

Arsenal midfielder Jermaine Pennant has dropped his appeal against a three-month jail sentence for drink driving, court staff said on Tuesday.

A staff member at Aylesbury Crown Court confirmed the former England under-21

midfielder had changed his mind after saying he would appeal immediately after his sentence last week.

Pennant, once tipped as one of England's brightest footballing talents, pleaded guilty to drink-driving and driving while banned after police caught him driving a

Mercedes with a lamp post dragging underneath.

At the time, he was already serving a 16-month driving ban for an earlier drink-driving offence.

He was on loan to Birmingham City when he was jailed.

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PRICE: N600m (covering the building, facilities and the underdeveloped portion)

Interested buyers should send their offer to General Manager, Property & Insurance, P.O. Box 2508, Lagos not later than 4th April 2005.

Sports

Adamawa United Football Club are taking their missed promotion case to a higher level, as officials of the club have concluded arrangements to storm the FIFA headquarters in Zurich any moment from now.

It will be a follow up to a protest letter earlier submitted to the world soccer gov-

Adamawa storm FIFA over promotion ticket

erning body.

A very reliable source disclosed to KICK OFF that the club chairman Emmanuel Zira and the Adamawa State Commissioner for Youths and Sports, Adamu Gurum have been pencilled down for the

trip.

To underscore their seriousness over the promotion saga and boost their claim for automatic promotion from the Pro League Division 1A last season, the Adamawa State government has already ap-

proved a budget of three million naira for the trip to Zurich, the source further confirmed to KICK OFF.

Adamawa United, who made good their threat to boycott the Premier League promotion playoff in Kaduna

in January, said they are still hopeful they will feature in the top flight once FIFA intervenes.

It would be recalled that

FIFA requested evidence from Adamawa to substantiate their claims. The club's officials have since complied, and have also copied the Nigeria Football Association.

NIGERIA/GABON WORLD CUP CRACKER

Doubts over Okocha's fitness

There are fears about the fitness level of Super Eagles and Bolton skipper Austin 'Jay Jay' Okocha as Nigeria prepare for their crucial World Cup qualifier at home to Gabon later this month.

Incidentally, Okocha also missed Nigeria's last qualifying game against Gabon in Libreville because of fitness problems.

The inspirational playmaker has been ruled out of Saturday's FA Cup quarter-final crunch tie against Arsenal at the Reebok Stadium due to a hamstring injury, and it may take another full week for him to heal up completely.

Okocha picked up the problem during Monday's 1-0 Premiership victory at

Manchester City and failed to appear for the second half. According to reports from the Bolton medical staff, the 2004 Nations Cup MVP is likely to require at least a week's recovery before he will be back on the pitch again.

Bolton boss Sam Allardyce lamented the injury to his skipper, which is expected to prevent him from lining up against The Gunners, and by extension, the Super Eagles unless he recovers well on time.

"The only disappointment is that Jay-Jay is going to miss out on the cup tie," said Allardyce. "He will probably take a minimum of seven days to recover and Saturday will be too soon for him and that's a great shame."

Bauchi soccer clubs set to end rivalry

The managements of Wikki Tourists, Zabgai and Wunti football clubs in Bauchi on Monday decided to sink the differences, which had alienated their fans.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Wunti FC and Zabgai FC are amateur sides.

Officials of both clubs visited the chairman of the Wikki Tourists, Alhaji Abdullahi Danbaba in his office in a bold move to end the bad blood the rivalry had caused.

A statement signed by Malam Rabi Bello, Wikki Tourists quoted Wunti FC chairman, Malam Idris Abdullahi as saying during the visit that the two clubs had decided to end the friction between them.

Abdullahi described the trend where each club plot-

ted the destruction of the other as ugly, adding that it had adversely affected the progress of the clubs.

He said they had resolved to chart a new course by working harmoniously with one another.

Abdullahi appealed to the

management of Wikki Tourists to settle all outstanding transfer fees owed the two amateur clubs to consolidate the new development.

Thanking them for the visit, the Wikki chairman promised to pay the outstanding transfer fees.

AFN wants states to hold competitions

The Athletic Federation of Nigeria (AFN's) zonal meets which has been restricted to under-23 athletes in each of the six geo-political zones will compel the states to organise competitions to select their teams. Abdul-Karim Amu, AFN's Technical Committee Chairman has said.

Amu said it was up to the state AAAs to draw up standards for selecting athletes to represent them at the zonal meets.

"If they are going to select athletes, they must evolve some parameters for such selections, as those states that will just sit down to select athletes will not do well," he noted.

He observed that the need for fairness would compel them to stage selection trials.

Amu said the AFN meets would enable the state AAAs take control of their athletes.

The News Agency of Ni-

geria (NAN) reports that AFN's focus now restricts athletes to take part only in meets in their zones only instead of the previous practice of participating in all meets by travelling long distances.

"Nobody can now continue to claim that venues such as Kano or Calabar are too far away. Ibadan, venue of this weekend's South-West meet, is certainly not a considerable distance from Oshogbo, Abeokuta, Lagos, Ekiti or Ondo. Other meets are

being organised for contiguous states."

The AFN Technical chief reiterated that the federation would be very firm on the new under-23 age restriction for the meets.

"Those who do not produce their birth certificates will not be allowed to take part. And we will not accept any sworn declarations," he stressed.

Amu said the six states in the South-West could register a maximum of 10 athletes and two officials each, for whom the AFN would take officially responsibility.

He, however, added that "they are at liberty to register any number of athletes for the competition".

He disclosed that there would be no entry standards for the meets.

"An event is only valid when the competing athletes are up to four. It is also when a maximum of four athletes complete an event that it becomes valid."

The six zonal meets for the 2005 athletic season are scheduled as follows: Ibadan (March 11 and March 12), Bauchi (March 25 and March 26) and Calabar (April 22 to April 23).

Others are: Enugu (May 6 to May 7), Abuja (May 21 to May 22) and Kano (June 3 to June 4).

A Doping Seminar for all athletes and officials would be held in each of the zones during the meets, to be conducted by the AFN's Anti-Doping Officer, Efun-

ACB Football Club plan return

ACB Football Club is to be revived soon to become a model club in Africa, as the bank moves to make more Nigerians happy.

The Managing Director of ACB International Bank, John Udeka told KICK OFF that the bank is currently selling 25 billion ordinary shares at 80 kobo each to encourage football fans to buy into the bank.

Nicknamed 'Lagos Rangers' for their similar brand of robust football with their Enugu counterparts, ACB Football Club were once famous in Lagos State where they shared supremacy with Stationery Stores, NEPA and Julius Berger.

The club was disbanded in the mid 90s after playing in the Nigerian top division for more than a decade.

Famous Nigerian internationals who donned the yellow and green colours of ACB in the past include longest-serving former Super Eagles captain Stephen Keshi, Henry Nwosu, Austin Eguavoen, Willy Okpara, Chidi Nwanu and Moscow

Sports devt: Gabros official lambasts govt

Gabros International FC of Nnewi has decried the dwindling fortunes of soccer and other sports in Anambra.

Club secretary Ikye Igbokwe told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the government should be held responsible for the decline of sports in the state because of its lack of interest, attention and encouragement.

He said past administrations in the state never showed keen interest in sports development, except the Jim Nwobodo regime in the then old Anambra.

"Anambra State has the best footballing and other sports talents in the country but lack of government en-

thusiasm of youths interested in sports," he said.

Igbokwe urged the state government to show the way by sponsoring sports activities in the schools and local government areas before luring the corporate bodies for co-operation. "Sports is all about talents you discover and nurture through competitions. No amount of money spent on sports, especially football, is a waste. It is an industry providing employment to teeming youths," he said.

Gov. Orji Uzor Kalu, he said, had shown what benefits could be derived from sports by turning Enyimba FC into a big business.

Igbokwe lamented that there was not even a mini-stadium attached.

ment in the state and urged the government to have a rethink because sports, especially football, was a great mobiliser of people.

He said that between 1994 and 1998, three professional clubs - Jasper United, Udoji United and Gabros - were making waves in the national league, but today where are they, only Gabros is still surviving because the government had failed to assist them financially.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS

Arsenal	1	Bayern Munich	0
Bayern Leverkusen	1	Liverpool	3
Juventus	2	Real Madrid	0

regular flood wiping away some villages like Bussa, attack at the confab for their

Contd. on Pg 2



Okocha ...has picked up a hamstring injury during a Premiership match against Manchester City.

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for sale*

DAILY TRUST

THURSDAY COLUMN

Thursday, March 10, 2005

On Monday morning I got a telephone call from Akin Oshuntokun, the managing director of the News Agency of Nigeria. We had established a relationship with Akin, before the 2003 elections, when he was part of the Obasanjo campaign team. He came to our offices a couple of times to explain the perspective of candidate Obasanjo, as well as sometimes, even to take us up on what he perceived to be our bias against his candidate. These visits included an opportunity we gave him to attend our editorial board meeting, in order to get a first hand experience of our often robust debates of issues, national and international.

Akin had just finished reading Kabiru Yusuf's column for the week, *THE KUKAH I DIDN'T KNOW*, which I felt was particularly well written and so reflective of the deep anger in many parts of Nigeria about the curious choices Obasanjo made for the leadership of the National Conference. Akin asked me after the usual greetings, if people really felt that strongly about the choice of two Christians, Justice Niki Tobi and Rev. Fr. Mathew Hassan Kukah, as the head of the conference. I replied that the passion generated was very deep and it seemed to have become a trend for Obasanjo to make such insensitive appointments.

But Akin would not have any of that! He reminded me of the nationalist credentials of President Obasanjo; adding for effect, that in the South West, Obasanjo is believed to be more Northern than the average Northerner. I was quick to reply that the nationalist Obasanjo has transmuted, and has become more tribalist than the typical *Afenifere* zealot.

However, I also underlined the fact that I have had the opportunity in the past three years to meet Obasanjo on different occasions, citing the Sallah meeting we held with him at his Otta residence on November 29th, 2003 as an example.

I was happy about the nationalist forthrightness of his answer to a question from one of the Lagos journalists who had queried the distribution of Value Added Tax revenue nationally, especially to the Sharia states, who they accuse of not allowing the consumption of alcohol but would not mind to collect VAT revenue accruing from the sale of alcohol in the southern states. Obasanjo had given a short shrift to the question, and re-iterated that we are attempting to build one country; such a country cannot be built on the basis of discriminatory practices.

We had ended our discussion on Monday morning with Akin Oshuntokun agreeing that there is the need to understand ourselves better in Nigeria across all our divides, but above all the actions of the government must at all times respect the sensitivities of the Nigerian people. It was significant that this conversation took place, because in many ways, it confirmed that people take very seriously the opinions that we labour each week to paste on the pages of our newspapers, including the people in government. It is however also indicative of the alienation of the people in government from the broad opinions of various constituencies in Nigeria, that Akin Oshuntokun would be asking me if the issue of the leadership of the National Conference was something to be worried about at all.

My surprise comes from the constituency that Akin represents, the vocal, newspaper-based, elite of the south west and the Lagos area, who for several years, spent each day of their access to the Lagos press to lampoon governmental appointments or policies in Nigeria's recent past, that seemed to favour either Northern Nigeria or the Muslim community in general. It has become unfashionable, now that Obasanjo is in government, and everything apparently seems to be skewed in the direction of the Yomba elite and the south west, for commentators to be critical of Obasanjo and his administration.

The truth is that there is a conflict of perception in the public arena today in Nigeria, about the policy choices, and performance of the Obasanjo administration. The spin doctors of the regime would like us to believe that these are the best of times for Nigeria; and who can blame them? The business lobby around the president is creaming off

Between performance and perfection

By Is'haq Moddibo Kawu
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huge sums of money in all kinds of business deals and would therefore want Obasanjo to be seen in the best light possible.

On the other hand, the majority of the Nigerian people cannot understand why a supposedly democratic regime would be so hell bent on imposing policy instruments that cause so much hardship for them. At the street level, the perception of Obasanjo is one of an uncaring, vindictive



President Olusegun Obasanjo

president, whose years in power have witnessed an incredible inflow of money into the nation's coffers, but who nevertheless implements a project of government hostile to the poor, enamoured of foreigners, beholden to a business clique, and captive of technocrats doing the biddings of imperialism and foreign transnational capital.

Unfortunately for Obasanjo, his clique of technocrats deepen his alienation from the people because of their arrogance and disdain for the Nigerian people. They also compound their arrogance with an incredible level of incompetence which has cost Nigeria so much. For example the major plank of the government's economic program is the unconstitutional process of privatisation of our national asset.

Yet despite all their arrogant posturing the program has been so badly handled and Nigeria has been so thoroughly short changed in many of these deals. We all remember the SOLGAS fiasco in respect of Nigeria's most important industrial project, the Ajaokuta Steel Complex. The SOLGAS chaps were brought in, and at a point even the Secretary to the Government of the Federation had to issue a query, when allegations surfaced that they were beginning to pilfer equipment from the complex. After much damage, SOLGAS was eased out, an Indian outfit took over, and nobody was punished for the SOLGAS deal.

Obasanjo also gave out our National Hospital to a British consortium, even when Nigerians were administering the institution very competently. But in the spirit of his regime, total surrender to the neoliberal doctrine of market place capitalism, only foreigners are good enough to run big institutions. And run it they did, into crisis! Their incompetence became such an embarrassment that they were eventually eased out, after ensuring that our country has lost a tidy sum of money. But in tune with the anti-corruption image of the regime, again nobody was pun-

ished for the loss that our country suffered.

Then there is the PENTASCOPE mother of all deals! So incredible was the disadvantage to Nigeria, that the then newly-appointed Minister of Communications, Cornelius Adebayo wrote a many-page memo to President Obasanjo, about the PENTASCOPE agreement. In less than two years, NITEL made a transition from being one of the most liquid government agencies, with a tremendous capacity for growth, to an agency that has to borrow money to pay salaries! All in the context of the madness of selling our country by the Obasanjo regime!

Despite all these failings, the chaps Obasanjo gave the mandate to run the show have been so arrogantly unrepentant. Nasir el-Rufai, the architect of the PENTASCOPE deal, told the National Assembly body investigating the deal that "I have no apology to give. I have moved on and I have been promoted for what I did in BPE. We were the ones given the responsibility and we did it and our bosses were pleased." So with this type of mindset, it is obvious that Nigeria is in deep trouble with Obasanjo and his technocrats.

Obasanjo believes fervently that his charity begins abroad, especially in the capitals of the Western countries. He jumps at every opportunity to go to Europe and America, can't resist photo opportunities with George Bush, Tony Blair and others. To get their endorsement he zealously implements their recommended economic policies. The trips around the world are said to be in aid of getting debt relief, yet even he has just confessed that he had not made a headway in respect of debt relief. But I guess that he must have bought a new pair of knee pads, because he has also announced that he will begin his last round of trips around the world to beg for debt relief! We can safely assume that the new round of journey will last till 2007, and the result is similarly predictable, he will fail again!

It must however rankle Obasanjo and his spin doctors, who can't stop telling us the progress we are making to see a new index on failed states or candidates for failure, which is based on a selected "Low Income Countries' Under Stress (LICUS)" as defined by the World Bank to include Nigeria. This is according to the latest edition of *THE ECONOMIST* Magazine. The report says that "states can fail because of external shocks, or they can decay from within, or both."

Nigeria, according to the report has an estimated 136million people and in 2002 it has a GDP per person of \$300, while the annual GDP, percentage change, per person, between 1990 and 2002 is -0.30 The report further stressed that a couple of Oxford University based intellectuals "have tried to measure the cost of a typical poor country becoming a LICUS, ie, as unstable as Nigeria or Indonesia... They added together an estimate of growth forgone because of instability and an estimate of the spill over effect on neighbouring countries, and arrived at the startling figure of \$82 billion."

The argument that Nigeria is potentially a failed state is one that the government can be expected to take very seriously, because it is coming from a source that they have courted in recent times, *THE ECONOMIST* of London which recently organised an investment forum attended by Obasanjo himself.

A way out of the impasse? The six hundred million naira voted for image laundering can become useful here. The Nigerian political elite is a past master of the art of throwing money at problems, instead of creatively thinking out the solution to the issues at hand. It is not likely that they would do things differently with this new problem. So between performance and perception, Obasanjo isn't just faring well in his husbandry of the Nigerian state. The perception is far more negative than the credible performance. But he still has up to 2007 to make an effort in