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ORJI KALU
For
PRESIDENT
2007
For Generational Change

STAR FEATURE

Furore as
crash helmet
returns



Pages 24 & 25

KANO 2007

PEOPLE'S CHOICE



USMAN SULE RIRUWAI

THIRD TERM

Awoniyi backs Northern govs

Chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Chief Sunday Awoniyi, says he has confidence in the capacity of Northern Governors to appreciate the mood of the electorate, which he said is against the third term bid and to resist moves by the presidency to "cajole, urge or intimidate them into supporting it."

Reacting yesterday to unconfirmed reports that President Olusegun Obasanjo would be meeting with some selected northern governors

By Sufuyan Ojeifo,
(Special Correspondent)

in Abuja tomorrow in a bid to have them endorse the tenure extension, Awoniyi said the governors are mature people and collectively will do the right thing in the present circumstance.

Speaking in an interview with reporters in Abuja, he stated, "I have heard the rumour myself and I believe very many Nigerians have heard it too. Whether it is true

or not, I do not know. But I think on behalf of the governors, from the bit I know about them and their mood, they are not children; they will do the right thing ultimately.

"They cannot be unaware

of the mood of the electorates in each of their states and I believe they are not likely to go against the mood of the electorate in their states. The mood is against the third term bid and it will be very un-

wise to go against the mood of the people, no matter the pressure".

Awoniyi said that he does not expect that any governor would wish to have President Olusegun Obasanjo's admin-

istration continue beyond May 2007 against the backdrop of the "horrendous" things that happened in Anambra and Oyo states.

According to him: "In fair-

Cont. on Pg. 2

RIMI'S WIFE

My son is insane

- Mother of alleged killer

The mother of the 23-year old Jibril Tasi'u Zage who confessed to the killing of Hajia Sa'adatu Rimi, yesterday said that her son (Jibril) was mentally deranged.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* in an interview in Kano, Malama Halima Tasi'u said Jibril was mentally disturbed since he was duped of the sum of five hundred thousand naira recently by 419ners.

Narrating her ordeal to our correspondent, Malama Halima explained tearfully that "early this month, five men came to his shop attached to his family house looking for him.

He was called home on his GSM and after they had an audience with him for about 40 minutes they invited him to their residence for more discussions," she said.

Malama Halima said after

From Yushau Adamu
Ibrahim, Correspondent
(Kano)

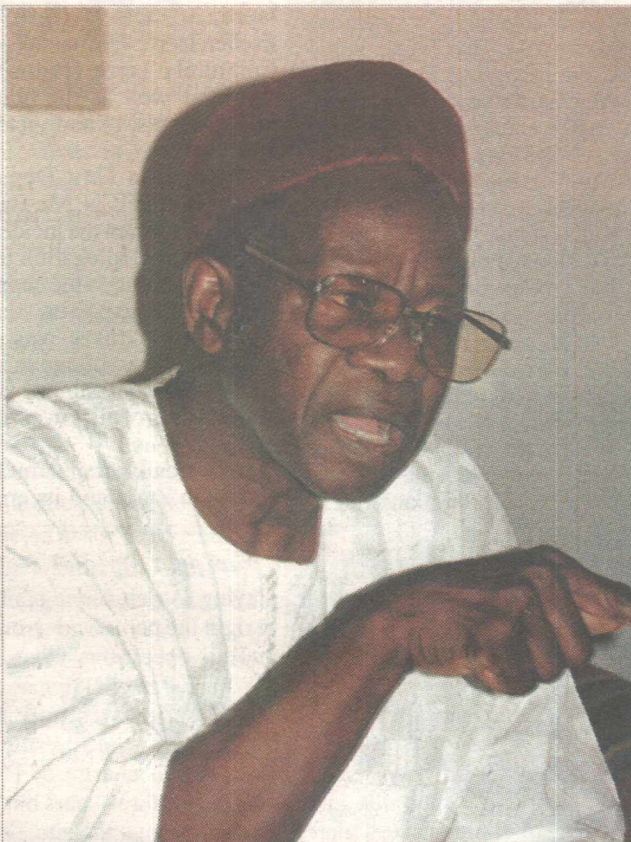
they finished all the arrangements with him, a day after, he collected his money amounting to N500,000 (five hundred thousand naira) and handed it over to them with a view to supplying him with cement.

Since he gave them the money, she went on, nobody supplied him with even a single bag of cement and he did not recover his money uptil today.

"Jibril has not been himself since the incident happened and the entire family has embarked on serious prayers with a view to make him recover his mental state of health," Halima stated.

She also recalled that Jibril had a similar case two years

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Chief Sunday Awoniyi, Chairman, ACF



Gov. Adamu Aliero, Chairman, Northern Govs Forum

Hajj 2005: Reps quiz N5bn loan to NTCH

The House of Representatives' standing Committee on Foreign Affairs probing the 2005 Hajj, has raised alarm that a N5 billion loan given to the National Technical Committee on Hajj (NTCH), for the exercise may have been misappropriated.

Also, the committee in its

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Assistant Political Editor

15-page report submitted to the lower chamber, alleged that the budget for the delegation of the *Amirul Hajj*, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, was overshot to \$972, 818 (equivalent of N136m) from \$676, 040. The report accused Mantu of not accounting for the funds.

The report, obtained exclusively by *Daily Trust* in Abuja yesterday, was an outcome of a probe instituted last year by the Usman Bugaje-led committee following a motion moved in the wake of the 2005 Hajj crisis by Dr. Haruna Yerima of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) from Borno state.

But Mantu yesterday, dismissed the report as "an-

other chapter in the series of campaigns of calumny and blackmail against the office of the deputy senate president by Bugaje on behalf of his paymasters who are desperate to get power at all costs."

Findings of the House committee's probe indicated high level fraud and non-accountability in the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs (DPA)

of the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the NTCH, led by Professor Abubakar Gwandu.

Part of the document reads: "The committee was informed that the federal government made a loan in the sum of N5 billion to the National Committee on Hajj. The explanation for this was that the funds from the state pil-

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Robbers kill policeman

escorting corpses to Sokoto

A police officer escorting the corpses of five accident victims was shot dead by armed robbers along Sokoto - Gusau road on Monday.

Confirming this to newsmen at the Usman Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital, Sokoto (UDUTH), the Sector

From Aminu Mohammed,
Regional Editor, Sokoto.

Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission in Sokoto, Mr. Lucas Umar, said the accident involving a truck loaded with 50 bags of grains and 79 passengers occurred

Cont. on Pg. 2

COUNT DOWN TO CENSUS 2006
(21 - 25 March)

56 DAYS TO GO
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News

PDP govvs *Cont. from pg. 1*

ness to the governors, at the national political reform conference, they stood firm and told Obasanjo that they could not go against the decisions of the Northern delegates as Obasanjo had wished because the delegates spoke for their people.

"The northern members of the Senate at their meeting in Kaduna, rejected the project. The spokesman of the Governors Forum at that same meeting also spoke against the project. Everybody including the governors saw the derision and boos with which the proponents of the project were greeted as members filed out after the meeting. Some senate members who were known to be for it dared not show their faces at the Kaduna meeting.

"Also, some three weeks later at the 40th anniversary to commemorate the death of the Sardauna of Sokoto at Arewa House, Kaduna on 14th January this year, the northern senators and members of the House of Representatives sent a joint message to the jam-packed audience that they were united against the third term project.

"That meeting passed three unanimous resolutions. The first resolution was that the governors should meet urgently to forge unity among themselves and work out a programme of unity for the good of Nigeria and the North with the support of the former Heads of State and Presidents of Northern origin and present the programme to the North for action.

"A resolution was also passed to congratulate the northern senators and members of the House of Representatives for their joint message, promising to keep to their words and that the people of the North were fully behind them.

"The northern governors meeting now proposed, I believe, must take these resolutions into account and seek ways to give them effect. At the personal level, I know that several of the governors are NOT seeking a return to power. I believe they will prove to be honourable men and that they will oppose a third term even if they do not proclaim so from the rooftops.

"I do not see how a governor or any prudent man for that matter, can give his support to inflicting a further four years of the kind of shameful mode of grotesque illegality in governance we experienced publicly in Anambra and Oyo states, not to mention great failures of character and performance and the kind of blind loyalty that the present regime considers proper or indeed necessary."

He stressed further, "In any case, in view of what has happened in Anambra and Oyo states where democracy has been set back by local warlords and their thugs and where arbitrariness has replaced decent rule of law, why would any governor wish to have that type of regime inflicted on this country for another four years come May 2007 and probably beyond?"

"I think things are getting worse everyday in terms of constitutionality and one thing that these governors can do for this country is to ensure that the rule of law reigns supreme between now and 2007. If they can do this, they will go down in our history as a group of men who upheld democracy and good governance at our great hour of need."

Awoniyi, who described Obasanjo as our modern budding Hitler, alerted on the dangers of tyranny and dictatorship staring the nation in the face on account of Obasanjo's leadership and urged leaders and well-meaning Nigerians to stand up and be counted in the fight to nip the third term project in the bud.

According to him, "the nation is in very, very grave danger and anybody who is in doubt about tyranny and dictatorship staring us in the face, step by step, should go and read and re-read how Adolf Hitler became the dictator of Germany using thugs, murder, terror, rigged elections and subversion of the very constitution that brought him into power until a stage was reached when leaders did not stand up.

"The German parliament even passed an enabling Act which made it possible for Hitler to abolish legitimately all other political parties and to then declare himself the supreme leader of Germany. It took great sufferings, loss of lives and the second world war to put Hitler down. A similar scenario is emerging in Nigeria today and all right thinking people must stand up and be counted to make sure that it does not succeed," he warned.

grims welfare boards were not being remitted to the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs so that it will have the necessary cash backing to request for the foreign exchange to facilitate payment that were to be made in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The committee was unable to track the movements and proper records of these funds. We have reason to believe that the funds were subject to abuse."

On Mantu, the report said: "The sum of \$672, 040 was budgeted for the 2005 Amirul Hajj delegation. Actual expenditure rose to US \$972, 818.53. Explanations proffered by DPA was that two payments of US \$150, 000 each were made to the Amirul Hajj delegation. But no voucher or supporting document was presented to support the payment."

It added: "The DPA in the course of the 2005 Hajj operations has undertaken expenditure in excess of approved budget for the Amirul Hajj delegation", and recommended a further probe into Mantu's spending, "to establish the financial dealings on the excess budgetary expen-



His Royal Highness, the Oba of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Akiolu in a group photograph with the National War College (NWC) team which paid him a courtesy call during the NWC participants' tour of military and police establishments... recently.

Pregnant mother, 4 children, others perish in fire

A pregnant mother, Mrs. Caroline Isere and her four children, together with two of her house helps died in a fire incident at Muchia, Sabon Gari local government area of Kaduna State.

Mrs. Isere's neighbour, Mr. Nosaya Ihesa, said the tragedy happened at about 12 midnight on Sunday.

Nosaya said the fire must have been caused by high voltage power supply by PHCN.

He said nobody escaped the fire in the entire Isere family, except the husband, Mr. Isere, who was in Kaduna, as he worked with the Kaduna branch of Union Bank Plc.

These gave the names of the deceased as Mrs Caroline Isere, 36, David Isere, 6, Esehen Isere, 4, Emanuel and Emanuela Isere (twins) 2 years, as well as the house helps, Dorcas, 17 and Victory 12.

The Zaria Unit Deputy Manager of PHCN, Mr. Bayo Dada, confirmed the incident, but dismissed allegation that the fire was due to the supply of high voltage power.

He said "there was no record of high voltage in the area throughout Sunday. We keep records of all power supply situations."

"The daily complaint by people in Zaria and its envi-

rons is low voltage and not high voltage.

We enjoy communities under the unit to always give

proper attention to their electric appliances to avoid a recurrence," dada pleaded.

Robbers *Cont. from pg. 1*

near Bisalam village in Dange - Shuni local government area of Sokoto State.

Mr. Lucas Umar said the truck which was from Illela in Sokoto state to Jos, somersaulted after the driver lost control in an attempt to avoid a pot hole.

According to him, the police officer who was escorting the five corpses and other injured passengers to hospital in Sokoto was shot dead by armed robbers who were

operating along the Sokoto - Gusau road.

The sector commander confirmed that last Monday's accident involving a truck was the seventh along the Sokoto - Gusau road in recent times.

It would be recalled that two trucks were involved in separate accidents during the Xmas break killing 28 and three passengers respectively.

The first truck which was from Sokoto to Onitsha was involved in an accident a kilometer away from Sokoto killing three of its occupants while the second truck which killed 28 passengers fell into a ditch near Bakura along the Sokoto - Talata - Mafara road.

Meanwhile, the Dange - Shuni local government council and the Sokoto state government have promised to foot the bill of the injured passengers who are receiving treatment at UDUTH.

Murder

Cont. from pg. 1

back when he experienced a serious headache. She added that he was hospitalised in one hospital along Hajj camp, Kano.

Malama Halima said that in his efforts to recover his money from the 419ers, Jibril was one time detained at Metropolitan police station (MTD) after he allegedly fought with one of the 419ers at Sabon-Gari, Kano.

When Daily Trust visited MTD police station for verification, an inspector in charge of crime told our correspondent that he did not receive any case from Sabon Gari during the period in question.

The police public relations officer, Kano state police command, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Baba Muhammad, when contacted, said he was not aware of the arrest of Jibril Tasi'u Zage.

Reps *Cont. from pg. 1*

diture for the Amirul Hajj delegation."

Responding on behalf of the deputy president of the Senate, chief press secretary to Mantu, Mr. Sylvanus Namang told Daily Trust that the Amirul Hajj had not collected anything besides what is meant for his delegation, describing the allegations as smear attempts.

"If there is any problem in budgetary expenditure, it is the ministry that should be blamed. The Amirul Hajj doesn't have any budget. That office is a ceremonial office that doesn't have any prerequisites attached.

"Let me tell you, this is part of the campaign of calumny against the deputy Senate president by chairman of the House committee, Dr. Usman Bugaje.... It is mere blackmail.... But he should know that the Amirul Hajj is a religious office that should not be politicised. The Amirul Hajj didn't dip his hands into the foreign affairs ministry pocket, what he collected was what was allocated to him as travelling allowance." Namang said.

He accused Bugaje of

playing ostrich, having failed to right the perceived wrongs in Hajj operations when he was in charge of Hajj matters for three years as political adviser to the vice president. "He was in charge of Hajj matters for three years but he didn't improve the situation. As chairman of the House committee, his office had oversight over Hajj matters, so he is as culpable as the ministry in everything." Namang added.

The report of the Bugaje committee also declared N130 million balance missing from the 2004 Hajj as it was not carried over to the 2005 Hajj and no explanations were given for this.

It accused DPA of illegally surcharging each of the 60, 000 pilgrims of \$30, amounting to \$1, 805, 700 for non-specified reasons, even though N3, 000 administrative charges were collected from each pilgrim.

"The accounting practices of the DPA leaves much to be desired, as there are no clear records and statements from banks to facilitate independent reconciliation of its financial transactions or re-

port thereon....

"The Auditor General of the Federation should in compliance with constitutional stipulations for the audit of public bodies, appoint an independent auditor to audit the financial transactions of the 2005 Hajj operations and a report be submitted to the National Assembly in three months from the date the House endorses the recommendation.

"Considering the obstruction of investigation, dereliction of duty and sheer incompetence of the DPA and the ministry of foreign affairs, the current officials, i.e. Director, DPA and the accountant should be immediately suspended to allow free access to records." The report said.

The committee also alleged the politicisation of the Hajj operation, lack of law guiding Hajj operations, poor logistic arrangements, poor screening that allows aliens to use Nigerian passports, contracting of non-credible airlines, overstay of pilgrims in camps, late commencement of preparations, insufficient aircrafts and the allocation of too many official seats.

NEWS

Niger Delta: One dies in clash

One person was shot dead while others sustained serious injuries in a violent clash between militant youths and soldiers at Ikorumo village in Bayelsa state.

Confirming the incident to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Hausa Service monitored in Abuja yesterday, the state's commissioner of police, Hafizu Ringim, said it happened when the militant youths attempted to burn the Agip Oil well in the village.

Hafizu said, "I received information today that the militant youths of Ikorumo village attempted to burn the Agip oil well in the area and the soldiers who are guarding the place tried to prevent

By Abubakar Haruna,
Reporter

them and in the process, one person among the youths was shot dead while others sustained injuries"

He added, "even though no arrests have been made but as I am talking to you, the situation is now under control."

He noted that the police are doing everything possible to maintain peace and order in the area and assured that the police will fish out the rioters and bring them to book.

According to the BBC, a witness who spoke to it under anonymity, said that the militant youths who came out in groups brandishing

dangerous weapons stormed the area where the Agip oil well is located on Monday morning allegedly on a mission to set it on fire.

He added that the youths are aggrieved that the Agip oil company has failed to give them scholarships and provide social amenities in the area.

The militant youths in the Niger Delta have been at logger-heads with the federal government for allegedly abandoning their areas in terms of development.

The militant groups had launched several attacks on the oil companies operating in the area and in some instances, held their staff hostage as a strategy to draw government's attention to their problems.

Former Managing Director of the United Bank for Africa (UBA), Mallam Abba Kyari has launched a clarion call to distinguished Nigerians to as a matter of urgency come out of their retreat to serve the nation from what he described as another drift perpetuated by those all out for personal gain instead of public good. He lamented that corruption and cronyism have become the major means of having wealth.

The statement made available to *Daily Trust* mentioned: Alison Ayida, Ahmed Joda, Amadu Kurfi, Anthony Enahoro, Alfa Wali, Adamu Fika, Adamu Ciroma, Bukar Shuaib, Sunday Awoniyi, Datti Ahmad, Sani Zangon Daura, Sule Kumo, Edwin Clark, Femi Okunnu, Maitama Sule, Tayo Akpata, Hope Harriman, Sule Katagum, Sobo Sowemimo, Philip Asiodu, Mahmud Tukur, Philip Asiodu and Umaru Dikko. He called on them to once again rescue the

Ex-UBA MD urges elite to rescue Nigeria

By Isa Sanusi
Asst. Head, Home News

"Forty years ago, the country was in similar situation but with saner people. Then you actively and consciously rallied around in holding the centre and averted fragmentation, even as the crisis led to a needless civil war. Today, you seem to be helpless when the scenario of forty years ago is unfolding in your life time. I do not believe you rallied to save the country then in order to see it destroyed now."

Mallam Abba Kyari who is also a former editor of *Democrat* noted that: "It is time for men of good will to sit together and work out sensible solutions to our common problems, so that

the business of government—the wellbeing, welfare and security of the citizens is the dominant issue of public policy."

He further observed that today the pursuit of power has been reduced to personal gain and not public good, thus deserting duty for pleasure. "Despite these fundamental changes it is not the time for the wise men of forty years ago to retreat when the country they nurtured and saved form fragmentation is now resembling an asylum taken over by lunatics on the periphery."

Dismiss Alamiyesiegha's suit — FG urges court

By Ruby Rabiou,
Senior Reporter

The federal government has asked a federal high court sitting in Abuja to dismiss a suit by the former governor of Bayelsa State, Diepreye Alamiyesiegha, seeking to stop his extradition to stand trial for alleged money laundering charges in London.

Rotimi Jacobs, counsel to the federal government, in an objection, also stated that the court lacks jurisdiction to entertain the suit.

The federal government, in a motion on notice pursuant to Order 25 Rule 2 of the Federal High Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2000 and inherent jurisdiction of the court, argued that the plaintiff's suit was embarrassing, vexatious and amounted to a gross abuse of court process. Abdulkareem Abdullahi, an Investigating Police Officer (IPO), in an affidavit in support of the objection, told the court to dismiss the plaintiff's suit as it would amount to sitting on an appeal over the order of the federal high court in Lagos.

Abdullahi also denied allegations that the federal government was behind Alamiyesiegha's trial in London.

At the mention of the case yesterday, the presiding judge, Justice Jonah Adah, adjourned to February 22, for hearing.

Daily Trust had reported that the embattled former Bayelsa state governor, detained by security operatives, had asked an Abuja federal high court to halt government's moves to

extradite him to face money laundering charges in London.

He had instituted the suit against the backdrop of an alleged threat by government to send him back to the UK to face trial.

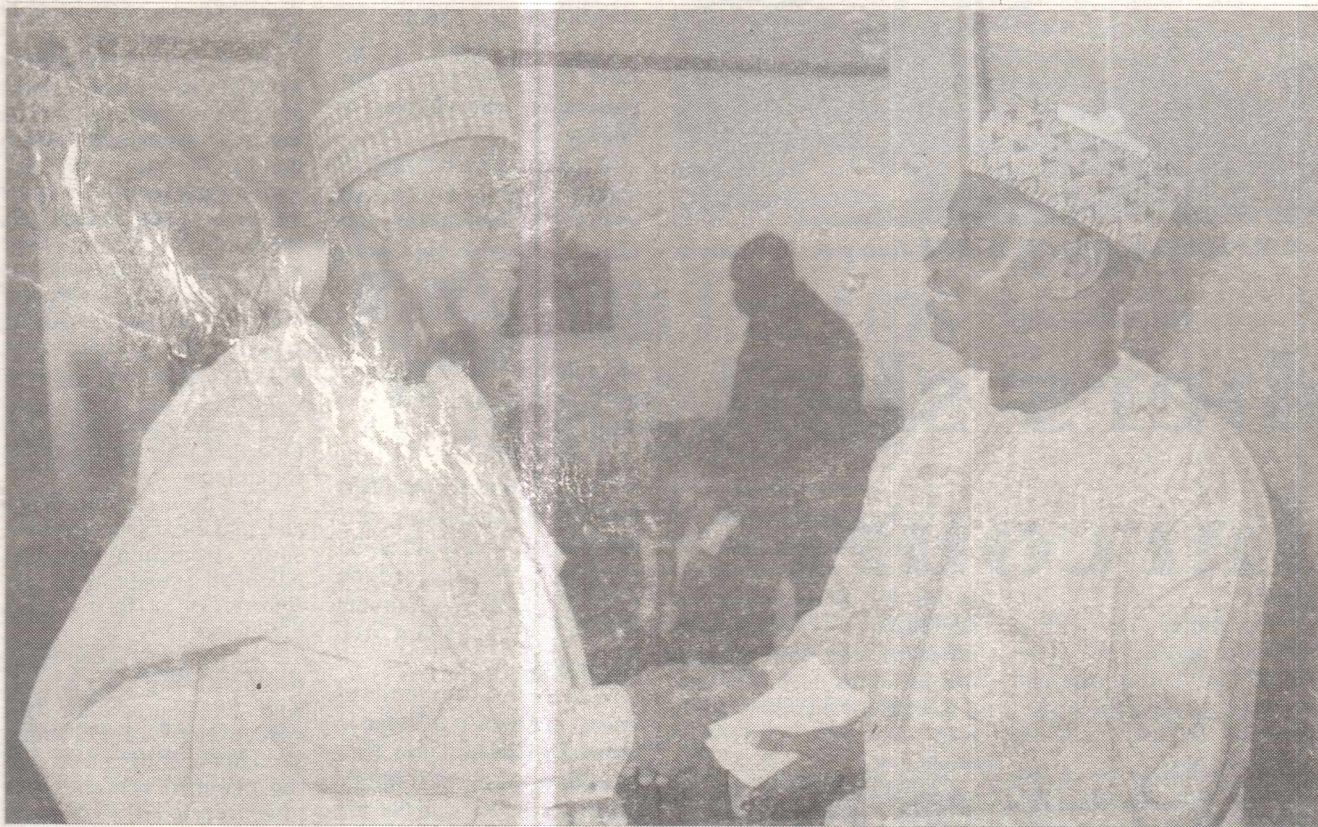
London police had arraigned him at a local court in the UK but he jumped bail and returned to Nigerian in a "mysterious circumstance" that later culminated in his impeachment by the state's House of Assembly on December 9, 2005.

Following his removal, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) accused him of money laundering and dragged him before the federal high court, Lagos, which fixed Tuesday for definite hearing.

However, Alamiyesiegha in his originating summons against the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), Inspector General of Police and the EFCC, had asked the court to compel both the IGP and the EFCC to release and return him as governor.

Through his team of lawyers; Alfred Kasumu, Mike Ozekhome and Mike Okoye, the plaintiff also demanded a consequential order restraining the defendants from further arresting him unless the House of Assembly complies with section 188(10) of the 1999 constitution.

He also prayed the court to determine whether by virtue of section 308(1) of the constitution, sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the Extradition Act, LFN, 2004 and section 31 of the Criminal Procedure Act, cap C41 LFN 2004, the EFCC was right to arrest the plaintiff despite his immunity. Vincent Obianyi in a 25 paragraph affidavit to support the plaintiff's suit, averred that since Diepreye's return to Nigeria, the federal government has threatened to enforce his extradition once the British court serves it with an arrest warrant.



The Managing Director of Clear Impression Printing Press, Kano, Alhaji Iro Ibrahim (right) being welcomed by Media Trust Limited Group Advert Manager, Malam Salisu Ibrahim Mohammed (left) to the 3rd Annual Trust Dialogue held in Abuja... Thursday.

VP's ex-ADC's whereabouts unknown

The whereabouts of Mr. Abdul Yari, the former Aide-de-Camp to Vice President Atiku Abubakar became a subject of controversy in the federal high court yesterday as security operatives claimed that he had since been released while his relatives maintained that they had not set eyes on him since the alleged release by the State Security Service (SSS).

Yari, a Chief Superintendent of Police was withdrawn as the vice president ADC by the Inspector General of Police, Sunday Ehindero, on November 29, 2005, for an alleged breach of security and was subsequently detained by the State Security Service.

At yesterday's hearing of the case instituted by Yari seeking to affect his release, the SSS told the Court that Yari was released on bail last Sunday at about 5 p.m.

A legal officer with SSS who declined to give his name, but claimed to be representing the SSS as a friend of the court in the case told the presiding

judge, Justice Babs Kuewumi that Yari was released to a member of his family on bail.

Counsel representing the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr. Okoi Martin collaborated the claim of the SSS, that Yari had long since been released on bail.

Yari's lawyer, Mr. Ricky Tarfa (SAN) however contradicted the claim.

He told the court that no member of the family of the former ADC had seen him since he was detained.

The family members who thronged the court to witness the proceedings also denied the claim of the SSS that Yari had been released on bail.

Spokesperson of the family, who identified himself as a cousin to Yari, Mr. Seidu Ogbole said that they were worried about his absence if in actual fact he had been released by the SSS.

He said, "We are surprised to hear that he has been released from SSS custody we have not set our eyes on him and we believed that if he was actually released on bail on

Sunday, he should be at home now."

Meanwhile, Justice Kuewumi has fixed March 6 for ruling in the suit filed by Yari challenging his detention.

Yari filed the suit at the Federal High Court in Abuja against his boss, the Inspector General of Police challenging his withdrawal as ADC to the vice president and his subsequent detention without trial since December.

The suit was filed under the Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure)

Rules, 1979.

Yari is seeking for a declaration that his arrest without any legal justification is unconstitutional.

He is also seeking a declaration that his detention at the Force Headquarters and the State Security Service Headquarters was a violation of his fundamental human rights.

He asked the court to make an order of perpetual injunction restraining the police and the SSS and the Attorney General of the Federation from further detaining him illegally.

Obasanjo names ministerial nominee

By Habeeb I. Pindiga

President Olusegun Obasanjo has presented to the Senate, Mrs. Grace Ojo Ogwuche as a ministerial nominee from Benue state.

Ogwuche is to replace former Minister of Environment, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, who left the federal cabinet in controversial circumstances last year.

The nomination was communicated to the Senate through a letter dated January 18, presented on the floor of the upper chamber.

Obasanjo also yesterday, asked the senate to confirm the appointment of Justice F. F. Tabai as a judge of the Supreme Court.

According to the president in a letter dated January 16, Tabai is to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Justice D. O. Edozie whose exit took effect from November 10, 2005.

Tabai, a judge of the Bayelsa state Court of Appeal, has been recommended by the National Judicial Council, Obasanjo said.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT



The Head of the village alleged to be harbouring the pipeline vandals being questioned by the IGP during their parade at the Force Headquarters, Abuja ...recently.

Police arrest 23 pipeline vandals

By Ruby Rabi, Senior Reporter

The police yesterday paraded 23 suspected pipeline vandals at the Force Headquarters, Louis Edet House, Abuja.

A joint team of mobile policemen and men of the Civil Defence Corps set up by the federal government to stem the tide of pipelines vandalism in the country, arrested the suspects over the weekend.

Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, who spoke directly with each of the suspects, warned policemen to desist from conniving and colluding with criminals whose main concern is to sabotage the economy of the country.

He said, "today's police force would not protect any policeman who chooses to disgrace us."

"I have also warned all sector commanders to be steadfast in their duties since I have been receiving reports against some of them. But let me use this opportunity to warn that any sector commander who fraternises with criminals will be disgraced."

Some of the items recovered from the suspects include 10 generating sets, four pumping machines, 33 jerry cans, 10 hoses, drilling tools, two cars (one Toyota and one Mazda) and five cutlasses.

The Commandant General of the Civil Defence Corps, Dr. Ade Abolurin, who attended the ceremony alongside the IGP, said that his

men are ready to prove their worth by working with the police to identify criminals who specialise in vandalising pipelines.

Fake doctor kills two

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

A 25-year-old traditional medical practitioner, Tasiu Ibrahim, has appeared before a court in Katsina charged with the death of two women brought to him for treatment.

The suspect was alleged to have caused the death of his victims by hitting them on the head repeatedly with a hoe handle.

The prosecuting police officer, Sergeant Mohammed, reading from the first information report, said one Sani Ilyasa, the husband of one of the deceased, Ramatu, reported the incident to the police in Matazu local government.

He said the suspect claimed that was the treatment for epilepsy.

The prosecution alleged also that the suspect gave the same treatment to one Alkaman Samaila, who was reportedly suffering from high fever.

No plea was taken while the presiding magistrate, Kabir Shuaibu, adjourned the case to 16th of February, 2006, for hearing and ordered the accused remanded in prison custody.

Three robbers shot in Port Harcourt

The police in Port Harcourt said they have shot three suspected armed robbers in a shoot out at Gambia street in Mile One area of the city.

The state's police public relations officer, DSP Ireju

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani, Bureau Chief Port Harcourt.

Barasua, said in a statement that the police were alerted of an armed robbery operation at the scene and they mobilised to the area immediately.

The robbers on sighting the police opened fire and the police returned the fire and in the process, they shot three of the robbers while others escaped.

The incident, according to her, occurred at about 3.00am and that the robbers actually died on their way to hospital.

Mrs Barasua said the police recovered one locally made revolver pistol with one live cartridge, ten expended ammunitions, one jack knife adding other offensive weapons. Other items recovered are GSM handsets, trinkets, wristwatches and a colour television.

In a related development, the police in Omuku have arrested one Chigozie Awulom for alleged murder of one Prince Awulom of the same community.

The suspect alleged that the victim had earlier inflicted wounds on him with a machete during a scuffle and

in his bid to retaliate, he attacked him with a machete inflicting him with injuries that led to his death. He said it was not his intention to kill him as he was only retaliating.

The police said they are still investigating the case.

Conductor in court for cheating, theft

By Ruby Rabi, Senior Reporter

A conductor who sells tickets to passengers at Jabi Park has been dragged before an Abuja Magistrate court for allegedly cheating his master of N33,000 out of the money gotten from the sale of tickets.

The police report made available to *Daily Trust* revealed that two workers at the Jabi Park, Ikeokwo Ikpama and Collins Nwachukwu, had gone to the police station to inform the police that the accused, Samuel Chukwe, had absconded with his master's N33,000 which he made from the sale of travelling tickets.

The report added that the accused who also works at the park was entrusted with the sale of travelling tickets which he sold and fled with until he was apprehended by the police.

The accused person is being charged with criminal breach of trust to which he pleaded not guilty.

The police prosecutor, Christopher Pato, told the

court that investigations into the matter has already been concluded but they would need sometime to assemble their witnesses.

Magistrate Abdul Dogo had admitted the accused to bail in the sum of N60,000 and one surety in like sum and adjourned the case to February 6, 2005 for hearing.

In another development, one Ali Mustapha from Zaria has been sentenced to two months imprisonment by an Abuja magistrate court for stealing a handset during prayers in a mosque at Jabi Park.

The accused person according to the police information report, had entered the mosque on the pretence of praying and had immediately picked the pocket of Mr. Abubakar Turaki taking his Sagem Handset valued at N6,500.

The report further revealed that the accused ran

away and entered another mosque in the park pretending to be praying but was caught by some Muslim brothers who handed him over to the police.

The accused who did not deny the allegations levelled against him, told the court that hunger and frustration led him to stealing and picking of pockets.

He pleaded for leniency. The prosecuting counsel, Mr. Ameh Ahmed, told the court to try the accused summarily since he had admitted to committing the crime.

He told the court that the accused was a first time offender as he has not been arraigned before any court.

Magistrate Abdul Dogo delivering his ruling, said that the accused has shown ample remorse but added that he would be punished so as to serve as a deterrent to others.

He sentenced the accused to two months in prison or in the alternative to pay the sum of N2000 as fine.



Sunday Ehindero, Police IG

POLICE EMERGENCY PHONE LINES

Route/coverage area	Telephone numbers
Apo (Gudu) Legislative Mechanic Village	0806 580 3210 0804 231 5582
Asokoro/Maitama District	0806 580 3206 0804 490 7942
Central Business District (Construction and Independence Avenues)/City Gate Giri Junction	0806 580 3203 0804 490 7939
Garki I & II	0806 580 3205 0804 490 7941
Jabi/Utako/Gwarimpa I & II/ Karmo/Gwagwa	0806 580 3207 0804 490 7943
Karu/Nyanya	0806 580 3208 0804 491 1520
Kubwa/Bwari/Zuba/ Dei-Dei Route	0806 580 3209 0804 491 1496
Roving Unit	0806 580 3211 0804 491 1526
Wuse I & II	0806 580 3204 0804 490 7940
Zuba/Giri/Kwali/Abaji Highway (1)	0806 580 3201 0804 491 1523
Zuba/Giri/Kwali/Abaji Highway (2)	0806 580 3202 0804 491 1524
Other Hot Lines	
Compol/DC OPS Numbers	
FCT Police Commissioner's Director Line	09-2341470
Office of FCT Police Commissioner	09-2341800
FCT Deputy Police Commissioner (operation)	09-2341811
Co-ordinator MOPOL Visiting Units	0802 301 9123 0805 591 7706
Others	
0803 200 3913, 09-2341199, 09-2341198, 09-5238711	
Daily Trust Hotlines	
08039686854 and 08056418945	

NEWS

Odili wants law to limit litigation charges

The Rivers state governor, Dr Peter Odili, has called for a law to peg how much a lawyer could charge a common man as litigation fees.

He was speaking against the backdrop of rising cost of litigation and its potential to deny justice to the poor at the public presentation of the Rivers state high court civil procedure rules, 2006, in Port Harcourt yesterday.

The governor said some

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani, Bureau Chief, Port Harcourt

of the issues concerning cost of litigation would have been resolved if the law had placed some restrictions on what lawyers should charge the ordinary man.

Odili said his government would like to see efforts in that direction as it would ensure that more common people get access to justice. He expressed optimism

that the new rules would create job opportunities especially for young lawyers and assured that the government will support the process through early payment of salaries for lawyers that would be employed.

Earlier, the Chief Judge of the state, Justice Iche Idu, had said the review of the 1987 edict was informed by the need to improve on the high court structure and achieve a just, efficient and speedy dispensation of justice.

He said the previous rules have become obsolete and inadequate to meet the needs of litigants, lawyers and the public especially in a fast growing jurisdiction like Rivers state.

Earlier in a church service to mark the occasion, The Methodist Bishop of Port Harcourt, Rt. Rev. Efiang Ekpenyong, had charged judges and lawyers not to pervert justice but to do right to all manner of people irrespective of their background and social status.

He said that working with the judiciary was a divine calling and therefore should be viewed by all practitioners as a sacrosanct assignment, pointing out that judges would only have rest of mind if they do the right things and dispense justice without fear or favour.

Man in court over death of cyclist

One Mr. Friday Enahoro, a driver with Big Joe Ventures, has appeared before an Abuja Senior Magistrate court for running over a motorcyclist and killing him instantly.

The driver who was alleged to have been driving his vehicle dangerously along the Nnamdi Azikiwe way by NICON junction, had hit the motorcyclist, Mr. Gbenga Odiah, resulting in the later sustaining serious injuries that led to his death on his way to the Maitama General Hospital.

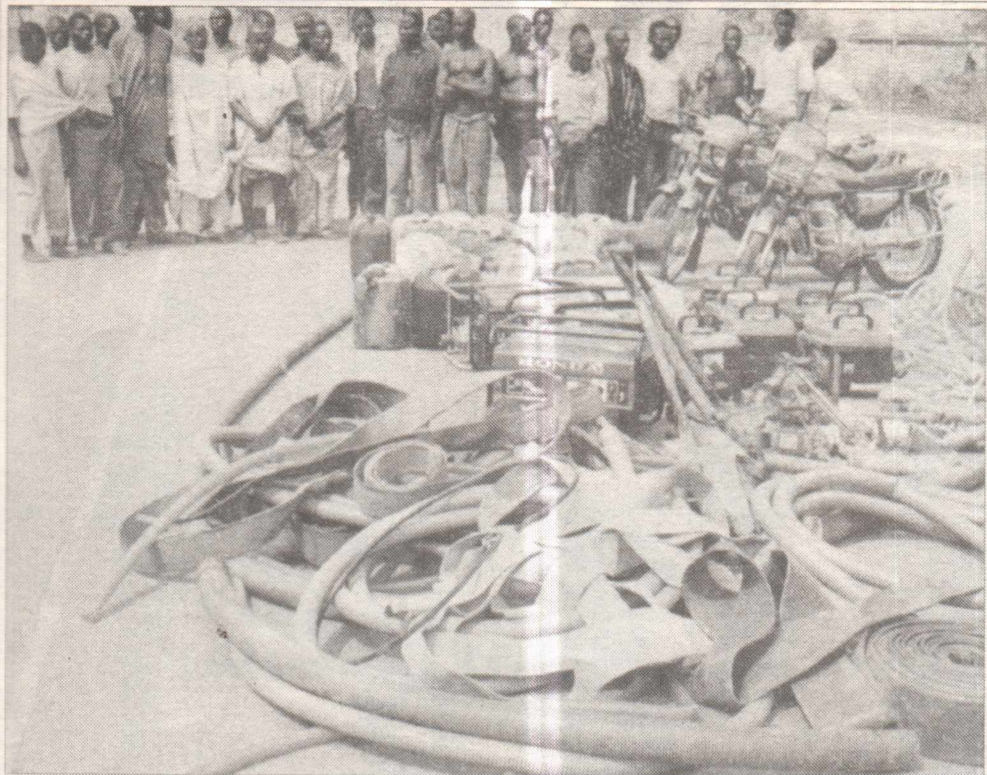
The accused person who is being charged for dangerous driving contrary to section 27 of the Road Traffic Act (RTA) Cap section 48 of the federal laws of Nigeria, pleaded not guilty to the

By Shehu Othman Shehu

charge. The prosecuting police officer, Mr. Ambi Ayuba, told the court that investigations into the case has not yet been completed, adding that the extent of damage caused by the accused has not yet been ascertained by the police.

He urged the court to grant him an adjournment to enable him assemble witnesses to prove his case while he did not object to the bail of the accused person.

The presiding senior magistrate, Zainab Bashir, admitted the accused person to bail in the sum of N300,000 with two sureties in like sum, adding that the two sureties must be civil servants working in the FCT and not below GL09.



A cross section of suspected vandals arrested by police and member of the Civil Defence Corps along Lokoja/Abaji and paraded at the Force Headquarters, Abuja with their equipments...recently.

Corruption: PDP vice chairman discharged, acquitted

A Minna high court has discharged and acquitted the national vice chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Abubakar Magaji, who has been standing trial on charges of alleged corrupt practices.

The court presided over by Justice Mariam Dzukogi, held that the evidence adduced by the prosecution was not sufficient to prosecute the accuse.

The judge said that the prosecution's evidence had been discredited, as the oral witness of the prosecution witnesses 2, 3, 4 contradicted the statement to the police, adding that, "when they are contradicted on material facts, such evidence must be explained by the prosecution but the prosecution failed to prove this."

From Aideloje Ojo, Minna

"The prosecution's evidence has been discredited and therefore, the accused cannot be convicted on the basis of unreliable evidence.

The evidence against the accused person presented before this honourable court is not enough to give conviction. The evidence has been discredited and unreliable and no reputable court will convict on it. The accuse person is hereby discharged," she said.

The PDP chieftain was charged to court on September 2, 2000, by the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related offences Commission (ICPC), for allegedly offering bribe to Justice Bima of the Suleja high court to show favour in a chieftaincy case before the

court. He was accused of offering the judge a N500,000 bribe.

However, counsel to the accused, Ayodele Oladele (SAN), made a no case submission in favour of the accused, arguing that the PDP boss's visit to the Suleja high court judge was based on a sympathy visit after the judge was robbed by some armed men and secondly to solicit assistance as a friend.

The defence counsel argued that the essential element that the accused offered a bribe to get favour in a case before the judge has never been proved before the court and urged the court to discharge the accuse.

In her ruling, Justice Mariam Dzukogi held that the court never doubted the fact that a gift was offered but that the fact was never proved that the money was corruptly given to influence a case pending before the Suleja court.

Justice Dzukogi made reference to the evidence of the principal witness, Justice Bima, who said that the accused came to visit him to sympathise with him on the robbery incident.

She explained that the court can only decide on real facts available before it and not on imaginary facts.


In all, the ICPC called eleven witnesses and presented 13 exhibits before the court.

Reacting to the court's verdict, legal advisers to the accused commended the judgement, explaining that it showed that the judiciary could be trusted by the people.

But the ICPC lawyers said the commission will appeal the judgement after due consultations at Abuja.



A member of the Anti-Vandal Squad, Ann Chimelu, on parade during the commissioning and launching of Operation Whipeout Vandals in Abuja, recently. Pic: Kennedy Egonodge.



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AMAC
(Announcer)

NEWS

Meningitis hits Sokoto

Eight children have been admitted at the Wurno General Hospital in Sokoto State as a result of an outbreak of meningitis in the local government area.

The disease was first reported in Tutukawa village and it later spread to Lugu village.

Already, the state government has released the sum of N1 million for the purchase of drugs for the affected areas and other areas that may likely be affected.

Conducting the state's commissioner of health

From Aminu Mohammed, Regional Editor, Sokoto

round the affected areas and the victims at the general hospital in Wurno, Dr. Cherima J. Yakubu, told the commissioner that the outbreak of the disease was reported as soon as the villagers realized that some children were having severe fever and headache.

He said they were rushed to the hospital and out of the eight children affected so far, five have been treated and discharged while the

remaining three were still receiving treatment.

Responding, the state commissioner of health, Alhaji Abubakar Zaki Amali Tambuwal, assured that the state government has taken adequate measures to prevent the spread of the disease.

According to him, as soon as the matter was reported to Governor Attahiru Bafarawa, he approved the release of N1 million for the purchase of drugs despite the non approval of this year's budget.

Alhaji Abubakar Zaki Amali said his ministry is prepared for any eventuality as adequate measures have already been put in place to tackle the spread of the disease.



Participants of National War College Course 14 viewing an Agusta helicopter at the Naval Air Station, Ojo, during their recent tour of military and police establishments.

N/Delta: NLC calls for release of abducted oil workers

NLC president, Adams Oshiomhole, has called for the release of the four oil workers held hostage by some groups in the Niger Delta since January 11.

Oshiomhole, in a statement yesterday in Abuja, said that the NLC remains firm in its belief that there were compelling local concerns in the Niger delta which require urgent political and constitutional solutions.

He however said that oil workers, whether Nigerians or expatriates, were not in any way responsible for that state of affairs, while their abduction will not solve the problems.

According to him, the

NLC is opposed to violence and hostage-taking as a means to pursue grievances no matter how justified they may be.

"We hereby appeal for the immediate release of all the hostages," he said and urged the federal government to intensify negotiations, adding that any resort to high handedness or military solution might be unhelpful.

He again stressed that the Niger Delta problem could be solved through a variety of measures, including job creation.

"This is a challenge before the president and members of the National Assembly," he said.

'PDP has no hands in 3rd term campaign'

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), said it has no hands in the alleged plan to use state governors to push for a third term for President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The party's National Publicity Secretary, Mr. John Odey, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), yesterday in Abuja, that the PDP has no

links with the allegation.

"We have not summoned any meeting with any governor on the amendment of the constitution and we are not going to do such a thing.

"The National Assembly is constitutionally empowered to deal with all issues bordering on law making and we do not have that power as a political party.

"We do not have the powers, neither do the governors. We are confident that the National Assembly will make any constitutional review when necessary," he said.

Odey who blamed political opponents for spreading rumours on the Third-Term agenda, said the PDP has commenced a public awareness campaign aimed at educating the populace on the nation's electoral process.

"We are embarking on this public enlightenment to engage our supporters and other Nigerians so that together, we can build a strong and virile political culture for the country," he said.

He said the PDP believes that if the public was properly enlightened on the electoral process, the electioneering process would be virtually hitch-free.

"There is also this issue of god-fatherism in our polity," he said, arguing,

"when there is proper education and the elites are involved in the politics of their communities, god-fatherism will be eliminated". On the plans by some members of the PDP to launch the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), a political association, Odey said the party would entertain such movement.

"We are not intimidated and we are not afraid because we do not want a system where only the PDP will exist," he noted, stressing that failure of strong opposition in the country was not healthy for democratic governance.

He criticised other political parties for not having the capacity to challenge the PDP government on issues that could help develop the country.

"They spend much of the time raising spurious claims on the pages of newspapers just to cause distractions for the government," he said.

Return of pilgrims in Sokoto zone epileptic -Kebbi Dep Gov

The Deputy Governor of Kebbi state, Alhaji Suleiman Abubakar Argungu, has expressed dismay over the attitude of Kobo Air to convey pilgrims from the Sokoto zone back home.

He was speaking at the Sultan Abubakar International Airport, Sokoto, over the weekend when he visited the airport to find out whether the third batch of the state's pilgrims have arrived.

According to him, it was very unfortunate that the airliner did not learn from the experience of airlifting the pilgrims to the holyland last month when over 300 intending pilgrims from the state were left behind.

The deputy - governor said the state was not happy with the airliner and appealed to the management of Kobo

From Aminu Mohammed, Regional Editor, Sokoto

Air to speed up the airlift of Kebbi pilgrims now stranded at Jeddah airport in Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, only about 960 pilgrims out of 3,552 from Kebbi state have so far returned home while 987 from Zamfara out of 3,383 have also returned. However, Sokoto state which has made four flights in the last 10 days have about 2,250 of its pilgrims back home out of 4785.

Over 10,000 pilgrims from Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states who were airlifted from the Sultan Abubakar International Airport, Sokoto, performed this year's hajj but only 3,885 have so far been airlifted back home.



His Royal Highness, the Oba of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Akiolu welcoming the Commandant of the National War College, Rear Admiral Anthony Isa to his palace recently.

News Focus

Hajj: Can we ever get it right?



Muslims on arrival at Lagos Hajj camp from Saudi Arabia waiting for their luggage.

Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

So much has been said about the Hajj fiasco that left about 20,000 intending pilgrims stranded in December 2005 even after they had done everything required to take them to the Holy land for the religious obligation.

And as expected, the main actors in the Hajj organisation have continued to trade blames in their bid to absolve themselves from what is generally seen as a national shame.

While the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Alhaji Abubakar Tanko, is angry that the three airlines contracted for the exercise disappointed the nation, the *Amirru Hajj*, Sen. Ibrahim Mantu, has distanced himself from the shoddy arrangements as his appointment was "purely ceremonial" with nothing to do with organising the exercise.

On their part, the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs (DPA), has complained of interference while the Prof. Abubakar Gwandu-led National Committee on Hajj (NCH), blames the bureaucratic bottlenecks in the entire process.

For the disappointed faithfuls who went through 'hell' in Hajj camps, these excuses are neither here nor there. But for analysts, it is time to beam the searchlight on the pertinent questions.

Why must the intending pilgrims suffer every year? Why should performing a simple annual exercise be so difficult? Why must Nigeria,

as confirmed by Gwandu, remain the black sheep of the Hajj exercise? And above all, can we ever get it right?

Most of the comments on the exercise point to one thing-organisational ineptitude-unofficially referred to as the Nigerian factor which captures the country's tendency to refuse to plan.

But a cursory look at the poor planning will reveal that it has its roots in corruption, a fact attested to by the *Amirru Hajj*, Mantu.

Experience has however shown that the situation has only persisted because culprits are never fished out and punished.

The Deputy Senate President who was jolted by the magnitude of corruption especially in the areas of passport and ticket racketeering that dogged the exercise last year, for instance, promised that heads will roll. But nothing happened.

Last year too, according to Gwandu, air cargo carriers received 12 Saudi Riyals to airlift each kilogramme of luggage but reneged on that deal and elected to ship the luggage at two Riyals per kilogramme.

Nothing has happened to the offending carriers even when Gwandu promised to ensure that justice be done as many pilgrims lost their luggages while those lucky to get theirs found it between October and November instead of March.

Incidentally, this year's exercise, considered the worst ever, was, by Gwandu's

calculation, expected to be the best after the NCH reportedly licensed three airlines considered reputable for the exercise and promptly paid them 30 per cent up front.

With the 58,000 pilgrims meeting the Sept. 27, 2005 payment deadline and the pilgrims reforms that ensured more participation by the states, Gwandu was sure of success until the opposite hit him in the face.

In seeking a permanent solution to the problem, Mantu has called for the "right pricing" of the exercise.

According to him, Nigeria with an average of 60,000 pilgrims every year should be very attractive to the airlines. He argued that the very low offer from Nigeria makes it imperative that aircrafts are leased to countries with higher offers while Nigeria is considered last.

Here, analysts believe Mantu has a point because several days after the commencement of the operation, there was no single airlift from Nigeria.

Mantu also has a supporter in Jahed Allam, general manager of International Trans-Air Limited, one of the airlines licensed for the exercise who complained that Nigeria's offer was "very unattractive and not competitive enough."

He said that the 900 dollars offered by Nigeria per pilgrim would not allow operators "to operate comfortably," an argument rejected by NCH secretary, Samaila Yusuf, who said that the amount was

"very much in order."

In seeking a solution to this perennial failure, there is also the need to examine Mantu's claims that airlines usually contracted to airlift the pilgrims were not reputable enough.

According to Mantu, there is the need to engage professional airlines like Saudi Air, Ethiopian Airlines, British Airways or South African airlines. That way, we shall get the best for our people.

Observers have also argued that the involvement of several bodies handling the exercise creates confusion in the organisation as roles always overlap.

"The DPA, NCH and the *Amirru Hajj* are all expected to carry out same functions and this is just a panacea for confusion," remarked Jibrin Mohammed, a Kano-based journalist. Mohammed attributed the incessant racketeering in the Hajj programme to a collusion between airline operators and too many Hajj officials seeking for "quick cuts."

Mohammed is sure that the situation would continue until the Hajj Commission is passed into law.

Analysts have also called for a thorough investigation into the affairs of the DPA and the NCH as some airlines that transported some pilgrims in the last two exercises were yet to be paid. Such a situation might just explain the reluctance to come to Nigeria.

Many have also called on government to hands off the

exercise and allow those ready to pay the "right and competitive fare" to work with private handlers with whom they could be sure of a better deal.

"That is better than the crowd we now have that breeds confusion every other year," argued Shehu Ladan, one of the disappointed intending pilgrims in Abuja who said that the subsidy granted by government usually ends in the pockets of civil servants.

For most keen observers, the recent vow by chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sen. Jibril Aminu, that the National Assembly will order a thorough investigation of the "sheer and unadulterated incompetence that shamed the nation," appears soothing enough.

Unfortunately, many commentators have found it difficult to extricate the National Assembly members from the "shame."

Top officials of the NCH who craved anonymity, have continued to complain of the overbearing attitude of politicians who they say arm-twist the officials to have their way.

Observers believe that a meaningful investigation into the Hajj activities must be extensive as many players are involved in the exercise.

One ready example is when the NCH paid N33.1 million to the Nigerian Immigration Service for the printing of 65,000 pilgrims passports and identity cards which were to be delivered in

September.

By early December when the NCH went to the National Security Printing and Minting Company (NSPMC), they were told that the money has not been remitted from the immigration department, forcing an urgent meeting with the internal affairs minister who ordered the remittance of the sum.

Nothing was said about the cause of the delay so that a repeat could be avoided.

Whichever way Nigeria decides to resolve this recurrent problem, it must be borne in mind that the Saudi authorities are already getting tired of the recurring confusion in Nigeria's yearly exercise.

Gwandu said this much last month when he noted that Nigeria is generally portrayed in the negative in Saudi Arabia.

Hear him: "Nigeria is seen as the nation with everything that is bad. We are rioters, we are the demonstrators, the late comers and the extension seekers."

But while the nation deliberates on the Hajj failure, another recurrent decimal is already rearing its head-thousands of Nigerians are already stranded at Jeddah airport in Saudi weeks after the exercise.

Pundits believe that a quick return journey to Nigeria for those who were able to make it is the best apology the Hajj authorities can offer for this year's failure as the search for a more organised system continues.

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Opinion

2006 Hajj: Shame of Sakkwatawa

It shall be called shame, shame, and shame! This was exactly what the hitherto supposed to be well-behaved and spiritually upright pilgrims of Sokoto State demonstrated penultimate Friday, January 20, 2006 at the King AbdulAzeez International Airport, Jeddah.

Prior to delving into details, the shame *Sakkwatawa* brought to Nigeria's persistent fragile but deteriorating image outside the shores of the country, one recalls with utmost displeasure the bad display of ignorance and lack of decorum characterised by high level demonstration of inefficiency of Sokoto State Pilgrims Welfare Board where it allowed or conveyed its re-

By Suleiman Muhammad Sulaiman

turnee pilgrims to be so rancorous and wanton at the Jeddah Airport by unleashing mayhem on their brothers and sisters from FCT, Abuja without any reason whatsoever to advance against the latter.

Going by reports from both local and international media organisations, Sokoto State pilgrims after spending two to three days at the Jeddah Airport decided to stage a dramatic crisis on the about-to-depart and innocent pilgrims of Abuja for no other reason than that the FCT pilgrims were alleged to have been accorded special treatment; that is, they didn't spend more

than a day but were about to board their return flight.

The so-called argument of whether the FCT pilgrims did not spend a day or an hour at the airport further buttressed the efficient and professional manner with which the FCT Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board discharged and coordinated the annual pilgrimage. In fact, they deserve commendation for that.

Anybody who observes hajj, either in the past or of recent, will acknowledge or justify that the FCT Pilgrims Board's laudable attempt to compete with and/or emulate other countries with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who stay at Jeddah Airport for a very minimal period is a good one. It will surprise any reader that the author of this write-up is a living witness during the 2004 hajj at Jeddah Airport where within a couple of minutes, over 1,000 pilgrims of Afghanistan formed a queue but the interesting part of their attitude is that nobody begged for excuse (or whatever favour) to join queue ahead of the last person he met. To the amazement of self and other fellow Nigerians, within five to 10 minutes, one ceased to see any Afghan as they were efficiently shown the way to

board their flight back home!

Unlike some states in my country and in particular where *Sakkwatawa* decided to behave otherwise, such decency and discipline are lacking and to the dismay and chagrin of all responsible individuals, Sokoto State pilgrims started shouting, using unprintable words on their fellow brothers and sisters for no other reason than the result of inefficiency of their state's pilgrims board! In fact, they started stoning the FCT pilgrims with sachets of *Zam-Zam* water or any object they could lay their hands on. What a shameful act!

With the foregoing insight, I wish to draw the attention of pilgrims particularly those from Sokoto State who threw decorum and decency to the dogs that they should remember their mission to the Holy land and need to, without any apology, engage in sober reflection on their ignominious conduct, which didn't portray the true and exemplary culture or teachings of Islam. And, may they be reminded of one of the verses of the Holy Qur'an which says upon intending pilgrims: "...Hajj is (during) well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein (by entering the state

of Ihram), there is (to be for him) no sexual relations and disobedience and no disputing during Hajj. And whatever good you do - Allah knows it. And take ..." (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:197).

Rather than be guided by the foregoing Surah, our brothers from Sokoto behaved in a very unruly manner by engaging themselves recklessly and wildly upon their brothers and sisters from FCT in a manner reminiscent of *Jahiliyya* period!

For record purposes, I want to categorically state that I am neither from FCT geographical zone nor am I holding any brief for the board. However, I hail from the same zone with Sokoto but one finds (like any other decent minds) the conduct of Sokoto State pilgrims very unacceptable and condemnable in all ramifications of good norms, civilisation and more importantly what Islam teaches. Even if one finds the reckless conduct of Sokoto pilgrims to be too rigid, one cannot but blame their state Pilgrims' Welfare Board for lack of good organisation and managerial skill. How come that the pilgrims stayed at the airport for three consecutive days after leaving Makkah or Madinah?

At the first instance, why should they be brought to Jeddah if their flight was not on ground? And is that how the operation was supposed to be coordinated? I stand by my experience during the 2004 hajj on the conduct and efficient organisation which I saw over the airlifting of the Afghanistan pilgrims as earlier explained.

Pilgrims from Sokoto State should realise that their FCT counterparts share no geographical zone with them in Nigeria; hence, having different bodies to cater for them. More so, their hajj carrier companies differ. Then why should they (Sokoto pilgrims) have descended so low as to start beating their brothers? Does Islam not preach peace and brotherhood? Had they forgotten the spiritual mission undertaken at the holy land?

In conclusion, I wish to particularly call on the Sokoto State governor, Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa to without any delay investigate the way and manner the state pilgrims board organised and handled this year's hajj, which brought shame not only to his state but the country in general. The exemplary conduct and organisational skill of states with more pilgrims like Kano should be emulated.

Suleiman Muhammad Sulaiman, No. 1A, Ardo Street, Nasarawa State.

"Pilgrims from Sokoto State should realise that their FCT counterparts share no geographical zone with them in Nigeria; hence, having different bodies to cater for them. More so, their hajj carrier companies differ. Then why should they (Sokoto pilgrims) have descended so low as to start beating their brothers? Does Islam not preach peace and brotherhood? Had they forgotten the spiritual mission undertaken at the holy land?"

Kano State has the slogan, "Centre of commerce" and defining the concept in terms of "trade" would still have been aptly named were the concept to be defined in terms of "politics." Kano is the state which both the least expected candidate or consensus candidate could win or lose election simultaneously depending on the circumstances on ground in any given situation and time.

If we can recall clearly around 1989-91, an Igbo man contested and won councillorship election in Kano. One can rightly observe that Kano is a typical Islamic society, because the impact of Islamic culture and trade spans over seven hundred years in Kano.

And about one thousand years of intricate traditional and political structure has been in place. It is the most heterogeneous and populous Hausa state in the North. These and many other factors make Kano a more politically volatile state. At the same time, it's a sensitive state to any government at the centre that seeks or wants to maintain power in Nigeria.

I feel that politicians in Kano should extol the virtues of the late Emir of Kano, Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero and Malam Aminu Kano of blessed memories.

In terms of political ideology, Kano politicians should emulate the current ANPP deputy governor, Engineer Magaji Abdullahi for so many reasons. I sincerely feel that the current ANPP government under the leadership of Malam Ibrahim Shekarau (my past principal in Hadejia), should try and come to terms with all the good pieces of advice given to them by Ujudud Shariff in his Tuesday column of *Daily Trust* on 22nd April, 2003 two or three days after this government was installed. But if the Kano ANPP deems it fit to seek for re-election come 2007, then I don't think I will be

Governments, politicians and people of Kano/Jigawa

By Ahmadu A. Is'haq

biased if I single out Engineer Magaji Abdullahi to top the list of other credible Kano ANPP members for the primaries and governorship elections in relation to the factors that characterised his past political struggle during the days of SDP.

On the other hand, what is happening in both Kano and Jigawa PDP is simply a demonstration of an addressed and expressed will of the democrats concerned wishing to articulate their grievances and make redresses. That can be seen in both their conferences (Rimi faction) of 1st and 3rd October, 2005 respectively. Alhaji Muhammad Abubakar Rimi, member, Board of Trustees of the PDP; former Minister of Labour and Productivity, Alhaji Musa Gwadabe; former Speaker, Federal House of Representatives, Alhaji Umar Ghali Na'Abba; former Minister of Mines and Power and later the Internal Affairs Minister during the late General Sani Abacha military administration, Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu; former Minister of State for Works, Alhaji Saleh Shehu; ex-civilian governor of Jigawa State, Barrister Ali Sa'ad; former Ambassador of Nigeria to Tanzania, Alhaji Ahmed Usman; former Ambassador of Nigeria to North Korea, Alhaji Daudu Suleiman and several other party members held a congress on Monday, 3rd October, 2005 in Kano as a group popularly referred to as PDP *Ta Jama'a* (the People's PDP).

Consequently, on Thursday, 20th October, 2005, another PDP faction popularly referred to as PDP *Ta Abuja* (Abuja PDP) met in the Sani Abacha Stadium, Kano, comprising the PDP bigwigs from Abuja. These included deputy national leader who represented the PDP National Chairman, Ahmadu Ali. Others in atten-

dance are too numerous to mention by name. If you look at this situation, it easily generates the fear of creation of factions capable of tearing the PDP into two houses (at the time of writing this piece). One can easily cast his mind back and relate to what transpired in PRP in the Second Republic resulting in two major factions of *Santsi* and *Tabo* and those characters are the same people in today's wrangling of PDP; this time around united together (the *Santsis* and *Tabos*). Also, on the other hand, there is this probability of re-union especially if you apply the concept of the theory of development that says "at the end of every crisis, there is development." Because trying to be a good student of history especially if we relate to the case in 1998 when all characters of people were brought together, some in bloc and formed the PDP as the strongest party not only in Nigeria or Africa, but the world at large. I cannot easily divorce the fact that *consociationalism* would be a viable option to restore normalcy and greatness in PDP (emphasis mine). Let's bet!

The most important thing to consider in making analysis about this case is the reaction of common people on Thursday, October 20, 2005 congress where they carried posters of different candidates including IBB, Obasanjo/Atiku, Uzor Kalu, Kwankwaso, Aminu Dabo and Ganduje on the other hand from all walks of the venue. Some notorious youth carried a bier with a whitish object inside indicating a dead body. Jumping and shouting, "Rimi ya mutu, mun huta!" (Rimi is dead and we're at peace!). Because the whitish object inside the bier indicated the corpse of Rimi with his poster

attached, which they handed over to the speaker at the congress, Alhaji (Comrade) Wada Waziri, and finally to Akida House at Maiduguri Road, Rimi's campaign office.

Talk about Jigawa State in particular, the important political issue is that of "successorship." The incumbent governor should contend with the rising popularity of the cream of speculated interested politicians cropping up by the day for the sake of development and progress of democracy in the state, so that he can score his 40 per cent pass mark on leaving office after eight years.

Turaki should not tread or witch-hunt anybody and should also realise that the success of the truce brokered between him and former Foreign Affairs Minister, Sule Lamido largely depends on how truly Sule Lamido is committed to be his brother and sisters' keeper (I wish his speech of October 20, 2005 in Kano came from the bottom of his heart). And also how strong the governor is to accommodate the political inter-play in the spirit of allowing the natural role of events between and among diverse individuals or groups of politicians. Some among the speculated interested politicians have exhibited courage as well as healthy competition with the incumbent governor at various levels in the past and at present; like Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu in the 2003 gubernatorial election and Farouk Adamu Aliyu, ANPP member, Federal House of Representatives and chairman, House Committee on Population for his incessant and vibrant role of criticising and addressing the shortcomings of the Turaki ANPP government.

Alhaji Saleh Shehu, former Minister of State Works is another person that the agony of the politics of successorship

shouldn't harm. For so many reasons because as contained in the *Daily Trust* of Friday, 22 July, 2005 "the fall of erstwhile Minister of State Works, Alhaji Saleh Shehu, was largely seen as a result of the truce entered between these two erstwhile political enemies. The works minister's open quest to contest the state PDP guber ticket has pitched him against Lamido and Governor Turaki.

However, Saleh Shehu is still not left behind and in fact was interested to keep the record straight in the sense that you admire his style of politics when on Saturday, October 24, 2005, he toured some major cities in Jigawa including Dutse and Hadejia to express his gesture for the support accorded him while serving as the minister, and to solicit for more support which of course was displayed by the cheering crowd of people to his convoy carrying his posters and that of his boss, Vice President Atiku Abubakar.

For Ali Sa'ad, ex-civilian governor of Jigawa State, he still celebrates his performance in the sense that "12 years after his administration, no government in Jigawa has broken the record he set in the provision of 1,000 houses in a very short period of time with the little money they earned compared to what is provided now."

Still cropping up on the list of speculated interested candidates for Jigawa gubernatorial seat in 2007 are Alhaji Ahmed Usman, former Ambassador of Nigeria to Tanzania. He participated actively in Jigawa PDP, but while some people speculate about his interest for governorship, others view him as a senatorial candidate wishing to contest election come 2007.

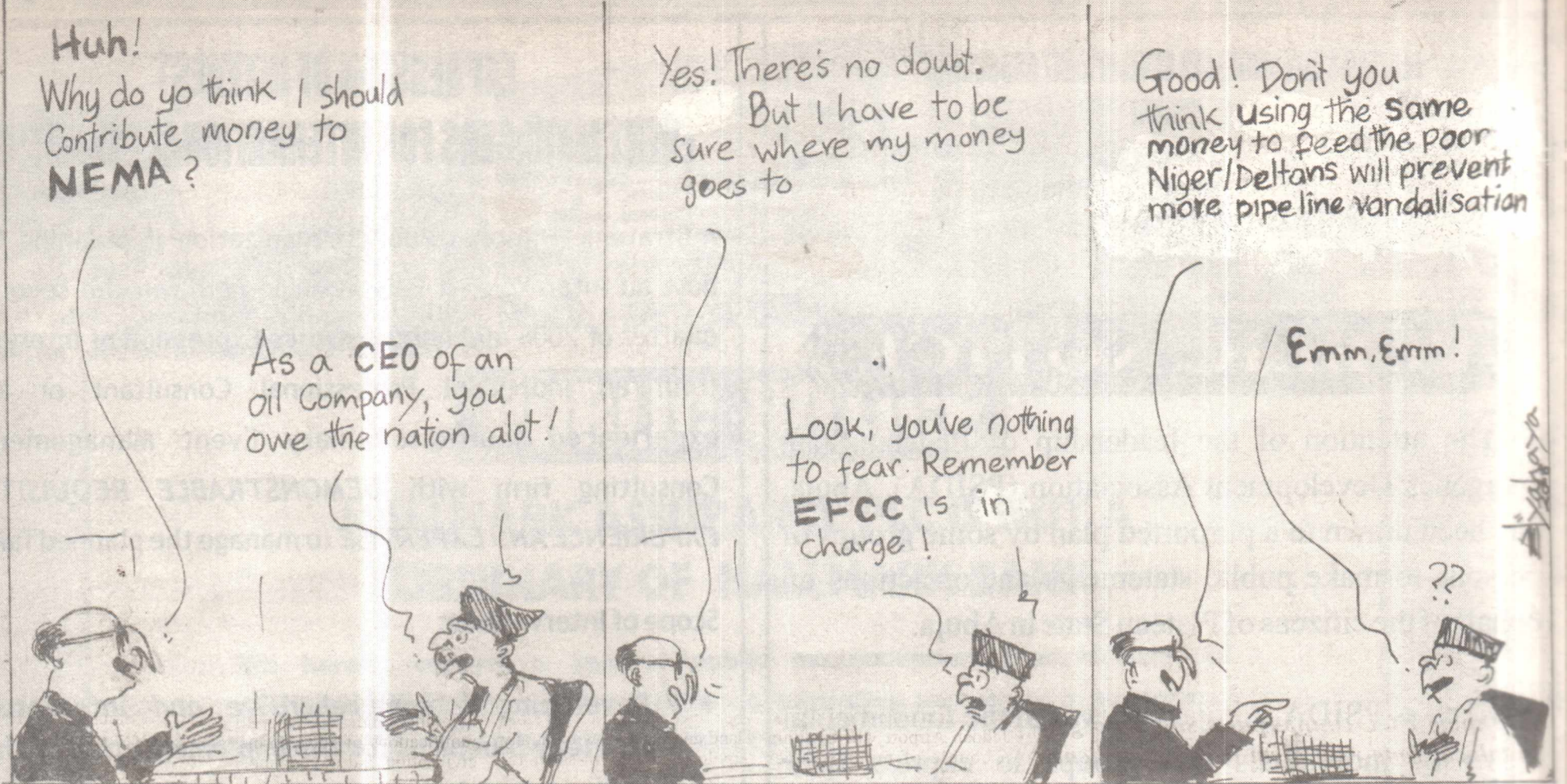
From all the foregoing, now is sincerely the time to make

the Jigawa slots thus: politicians and people of Jigawa should wake up "to give their today for tomorrow." While they celebrate the change of focus by the Turaki government, they should also pray to God to guide these prospective eminent politicians, and bestow them with wisdom for employing healthy competition in the general interest of the people to address the issue of who amongst them becomes what, why and how. "Sacrifice" remains the greatest single thing in this respect.

From what happened in Jigawa in the past, the concept of re-election bid of an incumbent government unlike in Kano is a viable exercise, but this issue is not a pressing one at the moment. The ideal thing to do now is to explore the concept of development but the one which emphasises that "central to any attempt at development is the enlargement of people's choices thereby providing them with access to resources, which are necessary for decent living." The incumbent government of Jigawa State has after six wasteful years embarked on some laudable projects that are sincerely long overdue for execution; like the much-hyped mass housing programme that was on the millennium budget of year 2000 in which 100 houses each would be built in all the 27 local government and 50 development areas making a total of 7,700 houses all over the state.

Let the Jigawa people strike a 'deal' with Governor Turaki about the state of the current exercise. If duly completed, then they should pray to God to save Turaki from the EFCC after leaving office in 2007.

Ahmadu A. Is'haq wrote in from 67, Farm Centre, GRA, Kano.



KUKAN KURCIYA

With Bilya Bala
bilyabala@hotmail.com

The ungrateful hornbill

Ahmed Yamel was a bright student and a sportsman. He played active hockey, which was the school's pastime. For his macho outlook, he was popularly called Man in our secondary school days in the mid-sixties! You could therefore imagine my disbelief when he recently told me that he shed tears of nostalgia after reading my last piece titled *The Revealing Lullaby of Bebiya*. Man, shedding tears! I was touched. It was a story that every one of us from that culture knew. The setting was very familiar to every one of us and we reminisce a lot as we pitied our children for losing out to TV and video games on that score.

As we reminisced over the bygone days, Ahmad El-Rufa'i, (no relation to the famous minister) my four-year-old son, walked in singing a stanza from one of the stories I had told them the previous evening. El-Rufa'i was one day almost refused treatment at the National Hospital where he was taken to by his mother due to some ailment; because one of the hospital staff thought he was the son of the famous minister. The reason was that the staff had to sleep outside the previous night because his 'illegal' structure home in one of the satellite towns was demolished by the FCDA. It took concerted efforts to convince the staff that while the minister's name was a surname, my son's name was a first name and therefore he could see that there was no blood relationship between the two. My poor son was grudgingly treated ultimately.

When Yamel asked me how come my son was singing such 'old folklore' song, I told him that some of the stories in my pieces I actually retold to my children whenever my DSTV card expires and they liked them a lot. It even tempted me to bring down the satellite dish and replace it with a candlelight storytelling

session in the family sitting room. He laughed and asked what was the story again as it had escaped his memory. I told him that it was "*The ungrateful hornbill*" and went ahead to tell him and his friend the story again.

Once upon a time, when birds and other animals talked like human beings, there was a female hornbill (*Sheda* in Hausa language) that had been looking for a husband for quite a long time without getting any suitor. She would follow other girl-birds to the treetop arena every bird-market day, with the hope that some lonely bird may see and propose to her, but she never had any luck. Other birds laughed at and told her that no bird worth his salt would marry such a long-beaked creature. Her beak was so long that whenever she sat in her nest, it would be protruding out like one of the branches she had her nest on.

She was disliked by her bird-people and derided by humans. She became very upset and restless. She would frequent ponds, lakes and rivers; in fact, wherever birds flocked, she would be there hopefully trying to be noticed by a suitor. But her beak was too long they said and therefore nobody wanted a wife with such a long and protruding appendage. "How would one hold such a creature in treetop ballroom dances?" a cute little robin or some other exotic bird would ask in jest. She indeed became an unhappy creature and would often sit alone on a branch contemplating her predicament.

No matter how hard she tried to woo a suitor, the moment they saw her long beak, they would pick up speed and flap away higher and higher into the free skies. One comedian bird was heard saying whoever married *Sheda*

should buy an eye protector else she could easily pluck one's eyes out if one dared cross her. Other birds would cackle in jest and fly away. This really got to her and she would spend the night in the trees crying until one day, a group of birds tried to play some pranks on her.

They knew that the king of birds, *Dawisu* the peacock, had lost his senior wife of recent. They went and told him that there was a beautiful girl-bird who would fit the royal nest-hold of the king and she was yet to be betrothed to any bird and felt that the king deserved to be consoled by her beauty. The king bought the idea and said he would pay *Sheda* a visit to see for himself.

A cute colourful robin was quickly sent to warn *Sheda* of the king's impending visit and its purpose. The poor girl-bird became agitated, apprehensive and not knowing how to cover her long beak. On the other hand, she thought it would be a God-sent opportunity to be able to entice *Dawisu* the peacock and king of birds and become his wife. She spent the whole night thinking of how to cover her long beak at least until the marriage had taken place. She thought and thought until an idea began to form in her mind.

Early in the morning, *Sheda* flew to the family tree of the little dove and asked if she was home. She was led to the branch in which the little dove sat eating a few worms she had earlier picked up from the fields nearby. "To what occasion do I owe this visit, oh *Sheda*!" The little girl-dove asked somewhat surprised that *Sheda* would pay her a visit that early in the morning. *Sheda* told the little dove of the impending visit of *Dawisu* and its reason. She asked that she be allowed to borrow the dove's small

beak for three days until the marriage was contracted, then the dove would have her beak back.

The little dove was full of pity and kindness. She removed her beak and gave it to *Sheda*, but entreated her to make sure she brought it back in three days time as the dove could not feed using *Sheda*'s long and unwieldy beak. *Sheda* swore by the lost bones of her mother that immediately the wedding was over, in three days' time, she would bring back the beak to the dove.

That evening, *Dawisu* and his bird entourage paid a visit to *Sheda* and proposed to her, which she quickly accepted before something made him change his bird-mind. That same night, the bride was conveyed to the royal nest of *Dawisu* where she was given a very cozy nest built earlier that morning. *Sheda* lived happily in the royal nest and forgot about the poor dove who gave her the beak with which she was able to get married. She became the favourite wife of the king and anything she wanted, the king would oblige her.

A month later, the poor dove had drastically lost weight as the beak she was saddled with would not allow her to feed. It was too big for a small bird that picked small grains and worms. So she made up her mind to go find *Sheda* and retrieve her beak before she died of starvation. She could hardly fly but the fear of dying propelled her into the blue skies from one treetop to the other asking for the whereabouts of the royal nest-hold of *Dawisu*, the king of all the birds! Every treetop on which she perched, she would sing a song thus:

Masu gidan nana, masu gidan nana
Kwanda Ku, Kwanda Kuwa tashin Ku
Ko nan ne gidan Dawisu,

Dawisu sarkin Tsuntsaye
Wata Sheda ta ari baki
Da ga kwana ukku ta ce man

Yau gata hard a watanni
Idan naje Koto
Ni kan fadi kushangare
Ni kan tashi kushangare

Roughly translated:
Owners of this nest-hold, I greet you

I greet you night and day
I ask if I am at the royal nest of Dawisu.

Dawisu our avian king
His hornbill wife borrowed my little beak

For three days she promised me

It has now dragged into many moons

When I go out picking worms

I tumble and fall headlong
Her beak is too big for little me

Then the nest-hold would send her away with kind words to another treetop until she got to the royal nest-hold of the king and she sang similar appeal. At first, *Sheda* pretended she had not heard the dove's appeal but other bird-wives did and stopped their chatter and listened attentively. With the glee of envy, they told the little dove that she was in the right place. Grudgingly, *Sheda* welcomed her without shame. The little dove refused to hear anything but demanded for her beak back, which she forcefully removed and threw the long untenable one back to *Sheda* and immediately flew away.

Sheda sat gloomily in her nest with a long beak protruding into the king's treetop toilet. When *Dawisu* came back

from his royal court, he picked his ablution container and went round to his convenience only for his anus to be pricked by *Sheda*'s long and unwieldy appendage. The king involuntarily jumped and if not because he still practised flying, he would have tumbled down the tree to his death. He turned around and began pulling the long appendage even as *Sheda* cried out saying it was her beak, not an alien thing. When the king realised what it was, he divorced and asked her to pack everything that belonged to her from the royal nest immediately.

As I concluded the story, the other person sitting with Yamel sighed and philosophically observed the similarity between *Sheda* and king Oki, an ungrateful king in another land, who has a running battle with his people because he too refused to return the beak which the people lent to him some years ago. Unlike *Sheda*, however, Oki kept himself in an impregnable fortress, chiselled out of rock, to escape the people's wrath. But like the little dove, the people were determined to get what belonged to them back, no matter where Oki went and hid. He may not be as lucky as *Sheda* and go scot-free! They would surcharge him for all the carrion he had been eating with their otherwise clean and holy beak!

We all laughed even as the friend remained dead serious about the surcharge of Oki. As I bade them goodbye, I too thought of the day of reckoning for such beak-stealing rulers all over the world and shook my head in unresolved anger over it.

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



PLATEAU STATE INDIGENES DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

(PSIDA)

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PUBLIC NOTICE

1. The attention of the leadership of Plateau State Indigenes Development Association (PSIDA), Abuja, has been drawn to a purported plan by some groups of persons to make public statements and/or actions on behalf of the citizens of Plateau State in Abuja.

2. Much as PSIDA, Abuja, believes in the fundamental rights of individuals and groups to express their opinions on state, national and international issues, the association wishes to state unequivocally that the purported planned action is not at the instance of Plateau State Indigenes Development Association, Abuja.

As a non-partisan umbrella organization that caters for the social and developmental needs of Plateau State Indigenes in Abuja, we, like all Nigerians and other citizens of Plateau State in particular, are concerned about the state of affairs in our beloved state.

3. Consequently, we have initiated and are exploring various avenues within our capabilities to assist, as stakeholders in Plateau State, toward ensuring that our state regains its normalcy and balance.

4. The planned action is and cannot therefore be the brainchild of PSIDA.

5. We wish to seize this opportunity to commend all categories of the citizens of the state and other respectable Nigerians for their assiduous efforts at bringing political equilibrium in Plateau State.

Long live Plateau State

Thank you

24/1/06
Damlong Walma, J.P.
(Chairman)

24/1/06
Ponfa A. Wuyep
(Secretary)

24/1/06
Joseph M. Kadaura
(P.R.O)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST EVENT MANAGERS FOR INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

A Strategic National Public Organization is planning to host an International Exhibition in Abuja in the second quarter of 2006 and hereby invites Expression of Interest from an Individual Professional Consultant or an experienced multidisciplinary Event Management Consulting firm with **DEMONSTRABLE REQUISITE EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE** to manage the planned fair.

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'Give Africa chance to grow'

It is also good news that they are actively considering debt relief for other African countries that do not fall within the HIPC category, Nigeria has benefited from debt relief and we are grateful to those that made it possible. While asking for more concessions from our creditors, I also urge those of us that have benefited from earlier relief to translate it to identifiable development endeavours as proof of our genuine concern about the future of our people.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the German President, Mr. Horst Kohler hosted us to the formal inauguration of his Partnership with Africa Initiative in Bonn in November 2005. We share in his genuine concern and dream for the future of Africa. We welcome the on-going dialogue between Africa and the Nordic countries. We note with satisfaction the outcome of the just concluded meeting of the Africa-Nordic Foreign Ministers in Cotonou, Republic of Benin. We salute these initiatives and similar other Initiatives and pledge our full cooperation to see the visions encapsulated therein succeed. It is my fervent view that the future of our continent that is now receiving international investment must be one that is free of conflicts, hunger, disease and want. It is also one that has evolved into a zone of peace; where its resources are exploited for the sole purpose of developing its societies; where despair has yielded way to hope; and where the security of generations yet unborn has been guaranteed today through good practices in governance.

Your Excellencies, our initiatives within the AU and NEPAD have continued to receive international endorsement. History therefore beckons on us to strengthen our determination to create and sustain the enthusiasm to meet the growing aspirations for development by our people. Where we lack the capital and technological know-how, we are blessed with enormous resources of land and abundant labour to engage in constructive and comparative partnership with the international community. It is axiomatic therefore that this is a basic underlining fact in the search for solutions to Africa's problems.

Dear Colleagues, our collective experience is indicative of the fact that good practices in governance flow from the quality, commitment, focus and character of leadership. Today even if a lot more is desired, it is noteworthy that the culture of good governance is gradually gathering fervour in Africa. With an increasing number of countries acceding to the African peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of NEPAD, one fundamental factor in the march

Being a text of a speech by President Olusegun Obasanjo at the sixth ordinary session of the assembly of the African Union, Khartoum, the Sudan, January 23, 2006

towards sustainable development is being attained. The onus of sustainability therefore resides with us. While congratulating those of us that have committed ourselves to this process, I urge those who have not, to find the positive reasons to accede to APRM. The APRM process has served to improve the image of Africa. I congratulate Ghana as the first country to be peer-reviewed.

Your Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, there can be no society without the youth. This is more so that society being a continuum depends on its youth to relay the baton of regeneration. The strides we are making today in reorganizing and reforming our society are the logical result of the knowledge and experiences which as youth we derived from our forebears. It was therefore most appropriate that the theme of the France-Africa Summit in December 2005 dwelt on the qualities and potentialities of the African youth.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank once again and congratulate the conveners of the summit, particularly our dear brother and President of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Amadou Toumani Toure, for successfully hosting that historical Summit. It is incumbent upon us as servants of our peoples, particularly the youth of Africa, to ensure that the outcome of that Summit is given the necessary support, both at national and continental levels.

Similarly, let me commend to this summit the recommendations of the Joint AU/ECA Conference of Ministers of Women and Gender Affairs in Dakar in October 2005, for serious consideration. We have arrived at a stage in our collective quest for solution to our problems when issues of interest and relevance to our womenfolk must take the center stage. Our commitment to the realization of the MDGs can only be total if we demonstrate our abiding will and resolve to uplift, even jump start, our determination to put the gender and youth issues, especially as regards the need for empowerment, on the front burner of the agenda of the AU at all times. The AU must provide credible leadership within and beyond the continent in this area.

In Somalia, not as much progress has been made as we would have desired, in spite of the Investment Africa and the international community have made to promote peace in the country. This situation is further compounded by the reluctance of the UN to lift the arms embargo to allow the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development Peace

Support Mission (IGASOM) to deploy. The other factor impeding progress in the achievement of peace in Somalia is the lack of the necessary resources to prosecute the AU's agenda in the country.

The Ethiopia-Eritrea border demarcation process has not recorded any significant progress owing to the divergent perspectives of the parties to the implementation of the Boundary Commission's decision. The disturbing signals arising from the troops deployment in and around the Temporary Security Zone, and the uncompromising stance of the two parties should

attempts and counter accusations of both Sudan and Chad of aggression in each other's territory and support for rebels in each other's territory are cause for serious concern and should be handled with the frankness it deserves in finding out the real aggressor. It is important that we take appropriate steps to discourage acts of destabilization. May I implore all parties concerned to ensure continuous faithful implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on Southern Sudan.

In the Central African Republic, the seeming relapse into a state of Insecurity currently being witnessed calls for our concerted attention. The need to find lasting solutions to these conflicts and

responsibility in global affairs. It was against this background that in Maputo in 2003, we set in motion the process of institutional transformation of the Union to meet the present day challenges. While almost all the organs of the Union have been established and are operational, the operationalisation of a few of them remains outstanding.

These include the Special Technical Committees, the Court, the Financial Institutions and the full attainment of the status of the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ECOSDCC). You will therefore agree with me that the establishment of, and full operationalisation of these organs, constitute the immediate challenge in the institutional transformation process.

Let me also remind us that to enable the Union to implement its programmes, member states must meet their financial obligations not only by paying their assessed contributions but also by making voluntary donations to our solidarity programmes. Furthermore, we need to recommit ourselves to ensuring that outstanding and existing instruments are ratified and implemented by all member states.

In the same vein, about four years after the transformation of the OAU to AU, our progress in the area of socio-economic integration and ultimate political integration appears to be slow. Our search for paradigms and methodology in moving the attainment of our objective of socio-economic and political integration forward resulted in a two day conference on the theme: *Africa and the Challenges of the Changing Global Order: Desirability of a Union Government*, which we in Nigeria had the privilege to host in Abuja from 12-13 November 2005. I believe that the conclusions and recommendations from that conference would have been, communicated across accordingly. We would therefore be helping the cause of African Unity and development if we freely and honestly contribute our ideas to the debate at this auspicious moment of our history. Meanwhile, to give fillip to the pursuit of achieving this objective, it is recommended that we should, without further delay, accelerate the implementation of the basic elements of integration such as policies of free movement of persons, goods and services across the continent.

In addition, we should evolve and harmonize policies in areas that will promote our common objectives of facilitating greater interaction among our peoples, creating better standard of living for our peoples, reducing poverty, creating wealth and putting Africa as a whole on a path of sustainable development. These are ultimately the true and realistic building blocks for a real Union that will last and be

beneficial to all. Any superstructure without firm and solid foundation on the welfare and well-being of our peoples in our different countries will either not hold or will collapse.

Your Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to pay tribute to the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Alpha Oumar Konare, for the dynamic leadership and the able manner in which he has been handling the affairs of the Commission. We also recognize and appreciate the contributions of the other Commissioners as well as those of the officers and staff of the Commission towards the realization of our common goals and objectives.

I would also like to express my appreciation to our partners whose presence among us today is a testimony of their genuine desire to continue to collaborate with us for the development of our continent. We hereby recognize the tremendous support, which you have rendered to our organization, especially in the area of peace and security as well as in addressing the challenges of poverty and the promotion of sustainable socio-economic development in Africa.

Dear colleagues, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, as we meet yet again to discuss the future of our great continent, let us remain conscious of the fact that we stand at the threshold of history. The project new Africa that we midwife must not be sacrificed at the altar of narrow interests of individuals and groups. No efforts should be spared to consolidate the achievements already recorded. Similarly, we should not shy away from tackling emerging challenges in the best tradition of democratic values, transparency and respect for the fundamental human rights of our peoples.

Finally, and in all humility, I would like to express my deep appreciation and satisfaction for the honour bestowed on me and on my country, Nigeria, for the opportunity to direct the affairs of our great continental organization for the past eighteen months. I thank all my distinguished colleagues for their cooperation and support in ensuring that the burden was not too heavy to carry. May God continue to guide us right in deciding on the path that our Great continent must follow.

Your Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour and privilege to formally declare the 6th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union open. I pray that our deliberations will yield positive results that will move Africa forward.

May God continue to bless Africa. Thank you very much.



President Olusegun Obasanjo

be of concern to all of us. We would therefore like to call on the two parties to continue to exercise restraint and to cooperate with the international community towards a speedy resolution of the dispute.

While appreciable progress is being made in the Abuja Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur, the situation on the ground in Darfur remains a matter of deep concern. In spite of the efforts made by AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), insecurity continues to prevail while the humanitarian situation appears not to have improved. The resolution of the Darfur crisis is critical to the peace and stability of the Sudan and the entire region. Let me say categorically to the negotiating parties in the ongoing Inter-Sudanese Talks that we can ill-afford continued delays in arriving at workable strategies. They must therefore come up with solutions that will help restore peace to the region so that its people can return to a life of normalcy.

The developments in the Eastern Sudan and in the Chad-Sudan border are not very encouraging. The accus-

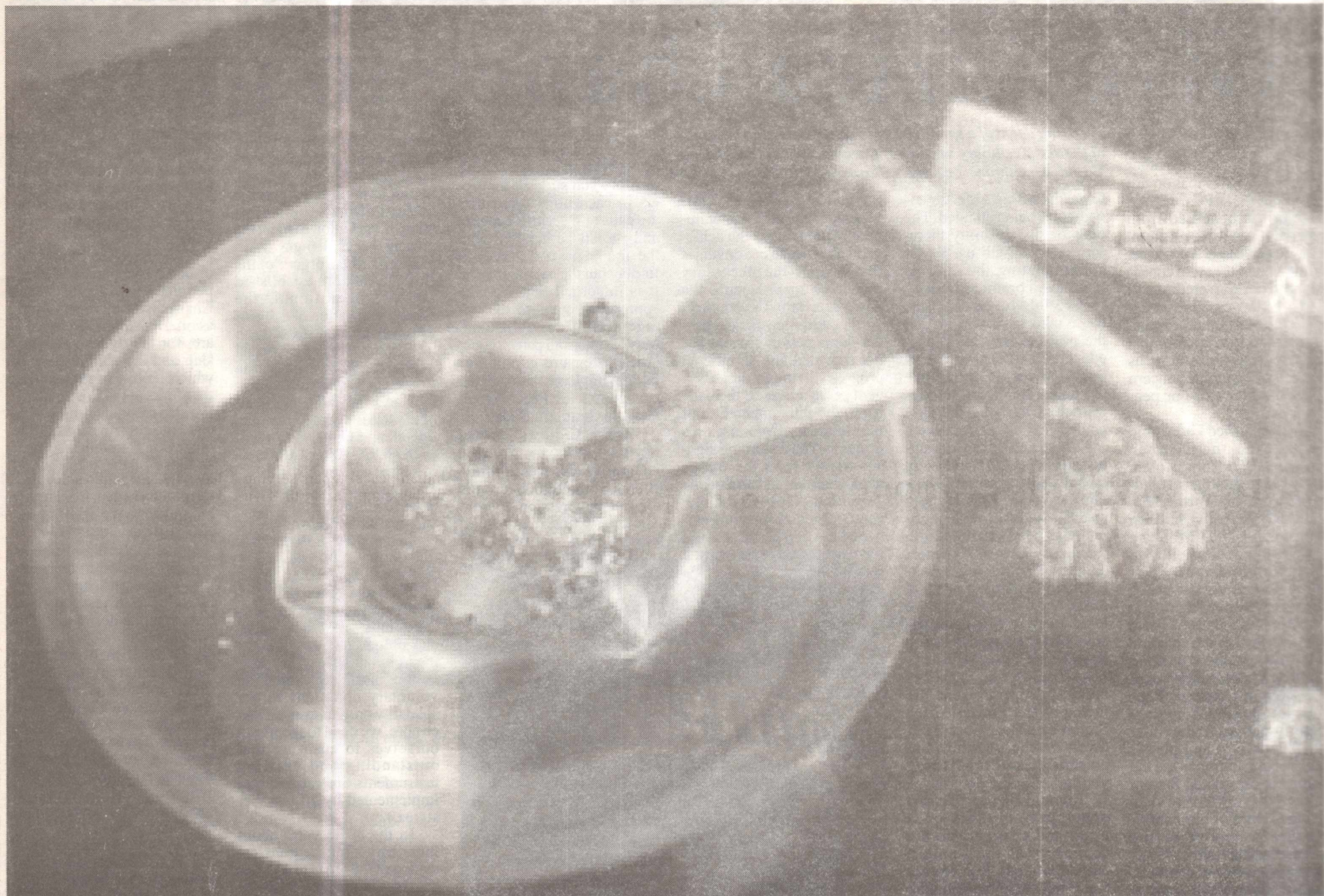
challenges of Insecurity and instability should continue to engage the attention of our Union in the days ahead. We should constantly have it in mind that peace and security are essential for development and progress. Besides, the scarce resources required for development are wasted in pursuing fratricidal wars.

In today's Africa, political tensions and conflicts can only serve to reverse and eventually upstage the gains we have made towards development and progress. I would also like to appeal to those sponsoring conflicts across Africa to please come to terms with realities and give the innocent African people a respite. They need to give our continent a chance to reflect, plan, organize, mobilize resources, strengthen institutions, and promote democracy and development.

Your Excellencies, about four years ago, when we launched this Union, it was with a call on African leaders to redefine the destiny of our respective countries, to build a better life for all our peoples in order to enable our continent to play its full role and to assume

Trust International

Odd World



Europe's pot-smoking capital Sunday for a trade show that is taking on the trappings of a major industry fair, complete with scantily clad models, glossy brochures and, of course, samples.

S/Korean province plans aid for mail-order brides

A rural province in South Korea plans to give financial aid to help lonely male farmers pay for mail-order brides from overseas.

South Kyongsang province plans to start a trial programme in which it will give 6 million won (3,500 pounds) to male farmers who marry foreign women, an official said on Tuesday.

South Korean farmers have been turning to brides from other parts of Asia in recent years after struggling to woo local women, who are often less than enthralled with the prospect of rural life.

"Young men in the countryside have a hard time finding brides and they started to look elsewhere," said Ryu Kum-ju, an agricultural policy official for the province, located in the southern part of the country. "We decided to give financial support to those men for a trial period," Ryu said by telephone.

The province also plans to increase courses for foreign brides to help them

adjust to life in South Korea. The local government estimates it costs about 12 million won (12,000 pounds) for a farmer to pay all the fees and travel required to find a

bride overseas. The number of South Korean men who have married foreign women has rocketed in recent years. It hit 25,594 in 2004, more than double the

Man jumps from moving jetliner onto tarmac

An airline passenger bit a fellow traveler Monday, then jumped out of a jetliner as it was moving to take off, authorities said. He was later subdued with a stun gun.

The man was taken to a hospital from the Fort Lauderdale airport, the Broward County sheriff's office said. It was unclear whether he was injured. The other passenger suffered minor injuries from the bite.

The Continental Airlines flight had been delayed for about 30 minutes, and as the Boeing 737 began to taxi, the man started yelling to get off, the sheriff's office said.

He ran to the front of the plane and banged on windows and the cockpit door, authorities said. As passe-

ngers and crew members tried to restrain him, he bit a passenger.

When the pilot depressurized the cabin, the man opened a door, jumped to the tarmac and ran toward the terminal. Deputies said they zapped him with a stun gun

11,017 in 2002, according to data from the Korea National Statistical Office.

China provides most of the brides, while Vietnam is second on the list.

after he resisted arrest.

Troy Rigby, 28, will be charged with criminal mischief, criminal trespass, battery, resisting arrest with violence and battery on a law enforcement officer, in addition to an outstanding warrant for marijuana possession, the

Drunk-driving suspect flees in police car

A Chicago woman arrested for drunken driving slipped off her handcuffs and drove away in a police cruiser, police said on Saturday.

Chicago resident Veronique Armour, 22, was stopped early Friday as she drove in the wrong lane on a city street. While a police officer was removing Armour's 1995 Honda Civic hatchback from the street, she somehow escaped the

handcuffs and drove away in the officer's cruiser, said police spokeswoman Joann Taylor.

Armour was caught a few minutes later in a parking lot about a mile away, police said. In addition to charges of

Whatever you do, don't call for the nurse

A Japanese nurse who tried to relieve her work stress by tearing off patients' nails was sentenced Monday to three years and eight months in prison.

The 32-year-old Japanese woman, who worked at a hospital in the ancient capital of Kyoto, tore off the fingernails and toenails of six female patients in September and October 2004. The patie-

This crook gets an "A" for originality

iguana.

Police said Monday they had been hunting the 33-year-old homeless man for months and that he had admitted to about 60 thefts in towns across the country.

Once inside a house, the man stole wallets and loose cash. Police arrested him Friday after a tip off and found nine empty wallets in his car, which had been stolen the day before.

driving under the influence and related traffic violations. Armour faces charges of possessing a stolen vehicle and escaping from police.

nts were all immobile after strokes or other illnesses.

The Kyoto District Court said the woman had committed the cruel acts to relieve stress she was under from extra work forced on her by her supervisors.

Trust International

Africa

Uganda rebels kill eight UN peacekeepers

Ugandan rebels ambushed UN peacekeepers in Congo on Monday, killing eight of them in a gunbattle that also left 15 attackers dead near the Sudanese border, UN officials said.

The Guatemalan peacekeepers were looking for Lord's Resistance Army rebels from Uganda who were believed to be in Garamba National Park, in Congo's remote northeast, UN spokesman Kemal Saiki said.

The incident was the second largest single loss of life suffered by the 16,000-strong peacekeeping mission since it began in 1999. Nine Bangladeshi troops were killed in February 2005 by ethnic militiamen.

The Ugandan rebels operate mostly from bases in southern Sudan, but some fighters fled to eastern Congo late last year following pressure from Ugandan troops who have been permitted by Sudanese authorities to pursue them to their rear bases.

Between 50 and 60 armed Ugandan rebels launched Monday's attack, which began at dawn and lasted about four hours until a helicopterborne Nepalese contingent arrived in support, said Hans-Jakob Reichen, a UN military spokesman.

UN troops killed 15 of the attackers, Reichen said. In addition to the eight peacekeeper deaths, five Guatemalan soldiers were wounded, the UN said.

The UN has about 16,000 troops in mineral-rich Congo — 105 from Guatemala — helping the government secure a fragile peace after a 1998-2002 war that drew in the armies of half a dozen African nations.

Saiki said the UN would not be deterred.

"Anyone who thinks we're going to give up is seriously mistaken," he told The Associated Press.

At UN headquarters in New York, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Secretary-General Kofi Annan "is deeply saddened and condemns" the killings. Annan "expresses his deepest condolences to the government of Guatemala, to the families of the deceased soldiers and to all the victims of this tragic incident," Dujarric said.

Separately, Dujarric said Indian peacekeepers serving further south in North Kivu province came under insurgent fire while on patrol. Peacekeepers returned fire, killing

four attackers and capturing weapons, ammunition and communications equipment, he said.

In Guatemala City, officials mourned the deaths, but said they would not withdraw their troops from the UN force.

"This is the cost of peace," said Jorge Ortega Gaytan, a Guatemalan army spokesman. "One of the most dangerous operations that the troops have is the imposition of peace."

Including Monday's losses, about 70 peacekeepers have died in Congo since the UN mission began, from fighting, disease and vehicle accidents. UN officials say 28 of the deaths were from combat.



Each year, 100,000 Sudanese under-fives die of preventable diseases

UNICEF appeals for \$805m in aid

Unicef has launched an appeal to raise more than \$800m (£450m) to help women and children affected by humanitarian emergencies in 29 countries.

The organisation praised donors for their response to disasters such as the Asian tsunami and Pakistan earthquake.

But it said the number of humanitarian crises in 2005 had taken its toll in overstretched aid workers, underfunded relief projects and donor fatigue.

Most appeals got just a fraction of the money called for, the UN agency said.

Unicef's report, published in Geneva on Monday, said that despite breaking funding records in 2005, only four of Unicef's 25 emergency ap-

peals had received 50% of the required amount.

Children live in an almost constant state of emergency because they are growing up in extreme poverty

Of the requested \$805m, more than a third of the total is for Sudan, where continuing conflict in the western Darfur region is threatening the survival of 1.4 million children.

Dan Toole, Unicef's director of the office of emergency programmes, who launched the Humanitarian Action Report, said a swift response to crises was essential to meeting long-term development goals.

"In many of these countries, children live in an almost constant state of emergency because they are growing up

in extreme poverty, without access to education or the most basic health services," he said.

The BBC's Imogen Foulkes in Geneva says Unicef is unlikely to be funded in full.

With partial funding, she adds, the organisation will be able to carry out life-saving work such as food distribution and immunisation, but other long-term health and education projects may miss out.

According to the 200-page report, areas in critical need of funding include:

Sudan, where an estimated 17 million people are without access to safe water and more than 20 million are without safe sanitation

Eastern and southern Africa, which have had more emergencies over the past decade than any other region in the world, including the current drought, the HIV/Aids pandemic and widespread malnutrition.

Rescuers hunt for Kenya survivors

Rescuers are cutting through layers of concrete hoping to find survivors from a building that collapsed in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

At least eight people were killed and more than 100 are in hospital.

Many people are still thought to be trapped in the rubble. Rescuers are concentrating on four areas where they have heard tapping or muted voices.

US and Israeli teams have arrived at the site to help the rescue effort, with a British team due soon.

About 200 people were thought to be in or around the four-storey building when it collapsed on Monday. The building was still under construction at the time.

The BBC's Karen Allen, at the scene, says that although more heavy lifting gear has been brought in, much of the debris is having to be moved by hand because of fears that other parts of the building may collapse.

I was taking a nap after having had lunch when I heard someone shouting to run.

Calvince Omondi, a volunteer rescuer, told AFP news agency that contact had been established with several people trapped in the building's basement.

President Mwai Kibaki is to cut short a visit to Sudan to co-ordinate rescue efforts.

Both Police Inspector Matthew Limo and Kenyan Housing Minister Soita Shitanda suggested that building regulations had been flouted, AFP reports.

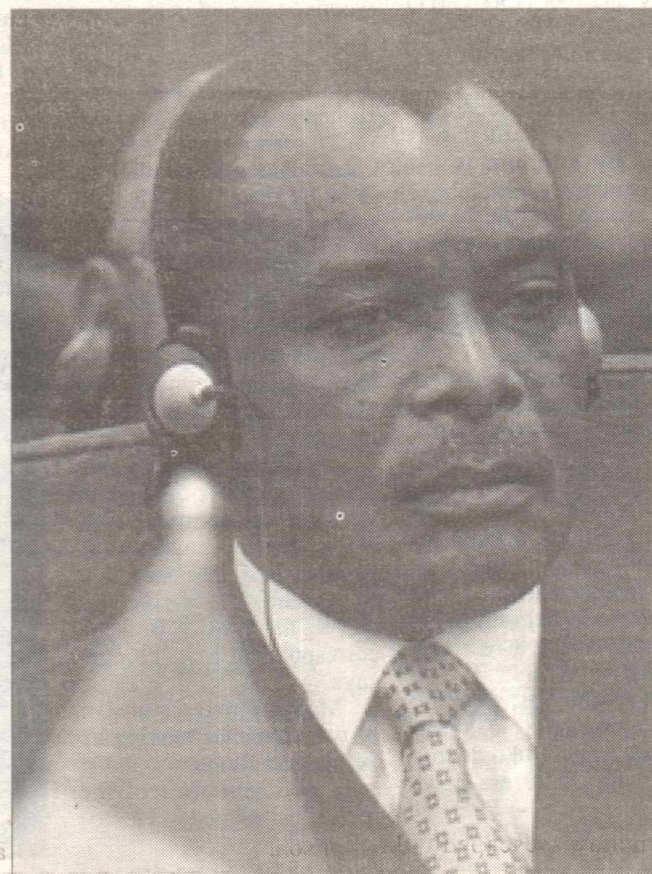
"If there was any planning approved by the city council, that plan was not followed to the letter or it was not a proper plan," Mr Shitanda said.

One worker, James Ofunyi, said the workers were on their lunch break, with many asleep in the building when it collapsed.

"I was taking a nap after having had lunch when I heard someone shouting to run, but I didn't get downstairs fast enough because the building started falling," he told AP news agency.

"I jumped to the other side."

According to a Reuters news agency reporter, some of the concrete was still wet.



Congo president Dennis Sassou Nguesso

Congo is now AU head

An African summit on Tuesday picked Congo Republic to head the African Union after strong opposition to Sudan taking over the leadership because of fears its human rights record could hurt African credibility abroad.

Under a compromise deal, Sudan takes over leadership of the pan-African body after Congo Republic steps down next year.

Critics had said Sudan should not get the chair while it was under fire for rights abuses in its western region of Darfur, where 7,000 AU peacekeepers are trying to uphold a tentative ceasefire between the government and rebels.

Some diplomats said the solution was mainly a face-saving measure for Sudan, which had initially been reluctant to withdraw its candidacy. They said Sudan's chairmanship in 2007 could well be challenged later on.

Rebels had threatened to quit AU-sponsored peace talks in Nigeria if Sudan was picked as the next AU head. One Darfur rebel group said they would continue talking after Congo was chosen but would not accept Sudan's presidency in the future if the Darfur conflict was not resolved.

"They are all congratulating the Congolese president now," a delegate told Reuters from inside the hall where heads of state and foreign ministers met on Tuesday and finally broke a deadlock that led to heated exchanges on Monday.

Shortly after the decision was announced in the hall, Congo President Denis Sassou Nguesso took the chair from outgoing president, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo, who has held the post for nearly two years.

Sudanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Jamal Ibrahim said Sudan would take over the leadership of the AU in 2007. An AU official said a draft resolution on the issue

still had to be formally approved. Such resolutions are usually rubber-stamped.

One rights group said this move just postponed the presidency problem and, by promising Sudan the chair, failed to put conditions on Sudan to address rights abuse accusations.

"If Sudan's records of atrocities disqualifies (President Omar Hassan) al-Bashir from the presidency this year, how can we be sure that this doesn't disqualify him next year?" said Reed Brody from New York-based Human Rights Watch.

Western diplomats said the AU's decision to delay Sudan's appointment showed the organization, set up in 2002, would not be deflected from its mission to promote democracy, human rights and development and was responsive to world opinion.

"It definitely shows that they are very sensitive about what the world thinks," said one Western diplomat.

The United States had said it was concerned about a Sudanese presidency.

On the first day of the summit in Khartoum, African nations were deeply split about Sudan, which put itself forward for the presidency based on a tradition that the summit host takes over as the AU's head.

Sudan had said it had the backing of North and East Africa, but diplomats said southern, western and central African countries had urged Khartoum to withdraw its nomination.

The summit had discussed the possibility of extending Nigeria's term, but some African nations were wary of breaking a tradition of a rotating presidency.

Obasanjo had helped drive the AU forward on issues such as improving governance. Diplomats said the influence of the AU president largely depends on the person holding the post and said Congo's Sassou had a good international reputation.

Trust International

World Report



President of Venezuela Hugo Chavez waves to people in La Paz, Bolivia on Monday, Jan. 23, 2006. Chavez said he welcomed the political arrival of Bolivian President Evo Morales, a 46-year-old socialist who once claimed he would be 'Washington's nightmare' if elected in the wave of new leftists gaining power at the ballot box.

Europe 'knew about' CIA flights

European governments were almost certainly aware of the CIA's secret prisoner flights via European airspace or airports, a key report has said.

The preliminary report comes from Swiss MP Dick Marty, for the human rights watchdog the Council of Europe.

The US admits picking up terrorism suspects but denies sending them to Arab nations to face torture.

Mr Marty said he could not be certain that the CIA used secret prisons in Europe to interrogate terror suspects.

The BBC's Tim Franks at the Council of Europe says the Swiss senator's report does not appear to reveal hard new facts.

Mr Marty began his investigation in November and presented his interim report to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on Tuesday morning.

In his report, he said "rendition" - the secret transport

of prisoners via Europe to third countries where they may have been tortured - seemed to have affected more than 100 people in recent years.

He cited the case of the Egyptian political refugee, Abu Omar, who was, he said, abducted by the CIA in the middle of the Italian city, Milan, in 2003, flown to Egypt and then tortured.

The report said his case was just one part of "a great deal of coherent, convergent evidence pointing to the existence of a system of 'reloca-

tion' or 'outsourcing' of torture".

In another case, a German man was said to have been kidnapped in Macedonia and taken to Afghanistan.

Forty-six members, 21 of them from Central and Eastern Europe.

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Dozens dead in Balkan train crash

At least 44 people were killed when a passenger train plunged into a ravine in southern Montenegro.

More than 180 people were injured one of the worst rail accidents in Montenegro's history.

The disaster happened shortly after 1600 (1500 GMT) on Monday at Bioce, about 10km (six miles) north of the capital Podgorica.

Interior Minister Jusuf Kalamperovic said it was caused by a failure in the train's braking system.

The train - carrying about 300 people from the northern town of Bijelo Polje to the port town of Bar - plunged into the 100m-deep (330ft-deep) ravine full of rocks.

Ninety of the injured are said to be children. Many were returning from a skiing trip.

The government has declared three days of mourning and Transport Minister Andrija Lompar has offered his resignation over the accident.

Helicopters hovered over the site as rescuers struggled amid bad weather to reach the stranded survivors.

"I had fallen asleep when a loud noise woke me," survivor Stanislava Bukovic told the Associated Press news agency.

"Then I felt something hit my head and lost consciousness. The next thing I knew

Venezuela leader hosts world social forum

Thousands of activists gathered in Venezuela's capital for a six-day World Social Forum that opens Tuesday include anti-war protesters, Indian leaders, campaigners against free trade and environmentalists. But they are all united by one thing: their opposition to President Bush.

The forum, which was set to begin Tuesday afternoon with an anti-imperialist march through Caracas, was organized by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who has frequently clashed with the United States and accuses it of plotting to overthrow him. He is also one of the leading voices of the new left sweeping across Latin America.

Organizers said more than 60,000 people had signed up to attend and tens of thousands more were expected at the forum, about half of them from outside Venezuela.

Anne Hess, an activist from Norway, said she was attending the meeting to protest Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who led the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

"We need to stop the war in the Middle East," she said Monday. "We need the whole world out in the streets again to stop Bush and Blair, and their crazy imperialist dreams."

Chavez is expected to

address activists on the sidelines of the conference. He has recently strengthened ties across South America as left-leaning leaders have won power in countries from Argentina to Bolivia.

"Venezuela has become an epicenter of change on the world level," Chavez said Friday, referring to the event in a speech. "That's why (US) imperialism wants to sweep us away, of course ... because they say we are a bad example. But they haven't swept us away and they won't."

Chavez has used a win-

dfall in oil profits to funnel millions of dollars into programs for the poor - something that has made him an inspiration for like-minded activists. But organizers of the forum emphasized the event was not intended as a giant rally for Chavez, though it was backed by government funding as in past years.

The World Social Forum was first held in Brazil in 2001 and coincides each year with the market-friendly World Economic Forum of political and business leaders in Davos, Switzerland.

Conservative Party wins in Canada election

OTTAWA - Stephen Harper and his Conservative Party won national elections Monday and ended 13 years of Liberal rule, a victory expected to move Canada rightward on social and economic issues and lead to improved ties with the United States.

The Conservatives' winning margin was too narrow to avoid ruling with a minority government, a situation that will make it difficult to get legislation through a divided House of Commons.

The triumph for the Conservatives came with many Canadians weary of the broken promises and corruption scandals under the Liberal Party, making them willing to give Harper a chance to govern despite concerns that some of his social views are extreme.

"Tonight friends, our great country has voted for change, and Canadians have asked our party to take the lead in delivering that change," Harper told some 2,000 cheering supporters at his campaign headquarters in Calgary.

Relations with the Bush administration will likely improve under Harper as his ideology runs along the same lines of many US Repub-

licans.

Harper has said he would reconsider a US missile defense scheme rejected by the current Liberal government of Prime Minister Paul Martin. He also said he wanted to move beyond the Kyoto debate by establishing different environmental controls, spend more on the Canadian military, expand its peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan and Haiti and tighten security along the border with the United States in an effort to prevent terrorists and guns from crossing the frontier.

With nearly all votes counted in the race for the 308-seat House, officials results showed Conservatives with 123 seats; Liberals with 103; Bloc Quebecois with 50, New Democratic Party with 28; and one seat to an Independent. Three seats still haven't been determined.

Prime Minister Paul Martin conceded defeat and said he would step down as head of the party, though remain in Parliament to represent the Montreal seat he won again. It was an unusual move to do both on the same night, but Martin appeared upbeat and eager to continue to fight the Conservatives from the opposition benches of the House.

US was 'outsourcing' torture - Probe

A Swiss investigator said on Tuesday there was evidence of "outsourcing of torture" by the United States but he had not uncovered any irrefutable evidence that the CIA operated secret prisons in Europe.

Dick Marty, a Swiss senator investigating the charges for the Council of Europe human rights watchdog, said it was "highly unlikely" that European governments were unaware of the abduction and transfer of prisoners.

There was "a great deal of coherent, convergent evidence pointing to the existence of a system of 'relocation' or 'outsourcing of torture'," Marty said in a preliminary report prepared for the 46-nation body in Strasbourg in eastern France.

"No cogent evidence has yet emerged on the existence in Europe of detention camps like the one at Guantanamo Bay," he added, referring to the controversial US military

detention center in Cuba.

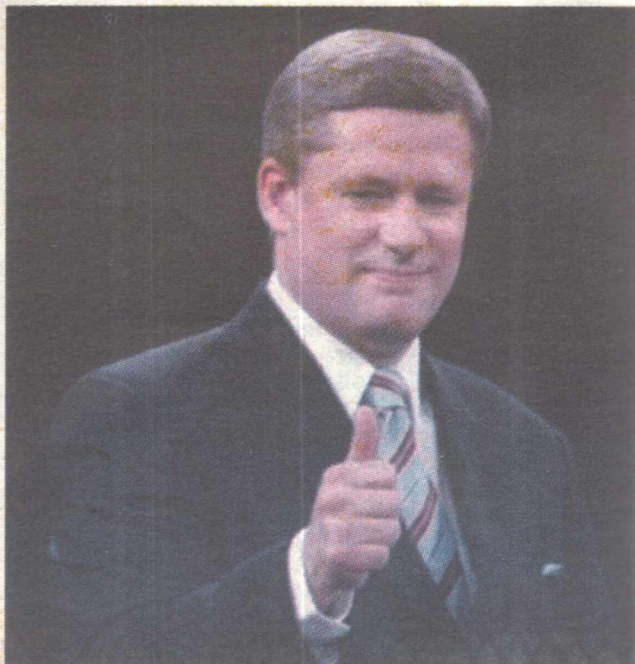
The initial findings were serious enough to warrant further investigation, he said.

"On the other hand, it has been proved - and in fact never denied - that individuals have been abducted, deprived of their liberty and transported to different destinations in Europe, to be handed over to countries in which they have suffered degrading treatment and torture," he said.

"It is highly unlikely that European governments, or at least their intelligence services, were unaware."

The US Central Intelligence Agency is alleged to have operated a secret network of jails in Europe, covertly flying prisoners through airports on the continent in CIA planes.

The US government has neither denied nor confirmed the reports of secret detention centers, first made in the Washington Post in November.



Conservative Leader Stephen Harper gives the thumbs up in Calgary, Canada, Monday, Jan. 23, 2006...

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ADVERTORIAL

RE: ALLEGED THREAT ON KUMALIA'S LIFE – A REJOINDER

We read with utmost dismay the distortion of facts as presented by the Borno State government through the governor's Director of Press, Alhaji Usman Chiroma, on the above subject matter as published in a paid advert in the *Weekly Trust* edition of January 14 – 21, on page 16.

To start with, we want to make it abundantly clear that if the Chiroma we know is not on the payroll of the Borno State government as an employee, he would have perhaps been bold enough to state the facts of the matter, without trying to play to the gallery as demonstrated in that watery position.

But what he has done is allowed. At least, he has to justify his pay as the governor's spokesman. However, at the appropriate time, we would not be surprised if he (Chiroma) makes a u-turn because even an infant in Borno State today knows that the unprovoked attack on the person of our leader, Honourable Mohammed Umara Kumalia, was initiated and is being sustained by the state government.

It is therefore common to find the young and the old in Borno State saying *gaskiya, Mutane Sheriff ne suke neman fada kulun* (meaning, it is the Sheriff's people that always look for Kumalia's trouble), when asked to comment on the recent and unfortunate dimension the politics of Borno State has assumed in recent times.

Now, on the issue at stake, in the said advertorial, the Borno State government claimed that Kumalia was accompanied by "illegally armed thugs as usual" and that the police report, as claimed by the government, indicated that at the venue of the wedding ceremony which Kumalia had gone to attend, a certain Alhassan Aliyu dared to shout "Sai SAS" in the presence of Kumalia. And that the intolerant of divergent vocal views, like his boss (Kumalia), one of his thugs,... completely enraged and unrestrained by Kumalia, violently attacked Alhassan (one of the governor's thugs) with a machete in full public glare."

Chiroma concluded in that advertorial that the rumour that Alhassan had been murdered precipitated that attack on Kumalia in his premises, which according to him (Chiroma), the police described as a "revenge mission".

Nothing can be far from the truth. We made our positions clear in our petition to the office of the Inspector General of Police after the attack, to the effect that the Borno State Police Commissioner has abdicated his office. So if what Chiroma said was true about his (CP) position, then we are not surprised.

But we must place on record that the attack was a premeditated one. It will interest the members of the public to know that before the attack, Hon. Kumalia wrote to the office of the Inspector-General of Police (see box), Commissioner of Police, Borno State; the Director of SSS, Borno State, and even the office of the speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, intimating them of the planned attack.

In fact, the Speaker, Aminu Bello Masari, was said to have personally called the IGP on phone on the issue, before Kumalia left for Maiduguri for the wedding.

If the attack was not a premeditated one, what would about 200 army of political thugs who are well-known in the state to be the governor's supporters be doing at a wedding the governor was not billed to attend? This, no doubt, clearly shows that it was a planned thing.

As Kumalia alighted from the vehicle, they were all shouting 'Sai SAS', but he ignored them and went straight into the venue of the wedding. And because he has always warned his supporters never to engage anyone in either a verbal or physical war, up till the point he went into the venue of the wedding, none of his supporters responded to the unprovoked provocation.

But as Kumalia was later briefed by the Police who effected the arrest of one of his supporters, it was the thugs who swarmed on the young man when he dared to ask the group to shut up!

And when the Police noticed that Kumalia's supporter was likely to be sent to nine feet below the ground, following the swarming on him, it quickly intervened by "arresting" the young man to safety.

That Kumalia is intolerant of divergent views is untrue. Chiroma knows who between his boss and Kumalia is intolerant of divergent views.

Again, Chiroma knows who between his boss and Kumalia moves about with political thugs. There are several instances to buttress the above submissions, but just a few may suffice here.

During the 2004 hajj exercise, at the airport, while the governor was telling the then intending pilgrims that he was never briefed about their predicament by his deputy, Adamu Dibal, who was then the amirul hajj, one of the then intending pilgrims who perhaps knows what the issue then was, which we do not intend to address here, said to the governor: "Walahi, kai makaryeci ne (meaning, I swear in the name of God, you're a liar).

Right in the presence of the governor, the thugs pounced on the man and beat him to stupor, until the deputy governor and other by-standers asked them to stop beating him. Was Kumalia there?

Two, when the then Police Commissioner, Ade Ajakaiye, who is now in Umuhia as AIG, was in Borno State, the thugs also made an attempt to attack Kumalia. The first one, as soon as Kumalia got wind of the planned attack, he shelved his scheduled trip to Maiduguri. And when he called security operatives in Borno to go to the airport to ascertain his claim that the thugs were already positioned there to attack him, the security operatives went there and behold, they saw the army of thugs.

Again, when Kumalia eventually came to Maiduguri to address the press on the purported plan to recall him, the same thugs were seen in a coastal bus loaded with dangerous weapons. But for the then police commissioner's wisdom, Ade Ajakaiye, who deployed a truck load of anti-riot Mobile men to the airport, only God knows what would have happened.

If the Police in Borno State keep their records well, and are unwilling to be partisan in this unfolding scenario, the records are there for everyone to see. If as claimed by Chiroma, Kumalia is the one that has been provoking the attack, how come the government never reported any of such cases to the police?

So far, we have made five different reports on five different occasions to the police. When Kumalia was attacked at the wedding ceremony of the Zannah Dujima of Borno's children, Umoru Bukar Mandara, right inside Mandara's premises, was he (Kumalia) the one that provoked that attack too? What about the attack on him in Biu? We are sure he provoked that one too?

It is on record that neither Kumalia nor any of his supporters have ever provoked any attack. Rather, it is the government sponsored thugs that have been attacking people perceived to be opposed to the governor's style of governance. The list is long, but you can ask Kakina, the strongwoman of Borno politics; Kaka Bolori, former MMC council Chairman or even Mutawalli Kashim Ibrahim-Imam, who was the PDP's flag-bearer during the 2003 April gubernatorial poll. They will all tell you the name of the person that has been sending and has continued to send thugs after them.

It is true that Kumalia and the former Biu Council Chairman, Alhaji Ali Biu, were at the police station. But it was not necessarily to "exert so much pressure on the police to

free the culprit, apparently in an effort to cover up their tracks to obstruct justice in a criminal matter," as claimed by the Borno State government in that advertorial.

All we wanted was to know why only the young man was arrested without a corresponding arrest of those who not only came to the venue of the wedding to harass and intimidate us, but who also followed us to the premises of our leader, Kumalia, to unleash violence on us.

And in fact, the other group who chose to call themselves SAS super youth were not arrested at all. They appeared from the Government House, Maiduguri on Tuesday, December 20, 2005, in chauffeur-driven government vehicles and headed for the police headquarters; from there to a magistrates' court, where they were assured of getting a bail to come home later. And that was exactly what happened. Do you really call that an arrest? If you ask for our opinion, we will choose to describe it an "arrangee arrest".

The said publication also described our leader, Kumalia, as someone who uses "one and dumps" one. Chiroma should know better who that description fits. He should ask Dan-Shagamu who was used by the governor to insult our revered Shehu of Borno, during the build-up to the 2003 elections on television, what has become of him today, after that "brave" appearance on television?

Beside Dan-Shagamu, what is the genesis of the crises between Kakina and the governor today? What about Kaka Bolori, Alhaji Ali Biu, and many others?

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON LAKE CHAD BASIN
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



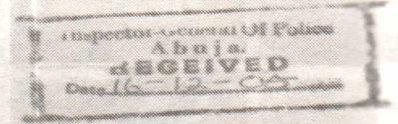
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Suite 1. 170, Annex 1, National Assembly Complex,
3 Arms Zone, P.M.B. 141, Garki- Abuja.
Tel/Fax 09-5231668



December 15, 2005

The Inspector General of Police
Force Headquarters
Abuja



IMMINENT PLANNED ATTACK ON MY PERSON

It has just come to my notice today that some thugs loyal to the Governor of Borno State, Ali Modu Sheriff, have planned an attack on my person to be carried out in Maiduguri where I will be attending the marriage ceremony of my younger brother from Friday 16th, December to Monday, 19th December, 2005.

The said thugs have held a meeting at the State Hotel, Maiduguri, today, Thursday, December 15, 2005 between the hours of 12.00 - 4.00 pm and have perfected their plans for the attack some of which are physical assault on my person and entourage and driving into my convoy with heavily protected 4 WD vehicles to cause accident, among others.

As you are aware, I have in the past reported to you and the Borno State Police Commissioner similar cases of attacks by the same thugs on my convoy carried out along the road in Maiduguri and at the airport also in Maiduguri, wherein several people were injured and vehicles damaged. The photographs of such damaged cars and wounded individuals are in the possession of the Maiduguri police headquarters.

As I am leaving for Maiduguri tomorrow, Friday, December 16, 2005, I therefore urge you to ensure that nothing happens to me or my entourage. These incidences have now become a regular past-time activity of these thugs as they are never brought to book in spite of overwhelming culpability.

This group of thugs is being led by one Musa Banana and assisted by one Mallam, leading a gang of over 100 (one hundred) other unemployed youth who are notoriously popular in Maiduguri.

I therefore, once again urge you to use your good offices to provide me with enough security men that will ensure maximum protection, while inviting these thugs for a proper investigation of this case.

As a law abiding citizen, I will not resort to any other means of protecting myself other than the one legally recognized by law, which is to report to the police authorities.

Please treat as urgent.
Yours Sincerely,

Hon. Mohammed Umara Kumalia
President, Regional Parliamentary Committee
on Lake Chad Basin

COPY TO

1. Hon. Speaker, House of Representatives
2. National Security Adviser
3. Borno State Commissioner of Police
4. Director, SSS, Borno State.

Although those distinguished politicians were not pawn in the governor's chess board, they were just patriot who were genuinely interested in moving the state forward and who together with Kumalia joined hands with the governor to ensure his victory in 2003. But what have become their lots today? The people of the state know better.

Contrary to the claims by the government, it is the restraint exercised by Kumalia and his supporters that has ensured continued peaceful political atmosphere in Borno. It is the government and not Kumalia that is trying to create crises and anarchy, but Kumalia has refused to provide it with that opportunity.

It is on record that if Kumalia and his supporters had done an inch of what the present governor did to the former governor of the state, Kachallah, prior to 2003 elections, by now, the state would have been thrown into a political turmoil. But we will continue to exercise restraint in the face of unprovoked attacks on us. Our leader, Hon. Kumalia, has in his usual manner written again to the Inspector General of Police and other persons in authorities about this latest attack carried out inside a privacy of his own home and is awaiting the outcome of their intervention.

We are therefore using this medium to appeal to the people of Borno State, the apostles of peaceful co-existence in Nigeria to continue to exercise restraint in the face of unprovoked attacks on them by the government. God, who delivered the Israelites from the hands of Pharaoh, will one day deliver us.

Signed:
Comrade Zannah Shettima

Business Trust

Winners emerge in MoneyGram end of year promo

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

MoneyGram International lived up to its promise of rewarding its customers at the grand draw of the "Win with MoneyGram, Share with MoneyGram" promotion held recently in Lagos.

The promotion which had about 12,500 entries saw Maria Ajuzie emerging winner of the grand prize of a laptop computer in the draws supervised by top representatives of United Bank of Africa which included Chika Mordi, executive director retail, Chidi Okpala, head, retail products and Charles Oben, head, brand and communications.

Salami Akinade Abayomi, Adebayo Akinike Tosin, Emmanuel Oluwatomi, Titus Afolayan Peter Ekeh, Micheal Godfrey, Oketona Olajide, Adisa Theresa, Franklin Owhodua, Adewuyi Adeniyi Gafari and Mopelola Zainab Odeniyi emerged as the ten lucky winners of Nokia mobile phones drawn from the pool of entries picked by journalists in attendance at the draws. Twenty five winners of recharge cards were also picked at the draws.

Speaking at the ceremony, Chika Mordi, executive director, Retail Banking, UBA said MoneyGram was set to offer unparalleled value to its customers in the years to come which necessitated UBA's commitment to MoneyGram.

"UBA will be deploying the largest MoneyGram outlets in Africa. We strongly identify with MoneyGram because it believes in value creation, dynamism and helping the aspirations of all its stake holders. These are core values MoneyGram shares with UBA", said Mordi.

The promotion which took place between 13th and 13th December 2005 according to Mordi, produced three winners every week during the four weeks of its duration. In order to emphasize MoneyGram's desire to share with the less privileged said Mordi, winners of the end of year promotion would participate in presenting MoneyGram gift to the less privileged slated for yesterday.

Nigeria's domestic debt hits N1.5 trillion

By Anas A. Galadima, Business Reporter

Nigeria's domestic debt profile currently stands at about N1.5 trillion, director general of the Debt Management Office (DMO), Dr. Mansur Muhtar has said.

He spoke at the opening ceremony of the Nigerian National Debt Strategy and New Financing Analysis workshop in Abuja on Monday where he said the figure represents the state of the country's domestic debt profile at the end of 2005.

According to the text of his speech made available to *Business Trust*, Dr. Muhtar said "as at end-December 2005 the domestic debt stock amounted to about N1.5 trillion. It is important to point out that although about 56 percent of this is in Nigerian Treasury Bills (NTBs), the structure of the NTBs has greatly improved since 2004."

He observed that as at end of 2005, 80 percent of the NTBs was composed of 182 day and 365 day instruments, stressing that "the programme for 2006 plans to extend the tenor of FGN Bonds to 5 and 7 years. In particular, the domestic debt management ensures that budget deficits are no more funded with treasured bills but with long-dated bonds.

The DMO boss revealed that the government is making progress with the establishment of a primary dealer/market system, noting that the operation of the system will encourage not only local but foreign investors to invest in FGN bonds.

Speaking on the debt relief granted the country by the Paris Club of creditor nations, Dr. Muhtar observed

that measures were being put in place to ensure that the country does not find herself in such a debt situation again. He said the existing strategy

would see Nigeria having no more Paris club debts by April 2006. In her remarks, minister of finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the Virtual Poverty Fund to be established by the federal

government would help "monitor and track the use of savings from debt relief in promoting pro-poor, MDG-related spendings; strengthening budgetary processes and public

expenditure management". She charged participants at the workshop to deliberate and make inputs on ways of fine-tuning the country's external financing policy guidelines.



A cross section of workers of the United Bank for Africa (UBA) during the praise & worship time at the voluntary exit seminar/party which was organised by the bank late last year.

Legacy becomes pension fund administrator

By Austine Odo, Business Editor

Legacy Pension Managers Limited, one of the 13 pension fund administrators granted approval-in-principle by the National Pension Commission has been issued license to commence operations as a pension fund administrator.

The issuance followed the conclusion of inspection by the pension commission on legacy's investment in information and communication technology (ICT) as

well as its unique operational processes.

A statement from the company said the company began preparation for its operational take-off by adopting a "first time right approach" by entering into a technical partnership with one of Europe's largest banks, ING of the Netherlands to provide advisory services in setting

up operations, risk and investment management, and a planned transfer of knowledge to legacy.

ING of the Netherlands has over the last 20 years accumulated experience in setting up pension schemes across the world; they had previously set up pension systems in over 20 countries.

Determined to ensure safe custody of contributors'

retirement benefits, Legacy appointed UBA Pensions Fund Custodian, a subsidiary of UBA Plc, as their Pension Fund Custodian.

The statement said Bello Mohammed Maccido, the managing director and chief executive officer of Legacy Pension Managers has assembled a very professionally based team to fill key positions in the company.

Non oil exports generate N115.1 bn

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor, Lagos

The Non-oil exports between October 2004 and December 2005 generated a total of N115.1 billion (\$689.6m) to Nigeria based on analysis of the raw data provided by Cobalt International Ltd.

According to available data, a total quantity of about 89,016 metric tonnes of tax product was exported between October and December valued at N12.6 billion.

As for the output in 2005 the month of December performed the highest with N15.3 billion (\$119.3m) while July was the lowest with N6.8 billion (\$51.4m).

Comparatively it would seem that non-oil products export was higher in 2005 than 2004 if the comparison is based on performance between the months of October and December 2004 and the same period in 2005.

According to officials of

Cobalt International Ltd, the export performance of the country was not stable in the period in review, saying "the trend in export performance this year has not been stable as it has risen and fallen due to global economic changes that have prevailed all over.

"The exchange rate is another factor that contributed to the roller coaster effect," the reported stated. For instance, it posited that cassava and its derivatives were adversely affected by this global economic change, adding that only 10.6 metric tons of dried cassava chips was exported officially in May 2005.

The report posited that the value of the export amounted to \$634.07 (N70,660), saying that since last May no significant export has been recorded.

Committee on trade malpractices gets new chairman

President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the appointment of Mallam Dahiru Ado-Kurawa as the



Mallam Dahiru Ado-Kurawa

chairman, presidential committee on trade malpractices.

Mallam Ado-Kurawa is also a commissioner in the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). A statement from the presidency made available to *Business Trust* in Abuja yesterday said the appointment takes immediate effect.

Other members of the committee include the chairman, EFCC, Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu; executive secretary, NIPC, Engr. Mustafa Bello; special adviser to the president/head monitoring unit, Prof. Ade Wahabi

managing director/CEO Nigerian Breweries Plc, Dr. Festus Odimegwu; comptroller-general of the Nigeria Customs, Mr. J.G. Buba.

Others are director, foreign exchange department, Central Bank of Nigeria, Mrs O. O. Akanji; director (Domestic Trade) federal ministry of commerce, Mr J. D. E Akanji; director, (Fiscal), federal ministry of finance; president, manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) Engr. Charles Ugwu, and national vice president, NACCIMA, Dr. H. Ademola Ajayi while Barrister Charles J. Etuk of the presidency (OSCH) is the secretary.

Business Trust

'Gas flaring to end before 2008'

The managing director of Niger Delta Petroleum Resources Limited, Dr Layiwola Fatona has promised that his company will end gas flaring before the January 2008 date set by the federal government.

Part of the measures put in place by his company to achieve this, the managing director explained, is the building of gas covering plant which will allow the company to take the gas, which ordinarily would have been flared, and process it to natural gas-to-liquid and cooking gas.

"We believe, with all the things we have been hearing about IPP, we should be able



Dr. Edmund Daukoru, min of state, Pet. & Energy

From Mohammed Shosanya
Correspondent, Lagos

to give the gas to the third party who will take that gas and do whatever they want to do with it," he said.

According to him, currently, part of the gas his company produces is used as fuel gas to run the generator at the flow stations, adding that a very small proportion of it is actually going to be flared.

"To go further by 2008, there is a collective obligation on the part of everybody to stop gas flaring; we believe that we would have achieved that even before 2008."

The managing director further spoke on the financing of the energy sector in Nigeria and advocated the establishment of energy desks in some of the consolidated banks in the country to provide the needed fund for the sector.

He said that the idea of energy banks earlier advocated in some quarters is long overdue while stressing that the setting up of the energy desks will allow banks to break even.

"I think we can scale down to say let us have a

knowledgeable and competent energy desk in say five of these banks. And when those five desks take a project; a Nigerian project and they say, okay let us spread the risks, I am sure funding of E&P will enter into new era," he added.

Coy plans expansion on rice farming

Olam Nigeria Limited, Nigeria's private developer and processor of agricultural products, has planned an expansion in its outgrowers and extension farming on rice in Benue State, next farming season. The expansion programme which is expected to cover all rice producing communities in the state, according to the company's outgrowers and rice extension farming programme manager, Mr. Regi George, is to also double activities on the initial five communities in Otukpo, Makurdi and Guma local government areas.

Mr. Regi George who was accompanied by a member of the rice preview committee and head of programme for lowland rice research unit at the National Cereals Research Institute (NCRI),

The federal government has appointed the managing director and chief executive of Zenith Bank Plc., Mr. Jim Ovia as the chairman, National Information Technology Advisory Committee (NITAC).

Minister of science and Technology, Prof Turner

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

Badegi, told newsmen in Makurdi that the expansion programme was necessary to feed the inactivated agro millers currently under management of the company.

He said for the factory to continue to produce, quality paddy rice has to be in full supply. This, according to him, can only be facilitated if farmers in the state and its neighbours are supported towards turning in bumper harvests.

Therefore, the programme manager promised that the initial 1,500 benefiting farmers of the company's outgrowers and extension programme would be tripled, just as he disclosed that plans were on-going on other rice producing communities in the state.

FG appoints Ovia chairman, Infotech advisory c'ttee

By Anas A. Galadima,
Business Reporter

Isoun inaugurated the committee in Abuja yesterday where he charged members of the committee to work assiduously to develop the country in terms of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

A statement made available to *Business Trust* said in his response, Mr. Jim Ovia observed that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the 'cement' that holds the future of mankind together.

ICTs, according to Ovia, have become a subject of great concern to mankind and sustainability of all forms of development.

He noted that technology has become an integral part of society as people communicate with other devices and are capable of performing information processing and other tasks beyond human imagination.

"The effects on future society are not yet fully apparent, but it is certain that they will be very profound

and breath-taking."

Therefore, let us prepare Nigeria for the knowledge," he added.

Ovia said he saw his appointment as an honor and a call to duty and thanked other members of the committee and the minister for the recognition.

The committee has a total of 22 persons as members. Ovia promised to approach the assignment with humility and a sense of responsibility and cooperation with other members of the committee in dealing with the challenges ahead.



Prof. Turner Isoun, Min. Science & Tech

Exceptional Leadership Opportunities*

Our client is the national regulatory authority for the telecommunications industry in Nigeria. It has been instrumental in opening the Nigerian market to competition, and is actively pursuing a market-driven approach to the further expansion of telecommunications services, efficient management of scarce resources, and ensuring that consumers are adequately protected. The organisation prides itself in being a transparent and open agency and an equal-opportunity employer, guaranteeing a most conducive working environment as well as a competitive staff compensation policy. Recent changes in its staffing situation at the Directorate level have created the need for our client to make a select number of appointments to deliver its strategic vision and advance business operations.

Director of Engineering Ref: T700

As head of the Engineering Directorate, the individual will provide direction and guidance to the management of a commercial frequency spectrum that supports Nigeria's fast-changing and rapidly expanding multi-billion naira telecommunication industry. Key elements of the job include:

- Generating and recommending policy guidelines that will ensure effective utilisation of the spectrum;
- Providing advice to government on all matters relating to the spectrum, and telecommunications in general;
- Supervising the planning and licensing of the spectrum to ensure fair and equitable allocation;
- Monitoring of the spectrum and enforcement of licensing conditions to ensure an interference-free spectrum;
- Providing effective leadership, continuous development and motivation of a team of engineers;
- Ensuring compliance with standards, ITU regulations and international best practices;
- Providing support to other professional directorates to ensure co-ordinated development of operational license and spectrum regulations;
- Liaising with industry operators, the public and government in order to effectively implement the organisation's participatory regulation policy.

To succeed in this role, the ideal candidate must be an even-tempered, tolerant team player with strong leadership skills, and have the ability to constantly keep up with and adapt to the ever-changing telecommunication industry. The individual must also have good communication and interpersonal skills, be able to impart knowledge, mentor subordinates, motivate and inspire confidence in people, and be proactive and visionary. Broad knowledge of the political and socio-economic issues affecting the Nigerian telecom industry is essential, as are analytical thinking, competence in the use of computers and result orientation.

The ideal candidate should possess at least a BSc. degree in Electrical, Electronic or Telecommunications Engineering with a minimum of 15 years' relevant experience in telecommunications. The candidate must have hands-on experience in installation, commissioning, operation and maintenance of telecom systems and be registered with COREN. Membership of any other professional engineering body such as NSE, IEE or IEEE and familiarity with ITU regulations, procedures and practices would be an added advantage.

Director of Licensing Ref: T701

The incumbent will be responsible for providing direction and guidance to the development, implementation and monitoring of licensing and tariff policies to support investment inflow, effective competition, fair pricing and a robust, diversified, stakeholder-friendly telecommunications sector. This incorporates:

- Advising on new areas/undertakings for licensing, including requirements and conditions;
- Ensuring that stakeholders in the telecommunications industry comply with licensing obligations and requirements;
- Advising on tariff setting, interconnection rates, license fees and other charges;
- Supervising the management and collection of statutory fees, charges and contributions;
- Co-ordinating industry consultation on new licenses or amendments to existing authorisations;
- Promoting effective competition in the industry;
- Monitoring and gathering environmental intelligence on licensing and tariff issues;
- Supervising and coordinating zonal offices;
- Coordinating activities of the Management Licensing Committee.

The role calls for at least a first degree in Social Sciences, Sciences, Law, Engineering or Humanities. A Masters degree or any relevant professional qualification such as CIM, ACA or registration with COREN would be an added advantage. The ideal candidate must also have a minimum of 15 years' post-graduation experience of which 8 should be in the telecommunications industry and in a similar function. The candidate must be an even tempered, tolerant team player with strong leadership skills, and have the ability to constantly keep up with and adapt to the ever-changing telecommunication industry.

The individual must also have good communication and interpersonal skills, be able to impart knowledge, mentor subordinates, motivate and inspire confidence in people, and be proactive and visionary. Broad knowledge of the political and socio-economic issues affecting the Nigerian telecom industry is essential, as are analytical thinking, competence in the use of computers and result orientation.

If you meet the above requirements, please forward your application and a copy of your résumé quoting the relevant reference number on the top right-hand corner of your résumé to pwc.recruitment@ng.pwc.com or The Executive Search & Selection Unit, PricewaterhouseCoopers Limited, 5th Floor, Katsina House, Ralph Shodeinde Street, Central Business District, Abuja.

Closing date for applications is 24 February 2006. Please note that only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

*connectedthinking

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PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS

Business Trust

FG approves 6 depots for Niger Delta

President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the establishment of six petroleum products depots in the Niger Delta.

A member of the presidential task force on the initiative, Alhaji Awwalu Abubakar told newsmen yesterday in Abuja that this was part of efforts to ease supply and distribution of products in the

area. According to him, the move is also to align products prices in the area with those obtained in other parts of the country.

He said centrality, navigability, adequate landmass and linkage to most creeks would determine the siting of the project.

He said the project has

been estimated to cost N4.3 billion to be drawn from public-private partnership.

Abubakar said Obasanjo had also approved the initial contribution of stakeholders

as follows: NDDC 35 per cent, NNPC 20 per cent, state government in the riverine states, 15 per cent.

Others are local governments in the area five per cent

as well as core investors 25 per cent.

He said that on the long run, the interest of the funding agencies would be subsequently divested to allow core

investors to manage the project.

NAN learnt that the project is expected to be completed and commissioned by the end of the year. (NAN)

Commodity market begins trading March, targets all products

Plans have been concluded for the commencement of transactions at the Abuja Securities and Commodity Exchange (ASCE) in March this year, just as the federal government decided to include all commodities in the country for effective coverage in the transactions.

Initially only seven commodities were listed at the market for a start to enable government pay more attention on some specialized commodities in the country.

Speaking at yesterday at the second interactive session on the establishment of a viable cash crop market in Nigeria, the Managing Director of ASCE, Yusuf Abdurrahim said the decision to accommodate all commodities at the start is to give chance to all stakeholders to partake in the market.

She said the benefit is to allow buyers and sellers know the prices of commodities at the local market, saying the market will provide a veritable platform for farmers to mitigate the inherent risks in agricultural production and marketing through the hedging.

According to him the market will minimize post harvest wastes and losses through timely price information dissemination on radio, television and newspapers.

Abdurrahim said this will create ready and expanded market for the Nigerian farm produce by serving as a gateway to the international market.

He said that the market will not only limit it self on agricultural commodities but also trade in products and commodities in the solid mineral sub-sector, energy and further promote the growth of the financial sector through the clearing services that will be provided by some banks that serve as clearing banks to the ASCE

Speaking on the need to have warehouses where the products will be kept, Abdurrahim said, ASCE is rolling out modalities to identify and locate warehouses in the country, stressing that it is necessary to encourage

By Hamisu Muhammad, Business Reporter

people to build such warehouses for effective storage.

NSE plans electronic trading floors for Uyo, Bauchi

The Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) has concluded plans to open additional branches of electronic trading floors in Uyo and Bauchi.

This was announced in a document on the 2005 performance of NSE issued by its Director-General, Mrs Ndi Okereke-Oyunke.

The document made

available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kaduna yesterday, said the Benin branch of the electronic trading had been opened.

She explained that work had started on the automation of Kaduna and Ibadan trading floors.

"The projects will be concluded in 2006 along with

the automation of the Onitsha branch trading floor," she added.

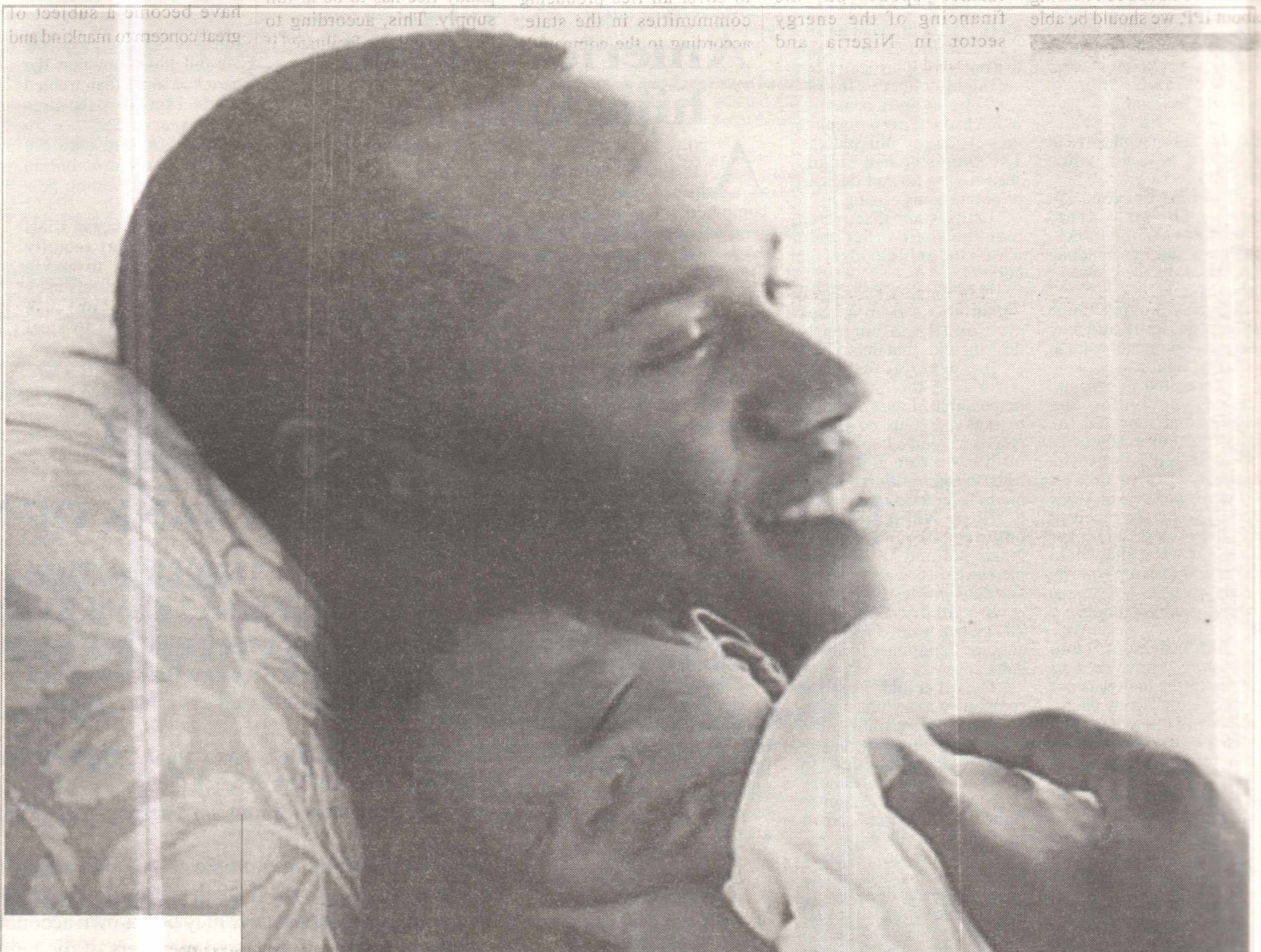
She explained that six stock brokering forms were revoked last year, including the Apex securities, Beachgrove Securities, Viva, Akitorch, Asset plus and Halsec securities.

"We are hopeful that the BPE would consummate its

decision to list the shares of Nitel and Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) on the market 2006," she said.

Okereke-Onyunke said the exchange had N2.9 trillion in 2005 as against N2.1 trillion in 2004 in market capitalisation.

It had a turnover of N262.94 billion in 2005 and N225.82 billion in 2004.



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Business Trust

INTERNATIONAL

How banks can check online fraud

Banks must do more to promote security among their online customers, the UK's finance watchdog has said.

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) made the call as it revealed half of internet users are either extremely or very concerned about the risk of fraud.

To ease safety fears banks should make more effort to educate web users about online security, the FSA said.

But it warned if customers were forced to foot the bill for online fraud 77% would stop banking via

the web.

More than 1,500 people were quizzed about online banking for the FSA's Financial Risk 2006 report.

The study, which will be published today, January 25, 2006, also showed that while many web users were protecting themselves, almost a quarter did not know when they last updated their security software.

Security breaches

"Most consumers recognise they have some responsibility for security but they are not necessarily following this obligation through," FSA financial

crime sector leader Philip Robinson said.

"To tackle the losses associated with fraud, banks should continue to drive

security and this must include educating consumers on the importance of protecting themselves."

It added that figures from

industry body Apacs showed internet fraud losses rose to £14.5m in the first six months of 2005.

While admitting that the

Online safety

Around 30,000 customers were sent a keyring-sized security device which generates a six-digit code - which changes every 30 seconds - to be used alongside usernames and passwords.

"We recognise that many banks are already taking steps to engage consumers," Mr Robinson added.

"Initiatives like the 'Get Safe Online' campaign between the government and the private sector show consumer education is beginning to happen.

"But banks need to look carefully at consumer attitudes and whether their initiatives are effective in maintaining confidence."

Online fraud has also hit the headlines recently after reports that criminal gangs had stolen millions from the government through tax credit scams involving the Department for Work and Pensions and Network Rail.

Such frauds are carried out by criminals who steal an individual's name, date of birth and National Insurance number and use these personal details to steal money from the government by making fraudulent tax credit claims.



Lloyds is trying out new measures to beat online fraud

Victims recount experiences of online fraud

Some adults say they have had their identity stolen or know a victim of ID fraud, *Which?* magazine has said.

Three BBC News website readers explain what happened to them when their ID was stolen.

Vikki Anderson, 29, bank worker from Uxbridge: When Vikki Anderson had her handbag stolen last July, she knew she was in trouble.

She was moving home and her passport and key personal documents were in the stolen bag.

"I cancelled everything that day, including my passport and reported the theft to the police. But I was still worried about the possibility of ID theft."

Vikki's nervousness was justified when she received a call from a car loan broker asking her when she would like her new loan repayments to start.

Vikki had not bought a car.

Vikki Anderson: "I told them that whoever had applied for the loan was not me and decided to check my credit record immediately."

Vikki found that a fraudster had used the stolen ID to obtain car loans worth more than £20,000 in her name.

Vikki also found that two direct debits had been set up on her bank account without her knowledge.

After a month, the loan company concluded that a fraud had taken place and told Vikki that she would not be liable for the loan.

"The fraudsters have caused a serious amount of damage."

"I was recently turned down for a credit card because my credit rating has been damaged."

Vikki is trying to get the two major credit reference agencies, Experian and Equifax, to amend her credit record.

"The whole process is not something I would want to repeat. I have spent hundreds of hours trying to sort everything."

"I still fear that the fraudsters will strike again, even though I have done everything I can to stop it from happening."

Laura McDonald: But the debt related to an address that Laura had left

more than four years ago.

Laura had fallen victim to a not too sophisticated but still highly-effective fraud.

"The housing association had left my nameplate up outside my old address. The fraudster had simply seen my name and decided to obtain goods using it."

Laura soon discovered that the mail order debt wasn't the only cloud on the horizon.

"My name was used to obtain books from a book club and I am currently dealing with that debt."

In order to prove that she wasn't the person responsible, Laura has had to make dozens of phone calls and send a copy of her birth certificate and utility bills to debt collectors and credit reference agencies.

Nasir Ahmed, 43, IT engineer from London: Nasir Ahmed fell for an increasingly common type of ID fraud.

It started in September 2004 when he received a call at home apparently from his bank.

The caller told Nasir that someone was trying to carry out a fraudulent transaction on his account and that to stop it they needed to confirm his personal details.

Nasir Ahmed: Eager to fight the fraudsters, Nasir confirmed to the caller his name, address, date of birth, place of birth - everything, in short, needed to perpetrate a sophisticated ID fraud.

Nasir heard nothing for a month, then on opening his credit card statement he found that more than £11,000 had been taken, mostly to buy flight tickets and travellers cheques.

"It was a real shock and I called my credit card company straight away who agreed to freeze my account and investigate."

"It took them three months to sort this out and credit the account. All that time I worried that they would say that they thought it was me who had spent the money, how would I find £11,000?"

"Where does a person go for help? The police said it was a matter between me and the credit card company."

Nasir was struck by the professional nature of the fraud.

American admits hijacking PCs

A 20-year-old American has admitted hijacking thousands of computers and using them to send out spam.

Jeanson James Ancheta pleaded guilty in a Los Angeles court to charges of conspiring to violate anti-spam and computer misuse laws, and fraud.

Prosecutors said the case was the first to target so-called botnets.

These are networks of computers that are infected with malicious software and then used to send spam and attack websites.

"Mr Ancheta was responsible for a particularly insidious string of crimes," said a spokesman for the US attorney's office in Los Angeles, Thom Mrozek.

"He hijacked somewhere in the area of half a million computer systems. This not only affected computers like the one in your home, but it allowed him and others to orchestrate large-scale attacks."

Zombie networks

Mr Ancheta was charged in November with 17 counts of conspiracy, fraud and other crimes in connection with a 14-month crime spree that started in June 2004.

He was accused of taking advantages of flaws in Microsoft's Windows operating system to infect hundreds of thousands of computers, creating a "zombie network" of machines.

In entering his guilty pleas, Mr Ancheta admitted selling access to his botnet to firms which fed pop-up ads to the infected computers.

Among the machines infected were US military computers in California and in Virginia.

Under a plea agreement, Mr Ancheta is expected to receive from four years to six years in prison when he is sentenced on 1 May, though

the deal has to be approved by a judge.

He also agreed to pay \$15,000 (£8,800) in restitution to the military facilities affected and forfeit the proceeds of his illicit activities, including more than \$60,000 (£35,000) in cash and a 1993 BMW.

figure was "relatively low" the FSA did point out that the figure had more than trebled from the £4m lost in the same period a year earlier.

In an effort to curb the growing problem of online fraud banks are testing new security tools.

Lloyds TSB began trials of a new two-part security system last year to tackle scams where fraudsters hack people's PCs or use "phishing" emails to steal login details.



CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA

TENDER NOTICE NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that 91-day Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills amounting to N10,000,000,000 will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 02/02/2006.

Interested Authorized Dealers (Banks, Discount Houses and Brokers) are invited to submit tenders to reach the Issues Office, Central Bank of Nigeria, Lagos, not later than 1.30pm. on Tuesday, 31/01/2006.

Each tender must be in multiple of N1, 000 subject to a minimum of N10, 000 per tender. Authorized Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A tender may be for own account of Authorized Dealers or made on behalf of interested members of the public, who are advised to apply through any of the authorized dealers.

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked "TENDER FOR BILLS". The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Wednesday, 01/02/2006. The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued for successful bid on Thursday, 02/02/2006. Payment in full for the amount of the accepted tenders must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30pm on the issue date 02/02/2006. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

ISSUES OFFICE
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBU SQUARE
LAGOS.

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2006

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
ADSWITCH PLC. 3	1.57	54,000		84,780.00
CUTIX PLC 3	3.02	53,600		162,412.00
Sector Totals	6		107,600	247,192.00
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC. 2	2.10	15,448		32,490.08
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC. 1	0.90	300		270.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC 11	18.00	158,492		2,935,218.40
PRESCO PLC. 14	11.50	34,635		390,843.00
Sector Totals	28		208,875	3,358,821.48
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC. 22	2.79	190,707		511,663.48
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC. 21	6.01	51,541		310,421.90
Sector Totals	43		242,248	822,085.38
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC 154	2.60	6,101,327		16,103,551.61
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC. 19	9.10	1,799,696		16,377,233.60
DIAMOND BANK PLC 2	7.75	100,100		775,775.00
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC. 2	2.26	333,400		753,484.00
FIDELITY BANK PLC 13	2.93	971,739		2,847,195.27
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC. 579	34.19	4,582,849		155,231,027.09
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC. 7	1.14	445,743		508,147.02
GTBANK PLC. 399	13.00	6,630,870		86,268,528.22
INVESTMENT BANKING 18	4.57	2,455,174		11,220,145.18
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC. 4	0.84	20,379,965		17,119,170.60
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC. 2	1.81	37,968		68,722.08
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC. 195	8.99	5,112,253		46,277,287.14
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC. 2	1.40	2,000		2,800.00
NAL BANK PLC. 1	2.80	139,218		389,810.40
OCEANIC BANK PLC 85	6.00	7,354,837		43,991,398.88
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC 2	1.91	244,200		466,422.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC. 112	12.81	1,510,309		19,485,167.26
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC. 87	25.48	278,730		7,102,040.40
UNITY BANK PLC 5	2.50	971,673		2,313,019.74
WEMA BANK PLC. 22	3.74	2,358,556		8,820,999.44
ZENITH BANK PLC 15	19.64	190,700		3,745,348.00
Sector Totals	1,725		62,001,307	439,867,272.93
BREWERIES				
CHAMPION BREWERIES PLC. 2	1.86	44,900		82,314.00
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC. 119	102.00	369,448		37,622,930.44
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC. 334	36.52	1,423,896		51,682,526.60
Sector Totals	485		1,838,244	89,387,771.04
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC. 88	33.70	401,578		13,525,499.30
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC 14	7.09	61,373		441,625.18
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC. 154	16.40	1,242,417		20,540,343.94
Sector Totals	256		1,705,368	34,507,468.42
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC. 10	3.90	293,924		1,120,333.70
CAP PLC. 9	8.86	10,031		88,874.66
D. N. MEYER PLC. 2	3.85	24,050		92,900.00
IPWA PLC. 1	0.37	25,000		9,250.00
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC. 4	4.31	131,462		567,821.22
Sector Totals	26		484,467	1,879,179.58
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC. 1	0.43	266		114.38
Sector Totals	1		266	114.38
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC. 10	1.30	259,388		338,272.76
C F A O NIGERIA PLC. 13	3.57	27,755		97,951.44
JOHN HOLT PLC. 2	1.54	8,521		13,122.34
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC. 61	16.20	840,213		13,611,450.60
S C O A NIGERIA PLC. 1	0.97	62,443		60,569.71
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC. 107	16.20	620,368		10,066,835.77
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC 167	21.00	1,196,826		24,836,918.94
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC. 6	0.80	64,030		51,364.30
Sector Totals	367		3,079,544	49,076,485.86
CONSTRUCTION				
CAPALBETO 1	14.00	1,400		19,600.00
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC. 2	1.09	192		209.28
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC. 5	21.50	1,500		32,250.00
Sector Totals	8		3,092	52,059.28
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC. 2	0.70	26,120		18,275.60
Sector Totals	2		26,120	18,275.60
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC 40	26.50	96,098		2,542,481.50
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC. 150	65.81	349,199		22,962,276.01
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC. 90	26.15	286,277		7,500,834.33
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC. 88	61.00	202,194		12,387,923.14
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC. 57	190.01	104,714		19,797,996.10
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC. 5	16.25	13,632		218,756.32
Sector Totals	430		1,052,114	65,410,267.40
FOOTWEAR				
FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES MAN. PLC. 1	0.29	5,351		1,551.79
Sector Totals	1		5,351	1,551.79
HEALTHCARE				
BCN PLC. 1	0.61	100		61.00
EVANS MEDICAL PLC. 7	2.52	108,718		273,969.36
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC 29	10.10	379,561		3,821,835.69
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC 4	5.36	23,250		124,620.00
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC. 1	3.23	26,571		85,824.33
PHARMA-DEKO PLC. 2	4.55	4,200		19,110.00
Sector Totals	44		542,400	4,325,420.38
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
ALUMACO PLC. 1	1.24	1,140		1,413.60
B.O.C. GASES PLC 12	2.85	75,000		213,471.21
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC. 7	0.71	299,159		215,362.89
OLUWA GLASS COMPANY PLC. 1	1.33	2,000		2,660.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC. 83	4.70	517,052		2,460,370.80
VONO PRODUCTS PLC. 13	1.27	913,156		1,160,608.12
Sector Totals	117		1,807,507	4,053,886.62
INSURANCE				
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC 1	0.54	15,000		8,100.00
AIICO INSURANCE PLC. 40	2.28	1,832,378		4,051,803.43
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC. 14	1.48	92,740		138,388.91
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC. 11	1.70	303,895		519,158.20
GREAT NIGERIA INSURANCE PLC 1	1.38	2,000		2,760.00
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) PLC. 1	0.58	200		116.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC. 14	2.90	121,465		352,587.65
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC. 5	2.14	15,860		33,906.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC. 17	3.02	216,892		636,045.75
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE 6	1.43	574,034		818,154.18
UNIC INSURANCE PLC. 25	1.36	5,603,314		7,056,207.51
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC. 12	3.07	61,078		189,205.64
Sector Totals	147		8,838,856	13,806,433.27
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC 6	1.18	28,931		34,450.58
Sector Totals	6		28,931	34,450.58
MARITIME				
JAPPAUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC 13	1.85	83,858		161,300.58
Sector Totals	13		83,858	161,300.58
PACKAGING				
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC 2	1.52	12,328		18,738.56
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC. 1	0.56	200		112.00
Sector Totals	3		12,528	18,850.56
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC. 9	0.52	54,000		28,585.00
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC. 96	42.95	236,910		10,209,806.89
CONOIL PLC 86	91.00	40,474		3,705,680.22
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC. 16	2.87	104,175		292,272.59
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC. 31	155.06	35,516		5,535,539.28
OANDO PLC 168	94.10	254,141		23,911,786.82
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC. 21	114.70	21,703		2,494,427.90
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC 34	181.00	47,362		8,627,922.66
Sector Totals	461		794,281	54,806,021.36
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC. 2	3.04	1,050		3,192.00
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC. 4	1.50	16,205		24,507.50
Sector Totals	6		17,255	27,699.50
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC. 46	9.58	1,030,324		9,767,576.12
Sector Totals	46		1,030,324	9,767,576.12
TEXTILES				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC. 5	0.38	155,125		58,947.50
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC. 9	2.07	28,843		59,885.01
Sector Totals	14		183,968	118,832.51
Overall Totals		4,205		771,749,016.62

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY			
SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
AIICO	1,832,378.00	4,051,803.43	40
WEMABANK	2,358,556.00	8,820,999.44	22
IBTC	2,455,174.00	11,220,145.18	18
FIRSTBANK	4,582,849.00	155,231,027.09	579
INTERCONT	5,112,253.00	46,277,287.14	195
UNIC	5,603,314.00	7,056,207.51	25
ACCESS	6,101,327.00	16,103,551.61	154
GUARANTY	6,630,870.00	86,268,528.22	399
OCEANIC	7,354,837.00	43,991,398.88	85
IMB	20,379,965.00	17,119,170.60	4
TOP 10 GAINERS			
SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
NESTLE	187.00	190.01	+3.01
CONOIL	90.00	91.00	+1.00
GUINNESS	101.00	102.00	+1.00
NNFM	15.48	16.25	+0.77
FIRSTBANK	33.61	34.19	+0.58
NB	36.00	36.52	+0.52
UAC-PROP	9.13	9.58	+0.45
UNILEVER	20.62	21.00	+0.38
CADBURY	65.50	65.81	+0.31
INTERCONT	8.78	8.99	+0.21
TOP 10 LOSERS			
SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
TOTAL	185.02	181.00	-4.02
TEXACO	117.00	114.70	-2.30
MOBIL	156.50	155.06	-1.44
OKOMUOIL	18.60	18.00	-0.60
CCNN	7.46	7.09	-0.37
UBA	13.00	12.81	-0.19
CUTIX	3.17	3.02	-0.15
DNMEYER	4.00	3.85	-0.15
VITAFOAM	4.85	4.70	-0.15
BOCGAS	2.98	2.85	-0.13

The 20 most active stocks by turnover volume at NSE in 2005

Oceanic Bank International (Nig) Plc-	2.342 billion shares;
United Bank for Africa Plc	-1.600 billion shares;
IMB international Bank Plc -	1.471 billion shares;
Access Bank Plc	- 1.316 billion shares
Afribank Nigeria Plc	- 1.223 billion shares
Intercontinental Bank Plc-	1.182 billion shares
Standard Trust Bank Plc-	1.133 billion shares
First Bank of Nigeria Plc-	972.8 million shares
Guaranty Trust Bank Plc -	930.9 million shares
Great Nigeria Insurance Plc-	839.8 million shares
Union Bank of Nigeria Plc-	788.7 million shares
EIB International Bank Plc-	717.4 million shares
WAPCO Plc-	581.4 million shares
Diamond Bank Plc -	543.7 million shares
Investment Banking & Trust Co. Plc-	531.6 million shares
Zenith Bank Plc -	498.

Furore as crash helmet

Abdulraheem M. Duzu, a student of Government Secondary School Wuse II, Abuja, seemed to be riding his bicycle with a lot of pleasure, carrying his friend Nadar Umar Faruq of the Federal Government Science and Technical College, Orozo. He appeared proud, wearing a yellow crash helmet, although it was, comparatively, much bigger than his head. Duzu's passenger was not wearing any helmet. Both of them need not have worn any helmet because they were riding on a bicycle. But the rider was wearing one in clear expression of public acceptability of the reintroduction or reinforcement of the law, which mandates every motorcyclist in the country, to wear a crash helmet for his or her safety and that of the passenger.

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) announced late last year that with effect from January 1, 2006, all motorcyclists and their passengers, should use the crash helmet as a safety measure against accidents, and other unforeseen circumstances.

The significance of the crash helmet to *Okada* riders

By **Abdullahi M. Gulloma,**
Reporter

and other motorcyclists, according to a senior road safety commander and head of the public enlightenment unit of the Abuja command of the Federal Road Safety Commission, Mr. Aide Okwonghai, cannot be overemphasised. He said that the use of the kit by *Okada* riders is vital, because they are what he referred to as "exposed road users" and are, therefore, prone to greater danger on the roads.

The FRSC official said the commission revisited the law on the enforcement of the use of the crash helmet, in order to ensure that motorcyclists in the country make effective use of the kit to protect their heads whenever there is an accident. According to him, enforcement of the use of the item is nationwide, both for the rider and the passenger, and that defaulters are made to pay a fine of N1,000 (One Thousand naira) and attend a compulsory class of some minutes, where they usually receive instructions on safety rules and regulations, and how to protect themselves.

Mr. Okwonghai said also that the FRSC is impressed with

what he referred to as "an encouraging compliance on the part of the motorcyclists, especially *Okada* riders, and we are employing a corrective measure so that the people involved would adjust to the use of the kit."

A reasonable number of the *Okada* riders said there is wisdom in the introduction of the crash helmet as, according to them, the kit would protect them in the event of an accident. For instance, Kabiru Mohammed, who came to Abuja from Zaria city in Kaduna state, said that the enforcement of the crash helmet "is the most reasonable thing the FRSC officials have done for the *Okada* riders." Mohammed, a diploma holder, said he was particularly impressed that the commission values the lives of *Okada* riders, and introduced the kit for their safety.

Speaking in support of the submissions by Mohammed, Mr. Okafor Emeka, who said he is from Enugu state, stressed that the introduction of the crash helmet by the FRSC, is a clear indication that the commission is now taking its duties and responsibilities to the Nigerian public more seriously.

He said that the crash helmet, which sells at between N1500 and N1800, was of great value at the beginning of this month when he had an accident along the Abuja-Airport road. "I think if it were not for this thing (indicating the red helmet) I would have been a dead person by now. I took a passenger from Area 10 to the headquarters of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) and before we reached our destination, we had an accident. It was a terrible experience. The helmet I was wearing was knocked in the encounter, which means I would have sustained a major head injury," he said.

Another fellow from Apo Village in Abuja, who identified himself as Hassan Rabi, said he had seen the wisdom in the use of the crash helmet. He narrated his experience thus: "On Saturday January 14, 2006, I was returning to my house in Apo village and, unknown to me, some people were fighting, and as I approached the scene, one of them picked a big stone from the ground and aimed at the other person, but he missed the fellow and the stone landed on my helmet, which threw me off the motorcycle, but without sustaining any injury. I stood up and thanked the Almighty for saving me. And I felt that if it were not for the helmet, my skull would have been fractured."

However, a reasonable number of the *Okada* riders are not happy with the introduction of the crash helmet, saying that it would further compound the problems being faced by commercial motorcyclists. Specifically, Lawal Inuwa, Paul Michael and Ubale Barau, who are operating within the FCT, expressed concern over what they referred to as the "exorbitant cost of the helmet ranging from N1,500 to N1,800, and even higher." According to them, the crash helmet



Another *Okada* man, Kabir Mohammed wearing a yellow crash helmet.

would make things difficult for *Okada* riders and their passengers, because the kit absorbs heat and passes it on to the user.

For Moses Anthony, Ibrahim Abba, Musa Dattijo, Mallam Umar Yusuf, Gabriel John and Aminu Isa of Gwarimpa, Zone 5, Durumi village, Lugbe, Mpape and Mabushi, respectively, the introduction of the helmet was a deliberate attempt by the authorities in the Federal Capital Territory and FRSC officials, to make life difficult for *Okada* riders operating in the FCT.

Specifically, Moses Anthony and Umar Yusuf argued that the helmet was introduced to frustrate *Okada* riders out of Abuja. According to them, the enforcement of the use of crash helmet is restricted only to the Federal Capital Territory, and that their counterparts in the other states of the federation are still operating without the helmet.

According to Mallam Umar Yusuf, who hails from Zamfara state, "No *Okada* rider is using the crash helmet in my state, or in Katsina and Kaduna states. It is solely an Abuja issue." His colleague, Moses Anthony concurred that *Okada* riders in Onitsha do not wear any helmet, and they move freely without let or hindrance."

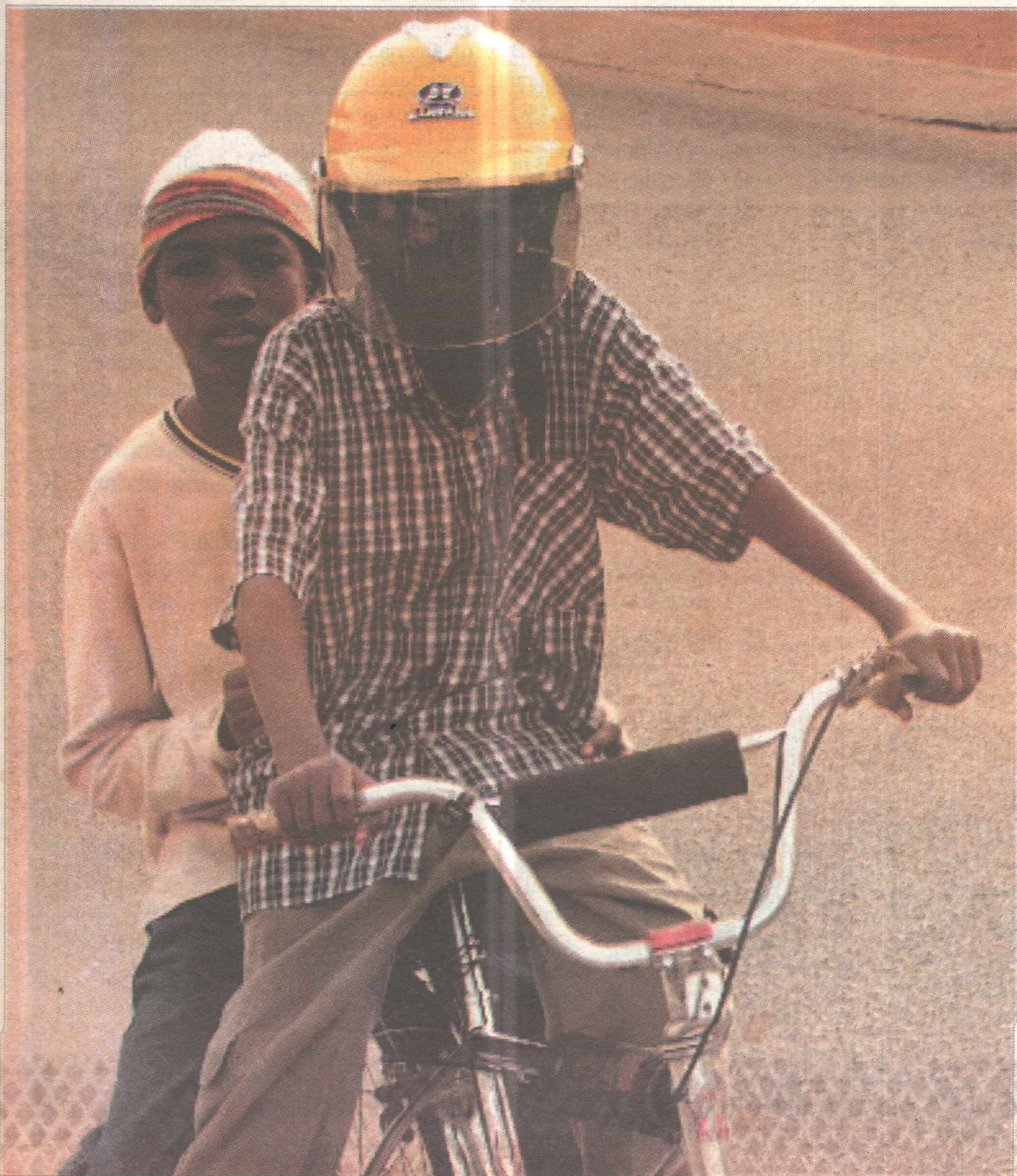
Dismissing the above assertion, however, the FRSC spokesman, Mr. Aide Okwonghai, said that the enforcement of the law is nationwide, but that emphasis is

given to Abuja, because it is the nation's capital. "It is not true that the enforcement of the law on the crash helmet is only in Abuja. Yes, Abuja is the capital of this country, and we need to have a capital where everything is almost in a perfect state. We are trying to make Abuja our own version of London, where everything is in fairly perfect condition," he said.

Some of the *Okada* riders are also of the view that the demand by the FRSC officials, that both the *Okada* riders and their passengers should wear the crash helmet is not feasible. They based their arguments on the issue of religion, and the fact that some Nigerians are arrogant, and would not wear the helmet if they are given same by the motorcyclists. Apart from the issue of arrogance, the *Okada* riders also expressed the fear that the use of one helmet by numerous passengers could spread communicable diseases among users.

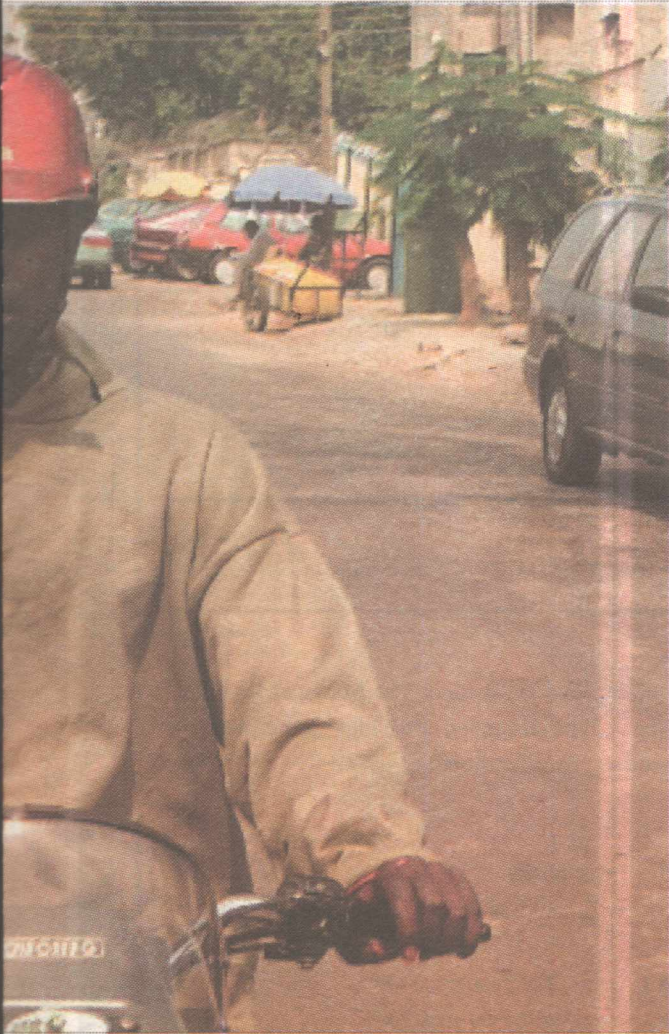
Kabiru Mohammed is of the view that the use of the crash helmet by passengers would suffer a major setback because of differences in religion, and cultural beliefs of the Nigerian peoples, saying that "as a Muslim, you don't expect me to instruct a Muslim woman wearing hijab to remove it and wear the crash helmet, or ask a reverend sister to remove her head tie and replace it with the kit. It won't work."

In the same vein, Adamu



Abdulraheem M. Duzu wearing a yellow helmet, while riding his bicycle alongside a friend.

returns



Mr. Dan, wears his red crash helmet as he goes about his Okada business

Musa and Bitrus Maigari of Garki Village and Karimo in the FCT, are of the opinion that the use of the crash helmet by passengers wearing traditional dresses, amounts to a neglect of cultural values. According to Maigari, "Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba men with their native caps cannot accept crash helmet from Okada riders for their

safety." His colleague, Musa, observed that Nigerian women, especially the ladies would not patronise any crash helmet from motorcyclists. "Women, especially the ladies, are so full of themselves, that as an Okada rider, you cannot say 'Madam, please wear this helmet for your safety.' They will just look at you, and if you are

not lucky they will abuse you. In fact, one lady told me she cannot wear that thing," he said.

For Hassan Yinusa of Wuse Zone 2, Abuja, one of the reasons that would make the use of the crash helmet by passengers practically impossible, is the fear of contacting diseases as, according to him, "some people have different diseases on their heads like dandruff and so on," and that there is the likelihood that these diseases can spread easily among passengers.

One of the passengers, who identified himself as Nuhu Hamza, said that the fears being expressed by Nigerians on the possibility of contacting diseases, through sharing of the crash helmet are genuine, but that the only way out of the problem is to sensitize the Okada riders on the need to ensure that they wash the kit on a regular basis.

Faulting this position however, Mrs. Margaret Shinkut and Dr. Ezekiel Yohanna, said that regular washing of the kit is not a guarantee to check the

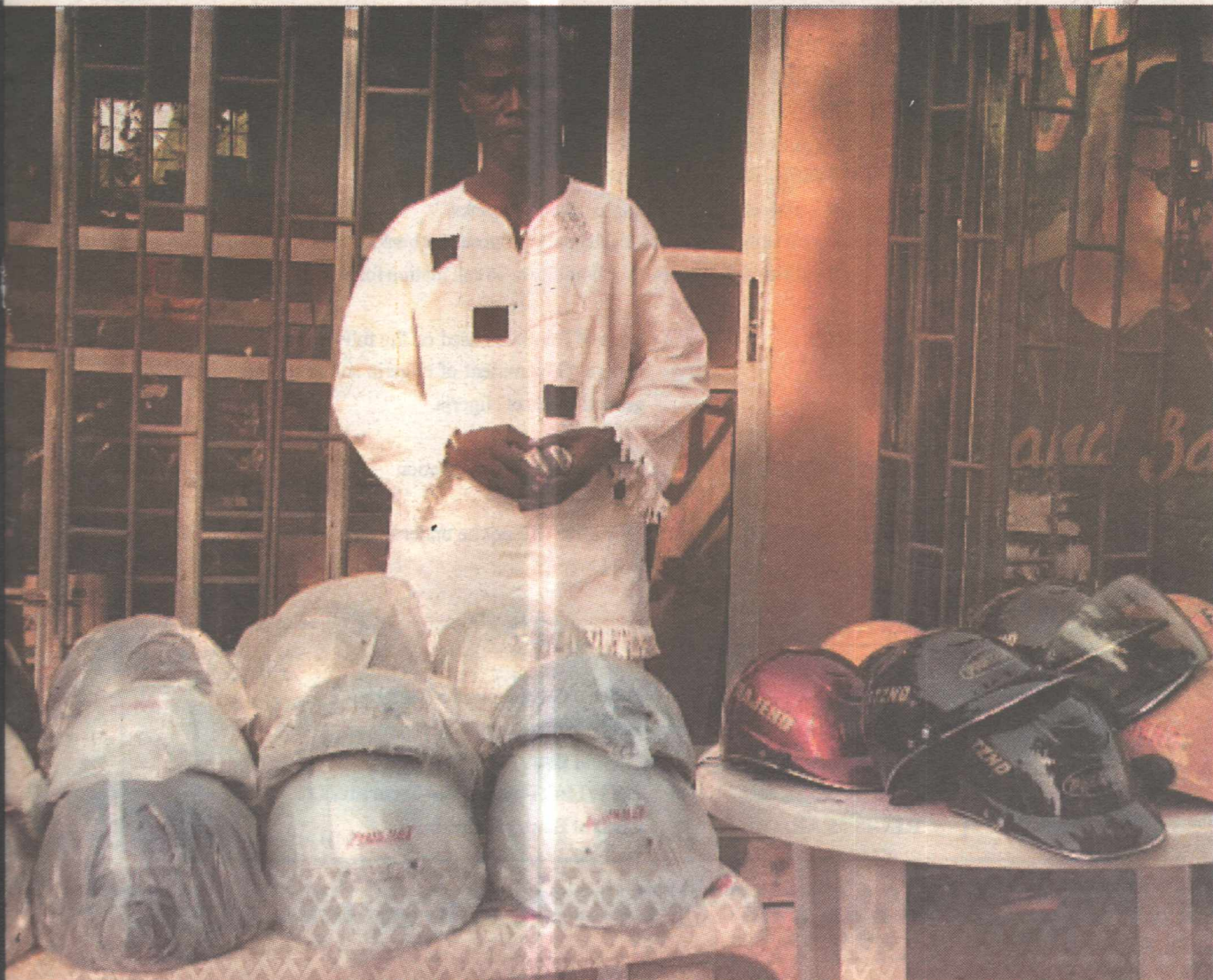
spread of communicable diseases among passengers that use motorcycles as a means of transportation. "Speaking as a medical expert, I don't subscribe to the view that if an Okada rider washes his helmet regularly, those who use his helmet are not likely to contact diseases. Let's say an Okada man washes the helmet when he comes back from work everyday in the evening, and from morning to that time he took a passenger with dandruff, for instance, there is no certainty that that disease cannot be spread among passengers that use the helmet that very day before he washes it," Dr. Yohanna said.

Another passenger who

identified herself as Mrs. Mary Iliya said the authorities charged with the responsibility of enforcing the use of helmet, should ensure that they do their job, regardless of the observations raised by some people as, according to her, "safety of life on the road comes first". Mrs. Iliya, a resident of Utako, said all the talk about diseases, religion and culture is a "gimmick and should be ignored."

Whether or not it is a gimmick, it appears that the use of the crash helmet has come to stay, and motorcyclists, especially the popular Okada riders are adjusting to it, perhaps inspired by the fear of being arrested by the officials of Federal Road Safety Commission.

Kabiru Mohammed is of the view that the use of the crash helmet by passengers would suffer a major setback because of differences in religion, and cultural beliefs of the Nigerian peoples, saying that "as a Muslim, you don't expect me to instruct a Muslim woman wearing hijab to remove it and wear the crash helmet, or ask a reverend sister to remove her head tie and replace it with the kit. It won't work." In the same vein, Adamu Musa and Bitrus Maigari of Garki Village and Karimo in the FCT, are of the opinion that the use of the crash helmet by passengers wearing traditional dresses, amounts to a neglect of cultural values. According to Maigari, "Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba men with their native caps cannot accept crash helmet from Okada riders for their safety." His colleague, Musa, observed that Nigerian women, especially the ladies would not patronise any crash helmet from motorcyclists. "Women, especially the ladies, are so full of themselves, that as an Okada rider, you cannot say 'Madam, please wear this helmet for your safety.'



Many motorcyclists buy their crash helmets from Mr. Azibuke Abara's shop near the FRSC office in Wuse Zone II, Abuja.



Offer-Circular Pursuant to the Debt Management Office (Establishment) Act 2003 and the Local Loans (Registered Stock and Securities) Act (Cap 214) LFN 1990

THE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA

on the authority of the

DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

on behalf of the

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

Offers for Subscription by Auction and is authorized to receive applications for

N25, 000,000,000

3rd FGN BOND 2009 (3-YEAR TENOR)*

Application List opens 23rd January 2006
Application List closes 25th January 2006

- Interested investors and authorized dealers (Banks, Discount Houses and Stockbrokers) are invited to collect application forms from any office of the Central Bank of Nigeria ("CBN") nationwide.
- Interested members of the public are to submit their bids through any authorized dealer nationwide to reach the CBN, Lagos not later than the closing date as specified. Application forms are also available on www.cenbank.org and www.dmo.gov.ng for download and completion.
- Authorized dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A bid may be for own account or made on behalf of interested members of the public.
- Completed application forms should be submitted by the Authorized Dealers to Issues Office, 5th Floor, Old Building, Central Bank of Nigeria, Tinubu Square, Lagos.
- This is the 1st in the series of the programmed issues for the 1st Half of 2006 as set out below**:

Month	Tranches	Opening	Closing
January 2006	N25,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 1 (3-Year Tenor)	23rd January 2006	25th January 2006
February 2006	N10,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond Series 2 (3-Year Tenor) N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 3 (5-Year Tenor)	20th February 2006	22nd February 2006
March 2006	N10,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 4 (3-Year Tenor) N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 5 (5-Year Tenor)	27th March 2006	29th March 2006
April 2006	N10,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 6 (3-Year Tenor) N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 7 (5-Year Tenor)	24th April 2006	26th April 2006
May 2006	N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 8 (5-year tenor)	22nd May 2006	24th May 2006
June 2006	N20,000,000,000 3rd FGN Bond 2013 Series 9 (7-year tenor)	26th June 2006	28th June 2006

- Payment in full for the amount of the accepted bids must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30 p.m. on the allotment day (i.e. 2 days after closure of Application List). This will normally be effected by direct debit to the account of the Authorized Dealers who should ensure that their accounts with the CBN are adequately funded for this purpose.

*The DMO reserves the right to vary the amount allotted in response to market dictates.
** The Issuance Calendar may be revised in response to market realities.

Note: The issuance will continue during the second half of the year; the issuance programme for the second half of the year will be published in due course.

SUMMARY OF THE OFFER

ISSUER: Federal Government of Nigeria ("FGN")
THE ISSUE: N25 billion 3rd FGN BOND 2009 Series 1
UNITS OF SALE: N1, 000 per unit subject to a minimum subscription of N10, 000 and in multiples of N1, 000 thereafter.
PURPOSE: To restructure part of the outstanding 91-day NTBs into longer-tenored bonds, provide benchmark instrument for the pricing of other securities in the capital market, facilitate the development of the bond market in general as well as fund the budget deficit.

TENOR: 3 years
INTEREST RATE: To be determined by auction. The Marginal Rate that clears the volume on auction or the highest accepted rate becomes the coupon for the issue.

INTEREST PAYMENT: Payable semi-annually.
MATURITIES: The series will mature as shown below:

N25 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 1	27th January, 2009
N10 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 2	24th February, 2009
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 3	24th February, 2011
N10 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 4	31st March, 2009
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 5	31st March, 2011
N10 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2009 Series 6	28th April, 2009
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 7	28th April, 2011
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2011 Series 8	26th May, 2011
N20 billion 3rd FGN Bond 2013 Series 9	30th June, 2013

REDEMPTION: Bullet repayment on the maturity date.

STATUS:

- Qualifies as securities in which trustees can invest under the Trustee Investment Act
- Qualifies as Government securities within the meaning of Company Income Tax Act ("CITA") and Personal Income Tax Act ("PITA") for Tax Exemption for Pension Funds amongst other investors
- To be quoted on The Nigerian Stock Exchange
- Not subject to a single obligor limits for banks
- Zero weighting for capital adequacy purposes for banks
- Qualifies as liquid asset for liquidity ratio calculation for banks

SECURITY: Issue of Bonds is based on the full faith and credit of the Federal Government of Nigeria and is charged upon the general assets of Nigeria.

PAYMENT TERMS: Payable in full on application

UNDERWRITING: This offer will not be underwritten at the instance of the FGN

PARTIES TO THE OFFER

ISSUER: Federal Government of Nigeria
ISSUER'S AGENT: Debt Management Office
AGENT BANK: Central Bank of Nigeria
STOCKBROKER: Trade Link Finance and Securities Ltd.
REGISTRAR: Central Bank of Nigeria

JOIN OUR TEAM.



CHAN Pharmaceuticals, a Christian Health Association of Nigeria (CHAN) company is today the oldest and largest drug distribution NGO in Nigeria. CHAN Pharmaceuticals has expanded to acquire a large asset base with Headquarters at Jos and six zonal drug depots within Nigeria. With a vision to be the preferred partner in healthcare, the company is seeking to recruit dynamic and performance driven individuals to fill the following vacancies.

1. HEAD, PROGRAM & ADVOCACY

Reporting to the Managing Director/Chief Executive.
The ideal person shall be responsible for developing our consultancy business, writing and packaging proposals to donor and other international agencies covering all areas of service especially in distribution, logistics and pharmaceutical capacity building.
He/She shall also be responsible for coordinating our public relation, communication and perception management activity by interfacing with relevant stakeholders and the public.

Skills, Qualification and Experience Required.

- i) A good Degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences and Masters in Business Administration or Public Health Economics/Management.
- ii) High inter-personal, communication and relationship skills.
- iii) Ability to use modern computer tools is very important.
- iv) Up to five years experience in a Pharmaceutical consulting, Advocacy or Public Health environment will be an advantage.

2. HEAD OF OPERATIONS

Reporting to the Managing Director/Chief Executive.
The person shall be involved in managing the procurement of all pharmaceutical products, medical consumables and other company needs. He shall manage the activity of the company's quality control laboratory and coordinates all interfaces with our suppliers and regulatory agencies.

Skills, Qualification and Experience Required

- i) B.Sc in Pharmacy and a Masters Degree or an MBA
- ii) The ideal person must have overwhelming knowledge of the Pharmaceutical industry in and outside Nigeria.
- iii) High inter-personal and relationship skills.
- iv) Candidate must have five to eight years experience in pharmaceutical management.
- v) Up to three years experience in procurement in a pharmaceutical environment will be an added advantage.

3. INFORMATION SYSTEM MANAGER

Reporting to the Managing Director/Chief Executive.
The ideal candidate shall be responsible for optimizing and managing the company's information resources. He shall manage the installation, maintenance and continuous service of the company's information technology resources.

Skills, Qualification and Experience Required.

- i) A good degree in Computer Science, Statistics, Business Administration or any related discipline.
- ii) Must have more than average knowledge of Networking Management and Operating System.
- iii) Involvement and experience in successful implementation of any of the following integrated ERP tools (Sage Pastel, ACCPAC, Navision etc).
- iv) Should have at least four years experience in computer operations, management and security.
- v) Self starter with ability to work with a wide range of people.
- vi) Must be solution conscious and performance driven individual.
- vii) S/he must be innovative and must be able to learn new tools and transfer knowledge to team mates.

4. PROCUREMENT AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS MANAGER

Reporting to the Head of Operations.
The ideal candidate shall be responsible for liaising with regulatory authorities in all areas of product registration, importation and clearing of goods and shall ensure compliance with standards and procedures. S/he shall also be responsible for coordinating procurement activities in a defined business sector.

Skills, Qualification and Experience Required.

- i) Must hold a minimum of B. Sc Pharmacy.
- ii) Must have a sound knowledge of regulatory procedures.
- iii) Should have not less than three years post-qualification experience in pharmaceutical management especially in regulatory affairs.
- iv) Two years experience in pharmaceutical manufacturing is necessary.
- v) Must have good knowledge of Microsoft Office

5. FIELD SALES MANAGER (EAST)

Reporting to the Head, Sales & Marketing.
The ideal person shall control, coordinate and stimulate the field sales operations in accordance with sales policies and programmes and shall grow the company's business by giving commitment to monthly, quarterly and annual sales targets in his/her defined area.

Skills, Qualification and Experience Required

- i) A good degree in Pharmacy with three years experience. First Degree in Biological Sciences with Five years experience in Sales and Marketing of Pharmaceuticals could be considered.
- ii) Excellent communication and inter-personal skills required.
- iii) Possession of an MBA (preferably in Marketing) will be an added advantage.
- iv) Must have good knowledge of Microsoft Office.

6. QUALITY CONTROL MANAGER

Reporting to the Head of Operation.
The ideal person shall be involved in managing the company's quality control laboratory and also ensure that all products supplied to the company meet all quality standards.

Skill, Qualification and Experience Required.

- i) A good first degree in Pharmacy/Chemistry and an M.Sc in Pharmaceutical Chemistry/Chemistry.
- ii) At least three years quality control experience or laboratory management in a pharmaceutical environment.
- iii) Should have sound knowledge of relevant regulatory requirements and current standards of Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP)
- iv) High energy drive and ability to work extra hours.
- v) Good interpersonal relationship and computer skills.
- vi) Membership of relevant professional bodies.

7. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Reporting to the Head, Sales & Marketing.
The ideal person shall develop and implement annual and strategic business plans in a specified area of our pharmaceutical business to achieve agreed objective. He shall also be responsible for driving our new product development activities.

Skills, Qualification and Experience Required.

- i) A good degree in Pharmacy
- ii) Possession of an MBA (Preferably in Marketing) will be an added advantage.
- iii) Minimum of 3 years experience in pharmaceutical sales/marketing.
- iv) Should have excellent planning, co-ordinating and decision making skills.
- v) Good analytical ability.
- vi) Good communication and presentation skills.
- vii) Proficient in the use of Microsoft office

8. PROCUREMENT OFFICER

Reporting to the Head of Operations
The person in this position shall be responsible for coordinating all procurement activities and making excellent relationship with external parties to ensure timely supply of relevant products and services to the company.

Skills, Qualification And Experience Required.

- i) A good first Degree in Pharmacy, Business Administration, Economics, purchasing and supply or any other Social Science.
- ii) Excellent negotiation skill
- iii) Excellent analytical and forecasting skills
- iv) Proficient in Microsoft office, especially in excel.
- v) At least two years experience in similar procedure

9. MEDICAL SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Reporting to the relevant Field Sales Manager.
The ideal person shall be responsible for promoting selling and redistributing the company's pharmaceutical products and consumables to our member hospitals including other selected outlets and institutions.

Skills, Qualification And Experience Required.

- 1) Must hold a minimum of B. Pharm.
- 2) Honesty and maturity in character very essential
- 3) Excellent inter-personal & communication skills.

10. PROJECT OFFICERS

Reporting to the Head, Customer Service.
The ideal candidate shall manage the implementation of various third party contracts under his or her control. She/he shall also be responsible for supervising logistics and distribution activity in the relevant project and shall where necessary interface with third party clients.

Skills, Qualification And Experience Required

- i) A good Degree or its equivalent in Pharmaceutical Sciences.
- ii) Should have sound knowledge of logistics/distribution processes especially in Pharmaceuticals.
- iii) Must have good knowledge of Microsoft office.
- iv) Should have not less than three years post qualification experience in a related field from a functional logistics and distribution environment.
- v) Excellent communication and inter-personal skill.
- vi) Must be flexible, ready to work with others and under pressure.

11. DRIVER TO THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

The ideal person, who will be assigned to manage the Managing Directors' official car, should be well exposed to the country's road terrain with the ability to move at little or no notice.

Skills, Qualification and Experience Required.

- i) Minimum of school certificate.
- ii) Must have high integrity and passion for work.
- iii) Must have inter-personal/communication skills.
- iv) Not more than 35 years.
- v) Must have driven a top executive of a highly rated organization for at least five years.

All applications should be submitted not later than two weeks after this publication and directed to:

The HR/Admin. Manager.
CHAN Pharmaceuticals Ltd/Gte.
Little Rayfield Road, P. O.Box 6944, Jos Plateau State.
Chanpharm.careers@gmail.com

or
The Customer Service Officer.
CHAN Pharmaceuticals
Ibadan Depot. 241 Obafemi Awolowo way,
Molete Ibadan.



...Your Preferred Partner In Healthcare

KANO TRUST

NGO vows to battle unemployment

An international non-governmental organisation, Opportunities, Industrialisation Centres (OICI), has raised alarm on the rising rate of unemployment among youth, even as it has vowed to address the situation. The country director of OICI, Jacqueline Hardware Glin, disclosed this when members of the centre paid a courtesy visit to the Kano State Commissioner of Information, Dr. Tijjani Muhammad Naniya.

Jacqueline Glin observed that unemployment is one of the principal factors that undermine the socio-economic growth of any nation, pointing out that OICI is out to checkmate that ugly trend.

According to her, government and other stakeholders should join forces with the centre to create employment opportunities for youth and

women, to reduce crimes and poverty in the society.

The OICI boss told the commissioner that the goal of the centre is to provide skill acquisition and vocational training for the unemployed so that they would be self-reliance.

She said the beneficiaries

of the programme are being trained on various trades like carpentry, soap making, agricultural development, hair care, tailoring and weaving among others.

Responding, the commissioner assured OICI that government would provide conducive atmosphere for the

hitch-free and successful implementation of its initiatives.

Dr. Naniya said the crusade for total elimination of unemployment is one of the top priorities of the present administration.

He said Governor Ibrahim Shekarau, had last year launched poverty eradication

strategy tagged "Youth Empowerment Programme" under the office of his special adviser on youth development.

Under the programme according to the commissioner no fewer than 2000 unemployed youth have so far received extensive vocational

training.

Dr. Naniya added that each beneficiary received working facilities and N20,000.00 cash to start their various businesses.

He however, solicited the support of private firms, saying government alone can not shoulder such responsibility.

182 embrace Islam in Takai

No fewer than 182 people have embraced Islam in Takai local government, the council chairman, Alhaji Inuwa Dambazau, has said.

Briefing newsmen on the activities of the council, Alhaji Dambazau noted that the affected people embraced Islam following a repeated and extensive preaching by the local government and Kano State Islamic Propagation Committee.

He added that this was a clear signal that the inauguration of the committees has started yielding fruitful result.

According to him, the image of Islam and Muslims would no doubt be revamped following the development, vowing to unveil additional strategies that would woo other non-Muslims into accepting the religion.

He gave assurance that the council would do everything possible to assist the new converts so that they would feel a sense of belonging.

While charging them to be dedicated and hardworking in seeking the knowledge of Islam so as to worship the almighty God based on the laid down criteria, Alhaji Dambazau charged the entire Muslims to embrace the new converts with open minds instead of discriminating them.



A cross section of 2005 Kano pilgrims during a seminar held at School for Arabic Studies (SAS) Kano...recently.

C'ttee orders NYSC to move to permanent site

The Kano State zonal office of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has been directed to relocate to its permanent orientation camp at Koraye local government area of the state, the chairman of the sub-committee on the relocation of NYSC Orientation Camp, Alhaji Yahaya Alabura, gave the order.

Alhaji Alabura, who spoke while on a courtesy visit to the state's NYSC governing board chairman, Dr. Tijjani Muhammad Naniya, observed that continued stay of NYSC Orientation Camp at the premises of Ungogo Technical College is affecting the students.

He said since adequate facilities are provided at the permanent camp, NYSC has

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Correspondent, (Kano)

no reason of not relocating.

The relocation sub-committee chairman pointed out that massive examination failure of students of the college was as a result of inadequate classrooms.

This, according to Alhaji Alabura, could not be unconnected with the fact that some classrooms were converted for use by corps members.

He, however, argued that the one month ultimatum given the school to conclude its session before the commencement of the next orientation exercise is inadequate, saying all hands should be on deck to ensure that NYSC move to its permanent orientation camp before the next exercise.

In his remarks, the NYSC Governing Board Chairman, who doubles as the Commissioner of Information, Dr. Tijjani Naniya, gave assur-

ance that government would do all it could for the speedy relocation of NYSC orientation camp to the permanent site.

The commissioner, who expressed delight for the visit, noted that government would not support any act that would cripple its educational development initiatives.

KNSG to execute N40m project in each constituency

The Kano State government is to execute 40 million naira project in each constituency in the state, Commissioner of Budget and Economic Planning, Alhaji Nour Sani Hanga, has said.

Speaking at a budget briefing yesterday, Hanga explained that each constituency would choose the type of project it want and state government would execute it accordingly.

Alhaji Sani Hanga said

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent, Kano

also that the state Budget Monitoring Bureau will constantly monitor all the executing projects to ensure that they were adequately executed.

The commissioner said further that the ministry will ensure adequate implementation of the 2006 budget for the betterment of all.

He pointed out that due to the FG resolve to use most

of the oil revenue generation on projects execution, it has planned on how to manage the little revenue it generated.

The commissioner also said that Kano being the Shari'ah implementation state will ensure adequate utilisation of the public funds throughout the year 2006.

He also disclosed that presently the state is operating dual budgeting system, but with time it will adopt the single budgeting system as it was the case in other states.

EKO TRUST

Collapsed Buildings: Lagos Assembly seeks FG's help

The Lagos State House of Assembly has called on the federal and Lagos State government to save Lagosians from property owners who contravene building codes. The call came on the heels of the collapsed building at Amukoko area of the state last Friday in which five lives were lost.

Moving the motion on the floor of the House under matters of urgent public importance, the legislator representing Ajeromi Ifelodun constituency, who is also the chairman, House Committee on Education, Mr. Kolawole Taiwo, noted that the development was sad because officials of the Ministry of Urban and Physical Planning had foreseen it. According to him, the attention of the federal government should be drawn to Ajegunle where several tribes are represented, adding that it is also a place with

Stories by Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent (Lagos)

an avalanche of sub standard buildings. Taiwo said, "People should come to our aid, government's assistance is also needed, lives are unsafe and wicked property owners who steal from the poor should be brought to book." In his remarks another legislator, Mr. Lateef Shitta-Bey, noted that there was a great proliferation of the building sector which had led to construction of grotesque buildings that do not stand the test of time. "What is happening is a recipe for disaster, everybody has become a building contractor, this has a chaotic implication, the ineptitude of housing officials is also responsible for the proliferation, and property owners just don't care. They are after what they can get," Shitta-bey stressed. He stated that close moni-

toring of the building sector could be a solution to the problem, adding that planning regulations also ought to be reappraised. He said, "We should enforce adherence to quality

control, architectural designs must be followed, we are talking about human lives here, therefore building contractors must have the right qualifications." A member of the Assembly,

Mr. Abdulateef AbdulRasaq, said contravention of building plans was suicidal. He called on the state government to procure necessary equipment to combat disasters.

According to him, the owner of the house should be arrested and prosecuted in order to serve as a deterrent to others. The House also commended Julius Berger for helping out with rescue efforts.

NUP insists on strike

In spite of the plea by the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, the rank and file of the Nigeria Police Force have insisted to embark on their planned strike action.

The National Union of Policemen (NUP), the umbrella body of the junior police officers, while making this known in a statement in Lagos said an ultimatum for the commencement of the industrial action would be issued in due course.

NUP said that nationwide mobilisation is on course, adding that the high command of the force would be compelled to comply with its demand.

In a communiqué issued at the end of its meeting held weekend in Asaba, Delta State, signed by its spokesman, Sergeant Nelson Boro, NUP demanded among other things that the monetisation policy enjoyed by civil servants should be extended to members of the police.

Further, it asked that the much publicised minimum wage introduced by President Olusegun Obasanjo be implemented among the policemen without delay.

"The remaining police graduates among the rank file be promoted either to the

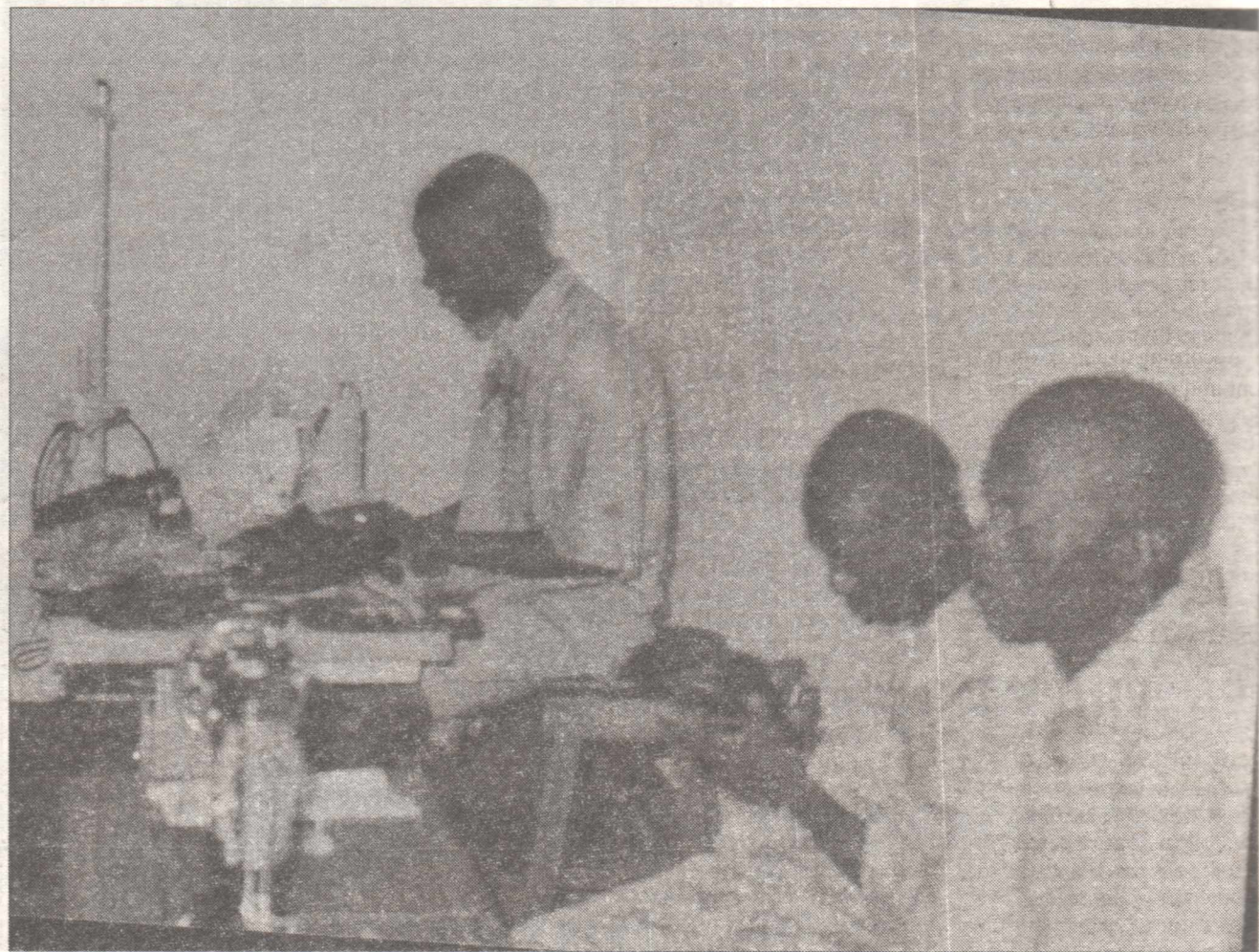
officer cadre or to Inspectors of police, that officers and men transferred to Force C.I.D in May 2005 be paid there 28 days hotel allowance in lieu of accommodation without ranks discrimination immediately".

Noting that the rank and file embarked on historic strike action in year 2002 due to the insensitivity of police management authority to their plights, NUP emphasized that the police leadership had since not formed a forum to gauge the pulse, feelings, aspirations and frustrations of members of junior officers.

Stressing that the bridge of understanding between police officers and junior ranks has continued to widen, NUP vowed that no threat from any quarter can stop it from embarking on the planned strike.

While throwing its weight in support of the IGP anti-corruption crusade to sanitise the police, NUP noted that a successful war against corruption remains a mirage if the welfare of the men remains neglected.

"Egunje, an euphemism for bribery has become a disease which must be eradicated totally if the fight against corruption is to be actualised.



Some former 'Area boys' being trained at the Rehabilitation and Skill Acquisition Centre, Tekunle, Ita-Oko...recently

Pix Oladipupo Odunewu

Ministry prioritises completion of road projects

The completion of all on-going road projects covering a total length of about 80km; upgrading of 15 major roads in the Lagos Island business district into high street standards, and the completion of newly awarded roads covering a total length of 30km are among priority projects for the Lagos State Ministry of Works and Infrastructure this year.

The commissioner, Engr. Rauf Aregbesola, who disclosed this, also listed the rehabilitation of recurrent and routine maintenance of existing roads, and the rehabilitation of 15km road by December 2007 under the Public Infrastructure Improvement Partnership (PIIP) programme as some of the other major focus for the year.

He reiterated the state government's commitment to galvanise all efforts towards ensuring the development of motorable roads, improvement of road networks in the state as well as in-

creasing the road capacity to ease traffic congestion.

According to the commissioner, strategies for implementing the objectives will include direct labour and contract awards from budgetary provisions, loan facility provided by the World Bank for LAMATA, management of high streets by private agencies, maintenance of roads by zonal agency contractors, private sector participation under the BOOT arrangement and the Public-Private sector collaboration under the PIIP.

He noted that the completion of on-going projects is inclusive of road projects that were awarded since 1999 and have reached their various stages of completion, while new roads and bridges to be constructed this year include the flyover bridge from Itire-Okota road, expansion of Ago Okota/2nd Bridge, Amuwo Odofin; Isheri Oshun/Ijegan/Jakande Estate Road via Okota Bridge and the expansion of Badagry Expressway

as well as the dedicated bus lane for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Engr. Aregbesola opined that the dirty habits of the people blocking the drain with refuse which hinders the free flow of water have further aggravated the easy disintegration of roads, adding that concrete efforts are required through the routine and recurrent rehabilitation programme in order to keep the already tarred road motorable.

According to the commissioner, the operational modalities of the Private Infrastructure Improvement Partnership (PIIP) programme will be reviewed in order to enhance its improvement, while stressing that the various PSP road programme will be reinvigorated.

He noted that the Bill for a law to establish a laboratory for regular Test of Building and Civil Engineering Construction Materials in Lagos State is currently receiving due attention at the

State House of Assembly, hoping that when it becomes operational, it would reduce the ugly incidence of collapse buildings, and also streamline civil engineering activities in the State.

The commissioner added that infrastructure will also be provided at some Lagos State Housing Estates, including Ikeja, Shasha, Alagba and the Lekki Millennium Housing Schemes in order to encourage allottees to take possession of their houses and to make the estate liveable.

Engr. Aregbesola explained that despite the tight fiscal regime which the ministry operates and the increasing responsibilities of government which both combined to make previous years quite challenging, it is gratifying and soul lifting to know that the modest achievements recorded in the past year in the area of improvement to our road infrastructure has impacted positively on a greater percentage of the citizenry especially the commuters.

Inside Politics

3rd Term: The hawks and their agenda

Chief Olusegun Mathew Aremu Okikiolakan Obasanjo, a retired General of the Nigerian Army and former Head of State, happened on the nation's political scene in 1998 when he was drafted into politics, specifically to contest the presidential election, as he had been anointed by the powers-that-be to succeed the then Head of State, General Abdulsalami Alhaji Abubakar. Coming from a military background, Obasanjo did not make any pretension to being a politician. He was crude in the art of politics. But he managed to forge ahead, causing tensions along the way.

When General Abubakar and former Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida packaged him to emerge as President, it was, as learned, designed to achieve a dual purpose: to assuage the feeling of loss and pain by the Southwest zone, which son, Chief M.K.O. Abiola had died in the custody of the federal government in which he was held by the regime of the late General Sani Abacha, for daring to declare himself the duly-elected winner of the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential election at Epetedo in Lagos; and, two, to promote or further the military hegemony in national governance, perhaps with the prospects of a member of the military clique taking over from Obasanjo.

Talking about the tensions that Obasanjo caused along the way on account of his political naivety, consider these two: his announcement of N130 million donation to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which unsettled the party's leadership guard some of whom were interested in the party's presidential ticket as well as the polity, which got a scaring prospect of money influence in the emergent politics, although the furore generated made it impossible for him to redeem the pledge; then, the decision to choose Alhaji Abubakar Atiku, the Turaki Adamawa, as his running mate for the 1999 presidential election. Besides, these two instances, he has, since assuming power, been causing tensions in every nook and cranny of the polity.

Obasanjo's choice of Atiku, who had already emerged as Governor-elect of Adamawa State, rattled the clan of power brokers in the North who had calculated that having facilitated the emergence of Obasanjo, he would be there to do their bidding. But alas! This Baba Iyabo, as Obasanjo is now fondly called, is different from the Head of State of 1976-79. He has become his own man; he has defined his own course of action even if considered not to be

By Sufuyan Ojeifo,
(Special Correspondent)

politically correct; it was his will to have Atiku as his running mate, the man with whom he could work; the man in whom he was, but no longer well pleased. Things have now completely fallen apart.

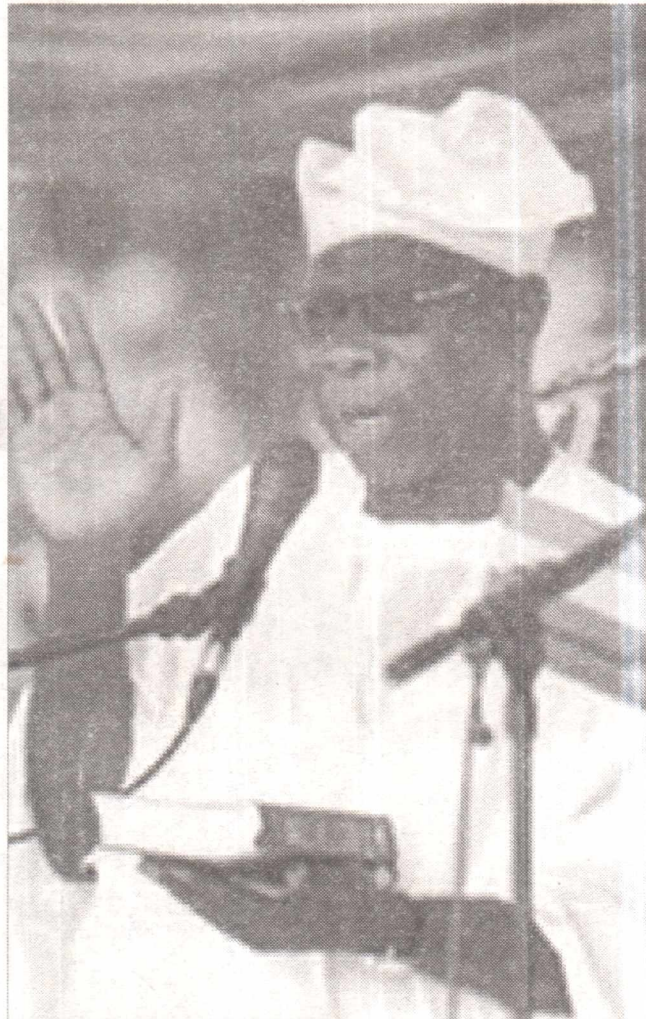
By that singular decision of picking Atiku, prominent northern politicians such as Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi and Professor Jubril Aminu, who had either positioned themselves or had been positioned by powerful and strategic interests, got a shocker of their lives as their political calculations were shattered. The tension created by this was doused by the Emirs who were reached to talk with their people to accept Atiku's choice. But Obasanjo's action was appreciated by watchers of the development within the context of his own possible understanding of extended loyalty, which he expected to be total, military-like, which he believed he could get from Atiku.

He had, perhaps, moved to pick Atiku in honour of the loyalty of his friend and second in command when he was Head of State, the late General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, an intense and passionate power player in national governance, as well as a strategist and tactician in party politics, who was his (Atiku's) political godfather. As the scion of the Yar'Adua political dynasty, Atiku, who mobilized the Yar'Adua machine in the field for Obasanjo's victory at the polls, was considered capable of sustaining the loyalty of the Yar'Adua political family. And he did that creditably. Which was why Obasanjo in the first term (from 1999-2003) handed over to him control of the party machinery. It was also learned that, to the displeasure of some hawks in government, he was given the leeway to make significant input into the composition of the Federal cabinet and appointment into the Board of parastatal corporations, besides his constitutional role as Chairman of the National Council on Privatisation (NCP).

Perhaps, Atiku's political sin, in the estimation of the hawks in the Presidency and the party, would be that he deployed the power and influence of his office and the strategic responsibilities given to him by Obasanjo to his own political advantage. For instance, those who had their eyes on the presidency and even Atiku's position as Vice President stopped at nothing, in their hawkish manner, to put a wedge in the smooth flowing political rapprochement that existed between him and Obasanjo. His ambition, shrouded in the

garb of his quiet mien, was said to have cast him in the mould of a disloyal Vice President. Thus, provoked internal disquiet within the V.P.'s political camp, particularly the disorientation

Obasanjo. Today, perhaps to the joy of the hawks, the soul of the party has been wrested from the Vice President. He is treading and engaging in a balancing act on a very tight rope that could snap at



President Olusegun Obasanjo

within the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM), Yar'Adua's group inherited by Atiku, coalesced with external manoeuvres in a bid to undermine his position and political future beyond 2003. *Inside Politics* learned that a deliberate plot to scuttle Atiku's second term as Vice President was perfected by the forces within and outside the Presidency and the party.

It was also learned that they had conspired to collapse his political future abruptly by sowing the seed of hatred in the heart of the President. The plot had worked out fine as a Governor of one of the Northeast States had, as gathered then, been penciled down to replace Atiku as Obasanjo's running mate for the 2003 presidential elections. It took the deployment of political brinkmanship to salvage the situation and put Atiku back on track. The post-2003 presidential primaries and election developments in the Presidency and the PDP have continued to be appreciated against the backdrop of the dirty politics and pernicious manoeuvres that characterized the nomination of the Obasanjo/Atiku presidential ticket.

The manoeuvres had sharply polarized the Presidency into two camps—the Obasanjo and the Atiku camps. But, as expected, the contestation for supremacy within the party has now produced a winner in

further exertion of pressure. *Inside Politics* gathered that Atiku's camp is in a quandary over how to prosecute the 2007 presidential battle, particularly against the backdrop of a burgeoning monster that will stop at nothing to savage the camp and its leader. The vehicle of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the sleaze watchdog, is in full throttle to expose dirty deals by public officials who want to aspire for the presidency (or even the governorship or other offices).

Having succeeded in assisting the President to "silence" his Vice President, so it seems, the hawks in and out of government are now set on a two-pronged approach to the 2007 presidency: one, they are nudging the President and the president is enjoying being nudged on to "destroy" every potential aspirant to the highest office in the land. Former Military Administrator of Lagos State, Brigadier General Buba Marwa has now been effectively silenced. Incumbent Governors who were reportedly interested in the presidency have jumped down from the high horse, leaving the field open in the north to Atiku, whose hope lies in God and not in the instrumentality of State power; former Head of State and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) presidential candidate in 2003, General

Muhammadu Buhari, who has become more of a cult-hero to the masses of the north; and former military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, who is believed to be strategizing to return to Aso Rock in 2007. Babangida, also known as IBB, is said to be plotting his route back to Aso Rock Presidential Villa. As a passionate and influential player in the nation's power game, there are feelers that he is quietly syndicating with the powers-that-be to ensure smooth and successful handover of power in 2007.

In the south, Abia State Governor, Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu is the only one that has dared Obasanjo by forcefully coming out to declare for the 2007 presidency. Other aspirants, if there are, seem to be pandering to the whims and caprices of Obasanjo's presidency. Not even the growing agitations for the presidency to remain in the south in 2007 have opened a vista for many to launch out. *Inside Politics* gathered that the region is largely acting out Obasanjo's script, lending itself for use by the Presidency in furtherance of dishonourable tactics to hold unto the presidency that was honourably negotiated away by northern political elite and power brokers and carefully guided to him (Obasanjo) in 1999. The hawks, which are said to be encouraged by Obasanjo's dissimulation on the issue of the 2007 presidency, would stop at nothing to savage anybody from the south who shows interest in the presidency without Obasanjo's "clearance". This is why Kalu's business interests have become targets of the Federal Government's attack. Feelers are that the young Abia State Governor with massive national and international connections is determined to give the 2007 presidency his all.

The scenario that is likely to emerge either ways—North and South—depending on the workability or otherwise of the Presidency's agenda will see participants in the 2007 presidential race restricted to a few courageous individuals, particularly those whose hands have not been caught in the cookie jar of crime. The process of intimidation by the government and its hawks would have been completed. The identities of those who would remain in the race, from *Inside Politics* calculations might not be more than three very serious contenders in the PDP—perhaps Babangida and Atiku from the north, that is if a dark horse from the north that is acceptable to the power brokers is not propped up as a compromise candidate. The ANPP could also produce a strong candidate in Buhari if the Presidency and its hawks do

not infiltrate the party to frustrate his emergence at the presidential nomination primaries, using State Governors of the party and the National Executive Committee (NEC) to stop the future Head of State.

In the South, if the plot to retain the presidency there is successful, the Presidency's men would not be the only ones to jangle for it as Kalu is there. There are indications that Akwa Ibom State Governor, Obong Victor Attah is nursing a presidential ambition. Attah has embarked on covert consultations with some northern leaders on his presidential ambition. They will slug it out with Obasanjo's men—River State Governor, Peter Odili and his counterpart in Emu State, Chimaroke Nnamani. This likely political scenario has accentuated the fear that the 2007 presidency, the big battle for the soul of Nigeria, could make or mar Nigeria. If Nigeria is marred, as contended by analysts, the blame should be laid at the door steps of Obasanjo and his hawks who, in the interest of selfish agenda, have taken a trajectory of conflict in the determination of what should have been a simple reciprocity on the issue of power rotation between the north and the south as agreed to in a gentlemanly fashion in 1998.

The fear indeed is the possibility of cataclysmic reactions to the planned actualization of the selfish political agenda, whether patent or hidden, or whatever it is, that Obasanjo and the hawks in and out of the presidency might want to ram down the throats of Nigerians. After all, a notice has been served by Obasanjo's men in the south that they would pull out of the Nigerian federation if they did not retain the presidency in 2007. This is the crux of the matter that is ancillary to selfish political agenda of Obasanjo and his hawks. If, for instance, they boycott the elections as they have threatened and they pull out, then it means there is anarchy in the land. Will it be wise for the President to hand over under such a circumstance? That is the fear. Indications are that the President would latch on to that, using the relevant provisions of the constitution, to extend his stay in office by six months in the first instance; and, perhaps for another six months, if the chaos does not abate. This is a possibility. But for now, the presidential aspirants are endangered. If the Presidency and its hawks succeed in savaging all the aspirants, for instance, will they succeed in suppressing the voices of Nigerians and savaging them in 2007? Time will tell.

Inside Politics

2007: Storm in Borno as Kachallah, Kumalia, others join PDP

A political storm of wide ranging implications seems set to sweep across Borno's political landscape soon, as former Governor Mala Kachallah of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and House of Representatives member, Mohammed Umara Kumalia (All Nigeria People's Party, Maiduguri Metropolitan) along with several other politicians conclude arrangements to move over to the largest opposition party in the State, the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Competent sources told Daily Trust in Maiduguri yesterday, that Kachallah's and Kumalia's decision to leave their respective parties for the PDP follows several high level meetings in Abuja and Maiduguri with key PDP figures, including the PDP National Chairman Chief Ahmadu Ali where the modalities for receiving the senior Borno politicians were worked out.

Others set to decamp to the PDP along with Kachallah and Kumalia, sources also told *Daily Trust*, include two Alliance for Democracy House of Representatives members from the State, namely Isiaku Joshua Shara and Modu Alhaji Musa as well as nearly ten Borno House of Assembly members from the AD and ANPP. Among the state law makers set to decamp to the PDP is the former Majority Leader of the House, Alhaji Abdurrahman Abdulkarim who resigned his position last October in circumstances linked to serious disagreement with Governor Ali Modu Sherrif.

Our correspondent also confirmed that a former senatorial candidate during the 2003 elections in Borno North Senatorial Zone, Hajja Fati Ibrahim Bulama, widely known as Kakinna, who is allied to the Kumalia faction in the All Nigeria People's Party, will also decamp to the PDP.

Although a definitive date for the formal decampment of Kachallah, Kumalia and others to the PDP is yet to be fixed, the issue has already started generating a lot of political interest in Borno State, with many people seeing the decampment of these politicians as a serious

Kumalia, others join PDP

From Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor North East

challenge to Governor Ali Modu Sherrif's ambition for a second term in office in 2007. It also raises the stakes in Borno politics and clearly marks the thickening of the plot for the state's gubernatorial ticket.

Both Kachallah and Kumalia were former political allies of Governor Sherrif in the All People's Party (APP) before it metamorphosed into the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP). During the 1999 general elections, for instance, when Ali Modu Sherrif contested for Senator and won the ticket to represent Borno Central District in the Senate, he played a great role in the campaigning and political foot work that brought Alhaji Mala Kachallah as Governor. But the relationship between the two turned sour before Kachallah could finish his first term in office.

While preparations were being made for Kachallah to seek for a second term in the 2003 elections, Sherrif reportedly used his extensive contacts within the ANPP to ensure that the party called for primary election for the gubernatorial seat in Borno State, at a time that other incumbent ANPP governors were given automatic tickets. This development clearly rattled Governor Kachallah, who then made the landmark but costly political decision to decamp to the Alliance for Democracy (AD). By the time that Kachallah moved to the AD with several of his supporters, Sherrif had got the opportunity to contest for governor under the ANPP and eventually won the election.

The 2003 gubernatorial election in Borno State was itself a bitter and keen contest between Sherrif, who represents the ANPP, Kachallah who represented the AD and Kashim Ibrahim Imam, who was flag bearer of the PDP. Imam, who polled second to Sherrif, later challenged the election in the courts; a legal tango which lasted nearly one year before Sherrif was con-

firmed Governor by the elections appeal tribunal in Jos.

On his part, Kumalia, who represents Maiduguri Metropolitan Constituency in the House of Represen-

2003 elections. However, political disagreements separated them, adding to the tinderbox that was to explode within the ANPP.

All these politicians now join Kashim Imam, who had

duced Imam as the winner. Their disagreement and protest led the National Headquarters of the PDP to organize a second primary election under the supervision of the then National Vice Chairman (North West) of the party, Alhaji Iro Dan Musa.

The second primaries also produced Kashim Imam as winner, but Maina Ma'aji Lawan, Gambo Lawan and Mohammed Wakil surprisingly refused to participate in it, leaving Babagana Bafurra and Imam to slug it out.

The antagonism that followed the divisive primaries within the PDP might have been one of the reasons that cost the party the 2003 elections, as politicians opposed to one another trade allegations of anti-party activities.

In addition to costing the PDP the gubernatorial seat, the schism also cost the party in Borno State the ministerial slot given to it by President Obasanjo when he was forming his cabinet for the second term. There was bitter disagreement among the politicians antagonistic to one another as to who should be presented to represent Borno in the cabinet. When no single person could be agreed upon, President Obasanjo reportedly sought the advice of former senior Borno politician, Dr Shettima Ali Monguno, who suggested the name of female educationist, Hajja Bintu Ibrahim Musa, to whom the President gave the post of Minister of State for Education.

Competent sources told *Daily Trust* that despite attempts at reconciliation, these politicians were clearly yet to reconcile fully. Many of them were not visible in party activities in the state leading to the election of a new set of party executives led by former House of Assembly member, Alhaji Kolo Bukar. There have been insinuations that Imam had 'hijacked' the party and 'installed' his 'cronies' to its leadership but this allegation seems difficult to substantiate considering Imam's consistency and doggedness to remain

with the party at the grassroots in the post election period and fund all its activities.

There is no doubt that the decampment to the PDP of Kachallah, Kumalia and other senior politicians along with their supporters in Borno State would create another power bloc whose presence would also wield its own degree of influence within the party.

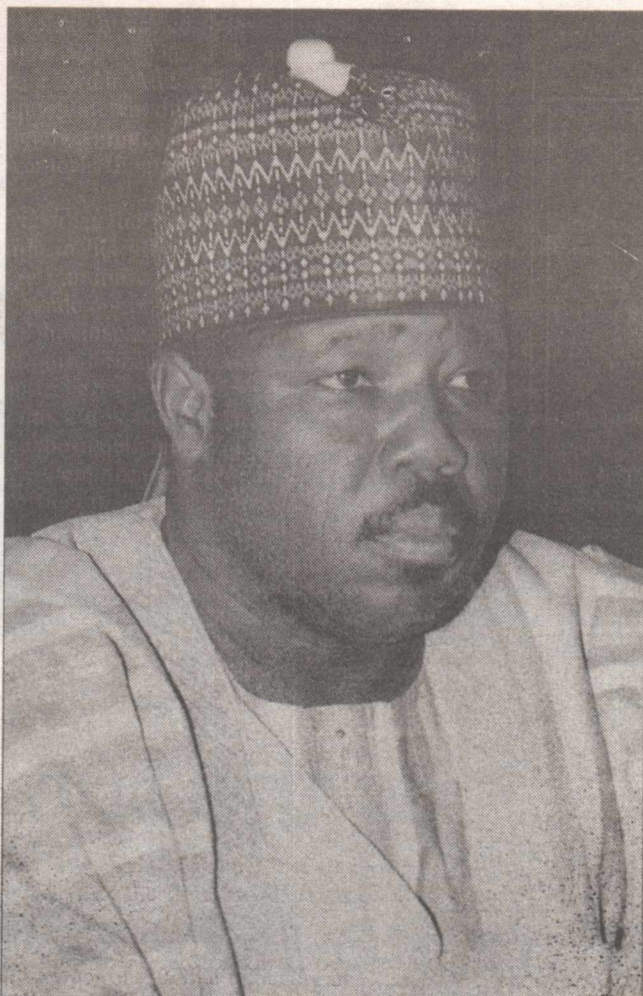
Again, how the issues at stake are streamlined and agreed upon remain to be seen, but competent sources told our correspondent that in the discussions leading up to Kachallah's and Kumalia's decision to join the party, agreements have been reached that both old and new members of the party are 'stakeholders' and 'partners' who will 'work together' for the progress of Borno State.

Daily Trust investigations show that there are fears within political circles in Borno State that Governor Sherrif might seek to exploit the differences within the PDP not to allow the new alliance to work. The Governor had been successful on one occasion in the past, when he succeeded in wooing one time gubernatorial aspirant of the PDP in the 1999 elections, Ambassador Baba Ahmed Jidda to his own party, the ANPP.

Given their knowledge of the Borno's political history, however, it is unlikely that members of the new PDP alliance would give such a window of opportunity for their ranks to be split.

As Governor Sherrif continues to call the shots in his own ANPP, it also remains to be seen what impact the movements out of his party would have. Sources told *Daily Trust* that even as things stand, it is difficult to predict if the ANPP would remain one cohesive political unit as it faces the 2007 elections.

On the whole, the movement of former Governor Kachallah, Kumalia and others to the PDP in Borno State can be regarded as a watershed political event which, for better or worse, would impact seriously in the politics of the next general elections in the state in 2007.



Governor Ali Modu Sherrif

tatives and was member of the ANPP National Board of Trustees, was moving on well with the Borno State Governor under the umbrella of the ANPP until recently. Although details of the factors that led to the frosty relationship between Kumalia and Sherrif are still hazy, the two were literally at daggers drawn; splitting the ANPP into camps with virtually two separate party structures and following.

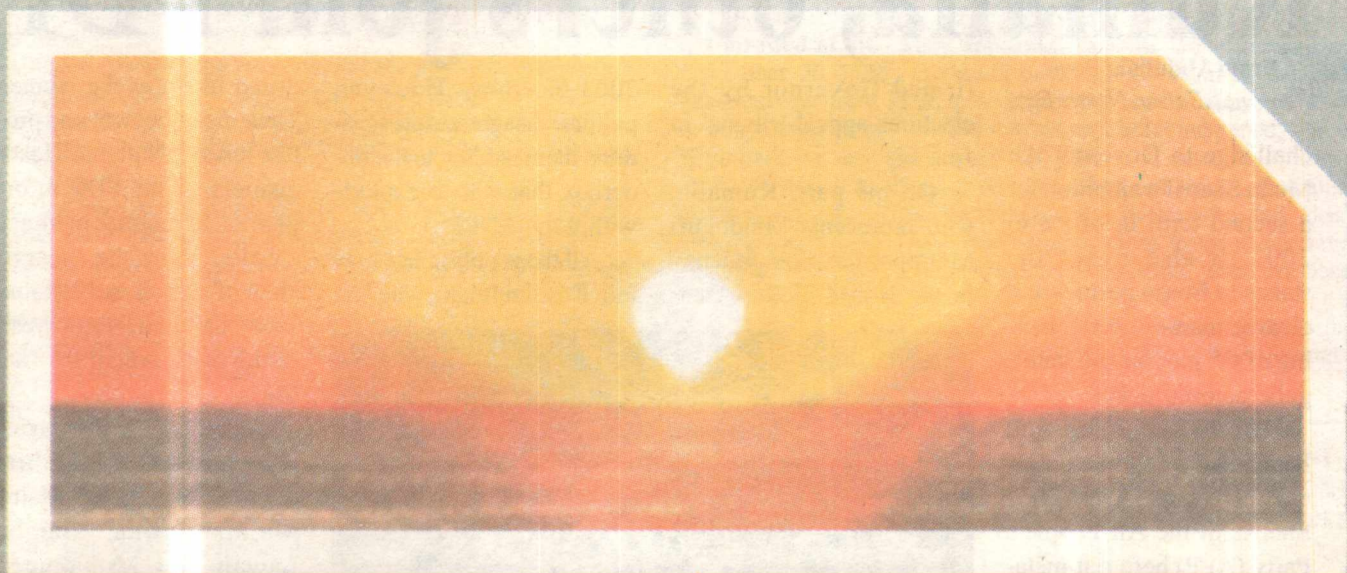
On several occasions, supporters of the Borno State Governor and Mohammed Umara Kumalia have clashed in Maiduguri, the state capital, the latest such clashes being in December, 2005.

Kumalia, was joined in his faction within the ANPP by Hajja Fati Ibrahim Bulama and former Maiduguri Metropolitan (MMC) Chairman, Alhaji Kaka Bolori. Both Bulama and Bolori were also Sherrif's political allies, and had helped in the campaigning that brought him to power as Governor in the

earlier engaged Governor Sherrif in a year-long legal battle following the 2003 elections.

It is not clear how the new political union in the PDP might work out. There are extant issues that must be decided, and quickly, as to who would now be the PDP's flag bearer in the forthcoming 2007 elections and how the new decampers will fit in within the larger structures of the party in Borno State.

Instructively, the PDP itself has never been one united house since 2003, when it fielded Imam as its flag bearer. The party's problems came to the surface when four senior PDP politicians, namely Maina Ma'aji Lawan, Gambo Lawan, Babagana Bafurra and Mohammed Wakil contested the gubernatorial primaries with Imam. A bitter row followed the primary election, when three out of the four that contested against Imam disagreed with the result which pro-



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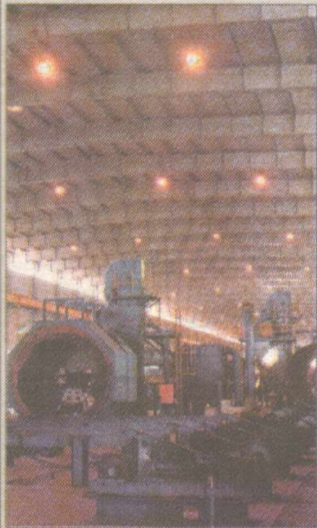


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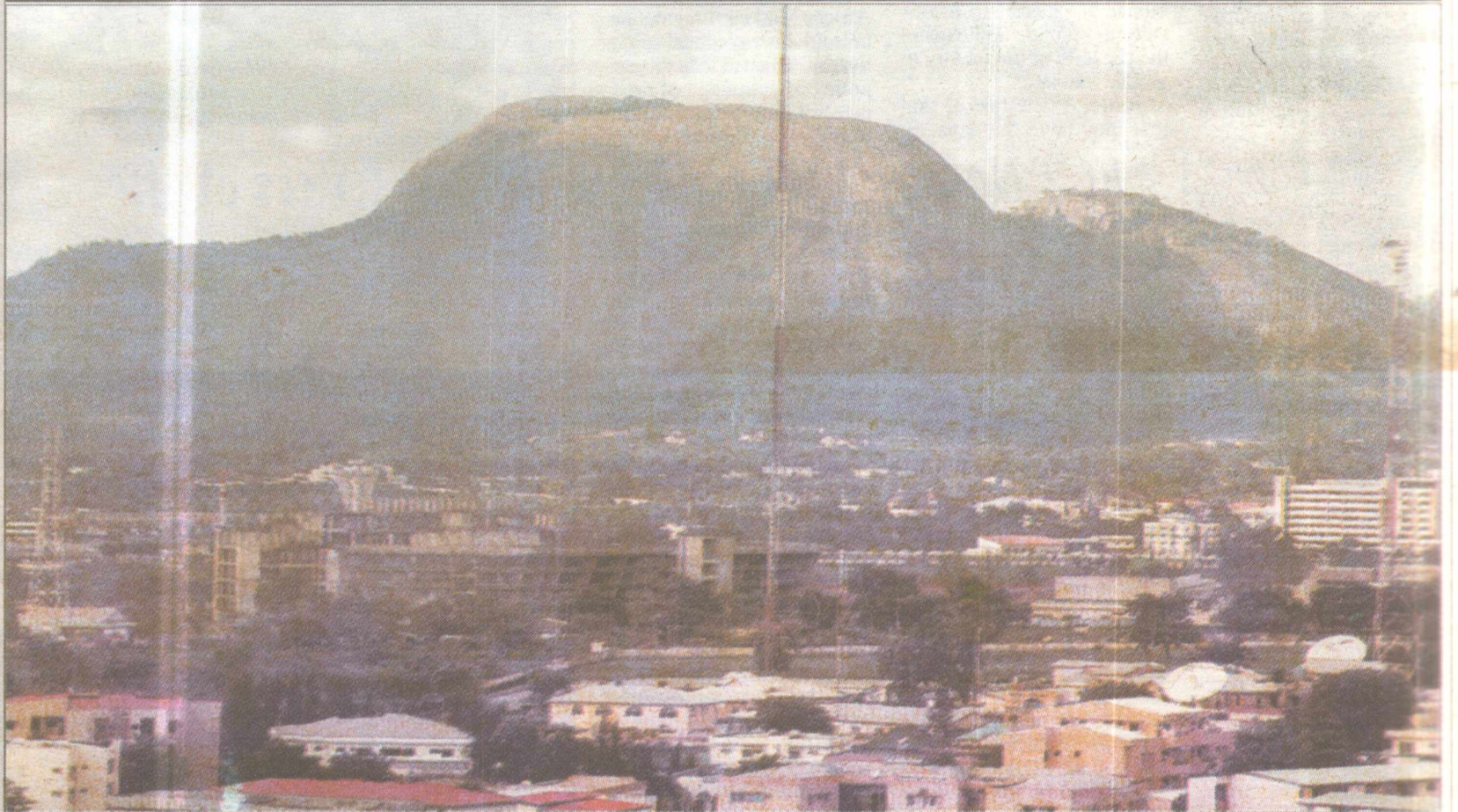
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ABUJA LANDMARK



ASO ROCK: At the background is the Aso Rock, Abuja. By far the largest rock in the immediate vicinity of the FCT, the Aso Rock towers over the seat of power in Nigeria, the Asokoro Presidential Villa, and also provides a dramatic background for the Three Arms Zone. Until it was displaced by development, Asokoro village existed at the foot of the rock, which served as refuge and a source of strength for the villages. Legend has it that a pond existed below the rock from which you were not allowed to draw water more than you can drink on the spot. Water fetched from this pond could not be spilled, thrown or taken away. It is said that the rock houses pockets of caves which only the then inhabitants can trace or enter

Rent hike increases hardship for Abuja tenants

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin,
Asst. Editor, Abuja Property

Recently, there was a threat by Landlords in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to implement their long-time hatched plan to increase rents on their property. To the landlords, it does not matter to them who bears the brunt of their action, what is of most important to them is to urgently break even on their investment in property development.

Daily Trust exclusively reported the intention of Abuja Landlords to increase rents on their property and since then, there have been avalanche of pleas by well-meaning Nigerians, including experts on property management/agents on landlords to soft-pedal on their decision, in view of the untold hardship it would bring on tenants if they increase rent on the already limited houses in the capital city.

An Abuja based property manager and estate agents, Mr. Obafemi Peter Ilori while commenting on the issue queried the intended move as, according to him, landlords have no reason to increase rent. He is not alone in this view as many estate agents spoken to on the issue wondered why landlords decided to bring another new hardship on Abuja tenants.

What is common among the landlords is their quest to make quick turn-over on their investment in property development. They are believed to be taking advantage of the high demand for houses, following demolition of illegal structures by Mal. Nasir El-Rufai's administration. It is not just enough to have an increase demand for a commodity, including houses, what matters is what Mr. Ilori considered as an effective demand. According to the property expert, effective

people looking for new apartment at the moment are victims of El-Rufai demolition, and even if they are able to pay their rents now, there is every tendency that they will not be able to renew payment the next year. This is because now that they have their properties thrown out, they are zealous and would pay to get a roof over their head for the moment.

The rent increase if actualized will no doubt increase the sufferings of most Abuja residents, especially the urban poor. It will boil down to touch the prices of food stuff and other commodities as prices of commodities will invariably increase to enable traders meet up with the current increased rent.

Experts in the property sector said landlords will only have justification to increase rents on their property if they carry out renovation works or added any value to their properties. Mr. Ilori told Abuja Property while discussing the issue that unless landlords carry out any of these two things, he or she would have no reason to start talking of increasing rent. Besides the above reasons, the expert said, sitting tenants sometimes get exemptions in the advent of increase because they are occupying the property before the repair works are being carried out. "In such cases, only new tenants bear the brunt of the increase by landlords, since they are moving into the property new", declared Mr. Ilori, an Abuja based estate manager. He said a situation where those things are not carried out on a property, rent hike will be unjustifiable.

What is however responsible for this development may not be unconnected to the high rent landlords put on their property. It is obvious that demands are high for houses in Abuja now than ever because of the prevailing circumstances, demolition of illegal settlements. This does not

development (Landlords) on how to go about rent increase since such moves should be with the consent of tenants. Agreeing to this challenge, Mr. Ilori said an estate agent who has both landlord and tenant as his clients can only play advisory role in the issue.

Like he said, "one thing I keep telling landlords is that the buildings which they think they can make quick turn-over on their investments by increasing rents remain theirs as long as they existed on earth and would be inherited by their children after their deaths. As such, there is no need for any increase that will further increase the sufferings of the people".

In view of this development, tenants are being apprehensive of the next move by landlords since their plans to increase rents are being scuttled through public opinion formed by the generality of Abuja residents. Abuja Property gathered that some tenants have started initiating new ways of getting closer to their landlords in order to be in their good books to avert quit notice, in the event that they (tenants) cannot afford to pay complete amount, if their rent is increased. Already, some landlords have directed their lawyers and estate managers to start preparing letters of increase or notice of payments to be issued to tenants, now that the year is just starting.

Meanwhile, some landlords who are bent on the increase are not happy with the way the issue of the increase is going. They had thought it will be automatic, in the sense that no body will raise eyebrow about it. If the prayers of some sections of Abuja residents are answered, estate agents and managers are experts that can and should

to averting the impending increase by landlords. Abuja landlords, many wondered did not seem to care for what any percentage of increase in rent would cause people residing in the Federal capital city.

Property experts could not fathom the reason for the increase in rents on properties when no repair work is carried out, neither had they increased value of any kind to it. "It is not that they are building new structures that one will say that the prices of building materials are high and the quest for the increase in the rent would have been justified.

What is however said to be the reason for the landlords' threat is not unconnected with the demolition of illegal settlements by the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) in its bid to restore the master plan of the capital city. Already, a good number of these illegal settlement areas have been wiped out in the demolition exercise which authorities said will be a continuous exercise until the desired goals are achieved.

Some landlords have issued quit notice to their tenants who they felt will stand in their way to scuttle their plan to increase the rent. An occupant of a boys-quarter, somewhere in Wuse II, Alh. Ibrahim Bashir told Abuja Property that his landlord refused to collect his rent of N200,000 which he pays annually, and asked him to vacate his property, simply because one of the displaced persons from Old Karimo is offering him N400,000 for the same property.

It is a high time the FCT minister makes a pronouncement on this issue to allay the fear of residents as well as to save tenants from untold hardship if the rents are eventually increased by land-

ABUJA PROPERTY NEWS

Obasanjo bans importation of steel water pipes

President Olusegun Obasanjo has ordered a ban on all imported steel water pipes in the country. He stated this at the occasion of the unveiling of SCC pipes factory certification in Abuja recently.

The President who had earlier commissioned the factory on 17 April 2003 commended SCC Nigeria limited for getting the accreditation of American Petroleum Institution (API) and International Standard Organization (ISO).

In his opening address, the chairman, SCC (Nigeria) Limited, Chief Emmanuel C. Adiele said from inception, the SCC Steel Pipe Manufacturing Factory has produced all the steel pipes and allied requirements for the Gurara conveyance pipeline project and now been upgraded to produce steel pipes of various diameters, to feed other water, oil and gas projects across Nigeria. "On your government's determination to support and sustain viable Nigerian local industry in every way possible, we have continued to generate and deploy enormous resources,

By Mustafa Abubakar, Abuja

human and material, specifically to upgrade and expand the capacity of the factory to global standards".

Chief Adiele further said that they have the capacity

to meet local demands, including those of the West African Markets. Importation, he said destroys local initiative and solicited for a focused policy of patronage of products from SCC steel pipes factory by governments at all

levels.

He added that the company's commitment to the president's vision has started to bear fruit as the American Petroleum Institutional and International Standard Organization have certified its fac-

tory and pipes in recognition of quality management systems and products, which means "our pipes have officially been acknowledged to be manufactured to international standard", he affirmed.

He therefore urged all

stakeholders both in the public and private sectors to consider urgently, the need to accord preference to the use of SCC products, in the light of the numerous beneficial advantages that will be enjoyed.

FCT Houses: FCTA releases 20,000 letters of offer to civil servants

Giving an update on the sales of Federal Government Houses, the Minister Federal Capital Territory, Mallam Nasir Ahmad El-rufai has disclosed that a total of 20,000 letters of offer have so far been issued to civil servants.

A statement by the special assistant to the minister on information strategy, made available to *Abuja property* stated that the minister who spoke through his special assistant, Economic Matters and the coordinator of the sales exercise, Dr. Abdu Mukhtar expressed this while addressing journalists recently in Abuja.

"The figure represents over 80% of the offers available for the 32,000 housing units due to be sold, already

as a confirmation that the exercise in on course, 16,000 civil servants have so far paid the 10% mandatory initial payment for their houses and the minister had gone through rigour of personally signing the 20,000 letters of offer released so far", he confirmed.

Dr. Mukhtar further disclosed that the FCTA had noticed that some public servant who had paid the initial 10% deposit for the houses offered to them have started ejecting other tenants who share the facility and warned that his government will no longer tolerate such development and that payment of such amount doesn't confer ownership on a prospective buyer and that "it is only the FCTA which has the right to

eject tenants when it is fully satisfied that the full payment for a property had been made and ownership duly transferred as drastic action will be taken against those who still persist in ejecting tenants on account of the claim of having paid the 10% deposit".

Speaking on the challenges at the initial phase of the exercise which included, participating banks not fully ready at the beginning, he said this has been decisively tackled as the government has been greatly encouraged

by the increasing enthusiasm of banks to support the exercise. "Eleven banks have fully come up and are set to loan over N7million to interested civil servants out of the N100 billion ear marked for the sales as the first installment and single digit interest payable on the loans to be taken from the N100 billion facility through the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) at 9.5% has been accepted by all the participating banks", he stressed.

He therefore said that the minister has assured that all complaints will continue to be routinely looked into and all stakeholders will be carried along and appealed to all stakeholders to note that the FCTA is simply working according to the guidelines and timeliness approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC). We hope to submit the final report to the president by June this year with a projected sales target over N100 billion feasible", he added.

Foreshore estate beckons for patronage

The Foreshore Lifestyle Terrace Estate, constructed by Forillon Transatlantic Limited is beckoning on all those who are on the lookout for peaceful environment in our increasingly chaotic cities.

According to close sources to promoters of the estate project is far bigger from Forillon's first project at Banana Island, Ikoyi, Lagos which was made up of 14 units of luxury townhouses each of which had 5 bedrooms, plus the guest chalets.

The project which had three blocks of four town houses and an addendum of pool, boys quarters, luxury landscaping. The town house went for N60million in 2005.

The new estate which has all the "condiments" of the first estate project to be embarked upon by Forillon and its promoters also has 14 blocks of buildings located close to the shore of Lagos lagoon. Hence, it has access to the sea.

However, the foreshore lifestyle terraces is made up of 14 semi detached luxury terraces built to the house of about N800million and will be let off to buyers at N75 or N80million per unit.

According to the representative of Forillons, Mr. Yomi Ogunsola, the edifice was conceived, in terms of construction by the duo of Telisol Nigeria Limited and Brick House construction Limited in January 2005 and will be finalized mid February. Already, he said inquiries

Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor, Lagos

are hitting up for the house and five of the structures have been sold while interests have been received for nine of the terraces although payments are yet to be made.

Other outfits in the estate deal include Guaranty Trust Bank PLC which serves as the financial adviser; agents are Diya, Fatimilehin and Co. and Klif Consultants which oversees the project manager department.

The good thing about foreshore is that all the pippings, wirings, even DSTV connections and air conditioner are executed before letting off the purchases.

Also, other feature include recreational facilities/club house as an addendum swimming pool, gymchildren's play ground, babique section and jetty.

Available also are 500 KVA standby generator, step-down transformer with output control gauges, panel room, individual meters for each house, street lights on all roads and garden, borehole for water supply, water treatment plant, underground and elevated water tanks and water distribution networks to all houses etc.

These are, according to Ogunsola, Type A and Type B house in the estate. The Type B which are costlier mostly faced the beautiful scenery of the Lagoon which the type A houses have views tailored to the estate.

The type houses of the

three story-building has ante-room, living and dining-room, kitchen store, stair hall etc at the ground floor. The first floor has the family lounge, box room, terrace, ensuit bathroom, three bedrooms etc and the second floor has master bedroom and a terrace.

Type B ground floor has carpets, garden terrace, entrance living room, visitors' toilet, maid bedroom, store below and stair hall. First floor boast of family living room, dining room, kitchen store, lobby etc while second floor plan include masters bedroom, ensuit bathroom bedroom 2 and 3 and lobby.

El-Rufai approves c'ttee for new schools in FCT

To put to rest the problems of shortage of classrooms and overcrowded schools, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) the minister of, Mallam Nasir Ahmad EL-rufai has set up a special committee for the rehabilitation and construction of new schools across FCT. The Education Secretary, FCT, Dr. Auwal Anwar disclose this at the 2005/2006 Education Secretariat press Luncheon held in Abuja on Monday.

Dr. Anwar said that to begin with, some 14 Basic Education and Senior Secondary Schools have been identified on which about N1.6billion will be spent. The ideal is to



The newly commissioned SCC Steel Water Pipes factory commissioned by President Olusegun Obasanjo in Abuja last Friday

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

have Model Institutions which will ultimately be the standard for the FCT. These schools he noted, include the new Girls Junior Boarding Secondary School opposite the Maitama hospital. "We have therefore commenced the processes of establishing new schools in areas Durumi and Bukpe".

"The massive influx of people into FCT has resulted in the overstretching of existing infrastructure so much that we are left with no option but to build new ones. Towards this end, we established 34 new primary schools bringing the total number of schools to 440. We also began a massive reno-

tion and rehabilitation exercise that saw the complete overhauling of 205 classrooms in the six Area Councils.

Six new classroom blocks were constructed, so were two modern Libraries", he added.

The Education Secretary further said that after discovering that there were no enough schools especially at the secondary and tertiary level in the FCT and the existing ones are generally over populated and lack basic infrastructure like classrooms, furniture and laboratories, the secretariat has to put up massive renovation efforts currently going on in the schools.

He said during the inspection of the project committee it discovered some anomalies of at least 16 abandoned projects, projects on schedule but not seen on site, paid contracts without completion of work were still reflected as outstanding liabilities.

"And after thorough examinations, the committee recommended for corrections which led to the creation of projects division headed by a Deputy Director under the secretariat and provision of 434 sets of furniture to the six area councils (49 sets for Abaji, Bwari 62, Gwagwalada 65, Kwali 95, Kuje 68 and AMAC 95)", he emphasized.

Abuja Property

Managing Abuja market fire disasters

As the weather changes and dry season sets in, the need to review and reflect on the past experience of Abuja markets fire disasters management comes to mind. An outright situation which calls for immediate attention that would aid the campaign for returning Abuja city to its original plan, which accommodate unique built environment for Nigerians without unbudgeted spending.

Abuja Property takes a look on what lessons and level of preparedness expected of all residents and end-users of all Abuja markets as they are expected to project the intention behind the creation of Abuja as the Federal Capital City.

At a national workshop on markets fire organized by National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Abuja Property angled the National coordinator, Fire Disaster Prevention and Safety Awareness Association of Nigeria, a none governmental agency, Mr. Babangida Ahmad Lamidi who articulated that for effective management of Abuja markets fire disasters, the transition from living without fire to living with fire which has made life in many ways easier, advent of safety matches globally had made fire not only cheaper, but also available to everyone must be addressed. This he said has also created constraint and risk, due to the perpetual presence of fire in human existence and has today created complicating factor, leaving to accommodate which has posed great challenge to human society.

He added that "though, the ability to control fire is a central problem in every known society and that is why overtime, human beings have learnt as part of their culture the act of controlling fire. But as the society begins to move from simple to complex, with scientific and technological breakthrough, the act of fire management and control becomes more sophisticated, thus every human being has to go through a learning process in order to acquire the skill needed to deal with this new challenges".

The Abuja Property however affirmed that the present study on fire disaster which showed that less than 80.6% of people all over the world, especially in Africa, Nigeria most importantly and the third world nations still lack the basis skill in control and management of fire, despite the constant use of fire on daily basis without actually acquiring personal understand of it.

By Mustafa Abubakar,
Abuja

In the modern encyclopedia, fire is explained as process of combustion manifested in

In the Federal Capital Territory there are markets that represent the traditional markets; temporary or road-side markets; neighbor-hood/district

cal or gas cooking appliances, careless in disposal of cigarette end, indiscriminate burning of refuse by the traders at fire prone zones, illegal electrical con-

nection and other unsafe practice.

However, the current position of these two markets informed that the old Wuse market have been decongested illegal attach-

ment, and the attitude of some of them that connive with traders to flaunt the existing regulations and most time distorting the original plan the Abuja markets leading to congestion, illegal attachment and un-access routes in the markets.

Although, the recent initiative taken by the FCT Administration to involve the private sector in the construction of markets and management, based on what is known as "BOT" Build Operate and Transfer is quite commendable. This method, at the initial stage will no doubt set the required standard needed in our market in the provision of required facility which includes that of fire safety, but at the long run, "BOT" Market are expected to be eventually transfer back to FCT Administration.

The problem here is who will be responsible for the management of these markets at the end, and how competent is that final operators in management and maintaining the markets retain the standard already set. Similarly, while what role will Local Government Council play in such markets, even when they are fully in control of such markets, can the present composition of Local Government Council retain this standard? Are many questions that need to be answered.

And until these roles are clearly defined the issue of setting standard particularly in the area of fire safety in our markets will hardly be realized.

However, it is believed that when problem of proper planning is resolved, adherent to basic fire safety standards can then be made possible, and decisions regard fire safety design in planning markets will also not be difficult or disregarded by market planners, particularly if the Bill at the national Assembly for passage into law on fire precaution and control that seeks to stipulate the standard fire safety code for all existing and new buildings including markets is signed.

On a final note, provision of adequate fire safety installation should include apart from ensuring that standard fire safety materials are used in the construction of markets to avoid fire spread, other fire protection facilities such as sprinklers, fire detection and alarm system to give early warning and fire extinguishing system either fix or moveable to help in fire fighting or to nib the fire on the bud will be required to efficiently manage market fires.



Fire outbreak like this poses serious threat to Abuja markets.

heat and light, the immediate effect of the manifestation, if not controlled is destructive and can disintegrate a highly organized structure of organic substance like Abuja city and can be reduced to ashes and smoke. Combustion process is blind and aimless, doesn't have any purpose which is not peculiar to fire and other natural forces, such as rain or wind, whatever inflammable material it touches, will be consumed, but then fire has a rare quality of being self-generating and can cause heat which sequentially turn to fire.

Abuja property in its fact findings to lasting solution to this unfortunate incidence gathered that in year 2000/2001 alone various markets fire in the country including Abuja caused damages estimated at N854.2 million naira apart from loss of lives, agonies, and other traumatic effects. Subsequently, extended to other years due to improper markets management.

Considering what market is therefore, Abuja market like any other market is a regular gathering of people where buying and selling activities take place. Trade in it is not only restricted to tangible commodities, but where buyers and sellers are physically brought together to exchange goods and services, including other financial transactions such as securities, currencies like stock market, foreign market, black market, labour market, free market etc.

market; specialized market and central market.

However, it is important to note that, the non-availability of dependable data of these market before now, makes the estimation of actual loss from market fire in Abuja impossible, but one thing is certain is that, all the above-mentioned classification of markets have suffered one form of fire disaster or another.

Market fire which cut across the length and breadth of the city markets is inexhaustible. To bring to mind the gravity of few markets that have had one or more doses of this fire destruction in Abuja are the evacuated "new Wuse market", re-organized old Wuse market.

Fire outbreaks in our markets are however caused as a result of multifaceted developments. Abuja property furthered gathered that the causes of market fires include Carelessness, negligence and nonchalant attitude of traders and discovered that over 95% of the traders in Abuja markets lack knowledge of fire prevention and safety, but unmindful of the possibility of an unfortunate occurrence or loss and accidents that could lead to fire outbreak and complete damage to the entire market and their properties. This attitude has contributed greatly to the high incident rate of market fires in Abuja. In most market instances of lack of basic fire safety knowledge, often leads to misuse of electri-

cal or gas cooking appliances, careless in disposal of cigarette end, indiscriminate burning of refuse by the traders at fire prone zones, illegal electrical con-

nection and other unsafe practice.

Occurrence of natural disaster or sudden accident

Intentional act or Arson;

Lack of proper physical planning/design of markets;

Sub-standard structures;

Free access of fire fighting vehicle into the market arena during fire outbreak;

Lack of adequate water network;

Improper/illegal connection of electricity;

Lack of inadequate or stable security system are also major causes.

Reviewing past experience vise-a-vise managing market fires in Abuja, there is the need for lot of multi-dimensional approach due to its complex nature.

Therefore, in retrospect, a review of past experiences shows clearly that there is 'tendency for more fire outbreaks in an unplanned market than in a well planned market'.

For instance, the statistic of fire-outbreak in these markets before the evacuation the new Wuse market and the re-organizing of the old Wuse market, indicated that as at 23rd July 2004 "5" minor/major fire-outbreaks were recorded in old Wuse market and as at 13 February 2004, over 15 minor/major fire outbreak were recorded in new Wuse market.

The old Wuse market, built with permanent structures, with illegal attachment without fire services station and the new Wuse market which was with temporary structure was constructed with sinks woods, planks and other combustible materials without fire

Abuja Property

The changing face of Abuja

Welcome to the Federal Capital Territory- Abuja, one of the finest cities in the world. A city endowed with all the beauties and splendor of mother nature; the green vegetation, rocks of various shapes and sizes, the crystal clean waters, the serene atmosphere and cool weather, all sum up to make the city indeed a place to behold and to cherish. A place where people of all tribes and tongues live, work and feel very much at home. A city that showcases not only the greatness of Nigeria as the giant of Africa but also symbolizes the unity of the over 250 tribes that make up its citizenry.

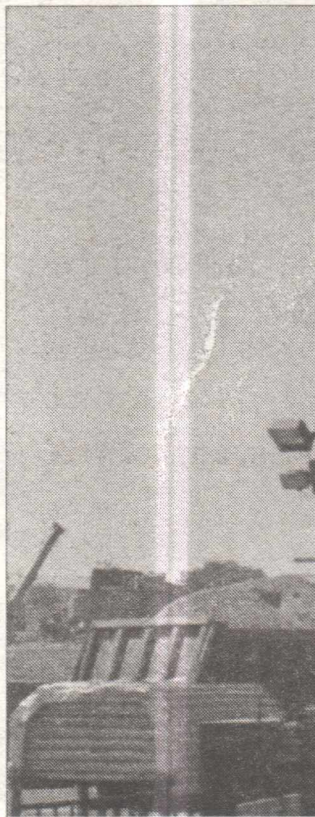
Through a long term development plan and meticulous execution which began in the 70's by the then Murtala Obasanjo regime, the city has rapidly transformed from bushes and huts of the natives to magnificent edifices accentuated by beautiful landscaping.

The roads are smooth and well layed out while the streets are neat and tidy. At night, streetlights blaze in the horizon and the city is agog with outdoor activities. The nightclubs and eateries (joints) can be found in all nooks and crannies of the city, adding life and colour to the rather quiet and serene atmosphere.

Outside Abuja, the story of the city is often larger than life. Tall tales of a land flowing with milk and honey. Where one can become very wealthy in a short time. With these tales therefore, all manner of people throng there including thousands of unemployed youths with hope and elation of settling down to a life of bliss.

The influx of people into

By Nasir Imam,
Editor, Abuja Property



The almost completed overhead bridge at the Apo legislative quaters junction, Garki Abuja, being constructed by Julius Berger Nigeria Ltd, aimed at decongesting the persistent traffic bottlenecks in the area.

and other vices associated with urbanization. The cost of the limited living accommodation cannot be compared with any other city in the country. The residents of Abuja pay by the skin of their teeth, in some areas as much as half a million naira for a two bedroom apartment and more than a million naira for a duplex. In each case the hapless tenant must pay for two years rent together with 10% of the total sum as agency and legal fees. To cut costs however, many residents secure cheaper accommodation in the suburbs of Abuja like Nyanya, Karu, Kubwa, Idu-

Karimo, Gwagwa and other outlying suburbs, most times contending with lack of provision by the government

about an equivalent of the popular C.M.S bus stop in Lagos is the traffic nerve

a good life. They migrate from all parts of the country in large numbers and could be seen withering and littering

infrastructure to enable residents, develop both residential and commercial buildings. This would go a long way in reducing the cost of accommodation and congestion in the city centre.

The government also has to map out strategies for resettling and rehabilitating these beggars and prostitutes who move into the city by the day. There should also be established, counseling units and centres where they can engage in one meaningful handwork or the other. The government should also include in its master plan or initiate a deliberate policy to set up industries in the outlying council areas that will not only provide employment for the teeming youths who graduate from secondary and tertiary institutions but will also reduce the costs of such products that are brought in from Kaduna, Lagos and elsewhere.

The Nigerian Police is obviously ill equipped and lest motivated to provide the panacea for the men of the under world. The government should therefore employ more policemen. A force of 250,000 men policing about 120 million people is grossly inadequate. The Nigerian police force also needs to be provided with more modern equipment especially communication gadgets to be able to grapple with the sophistication and guts of the present day armed robbers.

The present democratic dispensation therefore has the obligation to ensure the well being and security of lives and property in the Federal Capital Territory, more so when foreign investors need a conducive environment to invest in Nigeria.

of the basic infrastructure necessary for human habitation.

It is also noted that about seventy percent of workers who live outside the city centre troop into the city for their daily business. The four lane roads of the city are relatively free during the weekends, but as early as 6:30am of each working day in the week, traffic starts building up leading to congestion of the roads and all entry points from the suburbs. The situation is particularly chaotic on the about 35 kilometer double carriage way from Kubwa into the capital territory. Similarly, the Berger round

centre of Abuja. Because of this congestion of the roads, people spend as much as one and a half hours on the road before getting to their destinations within the city.

The menace of armed robbers in Abuja and its environs is also the tell tale sign of movement of all manner of people into the Federal Capital city. In their bid to get rich quick, the faceless night marauders unleash terror on the innocent citizens who toil night and day to make ends meet, leaving the residents in constant fear of these hoodlums.

The street beggars are not left out in this search for

the hitherto clean streets of the city begging for aims from motorists and passersby.

The scarlet women also, have taken hold of street corners and dark alleys of Abuja in the quest for money and good life thereby throwing morals to the bins and contributing largely to the spread of various sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

As a result of this daily movement into Abuja therefore, the government must move fast to implement the master plan for the development of the Federal Capital Territory especially the outlying council areas by putting in place the necessary

Abuja, a realtors' delight

When it comes to magnificent buildings, Abuja, the nation federal capital territory, is a realtor's delight dream transformed into reality.

There is no mincing of words. Abuja is very lovely. It is every thing that Lagos could have been but is not. It is better planned, managed and developed. This is not, to say there are no imperfections but what ever they are the federal might will always have things sorted out pronto. Take as a sampler: It is only in Abuja that the building of the high and mighty (that fall short of town planning rules and regulations), can be demolished without any

blinking of the eyes. It would be very difficult for this to happen in any other major city. Nevertheless some of the eye popping buildings donning the Abuja sky can enter the list of the most beautiful in the world.

Then huge government presence is understandable because of its administrative status.

Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that a lot of these well-heeled buildings from the headquarters of Federal Ministries and parastatals. These government buildings are better finished, elegantly set and flourishing. For example, the Lagos marina office (now the headquarters of the Nigerian Port

Authority is an ordinary rectangular building but the former Abuja headquarters (now ceded to the Ministry of Defence) is a ship shaped designer's choice, but will win the architect award any day.

As if to drive home the logic, some of the ministry and parastatal are not even content with what they have presently. In most every yearly budget hat comes, they incorporate proposals to build better edifices that will make him cover page in the realtor's digest.

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently building a sprawling new headquarters despite the fact that it already has a magnificent building that is the envy of realtors.

Abuja has too many great buildings it is difficult to choose which are not. Nevertheless, some stand out. They include the Twin Towers serving the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) headquarters.

Others include the imposing ultra-modern Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) building, the International Conference Center which has hosted so many international events. Also strong in contention for magnificent buildings are those accommodating the UN International bodies and Embassies.

To top it all, is the ultra modern Abuja new stadium that hosted the 8th Africa Cup of Nations.

Games.

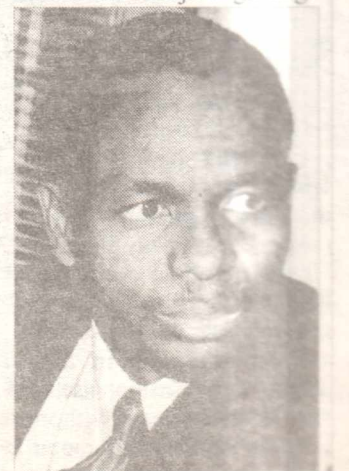
The most prominent buildings are found in the Central Business District (CBD) where you have hi-rise buildings. They are spread out over major roads like the Olusegun Obasanjo Way, Ahmadu Bello Way, Nnamdi Azikwe Way, AND Obafemi Awolowo Way, Herbert Macaulay Way, IBB Way, among several others.

Interestingly, most of the roads are named after Nigerian heroes, Pan Africanists, famous world leaders and places.

Abuja roads are wide, beautifully paved, silk smooth, and exciting to ride on. They are very neat and tidy. The trees-lined Bill drive that accesses

the Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport is a study of what roads ought to be built.

If only on account of being a former federal capital, Lagos would get some of the action that Abuja is getting.



Mallam Nasir el-Rufai



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HALLMARK ASSURANCE PLC was established in 1981 to provide high quality Insurance Underwriting to the Nigerian public and has been doing this successfully for over twenty years.

Conversely, HALLMARK BANK was established ten years later in 1991.

Although the bank was floated by HALLMARK ASSURANCE and her key shareholders, over the years, the shareholding structure of the bank changed significantly with a substantial divestment from the bank by our company and not in any way related to HALLMARK BANK at the moment as NO director (executive or non-executive) of the dissolved board of HALLMARK BANK has any shareholding in HALLMARK ASSURANCE PLC.

The inability of HALLMARK BANK PLC to survive the consolidation process in the banking sector therefore has no effect whatsoever on HALLMARK ASSURANCE PLC., which has, in the recent past, come under the control of a highly focused and aggressive Board of Directors.

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Signed
UGO (DR.) OBI RALPH EKEZIE
 CHAIRMAN OF BOARD



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Securing Hope & Creating Wealth for Mankind

JIGAWA: ANPP'S MANY LIES AGAINST GOVERNOR IBRAHIM SAMINU TURAKI

In the last few weeks, a lot of information ranging from the ridiculous to the weird, has been bandied about regarding Governor Saminu Turaki's membership of the ANPP. It was very clear right from the beginning that some members of the Jigawa ANPP were talking from both sides of their mouth over the membership of Saminu Turaki in the party.

The first drama started with a report in the *Daily Trust* edition of January 17, 2006, titled: "ANPP Suspends Governor Turaki". The caucus leader of the party, Alhaji Hadi Ukashatu, was quoted in the report as saying that Governor Turaki has decamped to the PDP and has "duly registered himself with the PDP, with registration number 148 at Unguwar Gabas ward in Kazaure local government of Jigawa state". The biggest lie of the century in this case was that the number 148 was the membership registration number of "Lawan Lawan Abba". The membership register of the PDP which is always available, has made nonsense of the Ukashatu's claim. It was in fact amazing how the caucus leadership would openly lie over records that thousands of party members have unfettered access to. So, where is proof of the decampment process?

What was even more shocking was how these selected caucus leaders of the ANPP would insist that even commissioners in the Saminu Turaki government have decamped as party executives in the PDP without any proof. This white lie should be exposed for what it is since the Jigawa PDP membership register proves otherwise.

The other issue of concern over which these selected ANPP caucus leaders missed the point was when they claimed that the national chairman of the party has given support to the governor's alleged anti-party activities. How on earth will a few members of the ANPP caucus in Jigawa be more committed to the party's progress than the national chairman? It seems these few caucus leaders are being more Catholic than the Pope.

Stories of Governor Saminu Turaki's decamping to the PDP have not aroused any interest because Nigerians would expect such an announcement to come from the PDP itself and not the ANPP. In fact, the PDP would have organized a party to welcome the most popular ANPP governor into its fold. This is the reality and the reason why nobody would be interested in the latest round of empty propaganda by a few ANPP members masquerading as caucus leaders. Perhaps the funniest part of the so-called caucus leaders was when they filed a petition to the office of the national chairman on January 7, 2006, trying to protest the hosting rights of the governor to organize the National Executive Committee (NEC), meeting of the party in Jigawa. The same imaginary decampment story filled every space

of the five-page petition. It contained signatures of people whose names have not been reflected. They were mere signatories to a petition and were presented as local government chairmen of the ANPP in the state without even their abbreviated names.

Interestingly, one of the signatories on page three of the petition, Alhaji Bala Ibrahim, whose name was made number four on the list, was in fact out of the country even before the petition was pieced together by the so-called caucus leaders of the ANPP.

Not only that, about five of the signatories were said to have been unable to confirm the signatures attached to their names after the petition had been hurriedly submitted by the so-called caucus leaders. For the first time since 1999, a petition has been written by a political party that does not even know the names of its 27 local government chairmen.

Borrowing from the style of Adolf Hitler's Information/Propaganda Minister, Joseph Goebbels, the so-called caucus leaders proceeded to plant an advertorial in the *Daily Trust* edition of Wednesday, January 18, 2006, singing the same song. Reason? Goebbels said "a lie told a million times becomes the truth". Guided by this illusionary logic, these few ANPP "leaders" went to newspaper houses with advertorials they were sure were cheap lies meant to score cheap political gains. In the advert, they claimed that a six-man committee has been set up to probe and recommend to the party whether or not further disciplinary action should be taken against the governor. As if the so-called caucus "decision" supercedes that of the national secretariat.

Even more ridiculous was the claim that the governor has "directed all members of his cabinet" to also decamp. Is political party membership a matter of personal choice or official instructions? This is impossible in a state like Jigawa with its history of political radicalism. For the so-called caucus leaders to imagine that they can pull the wool over everybody's eyes in this century is self-delusory.

Fortunately for the people of Jigawa state, a sense came out of the caucus leaders' madness. The Deputy Chairman of the party, Mallam Bako Muhammad, brought out the sense in the caucus leaders' confusion by enlightening the people not to be hoodwinked by an empty propaganda describing them as elements without the constitutional powers to do what they were claiming to have done.

Finally, we challenge the so-called caucus leaders to take a second look at all the outbursts they have made and deny that they did not tell cheap lies to mislead the public.

Signed

ALHAJI MUHAMMADU MURTALA.

Where is Governor Saminu Turaki's name in this list?

Some ANPP members alleged that Governor Saminu Turaki has registered as a card carrying member of the PDP with registration number 148. But the holder of that CARD is one Lawan Lawan Abba as it appears on the list below.



PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY MEMBERSHIP REGISTER

STATE Izang	STATE Code J.G	L.G.A Kegone	L.G.A Code D7	WARD U/Gabas	WARD Code 10
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S/NO	DATE	MEMBERSHIP NO	NAMES	SEX	AGE	ADDRESS	OCCUPATION	SIGN	REMARKS
121	1/10/05	121	USMAN IBRAHIM	M	36	LAKON RIZKIYA	FARMING	[Signature]	
122	-	122	IBRAHIM USMAN	M	70	"	"	[Signature]	
123	-	123	HUSAINA IBRAHIM	F	55	"	H/KIFE	[Signature]	
124	-	124	A ISHA IBRAHIM	F	60	"	H/KIFE	[Signature]	
125	-	125	KABIRU IBRAHIM	M	21	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
126	-	126	AHUKWILA IBRAHIM	F	22	"	H/KIFE	[Signature]	
127	-	127	YAHUZA IBRAHIM SHY'AIBU	M	24	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
128	-	128	A, ISHA ABBA	F	18	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
129	-	129	FATIMA NUSIF	F	18	"	"	[Signature]	
130	-	130	SANI NUHU	M	55	"	FARMING	[Signature]	
131	-	131	YAR BABA SANI	F	35	"	H/KIFE	[Signature]	
132	-	132	IYA SANI	F	29	"	"	[Signature]	
133	-	133	RABIY SANI	M	27	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
134	-	134	NA, IMA SANI	F	20	"	H/KIFE	[Signature]	
135	-	135	A, ISHA SANI	F	20	"	H/KIFE	[Signature]	
136	-	136	HASIYA SANI	F	19	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
137	-	137	KAMALU SANI	M	19	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
138	-	138	BUKAYIA SANI	F	18	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
139	-	139	AHMAD IBRAHIM	M	68	"	FARMING	[Signature]	
140	-	140	ARBI ABUBAKAR	M	67	"	FARMING	[Signature]	
141	-	141	UMMA AHMED	F	47	"	H/KIFE	[Signature]	
142	-	142	FATIMA AHMED	F	18	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
143	-	143	MAUSEAHU AHMED	M	25	"	"	[Signature]	
144	-	144	BAFHAR AHMED	F	22	"	"	[Signature]	
145	-	145	SADISU D. LAKWAN	M	47	"	FARMING	[Signature]	
146	-	146	LAKWAN NAJAHU	M	28	"	STUDENT	[Signature]	
147	-	147	ATUBAKAR AHMED	M	19	"	"	[Signature]	
148	-	148	LAKWAN LAKWAN ABBA	M	21	"	"	[Signature]	
149	-	149	LAWAN KABIRU LAKWA	M	23	"	"	[Signature]	
150	-	150	MAIMUNA LAKWAN	F	16	"	"	[Signature]	

NEWS

Adamawa Gubernatorial aspirants oppose zoning

As the 2007 elections draws nearer, agitation by a section of people in Adamawa State for the adoption of zoning formula in determining who becomes the next governor of the state is generating fresh controversy across the state as most aspirants are not favorably disposed to it.

The current agitation is led by the people from the central senatorial district who claim right to a shot at the highest political office in the state having played second fiddle to the Northern zone for eight years.

However, the view was rebuffed by the aspirants from the southern senatorial district who insisted that either of the zones that has not benefited was also qualified to

Bauchi investment coy gets new MD

From Tashikalmah Hallah,
Correspondent (Bauchi)

The Bauchi State government has appointed Alhaji Abubakar Sule Katagum as the new helmsman for the Bauchi Investment and Property Development Company Limited.

The appointment of Katagum, a seasoned financial manager, was in response to the unsound government revenue generation base.

Before his appointment the state revenue generation base was said to be weak culminating to an ultimatum issued by the state governor, Alhaji Ahmadu Adamu Mu'azu urged all revenue collectors to "block the leakages" or face the wrath of the government, and the invitation of the Nuhu Ribadu led Economic and Financial Crimes Commission [EFCC] to sanitise the board in June last year.

"Over the years, it is glaring that the capacity of government revenue collection machinery has been weak, hence the very poor internally generated revenue collection. It's our firm belief, that more could be achieved if adequate control measures are put in place to ensure prudence and accountability in the collection and remittance process.

"To ameliorate this problem, government has appointed consultants to work hand in hand with the board of Internal Revenue to reduce leakages of revenue generation...As is always the case, all Accounting officers will be personally responsible for any shortcoming in the area of revenue generation and remittance".

Alhaji Katagum, a graduate of Accounting from the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, was a director in the company before his elevation to the post of Managing Director which took effect early this month.

From Hamza Idris,
Correspondent (Yola)

gun for governorship.

Reacting on the zoning controversy in an interview with Journalists on Monday, one of the aspirants, on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Mohammed Koiranga Jada, said the only acceptable arrangement was to make it go to the zone that has not enjoyed power yet.

Koiranga Jada said that the North and Central zone have had fair share of power,

explaining that the incumbent governor, Boni Haruna, is from the North while his deputy, Bello Tukur, hails from the central senatorial zone, hence it was the South that should agitate for its turn in 2007.

Jada, who said he was qualified to contest election even if it was zoned to central or south, argued that though he was born in Jada, he has been living in Jimeta, in the central zone for the past 29 years.

"Zoning is not a problem to me because I built my

house here since 1977 and I gave birth to all my children here. I am very qualified to even contest election in central zone".

He however faulted the claim that the Vice President was representing the southern zone, arguing that presidential slot was a national affair. "If people want to apply zoning to the position of president, it can only be said to represent the north, if we go down to zone, then we can say he represents North-East"

Recently, one of the aspir-

ants, Senator Jonathan Zwingina, kicked against the Idea of zoning, saying that even at the national level, the PDP at its last convention have outlawed zoning at the national level, and wondered why such is still applicable at the state level.

He however revealed that

the southern senatorial district was the most deprived zone in the state in terms of appointments at the federal level.

Meanwhile, the central zone which has about five aspirants has insisted that it is the turn of the zone to produce governor.

C'ttee to settle Bafarawa, deputy rift arrives Sokoto

A Six-man fact finding committee set up by the National Secretariat of the ANPP is in Sokoto to find out the root cause of the unending crisis between Governor Attahiru Bafarawa and his Deputy, Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko.

The committee which is headed by Admiral Larry Amuso (rtd) was in Sokoto on Monday to hear from both the feuding camps, party leaders, and concerned members of the party.

Retired Admiral Amuso said this was with the aim of solving the problems that have been rocking the political atmosphere in the state for sometime now.

He noted that members of the committee were drawn from across the country in order to maintain neutrality in their fact finding mission, pointing out that their sole aim was to bring peace to Sokoto State.

He observed that as many members of the ANPP were ready to speak to them, the committee members 'are ever willing to listen to as many as they can'.

He stressed the importance of neutrality in the task, adding that sense of equity and justice was also essential to carry out the job.

The leader of the committee urged all the ANPP stakeholders in the state to be just, fair and truthful in making their presentation to the committee.

He explained that solving the imbroglio would be premised on what they would be told and their report would also be based on the conclusion reached from what is presented to them. Retired Admiral Amuso stated that the

From Sadeeq Aliju,
Senior reporter, (Sokoto)

committee would try as much as possible to speak with some of the members of the state House of Assembly and all other stakeholders of ANPP in the state, and therefore assured that justice will prevail at the end of the day.

Speaking earlier, the state deputy governor, Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, thanked the national headquarters of the ANPP for its concern and timely intervention in the ongoing cold war.

Alhaji Magatakarda Wamakko explained that over the years they had all laboured to build the party, and it was his candid opinion that the year 2007 'is promising the party a better future'.

He therefore described the intervention as a testimony of their concern and in line with his belief that the ANPP has a lot to achieve in the years ahead.

While acknowledging that the party has performed credibly well in the previous elections, the deputy governor expressed optimism that God-willing 2007 is going to be their year as he hoped the ANPP is going to take over the leadership of this country.

Members of the Larry Amuso led committee are the Adamawa State chairman of ANPP, Barrister Abdulrahman Bobboi, Rivers State ANPP chairman, Sir Clement Menebar, Dr. Francis Egwu, the deputy National Secretary of ANPP, the National Welfare Secretary of ANPP, Hajiya Fatima Mohammed and an ANPP elder from Niger state, Abdulaziz Lapai.



The Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido (R), the Head of Service of the Federation, Alhaji Mahmud Yayale Ahmed, at the presentation of Report of the National Mosque Rehabilitation Committee to President Olusegun Obasanjo at the State House...recently. Pix: Joe Oroye

PDP may die a natural death-Birma

Former minister of education during the late General Sani Abacha regime, Alhaji Dauda Birma, has predicted that from the ongoing internal squabbles bedeviling the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the party will soon die a natural death or be completely swallowed by the opposition All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP).

Alhaji Birma, who is a member of the national caucus of the ANPP and a close friend of the party's flagbearer in the 2003 presidential elections, General Muhammadu Buhari, made this assertion in Yola during a chat with *Daily Trust* on the emerging romance between some key officers of the ANPP and some elected members of the PDP where he cited the massive withdrawal of some PDP members from the party, pluralism of its leadership in some states and the purported agitation for third term as strong indicators for the party's imminent collapse.

Alhaji Dauda Birma, who is also the *Sarkin Gabas* of Adamawa, stated that the ANPP is so far the visibly strongest opposition party to the PDP which according to him is in the verge of total collapse, a positive development which he says "por-

tends the setting up of the federal government by the ANPP in 2007 if the same type of rigging is not perfected again".

He said that the ANPP has an open door policy of embracing who so ever has the progress of Nigeria at heart which is why many people from all nooks and crannies are rushing to join it. "Most of them (people) around us are PDP members who have no shelter to put their heads on. Therefore, they are coming over to ANPP and we are doing something to accommodate them because ANPP is a viable living party while PDP is scrambling".

He however noted that it is not all the people coming to the ANPP that have the party at heart. He said there are certain elements that associate with the party with the aim of destabilizing it. "The PDP is infiltrating into the ANPP and is making sure that the party is not stabilized. We know what they are doing. It is not for us now to react, but when the electioneering campaign starts, we shall put our house in order and we will survive".

The ANPP stakeholder, who also shaded light on the perceived lost of confidence in certain quarters in the leadership of Chief Don Etiebet,

maintained that as far as he is concerned, he is satisfied with the leadership style of the incumbent chairman. "I absolutely have confidence in him. People may have some misgivings about him because we are living in a dynamic situation. He is the leader of the party and is ensuring that we survive. If he behaves in a particular pattern that ensures our survival which did not go well with some people, then these are the qualities that some people are calling to question. I have absolute confidence in him", he reaffirmed.

Politician gives N250,000 for reconstruction of Yola market

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) gubernatorial aspirant, Alhaji Muhammadu Koiranga Jada, has donated the sum of N250,000 (two hundred and fifty thousand naira) to the victims of the recent inferno which gutted over 250 shops in Fallujah Central Market in Yola, Adamawa State.

Koiranga Jada handed over the money to the affected traders when he visited the market on Saturday where he commiserated with the victims and was conducted round the scene of the fire incident by the officials of the Traders

From Hamza Idris,
Correspondent (Yola)

Association.

Alhaji Jada expressed concern over the huge economic loss suffered by the victims, urging them to take it in good faith.

"I deeply sympathize with you over this fire outbreak which consumed your property and destabilized your activities, and I will continue to assist you in reviving your legitimate businesses", he stated.

Receiving the donation, the chairman of Gamzaki Trad-

ers Association, Mr. Yakubu Teri, thanked Koiranga Jada for his concern, calling on politicians across the country to imbibe the gesture.

He described Koiranga as a leading philanthropist who had never relented in his effort to touch the lives of the common man.

"We appreciate your generosity and concern for our plight, we will ensure the judicious utilization of this money in assisting the affected traders, may the almighty God reward you abundantly", the chairman said.

News

Hajj: FG to recover \$3m from Trans Air

The Minister of state, Foreign Affairs, Alhaji Abubakar Tanko, has disclosed that the federal government has started the process of recovering over 3 million dollars collected by Trans-Air as advance payment for airlifting pilgrims.

From Aisha Umar, in Jeddah

Stating this in a press briefing in Jeddah, Tanko said that Trans-Air will also have to face penalty for not airlifting pilgrims to Saudi Arabia in breach of contract.

The minister also said that Trans-Air will not be allowed to participate in future hajj operations.

However, he said, hajj fares for this year's hajj was low and suggested an increase to enable the authorities offer better services, and to avoid the suffering experienced by intending pilgrims.

Tanko also said that a hajj commission should henceforth manage pilgrims' affairs to enable government hands off the responsibility forthwith.

He further expressed concern over the attitude of some Nigerian women who came for Umrah and thereafter hide behind mountains until hajj, and described the attitude as an insult to Nigeria.

The minister said the women need to be enlightened to stop living under the bridges and engaging in nasty acts which he said Saudi authority frowned at.

He explained that just before hajj Saudi Arabia minister on hajj called on the Nigerian government to evacuate about 27,000 Nigerians who have over stayed in Saudi Arabia.

Tanko apologized to Nigerians who paid their money, but could not make it to hajj, and promised that they will be treated specially next year, adding that increase in fares next year would not affect them.

He expressed hope that the airlift of pilgrims on the return leg will be completed on February 1, 2006.



Dr. Magnus L. Kpakol addressing the traditional ruler of Okpeke, His Royal Highness, Peter Osigbeme, the Onwueweko of Okpeke clan during his tour of Edo North... recently.

NEMA boss charges states, LG on disaster mgt

The Director-General, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Alhaji S. S. Makarfi, has said that disaster management can be properly handled from the federal level, if states and the local governments show commitment by putting in place disaster management outfits within their localities.

By Sunday Benjamin, Senior Reporter.

communities in Nigeria to damage, injury and loss of life and property resulting from natural and man-made disasters, and assisting in the anticipation, recognition, appraisal, prevention and mitigation of disasters that may be caused or aggravated by in-adequate planning for, and regulation of public and private facilities and land use as some of the objectives of the national disaster response plan.

"I do believe that the document will mark a milestone in the nation's effort towards responding to disaster in a coordinated approach by all federal agencies and departments as well as non governmental organisations", he stressed. The underlying philosophy, he said is to ensure promptness to disaster situations, maximization of efforts and resources thereby reducing waste, duplications and ensuring effective life saving activities.

Alhaji Makarfi, in a paper entitled: "Institutional and Policy Framework for Disaster Management in Nigeria" he presented at the 1st National Summit on Disaster Management and Emergency Preparedness organised by the House of Representatives Committee on Emergency and Disaster Management and the Presidency held at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

According to the NEMA boss, states and local governments need to provide leadership and coordination by being supportive in the provision of information, finances, technical and material supports, stressing that, "the state governments, being basically responsible for protecting their citizens from harm, ought to carry out preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery activities".

He said government has, in the last five years spent billions of naira for the provision of relief items to survivors of various disasters, returning distressed Nigerians from foreign countries as well as on the procurement of equipments.

Alhaji Makarfi maintained that NEMA became a full-fledged agency in 1999 within the presidency as a functional, interventionist, proactive and autonomous agency to coordinate the management of disasters in its entire ramifications in the country.

While explaining the rationales behind the setting up of the agency by the government, the NEMA D-G who said the agency essentially coordinates disaster response plan, which he noted is clearly enshrined in the National Disaster Response Plan (NDRP), Nigeria's disaster response coordination and response document.

Alhaji Makarfi said the NDRP outlines the roles and responsibilities of identified resource organisations with available facilities, equipment and personnel. He further identified the reduction of the vulnerability of people and

Attah commissions N120m projects in Akwa Ibom

Not less than N120 million worth of projects were inaugurated in various communities of Uyo and Mkpato Enin local government areas of Akwa Ibom State yesterday.

The projects which were embarked upon by the state's Inter-Ministerial Direct Labour Committee form part of the 134 projects built to be commissioned from January to March this year by the state governor.

From Edet Ekanem, Correspondent (Uyo)

Speaking at the commissioning of the projects at Ediene Ikot Obio Imo and Obio Etoi, both in Uyo, the state governor, Arc. (Obong) Victor Attah, said the state government had last year commissioned 93 of similar projects executed by the committee at various communities in the state, adding that the gesture was to fulfill policy thrust of his administration aimed at bringing about socio-economic transformation of the state.

Obong Attah hinted that before March 31, 2006 76 electricity 16 mini-water and 42 sundry projects totaling 134 projects will be commissioned, explaining that late in the year 2004 he approved a total of 812 projects for the 330 wards in the state and felt satisfied that the indigenous contractors performed well within the time limits on 632 projects, but urged others who are at various stages of completion to put in more efforts or have the contracts revoked.

The governor, who promised to provide funds to the

committee for prompt payments to contractors, urged benefiting communities not to see the facilities as government-owned, but to liaise with the police and vigilante groups to protect the facilities from theft and vandalism.

While appealing to the people of the state for harmonious and peaceful co-existence for more development projects, he also assured communities which have not benefited from the projects during the previous and present phases of the programmes to remain calm as the government is doing everything possible to take care of their needs during the next phase of the exercise.

Project commissioned by the government on his first day include electrification project at Ikot Ebo, Nung Asang Ikono, Obio Etoi, D-Line Ewet Housing Estate, Atan Ofot, Osongama Estate.

Others are mini water project at Ediene Ikot Obio Imo and sundry projects at Jubilee Primary School Aka Offot and Four towns secondary School, all in Uyo local government area and similar projects in Mkpato Enin LGA's.

In his remarks at the occasion, the Commissioner for Finance who is also the chairman, Inter-Ministerial Direct Labour Coordinating Committee, Mr. Umana Okon Umana, thanked the governor for his interest in the projects through regular release of fund for the completion of projects.

He said although the committee has completed other projects such as 42,000 dual desks to primary schools in the state and renovation/rehabilitation of 182 classrooms blocks, hospitals wards, doctors' quarters and laboratories will be commissioned in the next phase.

Makarfi boosts water supply with \$41m vehicles

The Kaduna State government has taken delivery of 41 vehicles and 100 motorcycles, as part of \$40.96 million boost to the supply of quality water to the people in all parts of the state.

The vehicles which include six water tankers, one articulated truck (trailer), a Toyota Coaster bus and 32 pick-up vans are costed with the 100 motorcycles at N225,407,800.

Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, who commissioned the vehicles yesterday at the Malali Water Works, Kaduna, said the vehicles are for the maintenance of water treatment facilities, routine water quality sampling, detection of leakages and repair of distribution network, as well as data collection.

"Kaduna State government secured a credit facility of \$40.96 million from the World Bank in September, 2004 for the implementation of the National Urban Water Sector Reform Project in

From AbdulRaheem Aodu, Correspondent (Kaduna)

Kaduna, Zaria, Kafanchan, Zonkwa, Saminaka and Kagoro. World Bank provided \$34.86 million through the International Development Association, while the state government provided \$6 million counterpart funding.

"The project was aimed at improving level of service

delivery through restoration of water treatment facilities to their original state and improving the financial viability of the water board.

He said the project was expected to achieve improvements in the level of production of quantity and quality as well as revenue generation through components like rehabilitation, procurement of equipments, consultancy services and capacity building.

FG plans new service scheme for LG staff

In its bid to improve morale of workers at the local government level, the federal government has moved to initiate a new scheme of service for employees.

To this end, a 10-man committee has been set up to review the existing condition of service for local government employees.

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Youth Development and Special Duties, Col. Musa Mohammed (rtd), while inaugurating the committee yesterday, said that "motivation is a veritable

way of getting the best out of workers of an organization and since the scheme provides a credible career structure for local government employees comparable with what obtains in the civil service of the federation at both the state and federal levels, I believe we are on the right path in getting the best out of our LG staff."

The review, according to the minister, should "provide the avenue to correct the errors and omissions observed in the old scheme of service so that the new one will give

the local government employees a document they will all be proud of." The committee has one month within which to submit its report.

Responding, the chairman of the committee, Mr. Joseph A. Alabi, pledged to complete its assignment and produce a comprehensive report that will recognize various observations at the local government areas to be visited even though a recent workshop had made recommendations in that regard.

News

Kastina moves to check unwanted pregnancy

In a move to check the reported rampant cases of abandoned children within the town of Funtua local government area of Katsina State, the local government has so far recorded twenty three pregnant women out of wedlock.

The local government council will according to report sponsor DNA test in the state hospital.

From Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent, Katsina

The supervisory council of Funtua local government on educational and social services department, Alhaji Shehu Lado Maikaka, who was quoted in the state radio over the weekend, said the council was forced to undertake the measure due to recent cases of abandoned children within the area.

He said, both the suspects and their parents would be taken for the DNA test in order to avoid mistake and unnecessary suspicions, while the confirmed person must be asked to pay a monthly feeding allowance of at least N1,500 to the baby's family. Aside from other disciplinary measure that would be taken against them.

He then urged parents in the area to ensure proper good upbringing of their children by checking the type of friends they go out with.

In a related development, the council has directed for the census of all madmen and women roaming the streets of Funtua with a view to evacuating them.

Alhaji Shehu Lado Maikaka who supervised the local government education and social services department, said it was the chairman who directed all councilors to bring reports of lunatics in their respective wards for the council to sponsor their possible treatment in either Katsina or Kano Psychiatric Hospitals.

Efforts by *Daily Trust* to secure further comment from the local chairman on phone proved abortive.

First batch of Kwara pilgrims arrive Ilorin

The first batch of pilgrims from Ilorin zone arrived the Ilorin International Airport yesterday aboard Kabo Airline from Jeddah.

The Boeing 747 aircraft marked Dr. M. A. Dankabo Jarman Kano arrived the Ilorin International Airport at about 11.40am with 478 pilgrims from Kwara, Ondo and Ekiti States.

Speaking with *Daily Trust* on arrival, both the chairman of Ondo State Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji Idris Balogun and Alhaji Ibrahim Oniye, an official of Kwara State Pilgrims Board described their trip as successful.

Alhaji Ibrahim Oniye also commended Governor Bukola Saraki for his effort in ensuring that the trip was successful to and fro Saudi Arabia, adding that about 268 pilgrims from the state arrived aboard the Kabo Airline, yesterday.

However, the arrival and check in of the pilgrims was not properly coordinated by SAHCO Sky Power Handling Company Limited charged with that responsibility as there were no adequate buses to convey the pilgrims who looked exhausted from the tarmac to the processing centre.

Similarly, other agencies involved in the handling of the arrival of pilgrims were consciously missing except the airport manager, Alhaji Garba Ringim, who was on hand to ensure orderly conduct of the pilgrims while disembarking from the aircraft.



From left are Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed, the Perm. Sec., Ministry of works, Hon. Chuma Nzeribe, Chairman Committee on Disaster Management and Emergency, Hon. Tunde Salau, Chairman Organising Committee and the Director General of NEMA, Alhaji Salihu Shuaibu Makarfi during the two-day National Summit on Disaster Management organised by the Presidency in conjunction with House of Representatives Committee on Disaster Management held at the State House, Abuja...yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye.

Rivers govt vows to protect lives of foreigners

The governor of Rivers State, Dr. Peter Odili, has assured British citizens that the state government would continue to ensure their safety in the state, even as he has called for the establishment of a consular office in Port Harcourt to make it easier for people of the state traveling to get visas to United Kingdom.

The governor, who was speaking when the British Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Peter Waterworth, called on him in Port Harcourt, said he was saddened by the development in Bayelsa where some foreigners had been captured, saying that he would collaborate with his colleagues in other states to resolve the problems and ensure the safety of lives and

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani, Bureau Chief (Port Harcourt)

property in the Niger Delta. The governor promised to intervene to ensure the safety and early release of the men.

"We would continue to do our best in ensuring that the environment is cordial, healthy, friendly and hospitable and your citizens have comfort while living and working here," he said, and thanked the British government for what he called a rare hospitality extended to them when they visited Britain last year.

He called on the consular general to consider the issue of a British consular office in Port Harcourt to facilitate the process of securing visa by people from the area

especially sick people seeking medical attention in the UK.

He cited two incidents in the past where visas were denied sick people, despite the fact that hospitals for their treatment had been secured in the United Kingdom.

Earlier, the British envoy had described Rivers State as a very important state to both Nigeria and Britain as most of its nationals were working in the state for both the interest of the nation and the UK. He said the British people working in the area needed

the protection of the government in the state to enable them have a good working stay in the country.

The visit we gathered is not unconnected with the recent spate of attacks on British interest and kidnapping of some of its nationals in parts of the Niger Delta. The kidnapers are now asking for the release of the former governor of Bayelsa State, Chief Diepreye Alameyeseigha and Alhaji Asari Dokubo and a substantial ransom before they are released.

Kwara to assist trainee student farmers

About 100 youths undergoing training at the Malete Youth Integrated Agriculture Training Farm in Moro local government of Kwara State, are to be provided loans to embark on commercial farming after completion of their training.

Conducting journalists round the training farm yesterday, the farm manager, Mr. Collins Spain, said the youths comprising 13 females and 87 males would be trained in modern farm management for 12 months in cassava, maize yam, poultry and fish production.

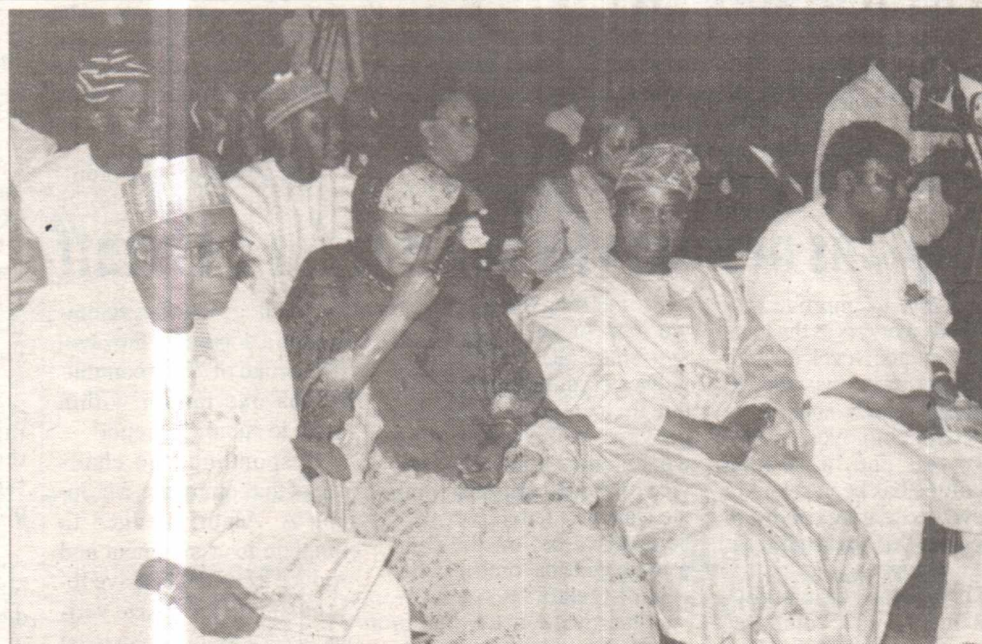
He said the ultimate aim was to make the youths commercial farmers and self employed citizens who would make fortunes in agriculture having acquired modern farm techniques involving land preparation, crop planting, planning and farm management.

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo Correspondent (Ilorin)

According to Spain, fifty percent of the students are Diploma, Higher National Diploma and University graduates, while the rest comprise school certificate or primary certificate holders.

Also speaking during the visit, the special assistant on youth empowerment, Barrister Muyideen Jimba, disclosed that the training farm was fully equipped with required agricultural inputs to enhance the training scheme, while recreation facilities put in place would complement the students training programme.

Already, the Malete Community has donated 1000 hectares of land for expansion programme of the training scheme out of which 250 hectares have been cleared for the next planting season on the farm.



A cross section of participants during the National Summit on Disaster Management and Emergency Preparedness organised by the Presidency in conjunction with House of Representatives Committee on Disaster Management held at the State House, Abuja...yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye.

SPORTS

EGYPT 2006 AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS

Okocha not sure for Zimbabwe

The team coordinator of the Super Eagles here at the Africa Nations Cup, Sumonu Bello Osagie, has said that it is not yet certain if Austin Jay Jay Okocha will be available for Nigeria's next match against Zimbabwe.

Eagles captain, Okocha, missed the Group D opener against Ghana on Monday because of a thigh injury, which officials say is not serious.

The Eagles take on Zimbabwe on Friday in their next match and Bello Osagie said, Tuesday, on Okocha's state: "Okocha is fast responding to treatment, though I cannot say if he will be available for the Zimbabwe match or not."

"What I can say, however, is that he is working hard to regain his fitness quickly."

"He goes to the gym everyday and he is desperate to get into action."

"But let me assure Nigerians that we'll not rush anything. I think it's too early to make any pronouncement on Jay Jay's chances against Zimbabwe."

Bello-Osagie would go on to describe the Super Eagles players here in Port Said as thoroughbred professionals.

This commendation is coming in the wake of Nigeria's victory over Ghana on Monday.

"I'm happy to inform Nigerians at home that the Super Eagles have so far behaved themselves here in Port Said."

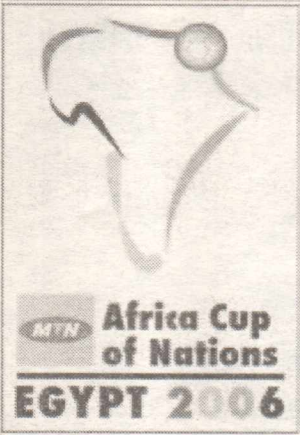
"The boys were in high spirit after their victory over Ghana, but they did not allow that to get into their heads."

"They keep indoors when they don't have anything doing and even as I'm talking to you this morning (Tuesday, Jan. 24), they are all in their rooms."

"The boys are highly focused and the concentration here has been wonderful."

"I can only praise their professionalism and sense of patriotism. They have comported themselves so well like thoroughbred professionals that they are."

Bello's commendation is a clear contrast to the situation in the Eagles camp at this same stage of the championship two years ago in Tunisia when three players, Yakubu Aiyegbeni, Victor Agali and Celestine Babayaro, were expelled from camp for breach of camp rules, less than 24 hours after Nigeria's 1-0 loss to the Atlas Lions of Morocco in their first game of Tunisia 2004.



Kanu reconciled to substitute role

Nigeria striker Nwankwo Kanu is reconciled to a substitute's role at the African Nations Cup after fracturing his cheekbone.

Kanu, who came on in the second half of Nigeria's opening Group D 1-0 win over Ghana, needed surgery after being injured playing for West Bromwich Albion against Reading on Jan. 7.

"I have to wait up to three or four weeks before I can really start to play," Kanu told reporters after training on Tuesday.

"It doesn't mean I can't play football but I have to be cautious and careful."

Asked if it was a gamble to have played against Ghana, he said: "It was, but right now I'm okay. I train every time so I feel good."

"If we're winning 2-0 or 3-0 there's no point me coming on. But if it's difficult, of course you have to come on."

Kanu is optimistic about Nigeria's chances in Egypt, despite the team unexpectedly failing to qualify for the World Cup in Germany.

"We are equal to the task, we are one of the strongest teams in this competition," he said. "The first game is always difficult but at least we got the three points and we have to build on that."

As for their prospects in 2006 after reaching the Nations Cup semi-finals in 2004, Kanu said: "The spirit is high, everyone wants to play and I believe we can do better than that."

"We want to prove a lot of people wrong. The World Cup was a disappointment but we have to move on. This is a big tournament."

"Whether you're going to the World Cup or not, everyone wants to win it."

Nigeria got off to a worrying start in Egypt when midfielder Paul Obiefule collapsed during a training session last week. On the bench on Monday against Ghana, he trained on Tuesday.

"It was a shock," said Kanu, who needed heart surgery soon after joining Inter Milan in 1996 for a life-threatening condition.

"Nobody could believe it because he was okay and suddenly it happened. It's not only heart problems that cause people to fall on the field though."

Kanu has set up his own foundation to pay for heart operations for African youngsters.

"I think it's the biggest achievement I've made in my life - to save lives," he said.



Okocha missed the Group D opener against Ghana. It is not yet certain if he will be available against Zimbabwe.

Yekini salutes Eagles

Nigeria's legendary striker, Rashidi Yekini has saluted the Super Eagles for their gallant display which earn them three points in their group D

match against their crack rivals, the Black Stars of Ghana.

Yekini who lead Nigeria to the Cup of Nations final in 1994 in Tunisia, said from his base in Ibadan, "Sincerely

speaking I am happy with the victory, for it is not easy playing against a team like Ghana. For that our boys deserve acknowledgment."

The man that holds

...Odegbami too

Prominent soccer pundits have continued to react to the Super Eagles Nations Cup victory against the Black Stars of Ghana Monday courtesy of Taye Taiwo's superb free kick.

Former Green Eagles skipper, Chief Segun Odegbami described the Eagles performance as superb, saying it's one of the best matches in the championship so far. "It's a fantastic performance, there's still room for improvement, a few areas to tighten up, but I'm very impressed."

Mathematical Segun Odegbami who has a place in history as a member of the Green Eagles squad that won the Nations Cup for Nigeria

for the first time in 1980 did not see the Senegalese as a particularly brilliant team, noting that their performance against Zimbabwe is an indication that they will have it tough against the Super Eagles.

He told brilafm.net "the Senegalese played fairly well, not brilliantly at all, the Zimbabweans are extremely weak,

but the Eagles are playing at a terrific pace, I believe the team will get better with every match."

Odegbami while acknowledging that there is still room for improvement is confident that this Super Eagles squad can win the third Nations Cup trophy for Nigeria.

Nigeria's individual highest goal-scoring record in the Cup of Nations with 13 goals however advised the team to endeavour to play "as one family as the competition progresses."

In the words of the legendary striker, "If they can play together as one, they will enjoy themselves and the game. And this too will make them go very far in the championship."

Yekini also described the Ghanaians, "As a very hard nut to crack and it will require a very talented side like Nigeria to beat a team like the Black Stars. It was not an easy game"

He urged the Eagles not to allow the victory to becloud their approaches in the remaining games.

According to the former African Footballer of the Year, "They should realize that they still have a long road to go and the coaches still have a lot of work to do, especially on the team's defence. But on the whole, I wish them the best in Egypt."

Drogba leads Cote d'Ivoire to second win

An early goal from Didier Drogba led-Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire to their second successive win at the African Nations Cup finals on Tuesday, a 2-1 triumph over Group A opponents Libya.

The World Cup finalists, who beat Morocco 1-0 on Saturday thanks to a Drogba penalty, are now on the cusp of the quarter-finals while Libya have been effectively eliminated.

Chelsea striker Drogba put

the Ivorians one up after a mistake by Libya goalkeeper Muftah Ghzalla in the 10th minute.

Ghzalla appeared to have smothered a shot by Arouna Kone but allowed the ball to slip from his grasp, allowing Kone to set up Drogba for an easy goal from close range.

The Ivorians squandered two good chances to add to their tally when Kone and Drogba went wide with close-range headers.

Libya, hammered 3-0 by hosts Egypt in the opening game of the tournament on Friday, grew in confidence after several swift passing moves and equalised two minutes before halftime through Abdelsalam Khamis.

Italian-based winger Jihad Muntaser pulled a cross back into the path of the tall Khamis, who timed his run perfectly to head home.

It was Libya's first goal at the finals since their semi-final appearance 24 years ago.

Drogba went close to restoring the Elephants' lead when he swivelled to hit a snap shot narrowly wide in the 50th minute.

Libya nearly went 2-1 in front 14 minutes later through Nader Kara.

Kara, back after suspension, missed the target with only keeper Jean-Jacques Tizie to beat following a neat interchange of passes.

But the Ivorians clinched victory when Ghzalla flapped at a high ball and Gneri Yaya Toure headed in from under the crossbar.

Cote d'Ivoire's progress into the last eight and Libya's fate in the competition is likely to be determined by the result of the Egypt-Morocco game.

RESULTS

Libya 1, Cote d'Ivoire 2
Morocco 0, Egypt 0

Today's fixtures
Angola vs Congo 4:15 pm
Cameroon vs Togo 7:00 pm

Sports

2006 AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS POSERS

Football pundits attempt answering some tough posers on the 25th African Cup of Nations

Names of respondent	Which country will win the Cup?	Which player will emerge top scorer?	Who will be the revelation of the tournament?	Which team will be the biggest of flop?	Which player will be the highest of scorer?	Which team will be the dark horse?	How far will Nigeria go?
Shargee Orkula <i>(Daily Independent)</i>	Cameroun	Samuel Eto'o	John Mikel	Togo	El-Hadji Diouf	Guinea	Semi-final
Jide Opara <i>(National Interest)</i>	Cameroun	Samuel Eto'o	Too early to say	Togo	Too early to say	DR Congo	Semi-final
Fidelis Ebu <i>(Vanguard)</i>	Can't say now	Samuel Eto'o	—	South Africa	Didier Drogha	—	Final
Richard Jideaka <i>(Sun)</i>	Can't say now	Samuel Eto'o	Too early to say	Togo	Chamaekh	DR Congo	Final
Dele Ogunseemi <i>(Tribune)</i>	Nigeria	Samuel Eto'o	Too early to say	Togo	Too early to say	DR Congo	Final
Olawale Alabi <i>(Kick Off)</i>	Nigeria	Samuel Eto'o	Taye Taiwo	Angola	Sheyi Adebayor	DR Congo	Final
David Ngobua <i>(Abuja Inquirer)</i>	Nigeria	Dos Santos	Guinea	Togo	Sheyi Adebayor	DR Congo	Final
Onah Iduh <i>(Daily Trust)</i>	Nigeria	Samuel Eto'o	Taye Taiwo	Togo	Nwankwo Kanu	Ivory Coast	Final

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6	Banking Facility	2	570m2	60,712,250:00
7	Open Stall	496	4m2	756,800:00
8	Restaurants with servery	8	170m2	20,172,000:00
9	Cold Rooms	40	15m2	2,158,500:00
10	Meat Shops	64 tables/Chairs	4m2	591,250:00
11	Chicken Shops	108 cages/Chairs	4m2	354,750:00
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Sports

AFTERMATH OF NIGERIA/GHANA CRACKER

Oruma: No, I'm not under pressure

Wilson Oruma, who emerged best player after Monday's Africa Nations Cup encounter between the Super Eagles and Ghana Black Stars, said that he was not under any pressure to perform because Augustine Jay Jay Okocha was absent from the game.

It is believed that the former Golden Eaglets captain only made the Eagles line up against Ghana because of the injury-enforced absence of captain Okocha.

Oruma said of Okocha's absence.

"Jay Jay remains our captain and it would have been nice to have him around on the pitch, but he was very supportive even as he was on the bench and I didn't feel any pressure.

"He urged us before the game to be ourselves and go out there to do the country proud."

After carting away the award for best player, instituted by sponsors, MTN, at the end of Super Eagles 1-0 win over Ghana Monday evening, Olympique Marseille of France ace, Wilson Oruma, was full of praises to almighty God.

He said: "First of all, I have to thank God for making this possible.

Glory be to God in the highest.

"Also, I thank my teammates. It was a team effort and I want to thank them very much for all their support.

"I also want to dedicate this award to all our coaches: Austin Eguavoen, Daniel Amokachi and Samson Siasia.

"They're making us work hard to make us fit and become a great team in this tournament.

"Today (Monday) we're able to prove ourselves. Ghana were too defensive

and they tried to frustrate us. We always knew it would only take a goal to break them down and open the game up.

"Taye made the difference for us by scoring that goal and we can only continue from there. It's all about team work.

"Today, it was Taye, tomorrow it could be me or Kanu or Aghahowa or someone else.

"The next game is very important also. We'll work with our coaches to fashion out another three points from there.

"This is the Nations Cup and you cannot underrate anybody.

"We saw what happened during the World Cup qualifiers, so you can't write off any team. We just have to focus on our games and take our opponents seriously."

Oruma believes the Eagles beat Ghana because they were hungrier.

"I think the team that wanted the match most won the day. We were very positive throughout the match and we deserved to win."

Despite the impressive victory on Monday, Oruma is cautious of Nigeria's chances at Egypt 2006.

"Well, we're not there yet," the former Insurance of Benin midfielder said, "but the most important thing is to take the matches one by one.

"Now we have Zimbabwe

as our next match and that should be our focus.

"We know every team is

waiting for Nigeria but we're also ready. We'll take the games match by match."



Oruma emerged best player after Monday's clash against Ghana



It's a game at a time - Eguavoen

Austin Eguavoen has said that it was crucial that the Eagles won their opening Group D match against rivals Ghana here in Port Said but they will continue take each game as it comes.

"It was most important that we won this game but at the same time, we will not be taking anything for granted and will instead take each game as a cup final," Eguavoen said.

"There is still a lot of work to be done on the team but this victory will certainly make the job a lot easier. It has taken some pressure off us. But we will not relax because our objective remains to win this competition."

The Eagles campaign will be further boosted by the availability of Rennes forward John Utaka who has served out his suspension from the red card he received against Algeria in September.

"Utaka is a key member of my team and he has been doing well in training. We are only too happy to have him back," said Eguavoen.

The Eagles coach also warned that Zimbabwe whom Nigeria beat home and away during the qualifying tournament will be no pushovers on Friday.

"We may have defeated them both at home and away but we all saw what they did against Senegal but for a few mistakes they could have got a result for themselves.

This is a different team from the one we played against in Abuja and this time they have everything to play for as against when we beat them 5-1 in Abuja," he explained.

Meanwhile, Eguavoen described the game against Ghana was a difficult one, though Nigeria was able to triumph at the end.

He said: "The game against Ghana was a very difficult one. When Nigeria play against Ghana, it's always a tough tie.

"We have three reasons to be happy with this result: We won the game, which was very important, Oruma won the best player of the match and we won the best support as you could see our fans everywhere."

Wilson Oruma won MTN's Best Player award, while Ghana's captain, Stephen Appiah, was chosen for the LG Fair Play award of the match.

Appiah said: "I'm very happy with the way we played. We lost concentration towards the end and Nigeria scored.

"It could be painful to lose this way but that's football."

Egyptian fan tips Eagles for Cup

Though Egypt won its opening game at the on-going Nations Cup on home soil, convincingly beating Libya 3-0, many Egyptians are still skeptical of their team winning the competition.

In fact Nigeriansportsonline.com can report that some Egyptian fans, like Mahmoud Sadek, are already conceding the trophy to the Super Eagles of Nigeria.

Mahmoud Sadek, 43, who says he is an Engineer and resides in the Port City of Alexandria in Egypt, told nigeriansportsonline.com in a chat that the Super Eagles of Nigeria are the strongest side in the competition and are sure to win it.

"You (Nigeria) will win the Nations Cup," Sadek said in response to a query on who he thinks would win the Nations Cup.

"We, Egyptians, know your team (Eagles) so well and we believe they are the strongest side in the competition.

"I don't see us (Egypt) winning it because we have a very inexperienced side with little known stars like Mido.

"But you Nigerians have (Obafemi) Martins, (John) Utaka and Jay Jay (Okocha). I don't see any side in this competition that can sfop you (Nigeria) from winning it," Sadek said emphatically.

The 43 year old, who claims to run a big engineering outfit in Alexandria, went on to reveal that he is a big fan of the Super Eagles and he and other fans were already mobilising to go and watch the Eagles play their remaining group matches in another Egyptian port city, Port Said.

"I'm a true fan of your team (Eagles) and always love the way they play. Like I said earlier, we know so much about your side and there are so many fans of your national team here in Alexandria.

"We are already mobilising ourselves to go watch them play in Port Said. The Nations Cup is

going on fine, but left to me it's a foregone conclusion, you (Nigeria) will win it," Mahmoud Sadek told nigeriansportsonline.com.

The Super Eagles next take on the Warriors of Zimbabwe in their second group game on Friday, after beating the Black Stars of Ghana 1-0 in their opening game of the competition on Monday.

Ghanaian press bow to Eagles

The general consensus of Ghanaian journalists here in Port Said after

Nigeria's 1-0 defeat of the Black Stars on Monday is that the better team won on the

day. "Your team (Eagles) deserved to win," blasted Michael Oti Adjei of Ball, a weekly soccer magazine in Ghana.

Adjei further told Nigeriansportsonline.com: "Your team (Eagles) showed they wanted the match more. They created more scoring chances while we (Ghana) just sat back to soak the pressure.

"Of course, something was going to happen and in the end it did. You (Nigeria) won. Congrats."

Another Ghanaian journalist, Samuel Asampong concurred though not before pointing at Micheal Essien's absence as their major problem.

"You could see we missed Essien very much in this match," the Kotoko newsman explained to Nigeriansportsonline.com.

"With Essien in this match we would not have played an ultra-defensive 3-5-2 pattern. But your team surely deserved to win.

"I mean, you created more chances and the result was fair."

However, there was a voice of dissent in the midst of all the accolades

Kuffour: We disobeyed our coach

Ghana Black Star's defensive Trojan, Samuel Osei Kuffour, has attributed his team's 0-1 loss to the Super Eagles in Monday's Africa Nations Cup tie to their failure to play to instructions.

The former UEFA Champions League winner with Bayern Munich of Germany told Nigeriansportsonline.com: "We lost because we disobeyed our coach's instructions!

Everyone could see we had a nice game. It's rather unfortunate that we lost the game. The result could have gone either side.

"We had two scoring opportunities towards the end but we failed to take them.

"Nigeria had a not-too-clear chance and they scored, but I think we paid for our carelessness. We lost concentration towards the end of the match.

"Our coach had instructed us to always station somebody in front of the ball whenever Nigeria had free-kick. We didn't do that in the dying minutes and we paid.

"But all is not lost because we still have two games against Senegal and Zimbabwe. If we win those games we'll go through."

Though Kuffour would admit that the absence of Chelsea of England star was felt by the Black Stars, the AS Roma of Italy player believes Ghana did well against Nigeria on Monday.

The 1991 U-17 World Cup winner said:

"Of course we missed Essien, but I think we still played well in his absence.

"It would have been nice for him to be here. May be the result would have been different.

"But life goes on. Hopefully, he'll be with us for the World Cup."

for the Eagles.

France Football reporter, Frank Simon told Nigeriansportsonline.com that the Eagles were too individualistic.

"I think it was a fair result in the end but to be honest with you, the match fell below my expectation.

"Your team (Eagles), in particular, was very disappointing. Your boys were too individualistic and I think Ghana played better as a team.

"But Taye Taiwo's goal was a winner any day. It brought spark to an otherwise dour match and I think you (Eagles) need to work hard if you hope to go far in this tournament."



Sports

FALL-OUT OF NIGERIA/GHANA CLASH

Ghana vow to fight on

Beaten Ghana Black Stars have blamed a loss in concentration for their narrow defeat at the hands of rivals Nigeria but promised that they will go for broke against both Senegal and Zimbabwe in their remaining group games.

"This defeat kills me,"

lamented defender Sammy Kuffour.

"We had a chance to even win the game in the first half only for us to lose in the dying minutes of the match through a loss in concentration. But we are not completely beaten. We still have two more games to go

and we will do everything to win them."

Skipper Stephen Appiah also shared the optimism of Kuffour.

"We are undaunted. We played well today even in the absence of some of our key players. We will keep the spirit high."

Both players congratulated those who stood in for keys stars Sulley Muntari and Michael Essien.

"We respect both Essien and Muntari but the players who took their places did the business. We only look forward to them joining us for the World Cup," said Appiah.



Eagles defender, Taye Taiwo celebrates after banging the winner against Ghana.

Amokachi blasts first half showing

Eagles' assistant coach Daniel Amokachi has said the team played far below par and not to instructions in the first half against Ghana Black Stars on Monday here in Port Said.

"The boys did not play to instructions in the first half and this almost cost us the match. And so during the half time we had to do a lot of talking to them in the locker room," Amokachi revealed.

"But the most important thing is that we took all three points."

The Black Stars had to clear-cut chances to go

ahead in the first period.

Amokachi, however, said the coaches will work on the team in time for their next game against Zimbabwe.

Oruma is MVP

Wilson Oruma was adjudged the best player as the Eagles pipped rivals Ghana 1-0 in the opening African Nations Cup Group D

match played here in Port Said on Monday.

Oruma showed the form that once won him many fans in his days with the Golden Eaglets. His daring runs from the midfield often troubled the Black Stars.

Nations Cup title sponsors MTN therefore awarded him a trophy for his commendable efforts.

"I dedicate this award to God who has continued to give me the strength to fight on. My teammates have also helped me to rediscover my form," Oruma said.

Ghana skipper Stephen won the LG Fair Play award.

Eagles leave Kanu behind

Probably as a result of the euphoria from their 1-0 victory over Ghana Monday, the Eagles team bus left for their hotel without West Brom star Nwankwo Kanu.

Kanu, who came on as a second half sub in the Ghana match and caused the free kick from which Taye Taiwo made hay, therefore had to

find his way back to the team's hotel alone about 15 minutes drive from the stadium.

France Football reporter Frank Simon, who is covering the African Nations Cup, said that the bus left 'Papilo' at the Port Said Stadium and this again shows that some teams get things wrong because "they are overprotective of the players".

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Sports

EGYPT 2006 AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS

Sylla warns Guinea of complacency



Guinea, surprise winners over South Africa, must beware of complacency when they meet Zambia in the African Nations Cup on Thursday, according to midfielder Mohamed Sylla.

"Although both we and Tunisia won, I have a feeling this group is far from decided," Sylla told Reuters in an interview in Alexandria on Monday.

"There could still be one or two turns in this group and if we don't watch out, it could be a tight finish. My teammates have to make sure they are as committed against Zambia as they were against South Africa."

Guinea beat South Africa 2-0 while Zambia were out-

classed in the 4-1 defeat to Tunisia in the opening Group C matches last Sunday.

Sylla, left out of Guinea's starting line-up because of a back complaint, said he felt the team had the ability to improve on their performance at the last Nations Cup finals in Tunisia, where they conceded a late goal against Mali to lose out in the quarter-finals.

"Everyone is setting their sights on the semi-finals, on going one better than last time," he said. "There hasn't been too much attention focused on us but we know that in our squad we have a lot of good players."

"The team is young but almost all the players are based in Europe. It gives us

great hope for the future. I am only 30 but I feel like an old man in this group," he quipped. Sylla is playing in his first Nations Cup after missing the last tournament for the birth of his first child.

Born in the Ivory Coast, he made a choice as a teenager to play for Guinea, where his father hails from.

"I was in the Ivory Coast junior side and played a few training matches but it's good to play for my father's country," Sylla said.

Sylla grew up in the same neighbourhood as Ivorian international Bonaventure Kalou and is godfather to Chelsea star Didier Drogba's son. "He and I used to play at Le Mans together. I remember sitting and watching

Champions League matches with him after training and then a few years later we were able to call each other to wish good luck for Champions League games."

Sylla played in the competition while with Celtic,

who he left for Leicester City at the start of the season.

"I always knew Didier would become a big star but he is still down to earth and a lot of fun. It would be nice to play against him in this competition," he said.

Song to set new mark ...in Togo tie

Rigobert Song will set a new mark for the most matches played at the African Nations Cup finals when Cameroon meet Togo in Cairo on Wednesday.

The 29-year-old, who recently won his 100th cap, will be playing his 25th tournament game, breaking the previous record of 24 held by the former Ivory Coast goalkeeper Alain Gouamene.

The Cameroon captain has not missed a game at the tournament for his country since 1996 and is playing in his sixth finals.

The Galatasaray defender made his 100th international appearance in

Saturday's 3-1 win over Angola in their opening Group B match. He became the seventh African to achieve the feat, but the first from outside north Africa.

Gouamene's mark could also be surpassed at this Nations Cup by Tunisian captain Riadh Bouazizi and his Nigerian counterpart Austin Okocha.

Bouazizi marked his 20th game in six different tournaments with a goal against Zambia in Alexandria on Sunday.

Okocha, playing in his

last tournament, missed Nigeria's opening match against Ghana in Port Said on Monday but has 20 previous appearances to his name.

Gouamene had another record matched at this tournament in Egypt — his participation in seven different finals having been equalled by the host team's striker Hossam Hassan.

Hassan, 39, has played in 18 matches since he first competed at the 1986 finals — the last time his country hosted the Nations Cup finals.

Adebayor likely to start against Cameroon

Togo striker Emmanuel Adebayor is likely to start his country's next African Nations Cup qualifier against Cameroon on Wednesday, coach Stephen Keshi said on Tuesday.

Adebayor was involved in a public slanging match with his coach on Saturday

night after refusing to start Togo's opening game of the tournament against the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The two traded verbal blows at the post-match news conference and Keshi had to be restrained from attempting to confront Adebayor on the team's bus in view of reporters.

The Nigerian-born coach accused Adebayor of being a "cry baby" after being initially dropped from the team against the Congolese and then refusing to play when Keshi changed his mind and later restored him to the starting line-up.

Adebayor made allegations that Keshi was victimising him because he had refused to allow Keshi to be his agent. Adebayor also said he was going to leave and return home to Lome.

new Arsenal signing was training with the team and Keshi struck a conciliatory tone when he spoke to Reuters on Tuesday.

"It was not very professional but it has all calmed down now. I think he will start but I haven't formalised my team yet."

Adebayor's action also drew criticism from his teammates, but he was greeted jovially when he joined them for breakfast on Tuesday.

He did not want to comment.

Togo lost 2-0 to the Democratic Republic of Congo in Cairo on Saturday and must avoid defeat against Cameroon in their next Group B match to have any chance of progressing to the quarter-finals.

"We know we have to win this one. We're ok. I'm still confident we'll make the



Cameroon's Rigobert Song will set a new mark for the most matches played in the Nations Cup when the Indomitable Lions meet Togo in Cairo today.

Our Nations Cup starts against Congo - Angola

Angola, comprehensively beaten in their opening Nations Cup outing by Cameroon, say the tournament kicks off for real for them when they face Democratic Republic of Congo on Wednesday.

Angola, surprise qualifiers for the World Cup, are unperturbed by Saturday's 3-1 defeat and believe they still can qualify from Group B providing they get a good result against the Simbas in Cairo. Coach Luis Oliveira Goncalves said that Cameroon are in a different class from the rest of the group and that he did not realistically expect his team to beat them.

"We're not worried because I think Cameroon are going to qualify from this group

Congo and Togo to see who joins them," he said.

"Cameroon are a much stronger side than the others, we knew that before the competition started. If we don't get a good result against Congo, then we will be worried." Angola's performance at the tournament is under close scrutiny as some sceptics have questioned whether they are good enough to hold their own in Germany.

Their World Cup preparations suffered another blow on Monday when FIFA announced that defender Yamba Asha, who failed a

Cup qualifier in Rwanda in October, had been banned for nine months, ruling him out of the trip to Germany.

The substance has not been revealed.

Congo kicked off with a surprisingly comfortable 2-0 win over Togo, inspired by an impressive performance from captain Lomana Lua Lua who scored one goal and set up the other.

However, the Congolese have also suffered their usual bout of infighting.

They threatened not to face Togo, claiming they had not received any of their bonus payments, and only agreed to take the field



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EDITORIAL

Hunger in East Africa

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) recently raised an alarm that an estimated 11 million people in four East African countries of Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia are on the "brink of starvation" following a severe drought that has already caused some deaths.

FAO attributed this critical condition to the failure of seasonal rains exacerbated by past and ongoing conflicts leading to crop failure and depletion of livestock herds. Already, the Kenyan government has declared a famine and has cried out that it needs at least 150 million US dollars to feed about 2.5 million people in the worst hit areas, while FAO revealed that the southern part of Somalia is hard hit and needs about 64,000 tonnes of food aid to survive until June this year. The UN world food programme also revealed that over 40 million US dollars are needed to stave starvation in Ethiopia where about eight million people are currently relying on food aid; while in Djibouti, drought conditions have worsened with no possible prospects of relief until the rains return sometime in the year.

Although instances of drought and delayed rainfall are almost normal features in most regions of Africa, especially the "Horn of Africa," where this has become almost a permanent phenomenon, we are appalled that the governments of these countries continue to ignore the fundamental necessity to squarely tackle this problem once and for all.

Our concern is due largely to the fact that famine, food shortage or hunger do not occur without months or even years of notice via shortage of rain, drought, locust or quela birds invasion, wars and other natural disasters that may impede agricultural activities. The food crisis in these African countries is therefore a potent indicator to the crisis of the state and leadership failure in Africa such that the continent which has arguably the most fertile land in the world has been unable to cater for the food needs of its people in spite of scientific and technological leaps in modern farming and food production.

African leaders, since the end of colonial rule, have been unable or unwillingly to creatively formulate any viable agricultural policy that make the continent self-sustainable in food production and processing. We must put a stop to this attitude so as to erase the denigration and stereotyping that have become the mark of our race. Our leaders must buckle up and take examples from Asian countries, especially China, which despite the seemingly insurmountable natural and ecological disadvantages, is not only able to now feed its billions of people but has become a major food exporter to other countries.

Food shortage, famine or starvation is not restricted to the East African countries identified by FAO alone but rather a widespread phenomenon all over the continent. Last year, Niger Republic was in the news as gory pictures of haggard-looking and emaciated children and their mothers suffering from hunger and starvation were aired on international television. Hunger and malnutrition are permanent experiences in many countries of Africa, especially Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Uganda and Burundi while Ethiopia had one of the most horrible and traumatic food crises ever witnessed in Africa in the '80s and early '90s.

While there might not be any officially declared famine in some parts of Africa, for instance, Nigeria, it is apparent that thousands of people, especially children, die due to malnutrition and millions of families could barely afford three square meals a day.

We urge African leaders to gird up and face the challenges of purposeful leadership, so as to free their people from the grip of hunger and starvation. The best way to achieve this is to set up an AU food and agricultural body with the mandate to ensure food security in Africa through research on food crops, provision of policy guidelines and early warning signals to avoid being caught off guard by drought, delayed rain and other natural climatic changes detrimental to agricultural activities. Our leaders should reconnect with the past where Africa, without the perquisites of modern technology, was not only able to sustain her people, but through that attracted others who unfortunately colonised her. The present situation where Africa is portrayed as a weakling and incapable of feeding her people is not only unacceptable, but denigrating.

DAILY TRUST

WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Wednesday, January 25, 2006

Gbenga's Freudian slip

By Mohammed Haruna

Call it a Freudian slip writ large, but the controversial interview by the nation's First Son (?), Gbenga, which *The News* of January 16 used as its cover story must rank as arguably the greatest damage anyone has done to the image and substance of President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. The title the magazine's General Editor, Ademola Adegbamigbe, used for his preface to the story, "Venom of Baba's son", couldn't have been more apt; Gbenga spared no one, not even his dad, in that interview, albeit inadvertently so. That the interview itself was, in a manner of speaking, a Freudian slip is obvious from the fact that it was purely the result of a chance meeting between Gbenga and Omoyele Sowore, *The News'* correspondent. This was the chance meeting at the unlikely venue of our border post with Benin Republic - Seme - which ended in Gbenga giving Sowore a ride in his vehicle, a ride that Gbenga will rue for a long time, if not for the rest of his life; the interview was said to have greatly angered his father who is said to have a reputation for being unforgiving.

Not only has Gbenga's inexplicable outburst in *The News* against just about everyone and everything damaged his old man's claim as Nigeria's greatest crusader against corruption - Gbenga, says with the authority of a First Son, that it's all selective - his interview has the potential of drawing public attention to the dismal record of his old man's economic reforms.

So far, the controversy over the president's self-perpetuation agenda has managed to draw the public's attention away from the failures of these reforms - the high unemployment, the inflation, the decay in our infrastructures, above all, the insecurity in the land.

As *Thisday* said in its editorial of September 22, 2005, "Any economic reform that does not provide jobs, mass transformation, power, food, basic health services, and social security is a failure. It is not enough for economic reforms to throw up a few billionaires even as poverty grinds the masses of the people into the dust." And most Nigerians would agree with *Thisday* that this is exactly what the president's economic reforms have done. Indeed, there are political observers who think the third term controversy is a deliberate ruse to allow a select few steal this country blind with few, if any, questions asked.

Whether this cynical view of the third term agenda is true or not, the fact remains that today, there is a lot more talk about the country's politics than there is about its economics. Which is a great pity because the country's economics is in a much worse shape than its politics, never mind the persistent claims of a turn-around by the president himself. Gbenga's claims about his father's commitment to economic reforms may have the unintended but desirable effect of drawing public attention to those reforms.

If Gbenga is to be believed - and I don't see why not - those who want his old man to stay beyond his second term do so, not so much because he is doing a great job of mending the economy, but because they are the greatest beneficiaries of those reforms. And these beneficiaries are not only "the top players in the private sector" as *The News* described them, but presumably even Americans who, in public at least, have rejected the president's alleged third term bid. The Americans have since developed a keen interest in our oil and gas following the instability of the Middle East, their main source of fossil fuel.

"The only reason why they are asking Baba to stay," said Gbenga, "is because they are afraid of Atiku (Abubakar, the Vice President). They know he will come and take over everything they have built with his unquestionable greed. Look, quite a lot of people are putting a lot of pressure on Baba to stay. Even the Americans are passing messages through me. Forget about all those scripted public statements. They want him to stay."

Baba, says Gbenga, would, however, not oblige them because, again according to Gbenga, first, the old man is too old to stand the rigors of high office much longer as he is older than he claims and, second, "because he is busy doing so many things. You can see that planes are falling off the skies left and right. Baba has no time to get involved in these claims."

If indeed the president has been too busy mending the economy to have time for those urging him to stay on beyond 2007, then his exertions seem to have achieved pretty little. The fact alone that planes have been falling off the skies implies that those exertions, at least in the aviation sector, have yet to achieve the desired results. But there is a lot more than planes dropping off the skies to suggest that the president's economic reforms are not as curative or as altruistic as its proponents often claim.

Take just two areas of these reforms, namely, the Paris Club debt cancellation and the Fiscal Responsibility Bill. When news about the debt relief first broke last June, some of the president's men went as far as to dub it the country's Second

Independence after that of October 1, 1960 from our colonial masters. Not only that, anyone who raised questions about the credibility of the debt cancellation or its costs was called all kinds of names.

For example, when Simeon Kolawole of *Thisday* claimed that some of those pushing for the debt cancellation had personal interests in the matter, he managed to get the minister of finance's dander up. Responding in *Thisday* of July 20, 2005, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala angrily asked, "Who are these people who would handle the buy-back? Would Mr Kolawole care to name them? Mr Kolawole must know more than the Paris Club, Mr President, myself, the DMO and others working on this because we do not know what and whom he is talking about. The statement is libelous, disrespectful and in extremely poor taste."

Clearly, the minister meant no third parties were involved in the negotiations for the debt cancellation. Six months later, this official position seems to have changed. It has now turned out that there has indeed been a third party and its name is Lazard Freres. Persistent rumours about the involvement of third parties, including the son of the minister, apparently forced the Debt Management Office last week to issue a less than persuasive rejection. "The appointment of Lazard Freres as consultant by the federal government to assist Nigeria at all levels of the negotiation process," said this statement, "is a standard operating procedure for all countries engaged in seeking debt relief. Lazard Freres is one of the most respected names in the area."

The statement went on to say that the consultant's fees were negotiated down from "the standard \$200,000 - \$250,000 a month to \$100,000 a month DUE TO THE FACT THAT BOTH THE MINISTER AND THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE DMO HAD THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO DO MOST OF THE WORK." (Emphasis mine).

The question the minister of finance and the chaps at the DMO should address is what expertise is required for the remaining work that would justify recruiting and paying a consultant the princely sum of \$100,000 a month? And while they are at it, they should also be spelling out to Nigerians the other costs they have to pay for the debt cancellation.

It is possible that the benefit Nigerians may enjoy from the debt cancellation is worth the cost, but we can never know for sure if we are not told the details. After all, the devil, as they say, is always in the details.

As with the debt cancellation story, Nigerians know pretty little or nothing about the Fiscal Responsibility Bill, the second area of reform I mentioned earlier. Nearly two years ago, Dr Okonjo-Iweala issued a pamphlet spelling out why Nigeria needs the bill. First, she said, the rules on expenditure were not always adequate and their enforcement was not always consistent. Second, she said, though the country has six zones, 36 states and 774 local governments, "we have only ONE ECONOMY", and there was therefore the need for co-ordination of economic and financial policies among all tiers of government. Third, the country, she said, has this nasty habit of being profligate in times of oil boom, only to suffer serious debt hangover when the boom ends. The Fiscal Responsibility Bill, she said, was the prevention needed to avoid the painful cure for a debt hangover.

Two years after the executive sent the bill to the National Assembly, it is yet to be passed into law - thanks in part to the fact that the Presidency does not seem to have given it the kind of priority it has given the president's third term agenda and thanks also to the fact that it does not seem to have done its homework well in putting the bill together: last month, it was stood down by the Senate for the good reason that the bill did not contain the financial implications of its implementation.

However, even if the bill were to be passed today, there is no guarantee that we will see an end to the fiscal indiscipline that has characterised the Obasanjo administration since its inception. Truth be told, the minister of finance was, by and large, wrong to talk about the inadequacy of rules of expenditure in our public sector, because the sector does have such a thing as Financial Regulations. She was right, however, to talk about inconsistency in the enforcement of the existing rules. The Fiscal Responsibility Bill may plug some of the loopholes in the existing system, but as with anything man-made, it will come with its own set of loopholes, since nothing man-made is perfect. The difference is always the honesty and sincerity with which a set of rules are applied.

Gbenga's Freudian slip in *The News* is perhaps the most damning exposure of the bad faith with which his father's administration has implemented and, in some cases, even formulated its economic reforms. If the interview brings about a shift in the nation's priority from our politics to our economy, it may turn out to be one of the most positive interventions in the ongoing debate about the direction of our political economy.