

DAILY TRUST

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 VOL. 10 NO. 32 TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2005 DHUL QIDA 24, 1425 A.H. N80



STAR INTERVIEW
IMF, World Bank not the authors of NEEDS - Masari
 Pages 20 & 21



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All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) Presidential Candidate, General Muhammad Buhari (rd), has called on Nigerians at individual and organisational levels to contribute what they can of money and materials to complement relief efforts by other countries to the people affected by the Tsunami disaster in South Asia and East Africa.

Buhari urges donation for Tsunami victims

General Buhari made the call in a goodwill message personally signed by him and made available to *Daily Trust* yesterday, while making a donation of N100,000 to victims of the disaster which he described as "a harrowing spectacle of suffering and

By Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter
 devastation in one of the biggest humanitarian disasters the world has yet seen".
 He called on members of the African Union and individual African countries to

shape up in their own right to lead the continent in learning to share the little things they have saying, "it is simply not right to always hide behind our poverty to refuse to do things which our conscience beckons us to do."

He suggested that the Nigerian Red Cross began the necessary level ground work required to commence disaster relief which all countries must contribute, while also exploring the possibility of setting up a special fund for the collection of relief materials in cash and kind from all

willing donors throughout the country, and arrange to have them sent to the affected areas.
 Similarly, he called on the world body to consider establishing an international disaster relief fund which all countries must contribute, while also exploring the possibility of setting up a special fund for the collection of relief materials in cash and kind from all

North mourns Wada Nas

Northern Nigeria was yesterday thrown into mourning following the death of a former minister in the Abacha regime and President General of the Peoples Salvation Party (PSP), Alhaji Wada Nas. He was 66.
 Alhaji Wada Nas, a frontline member of the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP), died in the early hours of yesterday in a private hospital in Kaduna

From Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent, Katsina
 after a brief illness.
 A former teacher and chairman of the Katsina chapter of the defunct National Republican Convention (NRC), Nas served as the special duties minister under the late military head of state, General Sani Abacha.
 The remains of the late Wada Nas were conveyed to Funtua, his home town, by

one of his bosom friends, Alhaji Umar Mutalab, Chairman, First Bank of Nigeria; accompanied by Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarrfi of Kaduna State; the CNPP Chairman, Alhaji Balarabe Musa; the former Chairman, Newspaper Proprietors Association, Alhaji Ismaila Isa, among others.
 The late former minister was buried at the Funtua central graveyard at about 10 am, attended by political

associates, loyalists and hundreds of sympathisers.
 He is survived by two wives, 20 children and grandchildren.
 Also in attendance at the

burial were Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara State; the Minister of Industries, Ambassador Magaji Mohammed, and the former military administrator of Kaduna State,

Col. Ja'afaru Isa (rd).
 Other personalities who were at the burial included the PCT Minister, Malam Nasir el-Rufa'i; an ANPP chieftain,
Contd. on Pg 2

...Nigeria loses a statesman

The Conference of Nigeria Peoples Party (CNPP), the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) as well as some notable Nigerians have described the death of Alhaji Wada Nas as shocking, saying the death has robbed Nigeria of a statesman of high standing.
 The CNPP said in a statement signed by its Secretary General, Maxi Okwu, that the shocking death of the former special duties minister and national president of the

By Abdu Labaran, Group Political Editor, Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief, Kaduna, Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent, Kaduna & Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent, Katsina
 Peoples Salvation Party had depleted "our ranks in our quest to wage back the Tsunami of fascism and anti-democratic tendencies of Obasanjo-led PDP regime".
 The statement added Wada Nas would always be remembered for his 'doggedness and unflinching commitment to whatever he believed in, no matter the array of

opinions and views on the other side. This definitely will mark him out in our political environment polluted with political carpet crossers and opportunists who lack commitment to any principles or ideals'.
 "Nigerians, and indeed this regime, would not likely forget in a hurry his pungent, incisive and brutally frank cerebral outtings in the media. In fact, he was the "stormy petrel" of our time."
 The ACF, which spoke through its Deputy National Secretary, Alhaji Inuwa Abdulkadir, said that Nigeria has lost an indefatigable political activist whose "crucial advice and fatherly counsel will be missed by the forum".



Late Alhaji Wada Nas

Iraqi election officials quit over threat

Election committee officials in charge of organising the upcoming Iraqi general elections in the northern city of Baiji have resigned after receiving death threats, just as 19 people were killed in a series of car bomb explosions, one of which was in front of the party headquarters of interim Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's party.
 "We all resigned. They

By Jibrin Abubakar, Senior Reporter (Foreign Desk), with Agency Report
 said the election was illegitimate because it will take place under occupation," said Mohammad Shahrani, president of the 12-member Baiji Higher Electoral Commission. He gave no details about the threats.
 "Anti-U.S. insurgents are

Describing the late politician as one of the most upright politicians and great grass-roots mobilisers, the ACF deputy scribe added that "Alhaji Wada Nas would be missed most by Nigerians

Robbers kill two intending pilgrims in Ilorin

Devil robbers struck in Ilorin in the early hours of yesterday killing two intending pilgrims for Hajj 2005. *Daily Trust* learnt that the robbers failed the resilience of the victims said to be a couple at

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent, Ilorin
 Isale Koko Quarters, Ilorin, Kwara State capital, but police PRO, ASP Gideon Marcus, said "we are not aware"

identified as Suleiman and his wife were murdered on the eve of their departure for the holy land scheduled for 10pm yesterday.
 Although no property of the couple was tampered with, the husband simply

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News

North *Cont'd. from Pg 1*

Alhaji Sale Hassan; Alhaji Mohammed Abacha and Senator Abu Ibrahim.

Reacting to the death, Alhaji Balarabe Musa described Nas as "a great patriot".

Musa said that the country would miss the "patriotic ideals" of the deceased.

He said he received the

"sad news of the death of our dear colleague with rure shock and humility to God Almighty".

He said that his death would affect the activities of the opposition, adding that "Nas has participated actively in the activities of the CNPP and his death will definitely be felt".

Nigeria *Cont'd. from Pg 1*

this time of its nascent democracy.

The All Progressives Grand Alliance described Alhaji Nas as "a great patriot, politician and statesman whose views could not be ignored by the people," adding that he would be missed by all those who had the privilege of working closely with him, and be remembered for his selfless service to his people and the nation.

APGA, in a statement signed by its National Chairman, Chief Chekwas Okorie, lauded the late politician for taking a definite position on any national issue without equivocation, adding that by his death, "APGA in particular has lost a partner in progress who saw merit in our policy to zone the 2007 presidential slot to the south-east".

The Kaduna State Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makari, who was at the funeral of the late former minister in Funtua, said that no one could doubt the contributions of Alhaji Wada Nas to national development, especially in terms of political education of Nigerians and northerners in particular.

The Kaduna state governor, who described Alhaji Wada Nas as 'one of the most outspoken and adroit politicians who demonstrated that politics and transparency can go together', said the political icon would be greatly missed by Nigerians, particularly by the grass roots whose course he championed throughout his political life.

Reacting on the death of Alhaji Wada Nas, the Katsina State Governor, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar' Adua, described his death as a great loss to the nation, and particularly, Katsina, the deceased's home state.

The governor, who spoke through his Special Adviser on Information and Media, Alhaji Nasir Abdul, said that the Nigerian masses had really lost a friend whose political calling was devoted to fighting their cause.

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Malam Nasir Ahmed el-Rufai, who led the federal government's delegation to the Funtua residence of the deceased for condolence, said the death of Alhaji Wada Nas was a great loss suffered by the whole nation.

The Minister of Industry and associate of the deceased, Alhaji Magaji Mohammed, said that Alhaji Wada Nas had contributed for the political enlightenment of Nigerians more than most of his political colleagues and peers.

The former Lagos and Borno States military administrator, Brigadier General Buba Marwa (rtd), said Alhaji Wada Nas was a politician of

the old school who always spoke his mind on any issue he strongly believed in, not minding whose ox was gored.

Describing the former special duties minister as his "very good friend", the Albarka Air chairman and presidential aspirant said that the deceased would be missed by most Nigerians, particularly the masses whom he was very close to and whose cause he fought for up to the end of his life.

Alhaji Iro Abubkar Danmusa, whose friendship with the deceased spanned over a period of 40 years, said that Alhaji Wada Nas was a politician of high moral standing who always stuck to what he believed in and who never allowed political differences to interfere with his relationships with his friends.

Alhaji Iro Danmusa, who is a member of the PDP's Board of Trustees and chairman of the party's reform committee, said that the late PSP national president did his best to contribute to political enlightenment in the country, describing him as a good commentator who will be hard to replace.

The former Deputy Governor of Katsina State, Alhaji Tukor Ahmed Jikamsai in his tribute, said that Alhaji Wada Nas was an ace that is hard to follow, and whose death will leave a vacuum that would be hard to fill.

Iraqi *Cont'd. from Pg 1*

active in Baiji, where one of Iraq's most important oil refineries is based.

Earlier on Sunday, guerrillas in the nearby town of Sharqat blew up a local government building due to serve as a polling centre.

Insurgents have also severely disrupted the imports of goods and refined oil products from neighbouring Turkey.

The general elections are scheduled for Jan. 30.

Meanwhile, the 19 people killed are said to be the first of four major blasts targeted to the headquarters of Allawi's al-Wifaq Party (Iraqi National Accord) in al-Zaitun Street in Baghdad yesterday.

The headquarters is reported to have previously come under repeated mortar attacks, but this time a bomber managed to break through the checkpoints of the headquarters and blow up his booby-trapped car.

Seven Iraqi policemen were killed, including an officer, and 23 others wounded in the explosion which targeted a checkpoint near al-Wifaq Party headquarters, police sources told al-Samarra.

The journalist reported that ambulances rushed to the explosion site and the US forces and Iraqi police cordoned off the area, while helicopters hovered above.



From L-R: Governor J. C. Dariye, Alhaji Adamu Maji Haruna, Emir of Hadejia, Ghong Gwom Jos, His Royal Majesty, Da Victor Dang Pam and Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki in a group photograph when the Emir paid a courtesy visit on the Ghong Gwom Jos recently.

OGBEH/OBASANJO FEUD

Benue PDP leaders urge truce

The Deputy National Auditor of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Godwin Dabo

Adzu'ana, yesterday called on President Olusegun Obasanjo to sheath his sword in the rift with the party's national Chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh, saying that the people will not tolerate any move to remove Chief Ogbeh on the basis of the letter he wrote to the president.

Addressing newsmen yesterday, Chief Godwin Dabo noted that the PDP leaders from Benue State have summoned Chief Ogbeh to a meeting on Sunday in which he exonerated himself of all corruption charges,

By Isa Sanusi,
Political Reporter (Senate)

emphasising that Chief Ogbeh's letter to the president was prompted by the failure of President Olusegun Obasanjo to take concrete action on the Anambra crisis.

"We have invited Chief Audu Ogbeh to Benue State and we have asked him to tell us the truth about what informed his letter to Mr President, and he said he was forced by complaints from party members and the executive. Consequently, he decided therefore that it is appropriate for him to make his comment and forward it to Mr President. He said privately that in the past one year, he had drawn the president's attention on several occasions on what was happening in Anambra State, but the president said the police were going to do something. Nothing was done," he said.

Chief Dabo said the position of the people of Benue State is that there was nothing wrong in the letter Ogbeh wrote to President Obasanjo, while maintaining

that the corruption charges should be investigated by the police and the EFCC before a judgement is passed.

"If NEC members of the party have complaint against Audu Ogbeh, let them allow due process to take its course. If at the end of the investigation, they found Ogbeh guilty, nobody in Benue State will intervene. We will let him pay the price for corruption," he said.

The PDP chieftain also suggested the party should put in place a committee to study the two letters and find out which one is more damaging to the nation's polity.

"Let us stop wishing our dirty linen in public," he advised.

Meanwhile, the National Youth Vanguard of the PDP yesterday passed a vote of no confidence on the national executive of the PDP headed by Chief Audu Ogbeh, even as they wanted an interim caretaker committee to be set up to take over from the National Working Committee (NWC).

At a press conference ye-

sterday, the national Coordinator of the group, Mr Usen Ikere, accused Chief Audu Ogbeh of overreaching the polity, saying that the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party lacks the legitimacy, trust and confidence to continue running the affairs of the party.

"We are dissatisfied with the party's leadership as it is presently constituted; it is inefficient, inactive and insensitive to the yearnings of the millions of the youth who are members of the party," a communiqué they issued stated.

Buhari *Cont'd. from Pg 1*
permanent rapid-response disaster relief civil defence force with offices on each continent which would swiftly respond to disasters without wasting time awaiting contributions.

While extending his condolence to the families of those who lost loved ones, the injured and the displaced, their governments and the entire world, General Buhari decried the nonchalant attitude of Africans and Nigerians in particular to the plight of the less-fortunate.

"The time has come for Nigerians in particular and Africans in general to rid themselves of the unbecoming attitude that knows only how to receive. Just consider what would have happened to the victims if the attitude of the whole world is like ours."

He said that it was a great pity that while a caring world had already collected almost \$2 billion for the unnumbered victims of the tragedy, "no member of the African Union had contributed anything to the fund," and wondered why we are not moved by the tragedy and suffering of others.

"Everyone can contribute his widow's mite to make a positive difference in the lives of others less fortunate," he said.

"It is not necessarily the quantum of contribution that matters in our case; it is more the readiness and spirit. Hasn't the time come for us to begin to do something positive? Why is it that we always wait for others to do the good work," he charged.

Robbers

with, it was suspected that the designated bank for the couple's BTA was removed.

Meanwhile, the airlift exercise of the third batch of intending pilgrims from Ilorin zone has run into a hitch due to the shortage of BTA at the Bank of the North, Ilorin, even as officials of the bank were not ready to entertain enquiries.

For the third day running, no flight has been recorded as a result of the inability of pilgrims board officials to assemble 455 pilgrims schedules for each flight.

At the inaugural flight ceremony of the first batch of pilgrims from the Ilorin zone, official disclosed that there would be four scheduled flights for pilgrims to be completed by January 4, 2005.

However, the Chairman of the state's pilgrims board, Alhaji Abdullahi Abdulhameed, said the remaining passports of the state's pilgrims had been deposited

Cont'd. from Pg 1

with the designated bank for the issuance of their BTA.

He explained that the delay may not be unconnected with the slight increase in the number of pilgrims as against the 1,000 pilgrims who performed the hajj exercise last year.

According to the chairman, last year's figure was used as the basis for the CBN, hence, the present adverse effect on this year's exercise.

When contacted, the Zonal Coordinator, Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs, Alhaji Aliyu Olarongbe, said only 49 pilgrims were needed to complete the third batch of 455 pilgrims as at press time.

He assured however that the third batch would leave for Jeddah 10pm yesterday with the hope that the BTA problem would have been resolved, and appealed to pilgrims to exercise patience. However, the airlift of Ondo State pilgrims from Ilorin zone has been completed, Alhaji Olarongbe added.

NEWS

PSP will survive Nas

—Dan Hassan

The Peoples Salvation Party (PSP) gubernatorial candidate in the 2003 general elections in Kano State, Alhaji Umar Dan-Hassan, has assured that the party would outlive its late Chairman, Alhaji Wada Nas.

Nas died yesterday in Kaduna after a brief illness and was buried in his home town, Funtua, Katsina State.

Dan-Hassan told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Funtua that the kind of leadership Nas provided for the party would ensure its survival.

"By the grace of God, all the aspirations and political wisdom of Wada Nas will continue because there are people around him who have learnt and will continue with the struggle," he said.

Nas' death, according to him, would give the opposition more strength as his exit would not become their weakening point.

On his part, the party's national youth leader, Alhaji Rabi'u Sani, assured that the leadership provided by Nas would not die with him.

He described Nas as a great political leader who would be missed by the political class.

NAN reports that prominent and political personalities have continued to troop to Funtua to condole the families of the deceased.

Among them was a delegation from Alhaji Muhammad Buhari, who is currently out of the country; Minister for Water Resources, Alhaji Muhtari Shagari; Minister of Environment, Colonel Bala Mande (tr) a delegation from Katsina State House of Assembly, and some members of the National Assembly.

Human Rights violation: Oputa Panel report indicts ex-military leaders

The report of the Justice Oputa-led Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission has indicted former heads of state, Generals Muhammad Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and Abdulsalami Abubakar for gross human rights violation, pointing out that the former military rulers have cases to answer in the interest of the nation.

The Executive Summary and Recommendations of the panel made available to *Daily Trust* noted that former General Abdulsalami Abubakar has a case to answer on the circumstances leading to the death of Chief MKO Abiola, saying that his government knows much more about the cause of the death of the late business mogul.

On General Ibrahim Babangida, the report said: "We are of the view that there is evidence to suggest that he and the two security chiefs—Brigadier-General Halilu Akilu and Colonel A.K. Togun—are accountable for the death of Dele Giwa by letter bomb. We recommend that this case be re-open for further investigation in the public interest."



The ever busy Sani Abacha Way leading to Wise Market empty yesterday due to the public holiday declared by the Federal Government to usher in the New Year. Pix: Joe Oroye

Nas' death, great loss, say Rimi, others

The former Kano State governor, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, has said that the death of Alhaji Wada Nas will rob present and future generations of politicians of beautiful and incisive ideas that would impact positively on the politics of Nigeria.

Abubakar Rimi, who was reacting to the sudden death of the late Funtua-born politician, said Wada Nas had never been afraid to speak his mind.

"The nation will miss him a lot because there are not many Wada Nas in the present age," he stated, adding that Wada Nas spent the better part of his life

From Musa Umar Kazure, Regional Editor (Kano)

serving the nation in various capacities and lately as a commentator on public affairs. Alhaji Tanko Yakasai, who knew Alhaji Wada Nas since 1964 when he was elected into the House of Representatives in Lagos, described the late politician as an outspoken politician who spoke his mind freely regardless of whose ox is gored.

He stated that Wada Nas was the type of people Nigeria needs today and will be difficult to get his replacement.

"Wada Nas is a consistent and principled commentator, a courageous and steadfast politician who is always frank in his approach to issues of national importance," he noted. He prayed to Allah to have mercy on his soul, and give his family, his friends and associates the fortitude to bear the great loss.

Also commenting on the death of Alhaji Wada Nas, his NEPU political associate and friend, Mr Magaji Daumbatta, said he is consoled by the legacy the late Wada Nas left for posterity because he led a worthwhile life and became a shining example to be emulated. "Wada Nas was a dogged fighter for justice and



Late Alhaji Wada Nas

champion of democratic ideals.

He has been in the forefront of fighting for justice for all, especially the less privileged in the society. He will be missed by, not only his family, but by all who cherish freedom, justice, fairplay and democracy," Alhaji Maraji stated. He prayed to Allah to forgive all his shortcomings and bless his progeny.

A public commentator, Alhaji Wada Danjuma Ibrahim, is however of the opinion that the death of the erstwhile National Chairman of Peoples Solidarity Party (PSP), Alhaji Wada Nas, is a challenge to Nigerians because Wada Nas has paid his dues as a Nigerian, as a Muslim and as a northerner.

As a Nigerian, he said, Wada Nas was principled and consistent which many politicians lack today because he saw politics as a means of liberating the society.

"Wada Nas stood firm for the north when other so-called champions of the north were busy seeking relevance with government and those in power. He fought, defended and marketed the north like any patriot of his time, and the north owe him for that," Alhaji Danjuma posited.

Alhaji Wada Nas, he said, added value to his life, so he prayed for his forgiveness from Allah.

Collapsed bridge kills 6 in Ibadan

From Dele Ogunyemi, Freelancer (Ibadan)

No fewer than six people were instantly killed in Ibadan, Oyo State capital when a pedestrian bridge beside Bola Ige International Market along New Ife Road collapsed on them when a trailer conveying an earthmoving equipment ran into the bridge.

Eye witness accounts revealed that the deceased persons who were passengers in a red Nissan Sunny car with registration number: Oyo AM 855 MAP got entangled as the bridge collapsed on the car following the crash of the trailer on it.

According to eye-witnesses, the trailer which was travelling on a very high speed towards Ife-Ife route had the earthmoving equipment being conveyed tangled with the bridge which resulted in the heavy equipment giving way, thus landing on the red car with a loud bang.

The six occupants of the Nissan Sunny car got killed in the process. A Toyota Corolla which followed the trailer closely however escaped death but ran into the trailer, leaving its passengers with injuries and bruises.

As a result of the accident, motorists travelling to their different home states for the New Year celebration were stranded due to the heavy vehicular traffic build up for several hours while others made spirited efforts to detour.

Plateau land dispute: Police confirm one killed, eight suspects arrested

The Plateau State government has confirmed the killing of one Engineer Davou Bulle in the last week's attack in Ropp village, Barikin Ladi local government area of Plateau State, even as eight people have been arrested over the incident.

Speaking with *Daily Trust* in Jos yesterday, the Plateau State Police Commissioner, Mr. Joseph Apapa who disclosed the number of arrests so far made following the attack, said investigation was still in progress.

Meanwhile, the Berom Youth Movement has condemned the killing of Engineer Bulle, expressing concern that "this gruesome act" is coming on the heels of the just concluded peace conference in the state when useful lessons were expected to have been learnt from past experiences.

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

Address a press conference in Jos yesterday, President of the Berom Youth Movement (BYM), Prince Simon Mwakwon Fwet, who insisted that the attack was not as a result of land dispute between Berom and Fulani families in the Ropp village, asserted, "from all indications, this was a premeditated and wanton attack, devoid of any provocation."

The youth movement demanded "unadulterated justice for the blood of Engineer Bulle; nothing short of that will assuage our inflamed and injured feeling," the president stressed.

He called on the government to ensure that the perpetrators of the act

are made to face the full wrath of the law.

"How this issue is ultimately handled and resolved will determine the sincerity of purpose on the part of government to put an end to wanton destruction of lives," Prince Fwet noted.

He, however, pledged that the BYM would continue to operate within the ambit of the law while calling on the people to remain calm and peaceful.

The Plateau State government had in a swift response to the situation sent a high powered delegation to condole the family of the deceased.

The Secretary to the Plateau State government, Mr. John Gobak, who led the delegation, said government would ensure it gets to the root of the matter and take appropriate steps in handling the situation.

News

Inferno: Customs brief victims' families

From Adelanwa Bamgboye,
Correspondent in Lagos.

At least six families out of the nine Customs officers who lost their lives in an inferno while attempting to arrest smugglers have been contacted by the management of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

The spokesman of the Nigeria Customs Service, Mr. Wale Adeniyi, disclosed this in a telephone conversation with *Daily Trust* yesterday.

The nine customs officers were fished out of the waters of a riverine community in Ojo local government of Lagos State.

The officers involved were part of the 12-man team from the Western Marine Command in Lagos.

Although several other mutilated bodies were later seen floating on the surface of the water, no arrest has been made so far because over thirty-six persons were feared dead in the stampede.

Three customs officers who survived the inferno had to swim and trek for hours before getting to urban areas.

Specifically, the smugglers were busy siphoning crude oil from the oil pipeline before they were accosted by the security agents.

While commenting on the issue, the Comptroller General NCS, Mr. Gyang Jacob Buba, said that government had concluded plans to purchase more patrol boats.

"We have always said that the general working environment is not up to standard. I am not afraid of saying so - we are saying so with all sense of responsibility, but you will appreciate that we cannot abandon the job until we have a perfect situation. We keep working and keep asking for a better condition," Mr. Gyang Buba said.

The C-G, who saluted the courage of his men, directed that other families should be contacted, adding that other necessary assistance would follow.



Gov. Bukar Abba Ibrahim and the Oba of Ijesha land, Oba Bagriel Adekujinle II and the New Otunba of Ijesha land who is also the Waziri Adini of Ijesha land during the Governor's visit to Ijesha land ... recently

Governor's vehicle hit boy over scramble for money

A 25-year old boy, Ali Musa, was at the weekend hit by a vehicle as Governor Ali Madu Sheriff threw money for teeming supporters at Gidan Dambe village in Borno State.

According to an eye witness, Bashir Adamu, the incident took place at about

From Isa Umar Gusau,
Correspondent in
Maiduguri

11.00 a.m. when the governor was on his way to Dikwa for a festival.

"Ali had returned from Taraba State on Saturday where he went on a visit and

the following day (Sunday), he died.

"When Governor Ali Sheriff started throwing money to some "achaba" men, Ali attempted to get some but so unknowingly to him, a black Jeep which carried the governor hit him on the head; he started bleeding through the nose and the mobile police attached to the governor rushed him to a hospital" the witness re-called.

Bashir Adamu, a car wash man, added that the governor had earlier on Saturday on his way to Dikwa thrown some money, forcing supporters to scramble for it.

When *Daily Trust* visited the emergency accident ward of the Specialist Hospital Maiduguri, the victim was found in a coma.

A close relation of the victim told *Daily Trust* that Ali's father live in Garba Cedi, Taraba State.

A woman who sat beside the victim in the hospital

lamented that the state government has not shown concern over the incident.

However, a source at the government told *Daily Trust* that Governor Ali Madu Sheriff had shown tremendous concern over the state of the victim.

"Governor Sheriff had personally assigned a medical doctor from the Government House to join the team of doctors taking care of the victim. The governor had also provided funds to the doctor for provision of drugs".

Awards for Gov. Ibrahim well deserved - Aide

The recent awards presented to Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim of Yobe State in some parts of the country have been described as testimony of his patriotism and love for a united Nigeria.

A statement issued by his Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Alhaji Ibrahim Jirgi in Bauchi yesterday, noted that Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim was "a peace lover, epitome of true Nigeria and a formidable champion of unity, among others".

The special assistant said the governor deserved the awards because he repositioned Yobe state in the

areas of politics, economic, and social struggle through meaningful interactions that have brought great investments.

On the governor's achievements, the special assistant observed that the governor launched the UBE scheme and ensured the prompt payment of scholarship allowances while school fees were abolished.

Alhaji Ibrahim Jirgi said the Back-to-Farm programme and the establishment of agro-allied industries and the construction of a television booster station are a few in the list of achievements by Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim over the last two years.

It could be recalled that recently, the governor was conferred with an honorary doctorate degree in Environmental Technology by Federal University of Technology, Akure, for his vision and people's oriented programmes.

Similarly, Governor Bukar was also turbaned as the Otunba of Ijesha land, *Bobotolu* of two land, *Waziri adini* of Ijesha land, *Turaki adini* of two land and the *Kpa-Kpando* of Nimo community, among others

2007: Babangida directs campaign outfits to fuse

The former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida (rd), has directed the various campaign organisations working for his 2007 presidential ambition to fuse into one outfit.

The Chairman of the north-east zone of the harmonising committee, Alhaji Adamu Gombe, disclosed this in Yola at a news conference.

He said that the zoning of the presidency to the north was a good omen to the PDP, adding that every part of the north was qualified to aspire for the position.

Gombe disclosed that some people in Adamawa presently aspiring for the presidency were working for the former president, adding they would make their position known at the appropriate time.

ABI nominates Dr. Onu man of the year 2004

Dr. Oghonnaya Onu, the first elected governor of Abia State and first presidential standard bearer of the then All People Party Party, (ANPP), has been nominated man of the year 2004 by the American Biographical Institute (ABI).

This was contained in a letter addressed to Dr. Onu, dated October 29, 2004 and signed by the President of the Institute, J.M. Evans. The president said of Research of the Institute

decided to nominate Dr. Onu based on his "overall accomplishments and contributions to society".

According to the president, the ABI board "continually researches the achievements of men and women from around the world and most are recognized in the Institute's internationally acclaimed WHO'S WHO publications".

"Occasionally," the president added, "the board finds other individuals deserving of such top honours as MAN OF THE

YEAR. The task of choosing such a group from around the world is overwhelming to say the least" as a result, the institute is assisted by its research board of advisors which comprises a panel of about "10,000 influential members who live in 75 different countries of the world" the president added.

Dr. Onu, who graduated with a first class honours degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Lagos, is said to have received several honours and awards from both within and outside Nigeria

FG appoints 14-member Amirul hajj C'ttee

The president has approved the appointment of Amirul Hajj/Federal Government's Delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Hajj 2005.

The Deputy Senate President, Senator Ibrahim Muntu, was appointed as leader of the delegation.

Other members include Amb. Lawan Gana Guba, Minister of Integration in

Africa: Dr. B.K. Kaigama, Perm Sec. GSO: Oba Tijani Oyesusi, Timi of Ede and Alh. Saidu Namaska, the Emir of Kotajona.

Others are Alh. Muhammad Umaru Atiku, Emir of Akko, Ustaz Bala Lau, Alh. S.A. Akinsanya, Alh. Ibrahim Akanni, Alh. Umaru Muham-mad, Sheikh Sani Jingril and Alhaji Muhammad Mustapha - Grand Khadi.

News

AU to solve Darfur dispute, says Mbeki

South African President Thabo Mbeki has said that the African Union (AU) was authorized to solve the Darfur dispute.

At a joint press conference with his Sudanese counterpart, Omar El-Bashir, Mbeki said

"the challenge is to enable AU to achieve this mission."

He said the AU had called on the African countries to send more observers to Darfur to monitor the ceasefire agreement signed by the Sudanese government and the Darfur rebels.

He pointed out that his country's observers "are already there" in Darfur.

"We will do our best to meet the demand of the AU by increasing the number of the observers in Darfur so as to expand their mission," said Mbeki.

The AU had succeeded in deploying only 900 troops in Darfur as ceasefire observers, whereas it had agreed on sending more than 3,400 to the area.

In the same context, the Sudanese president had confirmed that the challenge

for Sudan in the post-war era "is how to implement the agreement and maintain the peace."

The peace agreement would be signed by the Sudanese government and the Sudan

People's Liberation Movement on Jan. 9.

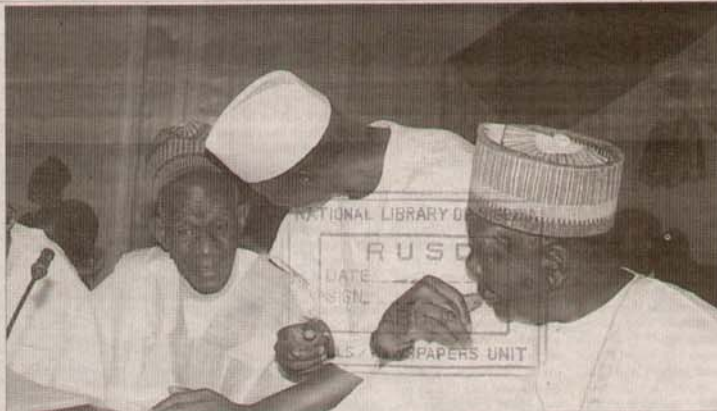
He said the six-month preparatory period which would start on Jan. 9 would enable the government to take some measures for the implementation of the agreement and rebuilding government's institutions.

Mbeki arrived in Khartoum last Thursday on a four-day official visit to Sudan.

He accompanied his Sudanese counterpart to Nairobi last Friday to attend the signing

of a permanent ceasefire and a detailed plan for implementing the protocols reached on southern Sudan conflict.

Mbeki also addressed the exceptional session of the Sudanese parliament on Saturday at the 49th memorial ceremony for Sudan's Independence Day.



General Yakubu Gowon discussing with Alhaji Yahaya Gusau and Col. Hamed Ali (ret) and the Chairman of Board of Trustees at the inauguration ceremony of members of the Board of Trustees and the National Executive Council of Arewa Consultative Forum held in Kaduna...recently

Kano PDP chides Rimi over utterances

The Kano State Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, has condemned the recent utterance of Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, a member of Board of Trustees of the party, describing him as a "cash and carry politician".

Addressing a press conference in Kano yesterday, the leaders of the party in Kano, led by the state's Chairman, Alhaji Uba Jigo, berated Rimi for his endorsement of the judicial commission of inquiry set up by the Shekarau administration to investigate financial improprieties against the Kwankwaso administration.

"Without mincing words, Rimi's position confirms that he has been consistently inconsistent in matters of the principles. His position sharply contravenes the principle for the respect of rule of law. Rimi's outburst is sub-judicial," the PDP leader posited.

While regretting such pronouncement coming from a respected leader of the

From Musa Umar Kazaure
Regional Editor, Kano

party, the Kano PDP leaders maintained that the current white paper indicting the former Kano State governor, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, does not approximate with a verdict of Elegbede Tribunal that convicted Alhaji Abubakar Rimi in 1984 of "corrupt enrichment".

They added, "The findings, recommendations, observations and follow-up matters contained in the white paper are not facts. They are expressed opinions of the ANPP government on issues pertaining to an opponent. They are nothing but published views of an opponent on a party government and individuals they would rather have erased from history".

They added that Kwankwaso would not react as Rimi did when he was convicted by the Elegbede Tribunal, saying Kwankwaso would neither plead guilty by accepting the opinion of his opponents as Rimi did in

1984, nor would he assign his wife and associates to raise funds from friends and foes alike to pay for the monies allegedly misappropriated.

The PDP leaders challenged Rimi that if he feels that he is so important, he should leave PDP and join any of the 29 political parties in Nigeria to achieve his presidential ambition.

They also threatened that henceforth, any PDP leader in Kano State who makes such unwarranted utterance against the party will be recommended for suspension from the party, and that include Rimi.

They added that their relationship with other PDP chieftains in Kano like Ghalu Na' Abba, Musa Gwadabe and Aminu Wali has been cordial despite the family quarrel which is natural in a democratic set up, saying only Abubakar Rimi is giving the party headache in Kano.

Turning to the ANPP government under Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, the PDP leaders said there is nothing on ground to show that the ANPP government has something to show as an achievement despite its claim of being a Shariah compliant government. "Prostitute are still around, beer is still being sold in Kano, immoral offences are still being committed in the government circle: tell me what is their achievements in Kano," the state secretary Aminu Labaran charged, while answering questions from journalists.

In a swift response, the Kano State government said that the setting up of the judicial commission of inquiry into the activities of Kwankwaso administration was not done out of malice or with intention to witch-hunt anybody as the entire proceeding was in public and documented.

The Director General, Research and Documentation

to Governor Ibrahim Shekarau, Dr. Tijjani Naniya, said the atrocities committed to the people of Kano State by the PDP government of Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso was too glaring to go unnoticed by any sincere and honest administration.

He cited the 48 million naira water chemical money diverted; the 67million naira students' scholarship that was misappropriated and the 97million naira meant for assisting vigilante and other security outfits that was shared to PDP party members by the Kwankwaso administration.

"All these are facts not fallacy, and you cannot deny them because they are documented. The misuse of the ecological funds is not something you will sweep under the carpet. If we do so, God will query us, and the people of Kano and God will not forgive us", Dr. Naniya posited.

The Shekarau spokesman said that the PDP leadership in Kano seems to be confused for dragging the ANPP government into their internal party squabble, adding that Sharia implementation is on course in Kano as all the structures required for Sharia implementation, like Sharia Commission, Hisba Commission and the Zakat Commission are already in place.

He stated that Mallam Shekarau record is there and clean for anyone to see and study since he joined the civil service in 1979.

"How can you victimise people who have been already judged as failure by the Lord God himself. Their defeat at the polls was a judgment by God, using the mandate of the people to remove them from power and gave it to Mallam Shekarau. So they are challenging God's judgment. We are not surprised when they challenged the judgment of the courts," Dr. Naniya posited.

Senator urges Adamawa politicians to forget differences

Former gubernatorial aspirant in Adamawa State, Sen. Abubakar Girei, has urged politicians in the state to forget their political differences for the development of the state.

Speaking during a lunch he organised for Adamawa stakeholders at his residence in Yola, Girei urged them to accommodate one another to achieve unity of purpose.

"This gathering which has representatives from the 21 local government areas, all political parties, religious leaders and traditional institutions, can shape the future of our dear state from its neglect and underdeveloped status to posterity," he said.

The former legislator also lamented the impoverished condition of the state despite the rich endowment of human and material resources it was blessed with.

"As it is today, the state lacks focus and direction to improve the lives of the people, there is the absolute need to redefine where we want to go from the crossroads we find ourselves today," Girei said.

He stressed the need for the establishment of good governance in the state, adding,

"it doesn't matter who is there as the governor but let us think of better ways of developing our state".

The former ANPP chieftain warned against the politics of

"Master/Servant" and political

God-fatherism saying, "it is destroying the system".

He alleged the looting of the state's treasury to serve the political masters or God-fathers "to the detriment of the entire state and its future".

"When a governor serves as a house boy, the treasury of the state and the people suffer and when the master fights, the servant, like the Anambra case, the state is at the receiving end," Girei noted.

Police Cadets to commence training February - Balogun

The newly recruited Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) will begin their 18 month training course at the Police Academy, Kano, in February.

The Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun, who disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja, said the Police Service Commission had approved the recruitment of the officers.

"A total of 805 candidates who went through interviews and screening exercises are due to start their ASP and Inspector trainings in February at the Police Academy, Kano," he said.

Balogun said the list

comprised 548 candidates for Cadet ASP course and 257 for Cadet Inspector course. He said that the recruitment was done to reflect national spread.

Commenting on training and re-training of officers and men in 2004, Balogun said that 947 inspectors and rank and file with university degrees or equivalent qualifications completed ASP promotion courses at the Staff College, Jos.

He told NAN that 23,206 constables were recruited into the force and trained at the various police colleges in the country last year.

Similarly, the IGP said 3,769 inspectors and rank and file attended various refresher courses, while 50 assistant commissioners of police

attended the Senior Command Course.

Balogun also said that seven senior officers attended courses at the National War College while four others went through a one-year course at the NIPSS.

According to him, 75 community police developers were trained while 130 officers went through advanced intelligent courses last year.

Balogun said that between 2002 and 2004, the force trained 142,522 recruits, while 4,620 police officers attended various courses locally.

He said that a reasonable numbers of officers and men attended various training programmes overseas in 2004, and assured that more training vacancies would be available this year.

MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY
temphist@yahoo.com

2005: Live and let's live

Obviously 2004 was not only turbulent and traumatic it also stretched our patience to the limit. Sadly also, just when we thought things could not get worse and at a time humanity seemed to be carried away by the rapid advancements in science and technology, the *Tsunami* tragedy which ravaged much of Asia and parts of Africa, brought its gruesome and painful reminder that we are all tools in the hands of one supreme God. For once humanity was united in that singular tragedy as Hindu, Muslims and Christians came together in collective grief for the thousands who perished in the disaster. Although the government has remained silent on the issue, I urge you all to spare a thought and a prayer for souls of the departed victims.

The end of 2004 also brought with it the customary naming of persons of the year. Time magazine expectedly threw up George W. Bush while back home the local media were unanimous in nominating Nuhu Ribadu. In my opinion he didn't do too much wrong, but let us also spare a thought for the long suffering Nigerian masses and the extra-ordinary courage of Justice Sylvester Nsofor whose minority judgement in annulling the sham presidential elections of 2003 showed we still have men of integrity left in the country. His courage is especially noteworthy when we recall what happened to the former Auditor General of the federation who dared to blow the whistle on the federal government's handling of its finances a few years ago. For all we know, in the coming days and months, the Judicial Council may suddenly remember that Justice Nsofor had not retired cash advances granted him decades ago.

Already, the PDP chairman Adu Ogburn who could do no wrong previously, has now been dragged before the EFCC by aggrieved members of the party's National Working Committee who only just discovered that their Chairman was financially reckless and in flagrant breach of the party's constitution. There are of course, no prizes to be won for guessing correctly the exact reasons behind Ogburn's latest travails. It is a special risk we run when we have an inept administration led by a crudely vindictive president. Also, because this is a new year, there is a need for us to get afresh, I will say nothing about the sordid events that trailed Ogburn's emergence as the PDP Chairman in the first instance.

But 2004 was not only about the *Tsunami* disaster or the PDP laughable circus. It was also the year the greater half of America decided to return George Bush to the White House along with his catastrophic handling of global affairs.

Back home, it was the year of intense political intrigues and arsonsists. It was the year Obasanjo, Ngige and Chris Uba decided to turn statecraft into a badly scripted comedy. It was the year of the Okija shrines and oil tankers laden with crude oil which simply disappeared into thin air off our coast and under the watchful gaze of our Navy. To me personally the year was memorable for two reasons: It was the year I was crudely betrayed by someone I thought I could trust and one in which our expansive family compound in Bida was almost completely razed. Needless to add that there wasn't a single fire engine within a fifty mile radius of the location. I seize this opportunity to thank the hundreds who laboured to ensure that the edifice was not entirely reduced to ashes and for the tremendous show of goodwill that followed.

But optimism is a strong virtue and we must all look forward to the New Year with renewed hope. Sadly, rather than to improve social services and infrastructure, a lot of energy is being dissipated in the run-up to the 2007 presidential elections. The other day, we were told that Dariye of all people made the short trip to Bauchi to plead with the state's governor Muazu to declare his candidacy for the presidential elections in 2007. Coming from someone who could not pay the salaries of civil servants in his state and whose obvious incompetence led to the genocidal ethnic conflagration in his state only recently, his call was particularly curious and amusing. By every yard stick, he must be an incurable optimist.

Muazu's widely acknowledged achievement in public office notwithstanding, it is hard to imagine how his presidency could be of benefit to someone in the mould of Dariye, except perhaps for selfish reasons. In any case, the charges pending against him at the Code of Conduct Bureau as well as the EFCC and the London Metropolitan Police seem weighty enough and if I were to be his shoes, I will do well to avoid jail in 2005 not to talk of 2007. But again, conscious of himself and his questionable resources, the man may simply be seeking a safe sanctuary in which his

peaceful retirement could be guaranteed. Nigeria, needless to add, is a nation in which elected officers from the top to the bottom exhibit the greatest symptoms of delusions of grandeur.

If it were not so, we will not now be talking of the elections in 2007 when nothing tangible was achieved since the return of democracy. The on-going revolution in the telecoms sector aside, there is little else to point at with any degree of satisfaction or relief. The economy is still in limbo. Health care is in shambles while the transport sector remains chaotic. Incredibly, even in Abuja, we are yet to see an efficient mass transit system put in place to ease the plight of commuters who are being increasingly driven further away from the main precincts of the city by the on-going demolitions of shanty towns in the territory. To compound our misery there were repeated hikes in the cost of fuel while wages stagnated.

The security of life and property remains a dream because the rank and file of the Police is not only poorly disciplined and ill-equipped; they are also accomplices to arson and kidnappings even of an incumbent governor. Their junior ranks walk around with holes in their boots and urinate in public. The Peugeot vehicles bought to improve their mobility only a few years ago have become total wrecks due to abuse and may God help you if your house is assaulted by robbers in the dead of the night. It is also only in Nigeria where you can be apprehended for not having a rear mirror in your car when that of the police itself had no head lamps.

The middle class, it must be restated, has been completely obliterated while the great majority still wallow in abject poverty seven years after the return of democracy. The rich also continue to get richer while the art of governance as has been restated repeatedly in the past is mediocre at all levels with little hopes for improvement. Still, we must not begrudge the rich because wealth is God-given if earned in an honest manner. But the masses also deserve an enabling environment in which to make a social existence. In the midst of our abundant resources they should have nothing in common with poverty if such resources are properly harnessed and utilized.

Most survive from day to day only by the special grace of God. Given the mass frustration in the land it has become obvious that in the coming months for the wealthy and affluent to be able to live in peace, they must find a way of accommodating the social needs of the poor. To that extent therefore, our slogan this year should be: "Live and let's live." I wish you all a Happy New Year.

Opinion

No el-Rufai, no

By Joseph Shakogaza & Nuhu Y. Abdulkareem

The plan of the FCT ministry to relocate the aboriginal community, as revealed by Engineer Muhammed Isa in Abuja Today of December 3, 2004 is disturbing. We are aware that the minister, Malam el-Rufai said the same thing earlier.

To evacuate us from our ancestral lands, and to pave way, for the lands forcibly taken from us to be given to other citizens would not only be discriminatory, but a more heinous recreation of the widely hated apartheid policy of Bantustan, where black community are parceled away and confined on isolated lands in the name of separate development by the now defunct racist white south African government.

Nigeria militantly and unreservedly engaged the racist regime in vehement opposition to this policy and to have such policy re-enacted here in any form or guise long after apartheid has collapsed is a brutal dent on Nigeria's credential and profile. Our people have generously made contributions to the building of a model capital city befitting to the status of our great country, by willingly surrendering farm lands, cultural sites and other relics of our collective identity, which are today, the sites of many government structures including the presidential Villa and we are still resolved to make more sacrifices if need be but only on the basis that our communities are integrated into the federal capital city.

Many examples abound world wide where the indigenous communities have been integrated into mainstream of their national development. The red Indians in America and the aborigines in Australia have retained their colorful cultures even in the face of roaring modernization, without having been deported out of their original habitation.

If Nigeria has no inclination to the respect and

protection of culture, it would not have created the ministry of culture. In the face of these dreadful threats to bundle the indigenous community out of our ancestral lands, we recall with nostalgia how our people rejoiced in 1976, when our land was chosen as the host community for a capital city. We thought how wonderful and colourful it would be, to interact with the rich diversities of other Nigerians and therefore, prepared ourselves for the exciting experience, that prospects promise.

Today we are deeply saddened at the turn of events in which we are treated as sub-humans, incapable of sharing in the modern civilization and development of the capital city. We are to be tucked and hidden away from being seen or noticed in the federal capital city. Good drinking water, electricity, hospital, schools, motorable roads to convey our agricultural produce to the market, has become a wide off the mark mirage.

We have thought that government, through affirmative action would fast-track our development to catch up with the speed of development in the city, but we are stoned in the face with obvious and discriminatory policies, ostensibly designed to dehumanize and render us unworthy to share in the human civilization. We totally reject this and make bold to affirm our humanity and citizenship, equally protected by the constitution to live and work any where in the country including our ancestral lands, without let or hindrance.

As stated earlier, our people are prepared to make concession, where it is necessary even if it means the removal of specific structures but we vehemently object to wholesome evacuation and deportation of our entire community to strange lands.

It should be recalled that late justice Akinola Aguda led committee who recommended Abuja for the federal capital

territory actually never met with the indigenous community prior to their recommendation, because from the helicopters with which they toured Abuja, they could only see a vast forest purportedly inhabited by any body. However, the fact is that Abuja indigenous community has been here, well over 500 years, before the white merchants and later, their colonial counterparts set foot in this part of the world. It is on record that in 1978, then, the head of state, General Obasanjo directed that those indigenes who wish to be resettled elsewhere be free to do so, while those who chose to remain will accordingly be fully integrated. In deciding to remain, a good number of the indigenes were further encouraged by the first civilian governor of Niger state, Awal Ibrahim, in 1980. Even if the idea of resettlement was at any time attractive to the indigenes, the experience of earlier resettlers have fore closed such options. Most of the indigenes who have been evacuated from Garki, Maitama, Asokoro etc with little or no compensation at all and relocated to Kubwa, New use are living in grinding poverty, isolation and miserable exclusion, having been cut off from their main economic activities of farming, from which they derive their livelihoods.

Honourable Minister Sir, you were quoted as saying that 59 indigenous communities in the FCT would be evacuated. The communities were not named by you and we thought that it would have accorded with the spirit of current democratic openness to name the communities and state why such a harsh policy of forcible evacuation is most suitable for a people who have sacrificed so much for the unity of the country.

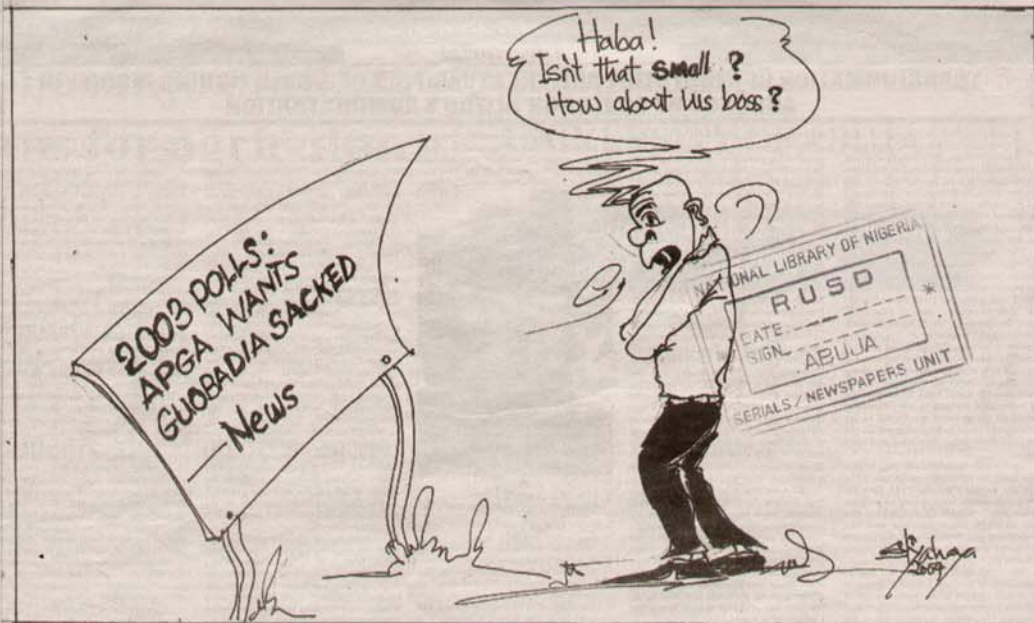
We may not have crusading international campaigners like the late Ken Saro Wiwa, or the Wole Soyinka's or Chinua Achebe's, to take our cause to the international community, but one day, the would be jolted and revolted by the cruelty meted to our people for being generous enough to accommodate other citizens in our ancestral homeland.

Our appeal for integration in to the federal capital city is not borne out of weakness but by earnest desire to contribute our quota to the development of the territory like other Nigerians. As the threats to forcibly evacuate us becomes louder and even appear imminent, we suggest that you take measures through your office to clarify issues regarding our status publicly and quickly also, so as to reduce the unwarranted psychological and mental torture our people are subjected to.

The minister knows better what is fair for the aborigines and what is not.

Joseph Shakogaza and Nuhu Abdulkareem write from Garki, Abuja.

"Honourable Minister Sir, you said that 59 indigenous communities in the F C T would be evacuated. The communities were not named by you and we thought that in the spirit of democracy, you will name the communities and state why such a harsh policy of forcible evacuation is most suitable for a people who have sacrificed so much"



YOUR LETTERS

Hausa films: Enough of this immorality!

I would like to inform, the Hausa Film makers producers and actors alike, that although they claim their effort is educative to the Muslim Ummah, most of the products they churn out are negating that claim. Rather than educating, they are corrupting the nubile minds of their junior brothers and sisters.

The society has today become an entirely different thing, if you take into consideration the kind of decay that has been implanted into the minds of these youngsters by the attitude of our actors/actresses. The norms and values being upheld in the society, which are the engine room for the modest life we are known for, are quickly

receding.

The choice of dresses by these teenagers has been influenced by what they see on screen. You simply can not associate them with their origin. Their attitude connotes one that is focused on worldly paraphernalia and enjoyment, just as these films depict.

Being noble, God fearing and modest, typical of an average Muslim, has been thrown to the winds. It is indeed a pity.

Most of the misdeeds in the Hausa film industry emanates from the Producers and Directors. They are the

ones that insist on the questionable dresses and the dialogue adopted. The girls wear skin-tight skates to bring out their shapes and skimpy T-shirts to augment their bust! The boys wear sleeveless shirts and shorts or skin-tight jeans and singlet to buttress their muscles! Then they come out prancing, wriggling and jostling one another on stage, shamelessly. Where are we heading for God's sake? We should remember that whatever we do on this earth is recorded, however small. And all our records shall be displayed before us on the

Last Day and would determine our final destiny.

Are these people thinking that they are sinless in what they are doing? God emphatically decreed that all of a woman's body is sacred unless to her husband. To display any part of it in public is a sacrilege! Are our film makers exempted from this? Please, let us reason and amend. Those in position to meet and advise these people should do so. We want sanity in the system! Let there be a moderating force so that not anything anybody cooks up is featured. By the time we have such in place, the society would be better for it.

The elderly ones among the crew; people like Kabiru Nakwango, Ibrahim Mandawari, Sule Koki, Iyantama, Hajara Usman, Amina Garba and others in their category, should always make it a habit to put in a word of caution whenever they are out in the field.

They are the old school among the lot and are quite familiar with ethics and values! Apply this knowledge to the trade at all times and let us see some changes! If the Director directs a girl to wear an outrageous dress, tell him there and then that he will appear before God someday and account for that act. Educate him on the consequences of the act! Tell

him that the target audience prefer the decently dressed actors and actresses he is shying away from.

These Directors/Producers favour skimpy dresses because they think the sight of nakedness makes the films sell faster.

But is money everything? Remember, you will die and leave whatever wealth you amass on this earth. Therefore, a word is enough for the wise.

Abdullahi Idris
Library Dept. NECO
Headquarters Niger state.

Adamu Adamu got Gov Mu'azu wrong

Defending Governor Ahmad Muazu aside, not a few of us who know Adamu Adamu were more than a little disappointed in his Friday December 31st, 2004, article. I know Adamu Adamu to be a highly religion conscious individual but was surprised to see him throw caution to the wind.

Even though an accountant by profession, we cannot belittle Adamu's considerable expertise in the field of civil engineering and other civil works issues, courtesy of his stint, most recently, at the PTF. So, perhaps he is more than qualified to pass those judgments on the civil works in Bauchi state. Also being from the so-called

marginalised Northern Parts of Bauchi, he probably has a score, for whatever reason, to settle with the governor. And I do not seek to suggest that he should forfeit his rights to hold onto his opinions.

However, I see no justification in resorting to falsehood and half-truths in order to take a stand on an issue, especially when the real intention is simply to attack individual be a politician or not.

Personally, I believe we should do away with the shallow minded politics of sectionalism. Let us go after issues of substance rather than raising so much dust in order to foster an agenda of prejudice.

Balarabe Ibhahim Udubo
No 166 college road
Angwar Dosa Kaduna.

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

Tread softly Mr. President

Mr. president Sir, I have been compelled by your recent exploits in the purported letter to our Dear party Chairman about the wranglings in Anambra which I consider incoherent with your previous position made known to us via your ever loyal special assistant on publicity in the person of Femi FaniKayode. I do not expect to receive a reply from you due largely to the fact that the democratic sphere we live in is still in the 'learning process', but all the same I hope you will have time to read my little concerns.

Are you trying to say that our literature lion, Chinua Achebe has been vindicated in his letter of rejection for a

national honour? His major accusation lies in his believe that the presidency has a sinister motive in the Anambra crisis. Your letter revealed to those who cared to listen that you were witness to an alleged confession by Chris Ngige and his estranged Godfather, if you say (which is most unlikely) that this piece of information was not known to you before Achebe made his accusation then that is a different ball game, but if the reverse is the case then it is most unfortunate, except also, if your special assistant is not competent to speak on your behalf.

To most followers of recent happenings the insulting nature your special assistant addressed the

literary icon even on an issue that you are now acknowledging is to say the least unfortunate. A milder and softer tonerely will have had the most of impact.

I also will wish to comment on the issue of your legitimate earnings (\$300,000 monthly) from your farm in Ota. I advice that you take a cue from the Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. The prime minister recently resign as the chairman of his football club AC Millan by virtue of his been the prime minister, you may as well resign as the chairman of your farm and appoint a trustee to manage same up to 2007 this will save you from scores of criticisms.

Yusufu, Abubakar
No. 12 Mukama Road
Koton-Karfi Kogi State.

TRANSFORMATION OF KEBBI STATE AND THE REVAMPING OF WORLD FISHING FESTIVAL IN ARGUNGU BY GOVERNOR ALIERO'S ADMINISTRATION

I visited Kebbi State between 19th - 23rd December 2004 having heard much about the Argungu Fishing Festival and development projects executed by the Aliero Administration. It is my conclusion that Kebbi State has gotten the dividends of Democracy. I was personally curious to find out how fish of different kinds and of such sizes were reared in the Argungu River. My curiosity was satisfied when I got to the site in Argungu. I was touched by the level of development in Birnin Kebbi, the State capital and its environs considering the fact that Kebbi State was created no too long ago from old Sokoto State. I went round and I was touched by the level of development in areas of Education, Rural Electrification, Rural Electrification, Water Supply, Provision of Health care facilities in both Urban and Rural areas. It should be noted that I am not from Kebbi State and have nothing to benefit whatever by writing on Aliero's marvelous progressive achievement in Kebbi. To substantiate my write up I decided to write practically almost all the projects mentioned in my write-up and stand to be challenged for the mind can never argue with what eyes have seen.

I personally sponsored this page so that other Governors that are snugly and toiling with the people's masses, can emulate Aliero who spends State money on projects for his people. I think Aliero achieved this feat, through his dedication and the competence of Commissioned Officers, Secretaries and other well meaning people in Kebbi State.

My write up is the truth and has no government motivation, and on closer look, I put records straight to the world instead of creating a general impression that all Governors in Nigeria are corrupt. Governor Aliero has worked credibly, and I do not want to appreciate this, kindly take a tour to some States where democratic dividend is nothing to write home about.

I am writing in Kebbi State in its natural form, for nobody thought I could go round to see things for myself. I believe in educating the world and in doing so one need to be very honest.

My first point of call was the Kebbi State Environmental Agency (KES EPA). The new office has offices and laboratories, fitted with state of the art facilities for the effective execution of the Agency's duties.

As I was leaving KES EPA, I saw trailers loading transformers, and on closer look, I discovered that it was the Kebbi State Rural Electricity Board, which is under the Ministry of Water Resources & Rural Development. This Board is charged with the responsibility of providing Electricity to all the rural areas. It has so far connected over 300 towns and villages from 1999 to date. The Board is poised to effectively carry out its duty of providing Electricity to the people, as Electrical materials ranging from transformers, cables and other materials were on ground in the Board's office and were being taken to site as at the time of my visit. I have never seen such Electrical materials in one spot at a time for the purpose of rural electrification since I was born. One very amazing thing was the Board's insistence on the use of only 300KV and 500KV transformers for carrying out its functions. I saw high quality Electrical materials including Nigerian cables, which are regarded to be the best in the World. From what I saw 85% of towns and villages in Kebbi State are connected to national grid which is commendable.

Another commendable achievement by the Kebbi State Government is the provision of affordable Houses for its people. There are various types of houses ranging from 3 bedrooms, 2 bedrooms and 1 bedroom flats for low, middle income earners and private individuals. The mode of payment is very relaxed, to ensure that interested persons do not feel the pinch, or scared off. The State Government bears 2/3 of the cost of construction and beneficiaries are allowed a grace of 25 years to balance no payment. Provision was also made for cases of eventualities like death of a beneficiary. In such instance, the next of kin to beneficiary is allowed to continue payment from where the original beneficiary stopped.

I was also at most of Kebbi State Government Housing Estates particularly the ones at Gwede and some other proto-type Housing Schemes scattered around the State. Worthy of mention is the 750 number blocks of houses ranging from 3 bedrooms, 2 bedrooms and 1 bedroom flats, abandoned by the Federal Housing Authority. These houses were bought over by the Kebbi State Government and most of them have been completed, while some are at various stages of completion. Assess roads within the Estate have been completed and electricity provided. Please go there and see for yourself.

I also saw the hydroelectric technology in use by the Kebbi State Government. This form of technology is used for construction and provision of houses in the State. The technology was used by this Administration to construct its Investment House. This form of technology is cheaper and easy to use than the conventional cement blocks. The State Government has

demonstrated its commitment to providing affordable houses for the people, by constructing prototype houses using by-products from technology. This has stimulated interest in the people, as some have already copied this type of construction, by building similar houses. I saw joy in people's faces due to houses made available to them by Aliero at affordable prices.

Education is one of the areas where I was positively moved by what I saw in the Country. I was very impressed that this Administration has placed a lot of emphasis on Education, knowing it is one of the catalyst for development. He has invested tremendous resources in the field of Education, by making Education free for all from Primary to Secondary School. He did not stop there, but also provided materials for learning for the Students free. Such materials do not include, exercise books, pencils, biro, textbooks and other instructional materials to aid learning and teaching. In fact I was in one of the Schools that the Minister for Education arrived to check if the materials for learning have been supplied to the School and if such materials are up to date.

As in the case of my visit, there exists a large stock at the State's store where these materials were kept. These materials are periodically distributed to all the students. I was impressed that as a new term had just commenced in the State after the Sallah break and Students were being issued such materials, I dare say that even States that have not been declared as not having instructional materials provided for its Students free of charge in their Stores like I witnessed in Kebbi State.

Students are not the only ones benefiting from this largesse of the State Government, as all Teachers are paid as at when due and an additional 30% increment given to all irrespective whether you are an indigene of the State or not. Teachers are provided with all teaching aids to ease their works. It also makes teaching easier and attractive. This perhaps can explain why in the last NCO Examination the State produced the best Student in Chemistry.

Let me also tell you that Aliero's Administration does not discriminate in employment of qualified Teachers. His emphasis is on qualification and readiness to work. Teachers from any part of the Country are currently under the payroll of the State Government. I personally confirmed this as a visit to most Schools shows the existence of non-indigenes as teaching and non-teaching staff. They take up appointment with the State Government without any inhibitions because they are placed on the same salary scale as their indigene counterparts and there is no discrimination of any sort. I personally queried some of these non-indigenes and was satisfied by their responses that this Administration does not give any preferential treatment to indigene. I saw Teachers from Ima, Anambra, Kwara, Ogun and other States in the Country resident and teaching in Kebbi State.

A direct benefit of the State Government's favourable disposition to non-indigenes in the State on Education is the increase in the number of both teaching and non-teaching staff. For instance, in Government Girls College, Birnin Kebbi, the School had only 34 Teachers before the inception of this Administration. However, with the coming of the present Government, the number of Teachers in the School has increased to 84. It has certainly increased the quality of Education received in the State. This I personally verified.

The State Government also increased feeding by a 100% both in quality and quantity as attested to by the Principal of Government Girls College, Birnin Kebbi, one of the Model Schools participating in the exchange programme in the Northern State in the Federation popularly known as Unity Schools. I personally inspected the meal taken by the Students. At this School, Students were seen being given mattresses, books and instructional materials on resignation.

His determination to provide quality Education for its citizenry is not limited to able bodied men, but also the disabled. His Administration saw the need for a School for the disabled, to take them off the street and reduce the social menace they constitute. Hence a School for the disabled was established.

The School for the disabled is solely owned and run by the Kebbi State Government. It runs a conventional mode of Education, that Western type of Education and also encourages its students to be self employed by teaching them vocational skills. The School has a workshop where subjects such as Introductory Technology, Carpentry and Tailoring are taught. It has a computer room, where computers application is taught. The blind are particularly encouraged to use a computer, using special software for the blind, which is being taught by a Volunteer Mr. Yun from Holland.

Interestingly this art have been perfected by the staff and they are equipped to impact such knowledge on students, even after the departure of this volunteer. Mr. Yun also confirmed that Kebbi State is one of the States



His Excellency ALHAJI ADAMU ALIERO, Governor of Kebbi State

in Nigeria using such special software for the blind.

One other remarkable feat achieved by Aliero's Administration is the establishment of the School of Nursing & Midwifery. The School was established by this Administration to provide competent Nurses and Midwives for the State. It is also solely owned and financed by it. The School is headed by a Director in the person of Mohammed Helu Nawala. It also has two Principals, one for the School of Nursing and the other for the School of Midwifery. This School is equipped with modern facilities, one of its kind in the Country. I was personally impressed by the structure of the School and the facilities provided for learning. It is a sight to behold.

The provision of health facilities is also an area which the Kebbi State Government has excelled. This Administration understands the full weight of the saying that "health is wealth" and has left no stone unturned in ensuring that the people experience this wealth. He has therefore made that sector one of his paramount areas of concentration.

An example of one of the ways the Government is contributing to the health sector is the renovating of the Sir Yahya Memorial Special Hospital, which was commissioned on the 23rd of December 1952. It serves as the main referral hospital for the 23 General hospitals in the State. The Aliero Administration has introduced a number of innovations to ensure this hospital meets the standard required and is headed by Dr. Kajoje, a Medical Surgeon of repute.

One of the innovations introduced by this Administration is the monthly allowance given to the Accident & Emergency Unit of the hospital apart from its regular subventions. The Unit is manned 24 hours 7 days a week by qualified personnel. Emergency services are provided for all, irrespective of religion or State of Origin. In the past, accident and emergency cases were not attended promptly as is the case with most hospitals in the Country, as relatives of victims has to bear the cost of treatment. This sometimes led to loss of life of victims. But with the coming of the Aliero's Administration, he saw the need for something to be done to alleviate the suffering of the people, hence the introduction of this laudable scheme. With this money, all accident and emergency cases are taken care of until their relatives come forward to take responsibility.

This hospital also has a Kidney Dialysis Treatment Centre, which has been completed. The facilities in this Centre can accommodate 12 patients at a time. This is the first of its kind in the Country. The hospital has also ensured that an 18 months supply of consumables needed for the operation of the Centre is in store and would ensure that before the depletion of this stock, another is procured. This is to forestall any complications during dialysis, which is usually the bane of Kidney treatment in the Country. The equipments needed to start off the Centre are already in the Country.

The hospital also has an Eye Centre where diagnosis of eye problems and eye surgery is carried out. In the cases where surgery is needed, patients are referred to the Hafat Eye Centre, where surgery is carried out free of charge. In just 2 months, over 300 patients have been operated free of charge.

Sir Yahya Memorial Specialist Hospital also has a standard Maternity Unit and Operating Rooms, where surgery is carried out. The Operating Rooms are fully equipped with state of the art facilities and they are fully functional. The tiles of the operating rooms were recently renovated and this hospital is noted as the only hospital in the Country that conducts prostatic gland surgery using a Stereoscope. The hospital also has an Intensive Care Unit and a Service Area,

consisting of the Kitchen, Laundry and Store for the hospital use.

This Administration has also rehabilitated and renovated General Hospitals and Primary Health Care Centres in the State and recently approved the sum of N60 million for the purchase of drugs, to be distributed to hospitals in the State. Apart from all these, all pregnant women and children under five are treated free, and drugs provided for them. This is a certainly commendable.

I also visited the Hafat Eye Centre and saw its Operating Theatre where surgeries are conducted. The Theatre is fully equipped with modern day state of the art facilities and it was established and equipped by the Aliero's Administration. This Eye Centre has brought succor to indigenes and non-indigenes alike. Even people from neighbouring Niger Republic have benefited from the Kebbi State Government kind gesture. I saw patients being prepared to be operated upon. This surgery is a highly commendable achievement by this administration.

A VVF Centre for patients suffering from Venous Valvular Failure has also been renovated to provide a conducive environment for their stay while in hospital during and after surgery. Bed and bedding materials for the comfort of the patients were also provided. And so also consumables necessary for the management and treatment provided in adequate number.

Other renovated places visited was the Kebbi State Government House, Birnin Kebbi. Prior to the inception of the Aliero Administration, Kebbi State had no structure Presidential/VIP lodges, with a large Auditorium. These lodges are suitable to host any visiting Heads of State or any VIP. He also completed and abandoned Kebbi Hotel in Abuja and is not least and work has reached an advance stage of completion for the one abandoned in Kaduna.

One very interesting phenomenon exhibited by the Kebbi State Government is its preference for indigenes. Contractors in the execution of projects, where they have comparative advantage and expertise. This was also extended to the construction of roads, which some State Governments still believe only foreign companies can handle.

Prior to the inception of this Administration, the road network within the State and environs was nothing to write home about. But with the coming of this Administration, particularly the road network within the State capital, have been reconstructed. He did not stop at that, he is currently constructing catwalks round the State Maternity to forestall erosion menace. Some notable roads completed are the Birnin Kebbi - Jega road, Kanje - Jo road, Ambara - Gulumbi Alheri road and Bose - Koko road.

Another remarkable feat achieved by Aliero which I saw is the re-construction of the road leading to Argungu from Birnin Kebbi, which was recently commissioned by the Vice President, Argungu town hosts the annual Fishing Festival widely known internationally. Major bridges have also been reconstructed to prevent cutting off of villages during the rainy season. Such bridges are the Kajoje - Jo and Gwanda bridge.

What further amazed me was the provision of water supply in remote areas in Kebbi State. Most of the Villages I visited had bore holes sunk by the present Administration. It was as if I was in the city. I was also at Zuru and if you are familiar with the town, you would know that water was a problem of residents there. However, this is a thing of the past.

People I spoke with in Zuru Emirate attested to me that the greatest dividend of democracy given them is the provision of water which no one can do without. There exists one of water project every where you go in Kebbi State. Places without pipe borne water are provided with bore holes. Almost 70% of rural areas enjoy supply of water from the Aliero Administration.

As said earlier, construction of roads and drainages are not also left out in Kebbi State. Almost all Local Government Areas in Kebbi State have drains to show to the sector. There is no area of development that is left behind as far as I was concerned.

In fact, my decision to visit Kebbi State was influenced largely by the Argungu Fishing Festival that produces such size of fish, on the one hand and to see developmental projects in the State, on the other. My desire

to see the fishing site was not quenched until I boarded a cab the next day after my arrival to Argungu.

Argungu is about 50Kms from Birnin Kebbi, the State capital. On getting to Argungu, my first place of call is the Kanta Museum, which I have heard so much about. The museum was the former Palace of the Founder of Kebbi, known as Kanta from whom the Museum derives its name. The Museum still maintains the old architect's modern design of the North.

The setting of the Museum depicts the natural setting of a typical Palace in the North, and artifacts ranging from weapons of war, pattern handkerchiefs of the people, different tribal marks and the different types of houses used by the people, to simple cooking utensils and vessels for storing water.

After my detailed tour of the Museum, I proceeded to the Fishing Village. The Fishing Village comprises of modern round blocks built solely to provide accommodation for guests during the festival. Each of the blocks is self contained, and the State Government charges some amount for its use. After the festival, the blocks are rented out to interested persons on a temporary basis, which they will vacate before the yearly festival.

There are also Guest Chateaux for VIPs. These are well furnished and maintained by the State Government. Not too far off is the Grand Fishing Hotel. This is a hotel of repute, capable of providing accommodation for any class of person. It has a Banquet Hall, over 200 rooms of various categories, a restaurant, an elevator for easy movement of people and a conference room. The rooms are well furnished to international standard, and very affordable.

From the Grand Fishing Hotel, I went to the arena where traditional dances, local wrestling known as kikowa and Dembe are staged. Closely located to this venue is the Archery site, which doubles as the venue for horse/donkey display and dancing. There is also the ground prepared for the display of agricultural produce during the festival and the farmer with the best harvest is declared "Sarkin Noma" literally meaning King of Farms. This event shall add colour to the festival.

Then I moved to the Fishing site, where the main event, the Fishing itself takes place. Stands have been provided for spectators, and as at the time of my visit, renovation work was in progress to get the venue prepared for the festival coming up in March next year. A portion of this stand is reserved for VIPs who can sit comfortably and watch the event.

One very surprising thing for me was the River where this fishing festival was held. Until my visit, I had imagined the River to my mind, but what lay in front was nothing compared to what I was seeing. My surprise was however erased as my guide explained to me that after the Fishing Festival, the portion of the River where the fishing festival takes place is closed to Fishermen. That is to say, nobody is allowed to fish in the River except during the festival. This explains the reason for the sizes of fish out during the festival. The fish are allowed to mature uninterrupted in their natural habitat for a whole year, until during another festival, when people are allowed to fish.

The Kebbi State Government under Aliero's leadership needs to be commended for the bold initiative it took by revamping the Argungu Fishing Festival, which did not take place for about six years until he revamped it last year. With my experience having served in various capacity home and abroad, I am proud to associate myself with leaders that protest and preserve nature in whatever form. This is exactly what Aliero did in World Fishing village in Argungu.

Kebbi State is a heaven for investors and tourists as there is peace and tranquillity. What concerns me much was the peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims in the State which is so wonderful. Despite the fact that 99% of Kebbi indigenes are Muslims, Christians live in this State peacefully. I confirmed this by my interactions with non-Muslims residing in the State. One Ibo man Julius Eneka said he has been in Kebbi State with his family for over 22 years and have a lot of friends he shares common goals and aspiration with. All security agents in Kebbi State are very professional and friendly. They are God sent to the State. For such a State to be as peaceful as I saw it, the security agents deserve commendation. I drove out on my way late at night and this was as peaceful as if I was in Saudi Arabia. The State is peaceful and conducive for investors.

THE ABOVE MADE A COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH ON KEBBI STATE OF NOT LESS THAN 400 PAGES BOOKLET.

Abdullahi Mohammad
Diplomat (R)
Tourist

Trust International

Sigh of relief as Sudanese sign peace deal

Sudan ended 2004 on a high note, with government and rebel representatives signing a permanent ceasefire and an accord that maps out the implementation of several peace protocols already concluded.

This paves the way for a final agreement to end 21 years of civil war in southern Sudan - Africa's longest-running conflict.

The ceremony took place Friday in the north-western Kenyan town of Naivasha, which has served as the venue for peace talks between Khartoum and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). It was attended by Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed el-Bashir, SPLM/A leader John Garang and South African head of state Thabo Mbeki, amongst others.

"In November (first Vice President Ali Osman) Taha and I signed a memorandum of understanding committing that we would conclude a comprehensive agreement and present a new year's gift to the people of Sudan. This is what we have done today," said Garang during an address to an audience of flag-waving Sudanese, Taha at his side.

This was in reference to a pledge made to the United Nations Security Council, which convened in the Kenyan capital - Nairobi - last month in a bid to give impetus to Sudanese peace talks.

"We are here to pay tribute to the people of Sudan and announce to them that we have reached

From Joyce Malama

a peace agreement. We are here to tell them that we will be at their service so that Sudan will be at a new horizon," added Taha.

A final peace agreement is expected to be signed on Jan. 9.

Negotiations between government and the southern rebels, which got underway in 2002, have been mediated by the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) - a regional body comprising Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti.

Prior to Friday's ceremony, the two parties had signed protocols on the sharing of Sudan's oil wealth, power sharing in a transitional government - and the control of three contested areas in central Sudan. The interim administration will govern Sudan for six years after the signing of a final peace accord, after which a referendum will be held on secession for the south.

The conflict has pitted Islamic authorities in the north against Christian and animist rebels who took up arms in 1983 to protest against control by the Muslim government in Khartoum. Complicated by the presence of oil reserves in disputed territory, the fighting - along with resultant disease and famine - has left over two million people dead and about four million others displaced.

"No fighting in Sudan anymore. Today is the independence day of Sudan, the 49th independence anniversary. The



Sudan's government and southern rebel negotiators raced against the clock to agree on the final chapters of a peace deal on December 31, 2004 and clear the way for a comprehensive pact to end Africa's longest-running civil war.

Government is accused of responding to these hostilities by attacking civilians of three ethnic groups from which the SLAM and JEM allegedly draw support - the Fur, Masaalit and Zaghawa. It is also accused of supporting Arab militias known as the Janjaweed ("men on horseback") in raids against civilians.

This campaign is underpinned by a longstanding struggle between nomadic Arabs and settled communities over control of land in Darfur. According to the UN more than 70,000 people have died and up to 1.6 million others been displaced as a result of the conflict. Certain rights activists and politicians have described the actions of government and the Janjaweed as genocidal.

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"No fighting in Sudan anymore. Today is the independence day of Sudan, the 49th independence anniversary. The independence has not been complete because of the war. But today, it is going to be complete because the war is over," said el-Bashir in an address to those who attended the signing ceremony.

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Trust International

North seeks Korean 'reunification'

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and South Korea have been enjoined to cooperate in efforts to attain peace, reunification and national independence of the Korean nations.

The call, made available to *Trust International* by DPRK's embassy in Abuja, was a joint editorial made by all the newspapers in DPRK to mark the beginning of the New Year Juche 94 (2005).

In the joint editorial, titled "Let the whole party and the entire people unite as one in mind and more strictly demonstrates the might of Songun", implored Koreans to inject a struggle against war in order to drive the US troops out of South Korea and struggle against US imperialism, urging the US to give up its attempt to stifle the DPRK by force of arms and make a switch over in its hostile policy towards it.

Contrary to reports of DPRK, inciting a nuclear war, the editorial stated "all the Koreans should stage a powerful struggle for peace against war in order to drive the US troops out of South Korea, remove the very source of a nuclear war and defend the peace and security on the Korea

By Elkanah Chawal, Reporter (Foreign Affairs) Peninsula.

The occasion commemorated the Juche-oriented revolution started by President Kim Il Sung, who founded the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), an event that ushered in the revolution and the nation.

The theme of the editorial emphasised the importance of the night of Songun post-policy army of DPRK and urged Koreans to instigate a fresh revolutionary surge in the army.

The editorial also enjoined the army to protect the headquarters of the revolution at all cost and enshrine the resolution of their leader, Kim Jong Il in maintaining sovereignty.

"We should effect as great revolutionary surge on all fronts of socialist construction bring about a desire turn in economic construction and its efforts to improve the standard of people's living this year which marks the 60th anniversaries of the WPK and the liberation of the country," the editorial stated.

It revealed Kim Jong Il's efforts to reunite North and South Korea, stating that "All the fellow countrymen in the north, the South and abroad

should make fresh advance in accomplishing the cause of national reunification this year under the uplifted banner of the joint declaration".

"Let's advance holding high the flag of cooperation for national independence, cooperation for peace against war and cooperation for unification and patriotism", it stated further.

It warned of the danger of a nuclear war in the Korean Peninsula, admonishing Koreans to resist US infringement, "should a war break out on this land, it is only Koreans in the North and South and their land that will suffer the disaster".

The joint editorial represents government's New Year message on the songun idea of Juche which centred on the People's army - the mainstay and main force of the revolution.

Car bomb claims two in Baghdad

A suicide car bomb has exploded near the party offices of Iraqi interim PM Iyad Allawi, killing two policemen and a civilian, officials said.

At least 20 other Iraqis were injured in Monday morning's blast in Baghdad.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell warned on Sunday of more violence ahead of elections set for 30 January.

The attack comes a week after top Shia politician Abdel Aziz al-Hakim was unharmed in a blast that killed 13 people at his party's offices in the capital.

Monday's explosion occurred when the car bomber tried to ram through a police checkpoint on the road leading to the offices of Mr Allawi's party, the Iraqi National Accord.

The vehicle exploded, shaking most of Baghdad and sending a column of smoke over the area.

Allawi was not reported to be in the building when the bomber struck.

Several police vehicles were wrecked in the blast. The National Accord's offices, located inside the heavily fortified Green Zone several hundred metres away, were not damaged.

Mr Allawi is not believed to have been in the building at the time.

Insurgents have intensified attacks against Iraqi and US forces, as part of their efforts to disrupt the elections to a constitutional assembly.

On Sunday, at least 23 people were killed in a suicide bomb attack on a bus carrying Iraqi soldiers north of Baghdad.

Three Iraqi insurgent groups have told Iraqis not to vote in the election.

And Iraq's main Sunni political grouping, the Iraqi Islamic Party, has already called for a boycott of the elections because it argues that the violence in central and northern Iraq makes a free and fair vote impossible



North Korean leader Kim Jong-il

Volcanic eruption hits India

A volcano has erupted and is spewing lava onto an island in India's Andaman and Nicobar chain that was devastated by last week's earthquake.

But officials said there is no cause for alarm, as the lava from the volcano on the uninhabited Barren Islands will flow into the sea.

The volcano has erupted three times in the last decade. More than 800 people are known to have died in the

tremor and tsunami on the islands, with thousands still missing.

Residents of Diglipur, a village on an island near the Barren, reported seeing smoke and fumes rising from the volcano after the earthquake and tsunami waves.

A senior official of the Geological Survey of India, MM Mukherjee told the BBC that the eruption was minimal. The volcano has been

dormant since it last erupted in 1996, he said.

A mud volcano in the Baratang Islands in Andaman also erupted after the earthquake, Mr Mukherjee said.

Mud volcanoes are the lesser known relatives of the more common magmatic variety. They are generally not considered to be dangerous.

The authorities have moved the villagers on the island away from the volcano.

The BBC correspondent in the Andamans said the chain of islands have a number of dormant volcanoes.

Mr Mukherjee said some of them could become active in the aftermath of the massive earthquake - the world's strongest for 40 years.

The earthquake and the tsunami submerged a number of islands in the Andamans.

They include Katchall, which shot into the news when thousands of tourists flocked there in the last week of 1999, to catch the first rays of the sun in the new millennium.

US soldier killed in Afghanistan

An American soldier has been killed and three others wounded in clashes near Asadabad, in eastern Afghanistan.

Two improvised bombs exploded and an ensuing gun battle broke out while US forces were on patrol in Kunar province, near the town of Asadabad, 170km east of Kabul, US military spokesman Major Mark McCann said.

"One US soldier was killed and three others were wounded," he said, adding that it was unclear whether the soldier was killed by the blasts or the gunfire.

McCann was also unable to say who carried out the attack.

On Sunday, another US soldier died in western Herat province during a raid on a

compound.

The three soldiers who were wounded in Monday's attack were evacuated by helicopter to US military headquarters at Bagram Airfield and are in stable condition, the US military said in a statement.

The US-led coalition still has more than 18,000 troops in Afghanistan, who are said to be in search of Taliban remnants.

The US military said its raid in Shindand district in western Afghanistan on Sunday during which one of its troops died, was launched to arrest a former local commander Mullah Dost Muhammad.

"Coalition troops were led to a compound by a local Afghan who said Mullah Dost Muhammad, a known anti-coalition militant, was inside," McCann said.

Kuwaiti minister quits over moral questions

Kuwait's information minister has offered his resignation, the day before he was due to face questioning by parliament over morality issues.

Mohammed Abul-Hassan is accused of failing to keep Western ways out of the conservative Gulf state by not doing enough to enforce censorship.

Earlier, Kuwait's prime minister said Mr. Abul-Hassan's questioning by Sunni MPs could inflame sectarian tensions.

Mr. Abul-Hassan is from Kuwait's minority Shia Muslim community.

In his resignation letter, Mr. Abul-Hassan said he wanted to leave his post to prevent political infighting.

It is not yet known whether his resignation has been accepted.

Three fundamentalist Sunni lawmakers were scheduled to question the Mr. Abul-Hassan in parliament on Monday, over failing to protect "values and morals" by allowing pop music concerts.

They have also accused his ministry of failing to do enough to censor books, magazines, and videos.

Mr. Abul-Hassan was appointed to the cabinet in July 2003.

Before that, he was

Iraqi party threaten to reject charter

Iraq's main Sunni Muslim party, which has already announced a boycott of the 30 January elections, has said it could also reject the new constitution scheduled to be drawn up after the vote.

Tariq al-Hashimi, secretary-general of the Iraqi Islamic Party, told *Aljazeera* on Sunday that his party would reject the constitution if it was against the movement's principles, dealing a further blow to hopes of a political process involving all the country's communities.

"We will reject the legitimacy of the results of the elections. The national assembly will be without legitimacy. We will reject it and we will also reject the constitution that it will draw up if it is against our principles," he said.

"We think that a situation marked by chaos and violence does not favour holding elections that will create a national assembly and even draw up the constitution.

"This assembly will not be representative of all categories of Iraqi society," al-Hashimi told *Aljazeera*.

He also echoed previous calls by his party for the election to be postponed and warned that other groups would pull out soon.

Iranian influence - and Iranians will try to influence this, of course - there is sufficient difference and past serious disagreements and conflicts between Iranian and Iraqi Shia," he said.

Given that, Iraqi Shia "will stand on their own two feet," he concluded.

Powell did not spell out reasons for his confidence, but US and other Western diplomats have been in contact with aides to Iraq's most prominent Shia cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and other Shia officials to discuss the elections and future political arrangements, officials said.

Although seen as a moderate influence in Iraqi politics, al-Sistani was born in Iran and studied theology in the central Iranian city of Qum.

Shiite political leader Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, whose Unified Iraqi Alliance is expected to do well in the upcoming polls, assured visiting US senators last month that Iran would not be allowed to meddle in Iraqi affairs.

But he is closely tied to the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, an opposition group formed in Iran in 1982 and backed by it for many years.

"That's the majority of the population."

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Shia Muslims make up more than 53% of Iraq's population, concentrated mostly in the southern and central parts of the country.

Powell also said he felt it was unlikely Shia control of Iraq's future government would mean it would be run from Tehran.

"My sensing right now is that, even though there may

Trust International

Late Margaret Hassan gets post mortem Peace prize

Murdered aid worker Margaret Hassan has been given the Tipperary Peace Prize in Ireland for her charity work in Iraq.

The Care International official had "paid the ultimate price for her dedication to the poor and vulnerable in Iraq", the prize's convention said. Mrs Hassan was

abducted in Baghdad on October 19. A video of her apparent murder was released a month later, but her body has never been recovered.

Nelson Mandela and Bill Clinton are among previous prize recipients.

The award, Ireland's most prestigious peace prize, will be presented to 59-year-old Margaret Hassan's relatives

at a ceremony in April.

The Tipperary Peace Convention said in a statement that the honour "salutes the extraordinary life of a Dublin-born aid worker".

"She showed extraordinary courage, tenacity and commitment in her concern for those who were living in the most difficult of circumstances."

During her captivity, UK prime minister Tony Blair and Irish premier Bertie Ahern issued direct pleas for Mrs Hassan's release and a special debate on the issue was held in the Irish parliament.

The aid worker held dual Irish and British citizenship but had lived in Iraq since the 1970s with her Iraqi husband, Tahseen.

She began working for Care International soon after it began operations in Iraq in 1991 and provided humanitarian relief to the most needy Iraqis in a professional career spanning more than 25 years.

When she was kidnapped, Mrs Hassan had been head of the charity's operations in the country for 12 years.

Film-maker and friend Felicity Arbutnot described her as "an extraordinary woman".

A funeral mass was held for her in Westminster Cathedral in London and an ecumenical service took place in Kenmare, Co Kerry, where Mrs Hassan's mother was born and where her sister Geraldine lives.

The Tipperary Peace Convention was founded in 1983 with the aim of promoting peace and rewarding people who make a noteworthy contribution to peace-related issues.



Late Margaret Hassan

Odd World

Man bets to clock 100 yrs

Devon pensioner is thousands of pounds richer after he bet he would reach his 100th birthday. Ten years ago Arthur Best staked £109 on reaching his centenary, at odds of 66-1.

On Sunday, Mr Best, who lives in Shrewsbury, collected a cheque for £7,303 from bookmakers William Hill.

William Hill's spokesman Graham Sharpe said: "It proved to be an inspired bet and now he's got plenty for celebrations."

Mr Best's daughter-in-law, Cynthia Best, 68, said the centennarian, who worked as a plasterer until he was 80, had "taken it all in his stride".

"He's enjoyed his day but he's not one of those people that gets overexcited," she said.

He realised when he was a young man never to worry about things.

Mrs Best said her father-in-law put his longevity down to lots of greens.

"He says he grew his own vegetables till five years ago and to 'eat plenty of fresh vegetables'. He realised when he was a young man never to worry about things."

"He's not very mobile but his mind's very active and he still likes to watch the races and pick out the horses even though he doesn't gamble anymore," she said.

Mrs Best said Arthur Best placed his birthday bet himself and had a seven-to-one win on the horses at the same time.

She said he had told her husband he was going to give the money to their family: "He says my husband can use it if he wants to change the car."

Around 40 people attended a birthday party for Mr Best at his local community room on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Mr Sharpe said William Hill would take about a dozen such bets each year and offers different odds depending on the individual.

"It depends how the person that's asking is, and we can also access statistics to find out how likely it is that someone born in a certain year is to live to a hundred."

He said with life expectancy increasing all the time: "Your best chance is to be young at the moment."

Woman, 105, visits doctor for the first time

A 105-year-old Bosnian granny has been treated by a doctor for the first time in her life, a Bosnian news agency reported.

Milja Markovic slipped in her house in a remote mountain village near Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia earlier this week and broke her leg, her son Momir told Srna news agency. He said his mother had never been ill in her life.

Markovic was not even registered in the files of the local hospital in Srebrenica, located some 70 kilometres northeast of Sarajevo.

Xmas: Ex-couple squabbles over child

When the separated parents of a five-year old Italian boy could not agree whose house he should stay at over Christmas, a judge settled the dispute by tossing a coin, an Italian newspaper reported on Thursday.

The squabbling couple took their argument to a family disputes court a few days before Christmas and were surprised when the judge, who said there was not enough time to convene the tribunal, tossed a two-euro coin for "heads-or-tails."

"I did it in the interest of the child," Judge Carlo Alberto Agnoli was quoted as saying in Italy's leading daily newspaper Corriere della Sera.

"I certainly couldn't do like Solomon and divide the child. So I trusted to luck," said the judge who presides at a court in the northeastern town of Trento.

He was referring to the biblical King Solomon who threatened to cut a boy in half when two women claimed he was theirs, thus learning who the true mother was when she begged him not to.

The mother, who usually has custody of the boy, won the toss and the boy spent Christmas with her, the paper said.

17 peasants murdered in Colombia

Suspected left-wing rebels in Colombia killed 17 peasants at a party to celebrate New Year's Eve, police said.

A source said guerrillas from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) burst into the party outside Tame, near the Venezuelan border.

A witness to the alleged massacre said the group opened fire after saying the villagers were co-operating with right-wing paramilitaries.

Police said the victims included four children and six women.

The attack took place in

the province of Arauca, one of the country's most violent and remote areas, where left and right-wing groups fight for control of drug-smuggling corridors.

Arauca police said counter-insurgency police and army investigators have been sent to the area to investigate the allegations.

The incident came the same day that a senior Farc commander, Ricardo Palmora, was extradited to the United States on drug trafficking and terrorism charges.

Colombia's armed forces chief put his troops on high alert, because of fears of reprisal attacks.

Croatia poll goes to run-off

The campaign has been dominated by the prospect of Croatia's potential European Union membership, and the handover of suspects to the war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

The extradition to The Hague of the fugitive general, Ante Gotovina, is seen as a key condition for Croatia to start membership talks with the EU.

Both Mr Mesic and Ms Kosor favour co-operation with The Hague and the goal of EU entry - the issue above all others likely to dominate the term of office of whoever is elected as Croatia's next president, says the BBC's Nick Hawton in Sarajevo.

He says much now depends on how the defeated presidential candidates tell their supporters to vote, particularly Mr Miksic.

Several thousand North Americans are still unaccounted for in Thailand and Sri Lanka after the tsunami which killed more than 120,000 people.

At least 14 US citizens have been confirmed as dead, state department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

He added that 600 people initially listed as missing were later found but others had been reported as missing.

Canada said four of its

Tsunami relief gathers momentum

Relief efforts around the Indian Ocean are gathering pace, eight days after tsunami waves devastated the region.

In the worst-hit area,

Indonesia's Aceh province, aid planes have been taking vital supplies to more remote areas.

But washed-out roads and bridges are still preventing aid workers reaching many of the millions of people in need.

The tsunamis, triggered by an undersea earthquake off Indonesia, are known to have killed more than 140,000, from Sumatra to Somalia.

More than 1.8 million people need food aid, and an estimated five million people have been made homeless.

In Aceh the relief logjam is easing as military aircraft from Indonesia, the US, Australia, and Malaysia take medicine, water and food from Sumatra to Somalia.

There have been frantic scenes as crowds of desperate survivors scramble to retrieve air-dropped supplies.

Aid workers have been shocked by the scale of the task ahead.

"The emergency teams are arriving, to be blocked by a wall of devastation," a relief official told Reuters news agency.

Aid agencies say it could be several more days before all districts are reached.

In northern Sri Lanka Tamil Tiger rebels say the government has yet to show it is serious in relief efforts, although both sides have set up a joint committee to supervise the distribution of help.

Supplies are also being dropped over India's Andaman and Nicobar groups, but aid groups condemn government restrictions on their operations there.

The aid fund reaches \$2bn as Canada doubles its contribution to \$67m and Taiwan increases its pledge to \$50m.

Ships from the Thai and Japanese navies are searching for bodies offshore, following a request from Sweden, which has the most missing tourists.

Experts assessing the damage say more than a million fishermen in the north-east have lost their livelihoods.

However India's official death toll of more than 9,000 is expected to soar as navy vessels and scuba divers comb river and sea bottoms for missing fishermen.

In Sri Lanka - the hardest-hit nation after Indonesia - aid efforts have been hampered by continuing heavy rains and flooding.

Many coastal parts of Sumatra have been flattened. Experts assessing the damage say more than a million fishermen in the north-east have lost their livelihoods.

About 80% of the fishing boats are believed to have been destroyed.

The BBC correspondent in Sri Lanka says many fishermen are too frightened to set out to sea again.

According to officials, 40% of the more than 30,000 Sri Lankans known to have died were children.

In Thailand the authorities have promised to continue searching for bodies for at least five more days before deciding whether to stop.

About 5,000 people are known to have died in the country - half of them foreigners - and 4,000 people are still missing.

Ships from the Thai and Japanese navies are searching for bodies offshore, following a request from Sweden, which has the most missing tourists.

It's very difficult, in fact, to establish in the middle of a chaotic situation exactly who is where, and who's been saved.

Relief operations are also being stepped up in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The BBC correspondent in the region said much of the aid is coming from informal sources such as businesses, community groups and individuals.

Early problems with coordination of so many supplies being channelled to the right recipients are being ironed out, the authorities say.

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It's very difficult, in fact, to establish in the middle of a chaotic situation exactly who is where, and who's been saved.

... Thousands US citizens missing

Nationals were confirmed dead while nearly 90 were missing and unaccounted for.

However, there is confusion over the figures as the Thai government has listed 20 Americans and 13 Canadians among more than 400 dead foreigners.

The Thai list includes 84 bodies identified as foreigners of unknown nationalities.

Trust International

Groups protest lavish royal spending in Swaziland

An upbeat New Year's message by Prime Minister Themba Dlamini has been rebutted by Swaziland's pro-democracy groups, with labour unions calling for a general strike in January to protest lavish royal spending and a controversial draft constitution.

"Poverty has been a great enemy for both social and economic development in our country. His majesty's government has put measures in place, and I hope this will go a long way to addressing this challenge," said Dlamini in his New Year's address, without offering specifics.

Dlamini, a relative of King Mswati III, who was appointed by the monarch to head the cabinet, was similarly vague on other issues, like the long-delayed national constitution and a rule of law crisis that has tarnished the country's international reputation and slowed foreign investment.

In his radio address, the premier argued that Swaziland was a democratic nation, despite the banning of political parties.

In response, the outlawed opposition party, the Peoples United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO), promised greater political activism in 2005, with public demonstrations and appeals for "selective" international sanctions against the royal family.

PUDEMO cited Mswati's recent purchase of one of the world's most expensive cars, a US \$330,000 Maybach, as evidence of his insensitivity

and lack of accountability in a country with a 70 percent poverty rate.

In its year's end statement, the Swaziland Coalition of Concerned Civic Organisations called for "citizens' involvement in the budget making process and the immediate cessation of government expenditure on luxury items".

Forty percent of Swazis are infected with HIV, a quarter of the nation survives on food aid, but the authorities continue to spend tax funds for non-essential but expensive luxuries such as houses for royal children living abroad, increased allowances for the extended royal family and the redecoration of royal palaces," the group said.

The coalition criticised government for spending more money on the security

forces than health and social welfare, "despite the fact that Swaziland has no notable enemies, and one of the worst health crises in the world".

A nationwide general strike set for 25 January has been called by the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions in its New Year's message. The workers' organisation will protest what it called a non-democratic constitution that retains the powers of sub-Saharan Africa's last absolute monarchy.

"The fact that 2005 will begin with the king assenting to a constitution that has not been informed by civil society organisations ... demonstrates that we are a long way from enjoying our basic fundamental God-given rights," the labour federation said in its statement.

Ethiopians protest

border talks with Eritrea

More than 50,000 people in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, have demonstrated against government plans to renew border talks with Eritrea.

Opposition leaders told the rally that a new peace plan with Eritrea would not right the wrongs of the peace treaty that ended a bitter border war in 2000.

They said the deal threatens Ethiopia's territorial integrity.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi agreed in principle in November to hand the

disputed village of Badme to Eritrea.

The peace plan "aims at giving away part of Ethiopia's land, which was won through the blood and sacrifices of tens of thousands of its gallant sons", opposition activist Gebru Asrat told the crowd, according to Reuters news agency.

It "did not serve the interest of Ethiopia and its people - it was a sell out", he said to cheers from supporters.

Badme was attributed to Eritrea in a 2002 ruling by an independent boundary commission, set up under a peace treaty that both countries signed in Algiers in 2000.

Ethiopia initially rejected the decision, saying it could cause further conflict, but finally accepted it in November 2004.

Correspondents say the rally was designed to prevent Mr Meles gaining support for his initiative ahead of Ethiopia's general election in May.

Details of Sudan cease-fire emerge

A peace accord ending Africa's longest-running civil war requires Sudan's government to withdraw at least 91,000 troops from the rebel-controlled south, a rebel official said Sunday, revealing new details of the deal signed last week.

The forces must pull out within 2 1/2 years, while a proposed government for the autonomous southern Sudan will field a separate army using its share of oil and tax revenues as well as international aid, rebel spokesman Samson Kwaje said.

"It will be a legitimate department of the government of southern Sudan," Kwaje told The Associated Press, detailing the peace accord signed Friday to resolve a conflict that has contributed to the deaths of 2 million people in the past two decades.

The rebels, meanwhile, have eight months to withdraw their forces from northern Sudan. They must pull out 30 percent of their fighters within four months of a signing ceremony scheduled for Jan. 9 in Kenya, said Ad'Dirdeiry Hamed, deputy Sudanese ambassador to Kenya.

The rebel pullout will cover the Nuba Mountains, land along the southern Blue

Egyptian parliament to elect presidential candidate May

The Egyptian parliament will in May elect a candidate to stand for the presidency, who will subsequently be put for approval to the people at a referendum in September, officials said.

"The nomination of the president of the republic by the People's Assembly will take place in May, at the end of the of the current parliamentary session, and the presidential referendum in September," said Safwat al-Sharif, secretary general of the ruling National Democratic Party, quoted by the Mena agency.

President Hosni Mubarak, in power for 23 years, has given no official word on whether he will seek a fifth mandate, but parliament has passed a motion in support of his candidacy.

Egypt chooses its president in a two stage process: first the parliament, dominated by the ruling party, must choose a candidate with a two-thirds majority and then the name is put to a popular vote in a referendum.

However the opposition had long called for constitutional reform to allow the president to be chosen from a list of candidates by universal suffrage, as well as a reduction of the presidential mandate.

The presidential mandate in Egypt lasts six years, but there is no limit on how many times the person can stand. The country has been under a state of emergency ever since former president Anwar Sadat was assassinated in 1981.



The Flight to Paradise Packages
NEW FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Lagos - Calabar - Obudu Ranch Resort

Long Haul Details

Departs	Arrives
LOS 1045hrs	CAL 1145hrs
CAL 1330hrs	PHC 1400hrs
PHC 1245hrs	BEB 1345hrs
BEB 1630hrs	CAL 1730hrs

Short Haul Details

Departs	Arrives
CAL 0900hrs	BEB 1000hrs
BEB 1030hrs	CAL 1130hrs

Flight Days
 Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays

Effective December 3, 2004



For more information and reservations contact:
 ADC Airlines - 234 - 1 - 776 3290, 01-4965750, 084-231919, 087-234477, 08023038704.
 DANA Limited - Lagos: 01- 4978753, 4978752, CES Tourism Bureau - Tony Bossey on 087-239157-9 Executive Travels - Clara on 0803 7232363, 0803 7136808, Nene on 087 - 231997.
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All enquiries should be between 8.00am & 5.00pm Monday to Friday



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Chairman and Managing Director



Danjuma Ochoi
Managing Director



Sulaiman Yahya



Furo Lawal



Ibrahim M. Mubari



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Performance Indices	% Growth	2004 ₦0,000	2003 ₦0,000
Gross Earnings	61.98	1,853,789	1,144,449
Profit/(Loss) Before Taxation	191.19	441,301	151,552
Profit/(Loss) After Taxation	137.37	343,129	144,552
Deposit Liabilities	50.23	8,565,242	5,701,230
Loans and Advances	45.67	2,848,010	1,955,110
Total Assets	43.47	11,560,124	8,057,401
Earnings Per Share	142.86	0.34k	0.14k

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Business Trust

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air	
Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja 06:50	
Abuja - Maid.	17:00
Abuja - PHC	9:00a.m.
PHC - Abuja	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Yola	1:00 p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.
Chanchangi Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
4:45p.m.	
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.
IRS Airlines	
CBQ - Abuja	8:00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Kaduna - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - CBQ	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.
EAS Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	
11:45a.m.	
Jos - Lagos	2:30pm.
Dasab Airlines	
Auja - Lagos	8:30 a.m.
Lagos - PHC	10:30 a.m.
PHC - Lagos	12:30 a.m.
Lagos - Kano	2:30 p.m.
Kano - Lagos	4:30 p.m.
Lagos - Abuja	6:30pm.
ADC Airline	
Lagos - Abuja	7:15 a.m.
	12:45 p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55 a.m.
<i>Most airlines operate the same flight schedule</i>	

Wolfensohn may quit

World Bank

James Wolfensohn said at the weekend that he anticipates bowing out in 2005 as World Bank president and not serving a third five-year term, but would do whatever shareholders ask of him.

"I've had 10 years, and I think that's probably enough. But if the need is there, I'll do whatever the shareholders want," he told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday. "My understanding and my belief is that probably during the course of this year I'll give over to someone else."

Wolfensohn's term expires June 1. As bank president since June 1, 1995, he has emphasized reducing poverty in developing nations and making lending projects more effective. Previously, he headed the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and was a Wall Street investment banker for 20 years.

The United States is the bank's largest shareholder among 184 nation-members. Since the bank's founding in 1944 by a conference of 44 governments in Bretton Woods, N.H., to help rebuild Europe after World War II, the bank traditionally has had an American president. Its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, traditionally has been headed by a European.

FG strategises for agric production

The federal government has mapped out strategy to accelerate the production of vegetable oil, live stock and Cassava to meet the country's needs by 2006.

The minister of agriculture, Malam Adamu Bello, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria, (NAN) in Abuja.

He said the government was making efforts to reverse the current trend of shortfall in production of such commodities.

Bello put the short fall in production of vegetable oil in the country at between 300,000 to 400,000 tones annually.

He said the first strategy towards achieving self sufficiency was to place a total ban on the importation of the commodity.

"We will then set up of an interim harmonization committee, mandated to follow up the implementation package of incentives approved for the sector by the government.

Nigerian Inter-Bank Offered Rate (NIBOR)

Quotes as of: 31/12/2004.

7 Days	13.8333
30 Days	15.7500
60 Days	16.5833
90 Days	16.8333
180 Days	16.8750
270 Days	0.0000
365 Days	16.6917

Primary Market held on 23/12/2004

Security	Rates
Tenor	NTB
Maturity Date	91 DAYS
Amount On Offer	24/03/2005
Total Public Subscription	N 80810.35 Million
Total Allotment	N 80810.35 Million
Range of Bid Rates	N 80810 Million
Stop Rate	12.5000% - 14.5000%
True Yield	14.5 %
Total Amount Offered	15.0423
Total Amount Demanded	US\$ 125000000
Total Amount Sold	US\$ 194188015.39
Lowest Successful Bid Rate	US\$ 162059985.16
Highest Successful Bid Rate	N 132.85 / 1 US\$
No. of Successful Applicants	N 133.3 / 1 US\$
No. of Unsuccessful Applicants	866
	110

Dutch Auction held on 20/12/2004

Central Bank of Nigeria Rates as of: 29/12/2004

Currency	Buying	Selling	Central
US DOLLAR	131.85	132.85	132.35
POUND STERLING	255.433	257.3703	256.40165
EURO	179.7116	181.0746	180.3931
SWISS FRANCES	0	0	0
JAPANESE YEN	1.2755	1.2852	1.2803
CFAFRANCES	0.2651	0.2751	0.2701
WAUA	203.7152	205.2603	204.48775
SAUDIRIYAL	35.1638	35.4304	35.2971

Minimum Rediscount Rate and Export Proceeds

Rates	Change
Minimum Rediscount Rate	15 0.00
Export Proceeds Per \$	1 0.00

Rates as of 29/12/2004

Bureau De Change rates

as of: 21/12/2004

Location	Currency			
	Dollar	Pounds	Buying	Selling
Lagos	137.50	138.50	256.00	257.00
Ikeja	137.00	138.00	255.00	256.00
Airport	138.00	139.00	256.50	257.50

STB, Zenith spearhead FIRS' automated revenue collection

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) at the weekend short-listed four banks to spearhead its new plan to automate the system.

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor

of collection for all federal taxes.

The four banks - Standard Trust Bank (STB) Plc, United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, and Zenith Bank Plc, according to a statement from the FIRS, "scaled a rigorous pre-qualification vetting" conducted by a committee drawn from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), office of the accountant-general of the federation (AGF), FIRS, Customs, and two private sector technical companies.

The statement said further that the lead banks were short-listed from among settlement banks that are active on a particular switching platform, based on the strength of their capital base, extent and reach of their branch networks, prior tax collection records, and ability to access funds from collecting bank branches in remote locations nationwide.

Executive chairman of the FIRS, Ms Ifueko Omoigui, who announced the result of the pre-qualification exercise at the weekend, said that a reputable rating agency in the country assisted in evaluating the financial strengths of the applicant banks.

She however, emphasised in a statement that the approval would lapse in three months unless the four banks are able to meet six conditions specified in the letter of approval sent to their chief executives.

The planned automation, according to the FIRS, would enable corporate and individual taxpayers conveniently make payments online or at approved collecting banks.

The system, it said, is powered by an electronic devise with the capacity to search and automatically sweep federal taxes from each collecting bank to the lead banks, for onward

remittance to government accounts with the CBN.

"This system is being adopted to fight tax fraud and operational weaknesses and to restore transparency in revenue collection and monitoring" the Service said on Friday.

An official of Zenith Bank told reporters in Abuja yesterday that the bank was prepared to take up the challenge, stressing that Zenith has the technological capabilities to execute the mandate. Another factor which counted in favour of the bank during the selection process, he said, was the sweep the bank recorded with its Initial Public Offer (IPO) mid last year.

VACANCY

POSITION: PROGRAM COORDINATOR

AEDILINKAGES, an international organization that specializes in Nutrition development, seeks a qualified candidate to assume responsibilities as Program Coordinator for Nigeria USAID-funded activities based in Lagos. The Program Coordinator will be responsible for Administration and Technical Coordination of the project activities. The position requires frequent travelling.

QUALIFICATION REQUIRED:

Advanced degree in a health profession or any social science with training in administration and one or more of the following technical fields-maternal and child health (MCH), nutrition, or behaviour change communication; at least 5 years of experience in planning and managing programs; demonstrated experience partnering with governments, donors, and NGOs; strong leadership and decision-making ability, computer proficiency. Preferred: USAID project management experience.

Apply to: AEDILINKAGES NIG.
P. O. BOX 14990
Ajidingbi, Ikeja,
Lagos, Nigeria.

Within two weeks from the date of this publication. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



Adamu Bello, agric minister

Business Trust

Motoring

Cars to look out for in 2005

As 2005 begins, consumers in the auto industry have begun to search for the latest editions of their preferred cars around the world. The situation is the same in Nigeria. Being if the largest automobile market in Africa, Nigeria is well recognised in patronising world's most popular brands such as Honda, Toyota, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot and Nissan.

Nigeria's automobile market in recent times witnessed progress largely due to the patronage by private organisations, corporate bodies and individuals. It is quite interesting that Nigerian roads are now full of latest editions of such classic cars that are used in developed countries. In this regard motoring took a look at these key brand names in the auto industry and came out with the cars that Nigerian automobile customers should watch out for.

New BMW M5: 'Businessman's express'
One of the things that always make the BMW M5 particularly attractive to customers is that, for all its performances, it is relatively under-

By Hamisu Muhammad, Reporter (Business)
stated, and relatively uncomplicated. It has plenty of power, in a thoroughly developed but straightforward rear-drive classic wrapped in a muscular but really quite subtle, body. That is the reason BMW thought of the mighty M5 as their businessman's express.

Honda Accord 2005: End of discussion?
The 2004 Honda Accord titled end of discussion is well recognised and patronised by Nigerian customers. In 2005, the Accord further established its role as a technology, performance and efficiency leader with the introduction of the Accord Hybrid, the World's first V-6 powered gasoline-electric hybrid vehicle.

Accord Hybrid utilizes the third generation of Honda's exclusive integrated motor assist (IMA).

Lexus ES: Not a Camry
The Lexus ES 330 is not a Camry, although the two cars share the same platform. ES is an entry-level luxury car with tasteful wood trim and leather seating, but with a half price of LS.

Therefore, this new brand of ES is designed to redress the problems of the ambitious consumers who wish to drive Lexus LS but cannot afford.

The ES 330's trunk is rated at 14.5 cubic feet, smaller than the Camry's, but there is room for everything the customers want.

Mercedes-Benz C-Class:
There is absolutely no point in getting it if you'll never exceed 55 miles per hour. C-class is the company's answer to BMW's in range.

It is equipped with VIO engine, interior decoration, the back of the seat might be too hard for some drivers and the instruments, the

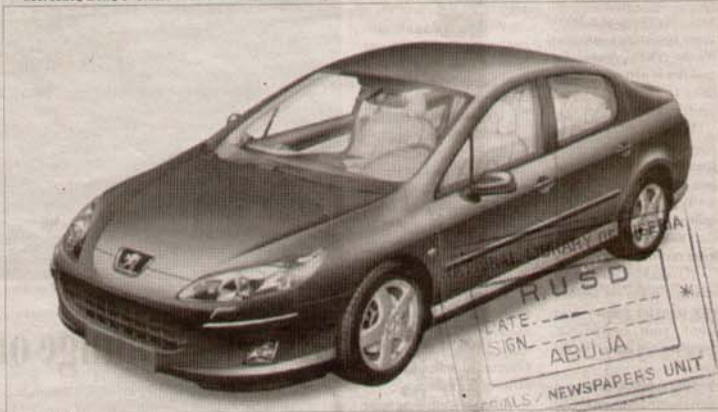
speedometer and rev counter are fine.

Peugeot 407: top-of-the-range
It is one step ahead of 406 by name, but so many steps in the exterior/interior dimensions, principal structural components and engine design.

This new model succeeds the 406 and comes with the

same level of commitment invested by the marque in the 206 and 307.

The structure of the 407 uses the platform of top-of-the-range PSA Peugeot Citroen models. The body for example exhibits a torsional rigidity -0.77 mrd under a torque of 100 than ever before attained on a Peugeot saloon.



Peugeot 407



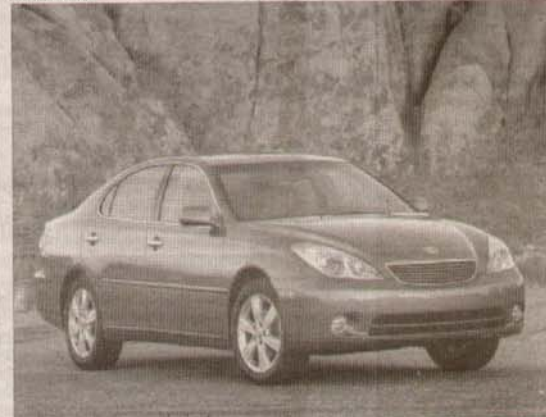
BMW M5



Honda Accord



Mercedes-Benz C-Class



Lexus ES

Business Trust

Nigeria to refine 50% of crude oil next year

Fifty percent of the crude oil produced in Nigeria would be refined locally from 2006, the group managing director of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Engr. Funso Kupolokun, has said. Speaking at a World press conference organised by the NNPC, Kupolokun said this is part of the objectives in the areas of local content development.

He said measures of drawing up of new initiatives in respect of local content including Joint Qualifiers System (JQS) and petroleum digital market place as well as accelerating use of local raw materials.

He said as part of the strategic plans for technology transfer "today most front end engineering projects are done in Nigeria."

"In respect of deep water Agbami development, 50 percent engineering man-hours are to be performed in Nigeria, and more than 6000 tones of fabrication to be done in country," Kupolokun added.

He said this year, NNPC under authority from the

By Hamisu Muhammad, Reporter (Business)

federal government, will push for mandatory 25 percent Nigerian content in the deep offshore projects, starting from the Agbami project.

Within the year, also, contractors will be encouraged to pool their sources together either as joint ventures, joint enterprise or new limited liability companies to execute larger jobs.

When asked by *Business Trust* the details of the 50 percent daily crude oil production locally. The GMD said the project would be carried out based on the current deregulation of the downstream sector.

He said the four existing refineries would be privatised within the year and more private refineries are expected to come up to complement the exercise.

Other intended measure expected in achieving the target includes push for passage of the Nigeria content policy bill to national assembly, define technology levels and ensure steady growth incompetency and capacity.

DPR warns erring marketers in Kaduna

The Kaduna Zonal office of the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) has warned erring marketers who refuse to observe the rules and regulations guiding the sales and distribution of petroleum products in the country.

According to a statement made available to *Business Trust* in Kaduna signed by Mordecai Dantani Baba Ladan, zonal controller of DPR, any marketer caught contravening the laws would be sanctioned appropriately.

The statement disclosed that DPR has observed, with great concern, the illegalities being perpetrated by some petroleum products marketers in Kaduna and its environs during this festive period.

DRP also noted that despite the recent review of prices of petroleum products by N1.00 per litre, many marketers are yet to comply with the directive of the federal government on downward review of the prices.

The statement also said that DPR shall continue to be

From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent in Kaduna vigilant in order to ensure compliance.

Shell moves to tackle leakages

Shell Petroleum Development Company has announced new measures to rectify problems associated with leakages of sand and water during oil exploration. The measures known as work over campaigns with the use of a modified double ramp barge would be held at Egwa field in the western part of the country.

The operations are used to rectify problems (sand and water product leaking packer etc) which occur over time as wells produce.

The company disclosed in a statement that instead of the conventional life barge used for such operations, a customised ordinary barge was deployed successfully for the five wells involved in the work over campaign at Egwa field whose average cost was put at \$500,000 in a month.



New loading facility, Calm Buoy, which is used to load crude oil to Ocean-going tankers, during installation at Bonny Terminal...recently.

Oil prices plunge on mild winter weather

Crude futures fell sharply Monday amid milder US winter weather on the first trading day of the new year and expectations of increased output from Canada and North Sea.

Prices spiked last week after militant attacks in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, sent jitters through the market on fears the supply chain might be broken in the world's leading crude exporter.

But analysts suggested those strikes were no longer affect-

ing the market despite lingering concerns sparked by a call last month by al-Qaida terror network leader Osama bin Laden for attacks on oil pipelines in the Middle East. "The market was panicked but fears essentially evaporated... since there was no follow-up," said Deborah White, senior economist for energy at SG Securities in Paris.

She said production outages in Canada and from the North Sea were about to end a development that in the

short term would mean an extra 300,000 barrels a day on the market.

Crude was trading at \$42.60 a barrel near midday in Europe in electronic trade on the New York Mercantile Exchange down 85 cents from Thursday's settlement. Benchmark light, sweet crude had closed in 2004 at \$43.53 in New York.

London's International Petroleum Exchange was closed Monday for a public holiday.

Heating oil meanwhile, traded down nearly 3 cents at \$1.2235 per gallon on the Nymex.

Despite falling more than \$12 per barrel since hitting record highs in late October, the price of crude remains just under 30 percent higher compared to year-ago levels. Distillate levels in the United

States the world's largest energy consumer are lower than a year ago, and colder weather sparks higher demand for heating fuel. Distillates include heating oil, diesel and jet fuel, all premiums as winter bites in the Northern Hemisphere.

Forecaster Accuweather said on its Web site Monday that cold weather will hit the United States midweek from Canada but will only reach the Upper Midwest.

Elsewhere, saboteurs struck an oil pipeline in Iraq over the weekend, damaging infrastructure crucial for money to rebuild the war-ravaged country. On Friday, interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said that attacks by insurgents on Iraq's oil infrastructure had cost the country about \$10 billion in the past five months.

Dollar steady against Euro in New Year

The US dollar was steady against the euro Monday after the shared European currency rallied from early losses in thin Asian trading.

In afternoon trading in Europe, the euro was worth US\$1.3542, short of the all-time high of US\$1.3667 it hit last Thursday.

The 12-nation currency slumped as low as US\$1.3389 in thin trading in Asia earlier Monday, with Japan markets closed.

The dollar was trading at 102.67 yen, down slightly

from Friday, while the British pound was at US\$1.9109 after rallying from US\$1.8983.

The dollar has been weighed down by worries over the ballooning US trade and budget deficits. With no short-term fix in sight, many analysts expect it to continue weakening in the new year.

Markets this week are closely watching a string of US economic data that are expected to display strength, culminating with Friday's job creation report from the US Labor Department



NATIONAL PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION



Advertorial

The National Programme on Immunization (NPI), and all our development partners, hereby thank all Nigerians, especially the Nigerian child, all our collaborators, all stakeholders in immunization, States, Local Governments, and the Private Sector for the opportunities offered in saving the Nigerian child using quality immunization services in the year 2004.

NPI and partners were particularly impressed by the large turnout of the Nigerian parents, care-givers, religious, traditional and political leaders during all the immunization campaigns in the year 2005. We believe that the lessons learnt in the previous activities are key to developing our strategies to greater achievement in 2005.

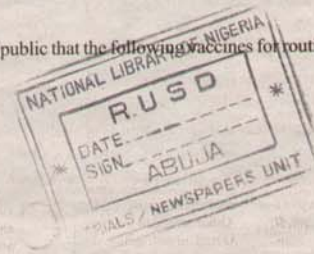
These lessons will also be applied to strengthen not only strategies to interrupt wild poliovirus this year, 2005, but also routine immunization services.

Immunization service delivery are available nationwide through the public and private sector. These services must and should be utilized for the over five million children born every year in Nigeria.

The Federal Government of Nigeria and partners have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate their unalloyed commitment to the Nigerian child through the provision of free vaccines, Syringes and other Logistic supports.

The National Programme on Immunization would therefore like to inform the general public that the following vaccines for routine vaccination of our children are available, namely:

- BCG against Tuberculosis (at birth)
- OPV against poliomyelitis (at birth, 6, 10 & 14 weeks)
- DPT against Diphtheria, Whooping Cough and Tetanus (at 6, 10 & 14 weeks)
- Measles (at 9 months)
- Hepatitis B (at birth, 6 & 14 weeks)
- Yellow Fever (at 9 months)
- CSM against Meningitis



This commitment on the part of Government is illustrated by having funds available for procurement of vaccines, cold chain equipment and logistics as well as supporting capacity development in states, LGAs and the private sector.

As we come into 2005, join us to make a resolution to immunize every child free of charge not only as a right of the child, but as a duty by parents, care givers, political, religious and traditional leaders. Our duty and your duty is to protect the health of the child.

The NPI, partners, states & LGAs have jointly reposition our service delivery to the ward level and plans have been put in place to reach every target with quality immunization services. We need you for successful implementation. Please resolve to do your part. We thank you for joining us in all efforts at Federal, State and LGA levels to interrupt Wild Polio Virus in 2005 and strengthen Routine Immunization Service delivery.

Now at the verge of polio eradication, the greatest challenge in 2005 is to sustain the tempo of conducting high quality supplemental national immunizations activities (NIDs and SNIDs) to ensure that every child receives 2 drops of oral polio vaccine in each of the 5 rounds of the 2005 polio campaigns, the dates of which are:

- 1st round NIDs Saturday 26th February to Tuesday 1st March
- 2nd round NIDs Saturday 9th April to Tuesday 12th April
- 3rd round NIDs Saturday 14th May to Tuesday 17th May
- SNIDS Saturday 6th August to Tuesday 9th August
- 4th round NIDs Saturday 17th Sept. to Tuesday 20th Sept.
- 5th round NIDs Saturday 12th Nov. to Tuesday 15th Nov.

With these planned quality rounds for the year 2005, and full support and cooperation of all Nigerians and our development partners, we are confident that we will achieve the target of interrupting wild poliovirus this year, in our final push to polio eradication, not just in Nigeria but globally.

We wish, once again, to thank all Nigerians, partners, other parastatals, NGOs, Individuals all stakeholders and not the least parents and care givers, policy makers for the journey so far, and also to appeal for a greater collaboration and support in the months ahead so that Nigeria will not only be polio-free but we would jointly entrenched sustainability in our Routine Immunization service delivery system for a stronger and healthier nation. Wishing all Nigerians a happy and successful 2005.

SIGNED

**National Coordinator/ Chief Executive,
National Programme on Immunization (NPI).**



PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

In line with the Federal Government's determination to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the National Health Insurance Scheme and to accord every professional due recognition and allow all to optimize their potentialities for a successful take-off of the Scheme.

The Honourable Minister of Health, Professor Eytayo Lambo, invites Stakeholders of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to a two-day Interactive Session, on 7th and 8th January 2005, by 10.00 a.m. prompt, at the Benue Hall of NICON Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

(THEME: RESTORING STAKEHOLDERS' CONFIDENCE TOWARDS THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NHIS)

Expected participants include the following:-

a. Government

- Minister of Health -1
- Minister of State for Health -1
- Head of Civil Service of the Federation -1
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health -1
- Permanent Secretary, Staff Welfare Office, OHCSF -1
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour -1
- Director General, Office of the Budget of the Federation -1
- Chairman, Senate Committee on Health -1
- Chairman, House of Representative Committee on Health -1
- Zonal Representatives of Honourable Commissioners of Health -6
- Rep, National Primary Health Care Dev Agency, NPHCDA -1
- Rep, National Programme on Immunization, NPI -1
- Chairman, Committee of Chief Medical Directors, CMDs -1
- Commandant, Army Medical Corps -1
- Commandant, Naval Medical Corps -1
- Commandant, Air force Medical Corps -1
- Head of Medicals, Nigeria Police Force -1
- Head of Medicals, Immigrations Service -1
- Head of Medicals, Customs Service -1
- Head of Medicals, Prisons Service -1
- Head of Medicals, Fed Road Safety Corps, FRSC -1
- Head of Medicals, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA -1
- Head Medicals, State Security Services -1
- Head Medicals, National Intelligence Agency -1
- Association of Local Government of Nigeria, ALGON -2
- Secretary General, Assoc. of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria -1
- Secretary General, Association of Civil Service Union -1
- Registrar, Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, MDCN -1
- Registrar, Pharmacists Council of Nigeria, PCN -1
- Registrar, Council of Medical Laboratory Scientists, IMLS -1
- Registrar, Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, NANNM -1
- Registrar, Board of Radiographers -1
- Rep, Wages and Salaries Commission -1
- Legal Adviser to Ministry of Health -1

b. Employers/Contributors (Employees)(6persons)

- Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC -2
- Nigeria Employers Consultative Association, (NECA) -2
- Christian Health Association of Nigeria, (CHAN) -1
- Federation of Moslem Women Assoc. of Nigeria (FOMWAN) -1

c. Providers (12 persons)

- Nigeria Medical Association, NMA -2
- Guild of Medical Directors, GMD -1
- Assoc. of General Practice Medical Practitioners of Nigeria, AGPMPN -1
- Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, PSN -2
- Nigeria Assoc. of Community Pharmacists, NACP -1

- Nigeria Assoc of Hospital and Administrative Pharmacists, NAHAP -1
- Nigeria Assoc. of Nurses and Midwives of Nigeria, NANMN -1
- Association of Medical Laboratories Scientists -1
- Radiographers Association of Nigeria -1
- Physiotherapist Association of Nigeria -1

d. NHIS- Registered Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)/ Managed Health Care Organizations (27Nos)

- i. Ronsberger Nigeria Ltd, Abuja -1
- ii. United Health Care International Ltd, Abuja -1
- iii. Hygeia Health Maintenance Services Ltd, Lagos -1
- iv. Southern Rose Nig Ltd, Lagos -1
- v. Royal Health Maintenance Services Limited, Owerri -1
- vi. Premier Medicaid Nigeria Limited, Ibadan -1
- vii. Health Care International, Lagos -1
- viii. Clearline International Ltd, Lagos -1
- ix. Total Health Trust Ltd, Lagos -1
- x. Princeton Health Limited -1
- xi. Equity Indemnity Insurance Company -1
- xii. Industrial and General Insurance Company -1
- xiii. Marina Medical Services -1
- xiv. Multishield Limited -1
- xv. Critical Rescue Limited -1
- xvi. Managed Health Services Limited -1
- xvii. First Health Limited -1
- xviii. Premium Health -1
- xix. Healthlinks Services -1
- xx. Thomas Insurance Brokers Company Limited -1
- xxi. Unic Health Insurance -1
- xxii. International Health Management Services Limited Lagos -1
- xxiii. Wise Health Services Limited Abuja -1
- xxiv. Heirs Medicare Services Limited Lagos -1
- xxv. Kaduna GMD Health Limited Kaduna -1
- xxvi. Songhai Health Trust Limited Abuja -1
- xxvii. Integrated Health Services, Abuja -1

e. International Partners (4 Persons)

- i. International Labour Organization, ILO -1
- ii. United Nations Development Programme, UNDP -1
- iii. World Health Organization, WHO -1
- iv. UK Department for International Development, DFID -1

This notice serves as invitation to all participants.

Signed:

DR. MUHAMMAD LECKY

Interim Administrator

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME



NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY

PUBLIC NOTICE NO. 3563

REMOVAL OF IDLE AND ABANDONED CRAFTS/VESSELS AT KIRIKIRI LIGHTER TERMINAL PHASES I AND II TIN-CAN ISLAND PORT.

The Management of Nigerian Ports Authority hereby gives notice to the Owners of all the idle and abandoned Crafts/Vessels at Kirikiri Lighter Terminal Phases I and II, Tin-Can Island Port, to evacuate same within fourteen (14) days of this publication.

Please, note that failure, on the part of owners of the said idle and abandoned crafts and vessels to comply with this notice, would necessitate the Nigerian Ports Authority to take unilateral action to rid the Jetties of these Vessels that are occupying viable commercial berths as well as constituting danger to surface Navigation.

STAR INT

IMF, World Bank not the author

It is almost an article of faith among most Nigerians that the people unfriendly economic reforms embarked upon by the President Obasanjo administration are designed and imposed on the Nigerian government by the IMF and World Bank.

One of the few Nigerians who, however, do not share in this belief is the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Honourable Aminu Bello Masari, who disclosed that, far from being the authors of the government's harsh reform programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions are even opposed to some aspects of the policy.

But even Speaker Masari, while insisting that the economic reforms are necessary, has, however, admitted that people are suffering because of faulty implementation in the hands of the members of the president's economic team who, according to him, "are not politicians."

In this interview with Daily Trust's Ishaq Modibbo Kawu (Editor) and Abdu Labaran Malamfashi (Group Political Editor) the Speaker also spoke on many other topics of national significance. Excerpts:-

Sir, it is the end of a year (2004), and if you look back over the year in terms of legislative performance, what would you describe as the highpoints of the year for you?

Well, if you look at 2004 vis-à-vis legislative performance you will appreciate that 2004 has been the year that we have seen more controversial bills and more serious bills. This is also the year that the government's economic reform programme bills were submitted to the House. Yes, given the emotion it evoked, the Labour Bill also deserves a mention and the Pension Bill, because of the sectional interest it aroused and its result has already started manifesting.

You see, a lot of people thought that the motive behind the Labour Bill was to gag labour. But this is far from the intention. The intention is to open up labour for other unions to flourish as is obtained in every democracy. So in terms of emotion, sensation, suspicion and other emotive feelings, you can say that the Labour and Pension Bills are the most prominent. Because of the late submission of 200-4 Appropriation, it was also passed this year.

Really, in terms of legislation, the year has been very eventful and I think this will spill over into the year 2005. So, by and large, the 2004 has been really eventful, and I hope and expect that members will also work towards sponsoring members bills even though logistically, it is still very difficult for members to introduce and pass bills.

As the Speaker of the House of Representatives, you bring to bear a considerable experiential level coming from the previous house. Now if you look at the way your colleagues in the House have performed, do you feel satisfied that there is a greater understanding now of the role that the House of Representatives and the legislature are supposed to play in the consolidation of our democracy?

Of course, yes. Well, I cannot say greater but there is certainly a better understanding compared to what obtained between 1999 and 2003. When we first came in in 1999 we did not even appreciate the extent of our powers. Likewise, the ex-

ecutive arm did not appreciate the function, the role and the powers of the legislature. They seemed to think that the legislature was an unnecessary addition onto the system. So the behaviour of the executive between 1999 and 2003 was disdainful of the legislature.

But when we came in 2003, there was some measure of improvement in terms of the appreciation of the place of the legislature from the executive. I must however, quickly add that although we have this measure of improvement, it is still not yet there. We are still not there yet. We need public support. We need public understanding. We need the public to appreciate the stages of coming out with an act. Yes, we want the public to appreciate that the legislature is not supposed to be another opposition. Rather, it is supposed to be a forum where people could freely argue their views and the executive feel the confidence to come and explain themselves and where they are wrong or right (they) will be accordingly told so. We really try to encourage private individuals and government officials to feel free to come to the National Assembly. After all, the legislators are all Nigerians like the rest of the people out there.

So you can see that as we have been saying, the legislature has continued to be the only symbol of democracy followed by political parties. So if there is appreciation on the part of the electorate, I think democracy will flourish much better than it is now. But as it were now, there is a kind of disconnect between the electorate and the elected officials because there appears to be a misunderstanding of roles with regards to the latter. At the local government you have the councillors, and at the state you have the State House of Assembly and at the federal government level you have the National Assembly. These are groups of politicians and elected officers who, in most cases, are supposed to share the credit or blame for the performance or non performance of their political parties. But because of the disconnect between the electorate and the legislators, especially as regards the role of the latter, there is a lot of pressure on the lawmaker from the electorate.

The electorate always want to know what the legislator has brought to his constituency and constituents in terms of projects, interns of the number of scholarships, in terms of boreholes, in terms of new roads etc. All these are things which are supposed to come from the executive. The legislator is not supposed to be the financier or the main financier of these things because his duty is that of law making and not executing projects. This is precisely what propels the legislators to demand for constituency projects and this pressure on the lawmaker will continue until such a time when there is an understanding of the role of the legislator. The electorate will have to come to terms with the fact that the legislator is not supposed to be somebody who must bring a project to his constituency but somebody who will subsume the Interest of the community within the national interest that if there are developmental projects things will naturally fall in place and everybody will benefit.

How then do you feel when people insinuate of a master-servant relationship between the executive and the National Assembly, or that the executive is too overbearing on the National Assembly?

Think people, especially you journalists, tend to focus too much on the federal government. If you look at the constitution vis-à-vis the responsibilities of the three tiers of government, you will find that there is more democracy at the federal level than at the other two tiers. So despite the seeming overbearing of the executive, you find that the National Assembly is more proactive in respect of its function than the State Houses of Assembly.

Again, you have to look at our history and what are inherited. You cannot divorce the personality of the people in government now from the way things are being run. I think, until we graduate fully into a democracy, we can not be free of an overbearing executive. The executive at the state and local government levels are more overbearing on their legislature than what is happening at the federal level.

So what is the position of the National Assembly in respect of the proposed National Dialogue since the ar-

gument against such a forum has always been that with the National Assembly in place national dialogue of any sort is really not necessary?

Well, national dialogue is something, which is constitutional and you cannot stop some from deciding to dialogue. The contentious issue is a Sovereign National Conference. So if we are talking about sovereign national conference then we are taking away the sovereignty from the president and the National Assembly all of whom were elected by Nigerians to hold the sovereignty on the behalf for a specified period of time.

But when you are talking about a dialogue, the three of us here can start to dialogue and call it anything and then follow it with a bill to the National Assembly. So there is really nothing wrong with the National dialogue as proposed by the president and in any case, people have been dialoguing anyway. Political parties are also for dialogue, there is the Chief Rotimi Williams-led patriots, the Arewa consultative Forum, the Afenifere, the Yoruba Council of elders, the Obaeze Igbo, all these are dialogue groups and Nigerians will continue to dialogue at both large and small forums.

One of the more interesting issues that made headlines in the last legislative year is the pressure that legislators from the South Western part of Nigeria put to bear on the National Assembly in respect of one of the projects that was supposed to be for Lagos State and which virement was supposed to be transferred to another overhead. There was something close to a strike as a result. How did the House take that particular issue in terms of the domino effect that it can have?

Well, I think what happened was unfortunate because some members were railroaded into taking a partisan position unknowingly. If you had observed, on several occasions between 1999 and 2003, AD staged a walkout and they protested but that never stopped the activities of the House because all you need to do business is a quorum and once you have that you can continue irrespective of who is protesting. So if anybody decides to protest by not attending the sessions of the House that person will only be depriving his constituents of representation. So if any members go on strike they are not on strike against the National Assembly but against the people who sent them to the House. On the issue of virement we are talking about N200 million

which was taken to some areas which we feel the money can be put to better use because you can not control flood erosion in Lagos with N200 million when the amount required for such a project is over N30 billion. In any case, except for the one time which the ANPP staged a walkout over a particular issue, there was never an opportunity for any political party or any zone to stage a walk out.

Anyway, the protesting members were trying to link up the political problem of the Lagos State governor with the presidency and find a way of expressing their views and unfortunately some members of the PDP from the South West, who are in the majority, did not read between the lines until the action was already taken. But as politicians we tried to approach the matter politically to resolve it and we also tried to remain focused. So if we had allowed ourselves to be polarised along regional, zonal lines then the House would have been divided for the first time. But thank God, the matter did not reach that level.

So you were really never worried?

No, we were not worried at all.

Talking about politics, your party, the PDP, which is the biggest and also ruling party in the land, seems to have problems of its own at the moment. What is your take on the issue between the president and the national chairman of the party and what do you think it portends for the future of your party because people are reading a lot of meanings into what is happening now?

Well, you see we are daily learning the democratic ropes, how to be good democrats and how to evolve a sound democratic culture and society weaned on democratic ideals. I think what happened between the president and the national chairman was unfortunate. However, it has not reached the level to polarise or tear the PDP apart. You see, the national chairman, being the chairman of the ruling party, and the president, being head of the executive arm of government, ought to reach one of the several fora available if there is any disagreement between them. There are the party caucus, the Board of Trustees of the party, the NEC and so on. Again, the chairman has an unfettered access to the president to express his views on issues and state his position, and, together with the president, come out with a common position. It was really unfortunate that the national chairman wrote to the president and somehow the letter leaked out as it was bound to because any communication copied to a third or more party will inevitably find its way to an unintended audience. And it bears emphasizing that it is important that the government and the party must not only be working together, they must



Honourable Aminu Bello Masari, Spe

also be seen to be working together. Given its control of the federal government and 28 state governments the PDP must not be allowed to be seriously sick because if it is sick it is the whole nation that is sick. Problems in other parties do not have the capacity to cause confusion in the polity, as would problems in the PDP. So we were able to successfully resolve and contain the situation.

You may have resolved and contained it now, but the feeling we get from the outside is that the rumble is part of the posturing for 2007; that the PDP is divided down the middle between Vice President Atiku Abubakar and General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd.)?

I don't think that is really a problem to us in the PDP, because we know that at the end of the day there can be only one candidate for the party's primary election. It is really not likely. So we are fully prepared that should there be more than one candidate the party has the capacity to organise a free, fair and transparent primary election to elect its presidential flag bearer. In any case, the current issue has nothing to do with the Atiku/IBB Presidential ambitions unless people are insinuating that the president is working for one and the national chairman is working for the other.

Another reading by some ranking members of the PDP is that the president's over reaction in his reply to the national chairman's letter was not targeted at the vice president but the entire north for standing firm against his

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LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

FG urged to wade into RTEAN crisis

The National President of the Drivers Welfare Club of Nigeria (DWCN), Comrade Monday Elimigbe, has called on the federal ministry of labour and productivity that supervises transport unions across the nation to wade into the problems facing the National governing council of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN).

Comrade Elimigbe who made the call while addressing the drivers in Abuja said that most of his members who practise their driving profession under the RTEAN expressed their dismay over the factional problem at the National level. They complained that the face-off had greatly affected the spirit of oneness in the union especially in the transport business.

According to him, the federal ministry of labour

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi
Correspondent (Abuja)

and productivity was saddled with the responsibility of handling the affairs of the Nigerian workers in the industries and other ministries and parastatals.

He revealed that the two members of the RTEAN, one Alhaji Muhammadu Mambo and chief Sunday Ogunyade who have been parading themselves as National Chairmen of the RTEAN should be checked by the ministry so that they will not cause chaos and confusion across 36 states branches of the union in the country.

Comrade Elimigbe who said the set goal of the club is to ensure the welfare of drivers urged the ministry to call the two warring members for settlement so as to erase divi-

sion and promote peace and unity among them.

In his response, the FCT chairman of the RTEAN, Chief Abubakar O. Sadiq who told Labour Trust that there was a break out faction at the national level of the union said the problem started in the year 2001 and efforts made by the federal ministry of labour and productivity proved abortive before the ministry transferred the matter to the industrial arbitrary panel (IAP) to investigate the matter and identify the national chairman following the past records.

On the process, he said, the IAP ruled that the two parties should take bonds of peace and settlement but they disagreed until the matter transferred to the National Industrial Court which had or-

dered that the national delegates conference should be organised for the fresh election and the leaders of the union across the nation should maintain their posi-

tions in order not to cause confusion.

Chief Sadiq said that he has been maintaining his position as FCT chairman following the ruling by the Na-

tional industrial court and pleaded with the members across the nation to be law abiding citizens and make peace to reign pending when the court will decide on the proceedings.



NLC National President, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole (m) addressing a press conference after his meeting with senators at the National Assembly. With him are other Comrades.

Jigawa NUJ petitions gov. over educational backwardness

The Jigawa council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), has petitioned Gov. Saminu Turaki against over what it called the poor state of education in his state.

In a six-point petition, signed by the Jigawa NUJ secretary, Mr. Mustapha Gide, said the union blamed government for its inability to

pay students' allowances in the past 12 months.

The union also accused government of being "irresponsible, through deliberate policies, such as cancelling the common entrance and junior secondary school examinations."

According to the union, "the action has deprived stu-

dents of their rights to quality education.

"In fact, it has reduced the scope of student enrolment from the state to other schools across the country," the union said.

The NUJ urged government "to settle NECO and WAEC examination fees for students in its secondary schools."

NUJ honours police officer

The Osun branch of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), has presented an award as a mark of honour to the leader of the mobile police 39 unit of the state command, Squadron Commander Agans Irabor.

Speaking at the award ceremony organised by the Osun council of the NUJ, the Osun commissioner of po-

lice, Alhaji Audu Abubakar who gave assessment in Osogbo said, Irabor has helped the command to really turn around the Mopod unit as the "best in the country in terms of discipline."

He said that other police officers nationwide needed to emulate the leadership qualities of Irabor.

"This award is a vote of

confidence in the command; we are proud of it and we thank the NUJ for it," Abubakar said.

In his comments, the chairman of the NUJ council, Prince Ayoade Adedayo, stressed that "we need better understanding among journalists, the police and the public to sustain democracy in Nigeria."



President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Adams Oshiomhole (l) and President of Trade Union Congress (TUC), Mrs. Peace Obiajulu during the workshop on the pension act, held in Abuja...recently. Pic: Felix Oshiomhole



From left to right, NLC President, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, Minister of labour and productivity Dr. Hassan M. Laval and the former NLC President.



Policemen drafted to NLC headquarters to stop the pre-strike rally in Abuja...recently.

LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

FG calls for review of NNPC staff retrenchment

The Federal Ministry of Labour and productivity, Abuja, has directed the management of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), NUPENG and PENGASSAN to work out modalities for the review of the complaints of NNPC staff who were recently disengaged from the service.

Speaking at the 'peace talk' organised for in-house union of NUPENG/PENGASSAN and the management of the NNPC, the permanent secretary of the Ministry, Dr. Timiebi Koripamo-Agary who said that the ministry is interested in achieving industrial peace and harmony said the parties, while deliberating on the review, should fine tune if possible, and provide some packages to those staff who were due for promotion before they are finally disengaged.

A press statement which was signed by the Chief press secretary, Emma Opara, said that after the agreement was reached by the parties, the NNPC management agreed to dialogue with the two staff unions to consider the demands of the unions in respect of the disengaged exercise.

The statement revealed that the parties will constitute a review committee that will consider genuine complaints of victimisation or mistakes that might have risen from the exercise.

The review committee, the statement said, must comprise of NNPC management, PENGASSAN and NUPENG and any other agreeable party that might be on observer status. And the final position of the committee should be forwarded to the ministry within a period of two weeks from the agreement day dated on December 28, 2004.

It would be recalled that the group managing director of the Nigerian Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Engineer Funsho Kupolokun had last

Stories by Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi Correspondent (Abuja)
 year announced the disengagement of 2,355 workers of the Corporation, just as he said that it would create about 50,000 new jobs over the next four years.

Engineer Kupolokun while speaking at a press briefing in Abuja said the NNPC is "at the verge of a new phase of existence and requires a new and more effective balance in terms of skill, age and experienced staff."

As a result, he said, it becomes necessary for the NNPC to "eliminate inefficiencies" in order to reposition the corporation to create the NNPC of our future."

Minister predicts cordial FG/NLC relationship

The Minister of Labour, Employment and Productivity Hassan Lawal has predicted a cordial relationship between government and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) this year.

Lawal, in a chat with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja said that there will be no more confrontation between labour and government in 2005 because then, NLC would have been decentralised.

"With the passage of the labour bill, the monopoly of NLC will be broken thereby giving room for more labour centres to be established," he said.

Lawal further added that 2005 would be a year of peaceful coexistence, political stability and economic growth.

The minister said that government and labour had come to terms that dialogue remained the only option for peaceful coexistence.

"FG and NLC have virtually fought themselves to a standstill and realised at the end of the day that only social dialogue can prevail so government now understands

the limitations of labour and vice versa," Lawal stressed.

The minister said the major achievement in the sector was the establishment of the National Pension Scheme, which he described as an upliftment for the Nigerian workers.

"With the new pension scheme in place, I for see workers retiring happily knowing that at the end of the day their entitlement will be paid as and when due," Minister said.

He, however, expressed regret that 2004 had been very turbulent for government and the labour movement as a result of the implementation of government's home driven reforms especially the deregulation of the oil sector.

"Government on its part had to implement its reform agenda and obviously there was bound to be hardship but the ministry acted as a bridge builder and peace maker which did not go down well with labour movement," Lawal said.

He said he believed that government's intention as regards the reforms was genuine and that Nigerians would benefit from it.

but indeed all of us that will remain."

Expressing NNPC's intention to create 50,000 jobs in the next four years, the GMD revealed that in the first phase, "we are bringing in about 600 new staff" and "this will be facilitated, among others, through a digital market place which we are setting up as part of the project PACE."

"Our aspiration" he said "is to create a new national oil company performing at world class level comparable to high performing national oil companies such as petrobras, petronas, statoil etc.

Labour Trust observed that at the NNPC headquarters in Abuja, some armed mobile policemen were apparently brought in to curtail any possible uprising that may be caused by the disengaged workers.

Labour Trust observed that at the NNPC headquarters in Abuja, some armed mobile policemen were apparently brought in to curtail any possible uprising that may be caused by the disengaged workers.

Nigeria Labour Congress, President Comrade Adams Oshiomole (r), Special Adviser to the Labour Minister, Mr. Victor Yakara (l) and Minister of Labour, Mr. Hassan Lawal Mohammed during the public hearing on anti labour bill, held at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja on Wednesday 25th, August 2004. *Pic: Felix Oughbide.*

NARTO indicts police over illegal parks

The Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) FCT branch has indicted the men of the FCT police command, Abuja, for allowing touts to operate transport businesses.

According to the FCT chairman of the NARTO, Alhaji Abubakar Sidi, the efforts made by the commissioner of FCT police command, Emmanuel Adebayo following a directive by the FCT administration to evacuate those illegal parks in the city proved abortive as bad ones in the Nigeria police encourage some transporters to

operate illegally due to what he called bribes that the police had been collecting from them.

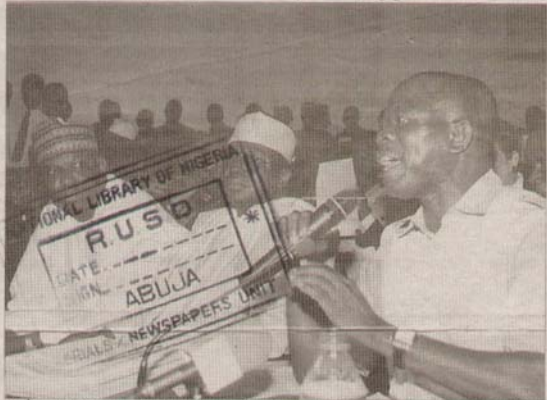
Alhaji Sidi who drew the attention of the FCT police command to the problems in the Nigeria police, said that the executive members of NARTO and other transport unions in the territory had several times reported to the police in their various divisional stations to evacuate most of the transporters that stationed their vehicles at illegal parks.

He revealed that the FCT police command lacks consistency in carrying out the

evacuation exercise as most of the drivers ejected from Area one, Mabushi round about and other parts of the city by the police had moved back.

He urged the FCT police commissioner, Emmanuel Adebayo to take cognisance of the rationale behind the crusade against illegal motor parks in the territory and provide possible solution to stem such menace in the police practice by ensuring that the bad eggs among the officers were removed from the service.

This, he said, will portray the image of the Nigeria police in a positive manner and Nigerians together with the police will learn to obey law and order.



The permanent secretary of the ministry of labour and productivity, Dr. Timiebi Koripamo-Agary (middle) and other members of Nigerian delegates to the recent employment summit in Burkina Faso.



NNPC sacked workers protesting over non payment of their salaries at NNPC headquarters in Abuja...recently. *Pic: Kennedy Eghonmie.*



SOCIETE GENERALE BANK (NIGERIA) LTD.

RC: 19868

NOTICE

In view of the prolonged closure of our branches, the following Notice is for the information of all customers of the bank, and for those members of the public who are holding Bankers Cheques/Drafts issued by Societe Generale Bank (Nigeria) Ltd (SGBN).

Some of our customers and members of the public were issued Bankers Cheques and Drafts in the wake of our suspension from the Clearing House and have consequently been unable to clear the instruments.

We now request all customers and members of the public holding such bankers cheques or drafts issued by the bank to contact us with full details of the cheques/drafts. This will enable us to ascertain our liability and update our records.

Please send the following information by post to the following address on or before 21st January 2005:

Head: Reconciliation Committee
Societe Generale Bank (Nigeria) Ltd
Sarah House, 13 Martins Street,
P.M.B. 12741 Lagos.

1. Name of Account holder.
2. Account Number.
3. Branch at which the cheque was issued.
4. Photocopy of both sides of the cheque.

Telephone enquiries should be directed to:

Dapo Idowu: 01-8932106
Siy Eneke: 01-8932105

Please note that the above information should reach SGBN by 21st January 2005.

Thank you for your cooperation.

SIGNED
MANAGEMENT

CORPORATE HEAD OFFICE: Sarah House, 13 Martins Street, Lagos

BRANCHES: ABUJA - ADO EKITI - AKURE - APAPA - ARABA - BOJUK - CALABAR - DALEKO - DAWKURU - GOMBE - GUSULI - IBAJAN - IDUROTA - IKELA - ILORIN - IZAJE - KADUNA NORTH - KADUNA SOUTH - KANTIN KAWA - KANO - LAGOS - LOKOLA - MADAGASCAR - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - OFFIN CANAL - ONITSHA - OYO - SOKOTO - STATION ROAD (PORT HARCOURT) - TIN CAN ISLAND - TRABE AMADI (PORT HARCOURT) - TWON BRASS - UYO - VICTORIA ISLAND - WARRI - YENAGOA - YOLA

ATM SITES: CORPORATE HEAD OFFICE, MARTINS STREET, LAGOS - VICTORIA ISLAND BRANCH, ADEYEMO ALAKA STREET - APAPA BRANCH, CREEK ROAD - IKELA BRANCH, OBA AVONIA ROAD - LAGOS BRANCH, BROAD STREET - ABUJA BRANCH 1, ALGIERS STREET - ABUJA BRANCH 2, ALGIERS STREET - PORT HARCOURT BRANCH, STATION ROAD - KANO MAIN BRANCH, BONFIN ROAD - MEGA PLAZA SHOPPING MALL, VICTORIA ISLAND - FLAVORS EATERY, ALLEN AVENUE - FAVORITES FAST FOODS, ADENIRAN OGUNSANNA STREET, SURULERE - MI BROS FAST FOODS, FESTAC TOWN - LAGOS UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL, IDI ARABA - SHERATON HOTEL LOBBY, ABUJA - NICON HILTON HOTEL LOBBY, ABUJA - KAGO HOUSING ESTATE, ABUJA - PRESIDENTIAL HOTEL LOBBY, PORT HARCOURT - BOOTLEGGER RESTAURANT, OLU OSASANG ROAD, PORT HARCOURT.

CASH CENTRES: ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES, IDOWU TAYLOR STREET, VICTORIA ISLAND - LAGOS UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL, IDI ARABA - KRI KRI CONTAINER TERMINAL, NPA, APAPA - RING PORT TERMINAL, NPA, APAPA - TIN CAN ISLAND LONG ROAD, NPA, APAPA - PETROLEUM TRAINING INSTITUTE, EPE, OYO - WARRI - ONE PORT AND FREE TRADE ZONE, NPA, ONE - MAIN PORT, NPA, PORT HARCOURT - ADO EKITI UNIVERSITY, ADO EKITI

YOUR HEALTH

Health interactive

With Dr Aminu Magashi

The fate of medical doctors in Nigeria

That the National Association of Resident doctors (NARD) and its members nation wide are on strike is no longer an issue or something to write about, what is more baffling is the fact that, by Monday, 3rd January, 2005, the strike has entered its 4th week, with neither the government of the day nor the NARD backing off. The strike is being handled as if it is being embarked upon by pure water sellers or truck pushers, in other words, no one is trying to grasp the implication of the unending strike, not only to the doctors but the generality of the populace.

At a press conference by the association's president, Dr Oguzie Jerry in Abuja on 9th December, 2004, he enumerated the rationale behind the strike vis-à-vis the demand of the Nigerian doctors. I am sure it would not be a waste of time and repetition, if I remind the reader, about such demands, amongst others, he reportedly told the august gentlemen of the press that "what ever information at your disposal concerning the reasons for this action by the NARD, must be disseminated as we have given you the authentic reasons for the action, that is

- Payment of 100% of our duly earned monthly salaries
- Payment of the arrears of salaries occasioned by the short fall commencement of the implementation of the 22% increment in basic salaries in places like the ministry for the federal capital territory Abuja, Abia state university teaching hospital, Lagos state university teaching hospital, Imo state university teaching hospital, to mention but few
- Payment of the arrears of the 22% increment in basic salaries

- Payment of our professional examinations up date courses fees
- Payment of teaching allowance and other allowances due to our members
- Payment of leave grants and annual increment
- Proper up grading and promotion of our members

He reportedly mentioned that they did all what they could to avoid embarking on strike, series of meetings, reminders, 2 day warning strike and giving ultimatum, all these could not make the government of the day to heed to reasoning and look at the demands and act accordingly. Well, that is now history, what is expected from both the two parties is to resolve the problems amicably to avoid more causality on the angle of the teeming masses that need proper medical attention, which for now is lacking at federal tertiary health institutions. Keen follower of the strike would agree with me that, at the Federal Ministry of Health under the leadership of Professor Eytayo Lambo, there is almost total inertia, ineptitude and lack of commitment to resolve the matter. No one in his right senses would believe that health workers can go on strike for 4 weeks, paralyzing services and no one losses his/her job, this charade of drama can only happen in under developed or developing nations.

Comments coming from some of my colleagues that I discussed this problem with, were not encouraging, one was proposing the need for the health sector to be privatize, so that every body has to pay for all services, to him, the liberalization of the health sector by allowing the existence and proliferation of private clinics, is not enough, when I asked him that, if the sector is privatize, what happen to the common man, he retorted that, in this country, who cares about common man any way. Another fear being expressed is the alleged health sector reform bill which is allegedly being championed by the Ministry of Health. In that bill, the issue of paying the salaries of House Officers and Resident Doctors would be removed, as it is perceived in some quarters that, they are under training, without necessarily looking at the angle that, they are the one bringing most of the income and doing most of the routine work in teaching hospitals, as well as general hospitals.

If such alleged bill is allowed to see the light of the day, it is not only disastrous to the medical doctors, but to the entire society as a whole. By not paying Resident Doctors salaries, few will enroll in to the residency programme and few will

qualify as specialists which will affect the quality of services being rendered to the society. In other words, it is the Nigerians that will be at the receiving end. The Teaching Hospital if that happened would lose its relevance and the private clinics will proliferate more for only the haves that can afford that. For the common man, he has to resort to be visiting traditional herbalists, drug traders and quacks.

Another more worrisome development is the tendency to flee the country at the slightest provocation and opportunities, the number of Nigerian doctors practicing abroad particularly in USA and United Kingdom is increasing at an alarming rate and worsening the health care delivery system in the country. The question to ask is that, are we to blame those doctors that flee, looking at this development of insensitivity on the part of government to avert a 4 weeks strike by the NARD.

I have said it before that, strike by health workers is not the same with the strike in other sectors. If for example NEPA officials decided to go on strike, what will be seen is darkness in places that cannot afford to use generator, like wise teachers, we are likely to see closure of schools with a lot of redundant students and pupils. For the strike of health workers, what is seen is the proliferation of diseases, increase in causality of the conditions that are seen to be managed easily. Increase in the death of pregnant mothers due to improper attention during labor. Rise in child mortality rate and death as a result of accident and emergency cases that are not attended, breakage of mortuary control system which will lead to air pollution and contamination and leading to series of respiratory conditions, amongst others. In essence the strike of a health worker will never be encouraged, abetted, supported and aggravated by any sensible person be it an executive or a legislature.

In conclusion, I am of the opinion that the fate of this strike, the medical doctors involved and its consequences, is not only affecting the health system, but the entire country, I urge and encourage the striking doctors to revisit the issue again, because certainly, we can not continue like this, also to take their case to the National Assembly and other well meaning Nigerians to prevail on the executive arm to find a workable solution. Also the doctors should created more awareness on their plight as well as the dwindling health sector in Nigeria and of course, the media as a fourth estate to help generate discourse and debate about the strike and other pressing health issues, which as of now, appear to be silent on.

Information on HIV

Please provide some information to me about HIV drugs

MNN
HIV drugs also called Anti retro viral drugs are drugs taking mainly to suppress the multiplication of HIV virus within the white blood cells, to help avert more destruction of white blood cell (CD 4 cells) which are responsible for providing protection to the body.

The drugs are not eliminating or killing the virus, but reversing or stopping the process of multiplication. There is an indication for using the drugs, even if someone has the infection, is not automatic for that person to commence using the drugs. The yard stick is to measure the level of CD4 cells count, which in some centers, if the count is below 500 / cubic meter or others use below 300 cubic meters as a yard stick.

Some of the drugs are Protease Inhibitors such as Saquinavir and Reverse transcriptase Inhibitors such as Zidovudine, lamivudine and nevirapine. An infected person with HIV and low level of CD4 cells as mentioned above will be taking the drugs on daily basis, till when the CD4 cell count has rise to an appreciable and tolerable level.

Seven years without an issue

I am a man of 35 years has been married for the past seven years without a child and have visited many gynecologists, please can you recommend one for me

Gumel.

It is very obvious that you are likely to know more gynecologists than my self. What is of paramount importance is for you to confirm whether it is you that has a problem, or is your wife, were you able to confirm that. Also if you are having more than one wife, is one of them having a child or children? A lot of problems leading to infertility can be reversed,

while few cannot be reverse. In visiting any gynecologist, find out if you are the cause of the infertility and also whether what led to the infertility is reversible or not, and what follows, would be the remedy to that. Good luck.

Hair loss

I am a regular reader of your column, my hair is scrapping from the front seriously which is noticed when ever I remove my head tie, although I noticed whitish particles at the root of my hair and I am using Morgan anti dandruff shampoo to wash, but the whitish particles will still reappear and up root my hair. Please what is the problem? Looking forward to hear from you and thanks for being there all the time.

Worried lady

Loss of hair, also called Alopecia requires detailed history taking, careful scalp examination and complete physical examination would enable a confident diagnosis.

There are two types of hair losses

Non Scarring type, this is the type that easily regenerates and can respond to topical or intra lesional steroid. This type are classified in to two

Localized (hair loss confined to one area)

Tinea capitis

Traumatic (traction or use of wrong cosmetic for the hair)

Fungi Infection

Diffuse type (hair loss covers wide area)

Nutritional problems, like deficiency with vitamin E and others)

Diabetes mellitus

Past partum (just after pregnancy)

Hypothyroidism or Hyperthyroidism

Scarring type (it hardly regenerates)

Localized

Idiopathic (unknown cause)

Infection with herpes zoster

Diffuse which is caused by Radiotherapy and a condition called Discoid Lupus Erythromyosis.

Other causes among women would be mycotic lesion (it is possible that dandruff may cause the loss hair and equally the anti dandruff agent may abet the loss)

Drugs such as cytotoxic drugs for treatment of cancer, anti thyroid drugs and also oral contraceptives.

Investigations will be tailored towards doing Full blood count, ESR, urea and electrolyte, thyroid function test, liver function test, hair pluck test. I will advise you to stop using the shampoo you are using now, visit a physician to assess your condition in line with some of the likely causes itemized above and other relevant techniques and investigation.

Food poisoning

For the past 40 days I have been exposed to cold whether and yesterday at mid night, I began to feel cold and feverish and started vomiting and passing of watery stool which became frequent, I am weak and warmed my self as a remedy, please what got wrong and this attack was preceded by taking some kind of food.

Igwe C

What you are suffering from based on the brief history you mentioned is Food poisoning secondary to what you ate. Food poisoning can also be called Gastroenteritis, and it presents with vomiting and/or diarrhea within first to fourty hours after ingestion of either food or drink that is contaminated.

It could be due to infective cause which is also divided in to two

Due to toxins of either Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli, Clostridium botulinum, among others

It could be due to non toxins, such as infection with Salmonella, Bacillus anthracis

The Non infective cause of food poisoning could be due to chemicals, metals or shell fish.

The approach is to subject the stool and the vomitus to culture, correct fluid loss by taking oral rehydration solution or intravenous fluid, depending on the amount loss and Anti biotics for the specific infective agent.

Write in confidence to healthinteractive@hotmail.com or send text message to 08023810589 or P.O.Box 14807, Kano, Nigeria.

YOUR HEALTH

Doctors' strike: Private hospitals get patronage

As government's silence over the ongoing strike action by resident doctors in the country continues, private hospitals now record impressive patronage by patients seeking medical attention.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that owners of private hospitals capitalised on this development to charge high fees for their services as patients have no alternative than to patronise them since the strike action has forced many federal tertiary health institutions to close gates to patients.

The strike action which has now entered into its fifth week has forced chairmen of public hospitals and consultants to combine both administrative work of the hospitals with attending to a very insignificant number of patients admitted at their various hospitals since doctors are not around to attend to them.

Polio: Nigeria suffers set-back - Prof Shehu

A one-time chairman and national coordinator of the National Programme on Immunisation (NPI) Prof. Umaru Shehu has observed that Nigeria had suffered a serious set-back in its fight against polio as a result of the controversy that surrounded the introduction of the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV).

Speaking recently in a paper entitled, "Immunisation as a most cost effective public health measure," he presented in Kaduna at the 2004 annual public lecture of the Barewa Old Boys Association (BOBA), Prof. Shehu pointed out that some people in some parts of the country expressed doubt on the efficacy and safety of OPV which generated a lot of heat before the intervention of religious/traditional rulers, stakeholders in the health sector and the federal government.

He wondered why people decided to propagate unfounded and unsubstantiated rumours on the safety of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) which, he noted resulted in the non-administration of immunisation of children with the vaccine for some time.

Commenting on the role played by some scientists in the wake of the controversy, Emeritus - Professor of Community Medicine of the University of Maiduguri said, "It is certainly inexcusable for any honest and competent scientist using state-of-the-art equipment to test any sample and then come out with a report which states that the sample contained "contami-

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Reporter (Health)

The chairman of Maitama district hospital in Abuja, Dr. E. B. Udofia for instance, had to respond to an emergency call recently to carry out an operation on a woman suffering from a pregnancy induced hypertension which caused her high blood pressure. He told Daily Trust that he had to do that, along with a couple of consultants as part of their duties to humanity. According to him, he had no reason not to respond to the call as the chairman of the hospitals with the responsibility of saving people's lives.

According to Dr. Udofia, the hospital has lost so much as a result of the strike action embarked upon by the National Association of Resident Doctors of Nigeria (NARD) since December 6, 2004 pointing out that the hospital cannot admit patients, except

very serious emergency cases. Some patients, he noted had to be taken away from the hospitals as a result of the strike.

The story was the same at the Wuse general hospitals, Abuja where the chairman, Dr. Olufermi Dada corroborated the experience at the Maitama district hospitals adding that activities at the hospital are almost at a stand still as a result of the strike.

He called on government to give resident doctors listening ears to avoid further deaths and sufferings. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) branch chairman of the National Association of Resident Doctors of Nigeria (NARD), Dr. Charles Nzulu told Daily Trust, that the strike action will not be suspended unless government meet up the association's demand.

According to Dr. Nzulu, the FCT branch of the association will meet sometime this week to appraise the strike action and lamented government's silence on the

issue since December 6, 2004 when the strike started. "Even the MFCT, under which the association operates has not said anything on the issue which then means that doctors cannot go back to work," he explained.

The effects of the strike action, according to Daily Trust findings are enourm on the people. For instance, one Mallam Mohammed Ahmed told this correspondent at the Wuse general hospital, Abuja that the high cost of treatment at private hospitals in his home state, Katsina forced people to cross over to private hospitals of neighbouring Niger Republic for treatment. These hospitals which he noted are in Maradi and Zindar in Niger Republic not only charge less for treatment but also render qualitative services to patients irrespective of where one comes from.

He narrated how his brother who had an accident and was told would be amputated in a hospital in Katsina but had his leg treated in one of the hospitals in Maradi, in Niger Republic. He appealed to operators of private hospitals in the country to stop increasing their service charge to patients as a way of contributing to the nation's health sector.

KNSG needs N2bn for health facilities

The present problem of inadequate medical and health facilities being faced by various hospitals and health centres in Kano State can only be solved if government voted the sum of N2bn for the supply of equipment.

The chairperson of health sector community support committee (HSCSC), Hajia Zahra Muhammed Sabo, who made the observation said government should urgently consider the condition of the health sector so as to strengthen its performance.

She pointed out that although the present government has been prioritising health since its inception, he however noted that a lot needs to be done to salvage the sector from total collapse.

According to HSCSC chairperson - government alone can not shoulder the mandate of providing sufficient medical and health facilities for its hospitals, saying the task is a collective responsibility.

Hajia Zahra stated that every where in the world, governments do not single

By Mustapha Isah Kwara, Correspondent, Kano

handedly take over the responsibility of improving health sector, but individuals, NGO's and other stakeholders also participate actively in this direction.

She said this has made the committee to embark on a mobilisation campaign to alert wealthy individuals the sorry condition of state's health sector for their urgent intervention.

According to her, hundreds of letters were sent to prominent individuals in the state seeking their contribution in that direction.

The HSCSC chairperson, however said the measure has started yielding positive results with a donation of medical equipment to the tune of N250,000 by the former secretary to the state government, Alhaji Abubakar.

Etsu Nupe declares support for health centre

Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar, has pledged maximum support for the Centre for Communicable Reproductive Health, an NGO based in Bida, Niger State.

The Etsu Nupe stated this in his palace, when officials of the centre visited him. According to him, "the services rendered by the NGO are crucial to the survival of the human beings as well as society in general.

"As such, the traditional institutions in this area will be delighted to offer it maximum cooperation.

"Health is wealth. That is why the activities of the centre, which aims at educating our people on the dangers of sexually transmitted infections, are quite significant," the Etsu Nupe added. He also advised his people "to shun all acts that can make them contract the dreadful HIV/AIDS disease". In his view, "ignorance and poverty are responsible for many cases of sexual abuse.

"Therefore, the awareness campaign by the NGO will help to check the menace."

Earlier, the executive director of the centre, Dr. Mohammed Yahaya, had told the Etsu Nupe that the visit was "to mark the well-deserved honour, as Commander of the Federal Republic (CFR)," recently awarded him.

The centre had begun sensitising students in 34 secondary schools in Niger State on the dangers of HIV/AIDS, he announced.



Governor Peter Odili of Rivers State administering the polio vaccine to a baby at Oyigbo, near Port Harcourt, during the flag-off of the national programme on immunisation in Rivers State.

NGO donates N5m anti-cancer drugs to Plateau

A Jos-based NGO, Labor Foundation, in conjunction with a U.S. organisation, the African Women Cancer Awareness Association recently donated drugs worth N5 million to treat breast cancer in Plateau State.

Presenting the drugs to the state government in Jos, Rev. Musa Wuyey, state Chairman of Labor Foundation, said the gesture was a response to the plight of the less-privileged.

According to him, the drug, "Tamolifen" was produced for the treatment of

breast and womb cancer. Wuyey said a combination of breast and uterine cancer was responsible for majority of cancer deaths in women.

The NGO chairman said the drugs, which were very costly, should be given free to the victims based on diagnosis.

Receiving the drugs, the state Commissioner for Health, Dr Patrick Dakum, assured the donors that their efforts would not be in vain.

He said the donation had gone a long way towards removing the economic barrier

posed by the non-affordability of the drugs due to poverty.

Dakum advised women who noticed a small lump in their breasts to go for the cancer test immediately to avoid being a victim.

He said the anti-cancer drugs would be shared among state government health institutions and the University of Jos Teaching Hospital (JUTH).

The commissioner said the ministry would distribute the drugs free to the victims and keep records of treatment.

YOUR HEALTH



Lagos State Governor, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu 2nd left at the Badagry General Hospital on an inspection of the free medical treatment offered Lagosians by the Association of Nigerian Physicians in America, Dr Olumiyiwa Stanke right, showing a fibroid growth in a woman to the Governor shortly before her operation. Pix: Oladipo Odunewu

TSANI applauds public declaration of HIV/AIDS status

A Borno based non-governmental organisation, the Tsangaya Association of Nigeria (TSANI) has described as a right step the courage of the people living with HIV/AIDS to come out boldly to declare their HIV/AIDS status.

The association, in a release made available to *Daily Trust* observed that the action is one of the realistic ways of tackling the spread of the pandemic in the country, just as it calls for the support of the people living with HIV/AIDS in the country by way of showing them love, care and affection.

It condemned the hostility, discrimination, loss of job and abandonment that the society makes this category of people pass through adding that "if this is not stopped, infected persons will cease from disclosing their status, even to their loved ones."

TSANI pointed out that some infected persons are pushed into passing it onto others because of hostility. It also added that the coming together of the people living with HIV/AIDS as a group or association will

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin
Reporter (Health)

enable them fight against such social deprivations in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

The statement also called for a humanistic approach in the fight against the pandemic which it noted will give an added psycho-

logical boost to the patients of HIV/AIDS.

The association which expressed concern over the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country also called for all hands to be on deck in the fight against the spread of the disease and noted that, "positive attitude towards infected persons would en-

courage them to own up, thus, helping in the collective efforts to tackle the problems."

TSANI further urged Nigerians to remain faithful to partners or loved ones and zip up by staying away from commercial sex in order to save Nigerian children from becoming orphans.

NAFDAC destroys N200m worth of fake drugs

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has refuted media report that some HIV/AIDS drugs delisted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) were being distributed by the federal ministry of health.

Director-general of the agency, Dr Dora Akunyili in a statement noted that there was nothing wrong with the tenders for anti-retroviral drugs (ARV) already delisted by WHO, pointing out that some drugs registered and approved by the agency but not listed by WHO for procurement by United Nations Agencies are still safe and effective.

Many regulatory agen-

cies world-wide, including NAFDAC, the statement added do not require bioequivalence data for drugs used in their indigenous countries because lack of bioequivalence does not mean that the drug is ineffective or harmful.

The statement elaborated that all drugs must however meet quality specifications such as active pharmaceutical ingredient purity, stability and current Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and urged people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in particular to shun the misleading and inaccurate newspaper report.

In another development, the agency has destroyed fake drugs and other spuri-

ous products worth N200 million in four different states of the federation.

The fake products which were destroyed on the eve of the new year were confiscated by the agency between January and November, 2004 after series of surveillances and enforcement operations in Onitsha, Kano, Maiduguri and Jalingo.

A statement made available to *Daily Trust* noted that the agency's public enlightenment campaign in the last four years have achieved resounding success as some fake products affected by the destruction exercise were willingly surrendered by their owners with ease.



BLEEDING

This can occur externally as cuts, internally as haemorrhoids, or even when the body functions normally such as during menstrual period. However, there are 3 types of blood:

(a) Bright red blood, which is rich in oxygen, indicates badly cut artery and this comes directly from the heart and spurts at each heartbeat.

(b) Dark red steady flow indicates cut from the vein. The dark colour is due to carbon dioxide and waste products.

(c) Blood from surface cuts usually involve capillaries or small blood vessels.

Generally, bleeding conditions are very common occurrences in every household. If cut is small, let it bleed a little to clean itself. Then, wash the wounds with water and apply any of the herbal remedies listed below to prevent infection, seal and heal wounds.

Treatment

1. Astringent herbs like oak bark/tea bush/marigold/ comfrey/shepherd's purse/sage/siam weed/yarrow are very effective for both internal and external bleeding.

(i) Make an infusion of any of these herbs and take 2 - 3 teacups daily.

(ii) Squeeze the juice of any of these herbs on the affected area.

2. Cayenne: Promotes coagulation and seals the wound. Apply cayenne powder directly to the bleeding area and take an infusion or a 14 teaspoon of the powder in a teacup of boiled water.

3. Onions: Apply juice directly to the wound as a disinfectant.

4. Alfalfa: High in Vitamin K. Make an infusion and take when necessary or apply as fomentation.

5. Aloe vera is a natural antibiotic and it relieves pain. The gel is applied directly to the wound and the juice taken as tea when necessary.

6. The fresh latex of the physic/purging nut (*Dacrydium* [Hausa], *Oluhuidu* [Igbo], *Botuje*, *Lapalapa* [Yoruba]) is also useful.

7. Red raspberry/black cohosh: Useful for menstrual bleeding and also for toning and healing the uterus after child-birth. Take a tea of any of these herbs 3-4 times daily.

NOSE BLEEDING

This is a very common occurrence and it's always due to injury to the tissues in the nose. Causes vary from weather conditions, health status as well as physical trauma.

Treatment

Once the bleeding point is identified, any of the treatments above can be applied. In addition,

(a) Apply crushed ice or cold wash cloths on the nose, neck and cheeks.

(b) Plug nostrils with cotton wool ball soaked in either lemon juice or onion juice.

It is also advisable to eat lots of vegetables rich in vitamin K, eg greens, spinach, pumpkin (*Ugwu*), etc.

VOMITING

Poisonous materials or stomach cleansing can be achieved by inducing vomiting through the use of emetics.

Treatment

1. Take 5-6 cups of lukewarm water with or without lemon juice/a teaspoonful of salt to induce vomiting. If vomiting does not occur freely, touch the back of the throat far down.

2. Infusion of the bark of the silk cotton tree (*Rimi* [Hausa], *Akpu* [Igbo], *Owu* [Yoruba]) is an emetic. Take 1-2 teaspoonfuls of powdered bark in a teacup of boiled water.

3. *Lobelia*/*Ipencaanha*: An infusion of 1 teaspoonful of powdered herb in a teacup of boiled water is taken when necessary.

Antiemetics (Treatment of Nausea and Vomiting).

Treatment

1. All spices, eg basil/ginger/peppermint/catnip are good antiemetics. Take a teaspoonful of any of these herbs in a teacup of boiling water to soothe the stomach.

2. Cayenne/cinnamon/cloves/apple cider vinegar. Any of these herbal infusion prevents vomiting.

3. Lemon - Fresh lemon juice: Squeeze the juice of 1/2 lemon in a cup of warm water.

4. *Aloe vera*/red raspberry/valerian roots: Infusion of any of these prevents nausea and soothes the stomach lining.

Hajija Zainab Sheriff writes from Zee's Herbal Pharmacy, Suite 12, Angels Plaza, Garki, H. Abuja. E-mail: zeeherbal@yahoo.com

ABUJA TRUST

FCT Minister commissions FACA secretariat

By Ebenezer John Buoro, IT Student

Mallam Nasir-el-Rufai, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory has said his ministry is political committed to combating HIV/AIDS adding that the ministry also has the moral duty to keep the disease ravaging humanity in check.

He made this known while commissioning the FCT Action Committee on HIV/AIDS (FACA) secretariat situated at Plot 796, Amadu Bello Way, Garki, last Wednesday.

At the ceremony Mallam Nasir revealed that since the launching of the body March 12, 2004 it has been responsible for the development of HIV/AIDS policies, recommend annual budget for AIDS and act as data base manager on HIV/AIDS in FCT.

While recalling its achievement for the past years, the chairman of FACA, Deji Omatode said FACA has created awareness of the deadly disease and has succeeded in preventing mother-child transmission of the disease.

He however pointed out that some of the challenges been faced by FACA is lack of active community participation, rapid population growth in FCT which is the most rapid growing city in the world, thanking the World Bank and UNICEF for its support toward fighting the HIV/AIDS scourge.

Dr. Remi, of the Civil Society Network coalition, at the commissioning, stated that

the Ministry of the FCT has sponsored northern central states and FCT has benefited from the training towards fighting the epidemic adding that FACA will like to identify the true NGO's to aid them in disbursing fund when the

time comes.

Speaking in the same vein, Dr. Jerry Omofemi, of the policy project unit said the enhanced project is targeted by USAID in creating programmes for education, federal institution, AIDS and to provide technical support to Nigeria, describing FACA as functional.

RTEAN decries illegal operations in parks

By AbdulWahab Deji Ajikobi, IT Student

The FCT chairman of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) Abuja branch, Chief Abubakar O. Sadiq has said that some Non-governmental Organisations (NGO) that operate transport business without having their business premises are operating illegally in the territory.

Chief Sadiq who spoke to *Abuja Trust* in his office, said the NGO's is authorised by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) to operate transport business, that were not affiliated with labour union organisation and are not supposed to operate in the park as required by the law, must have their separate premises where their vehicles will load passengers. According to him, it is only National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) which are the trade unions decreed by the federal government have right to operate in the public motor parks.

He revealed that those of the NGO's that have their business premises are: ABC transport company, Ekeson transport, Peace transport and other independent transport companies and their pas-

sengers can trace them in case of any eventuality.

The FCT administration, he said, must go back to the drawing board and compel those NGOs that have been operating in the public parks in the territory to establish their parks in order to avoid confusion in the transport business.

Also speaking to *Abuja Trust*, the FCT chairman of the Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), Alhaji Abubakar Sidi, who said that the NARTO has represented the interest of the transport owners, said the national governing council of the NARTO was incorporated by corporate affair commission to operate transport business across the nation.

He revealed that the corporate affairs commission which is a governmental body conditioned all the NGOs to maintain good relationship with the three tiers of government and the executive members of the NARTO can not relate with government in all levels, if the union is not operating in the public parks.

Our correspondent who spoke to some drivers of Luxury Bus Association of Nigeria (LUBUAN) at Jabi Park reported that the authority of Abuja Municipal Area council (AMAC) had allocated space for LUBUAN in the park and that if it is illegal for LUBUAN to operate in the public park AMAC would not allocate such land to them.

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) has reviewed its fines by 150 per cent, the Head of its Public Education Department, Mr Yakubu Attah, has said.

Attah told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja that the new charges would take effect from Jan. 1, 2005.

He said the use of telephone handsets while driving which formally attracted N1,500 fine would now attract a fine of N5,000.

Attah said that details of the newly approved fines

FRSC reviews fines upward

which would affect all road traffic violations would be released soon.

He said that the review was aimed at making road users to obey the road traffic regulations.

Attah said that the commission recorded a significant number of accidents during Christmas celebrations when compared when last year.

"The fatality rate of accident during the period was generally low as a result of our patrols and enlightenment campaigns," he said.

He said that the patrol tempo would be maintained until the end of January.

Attah also advised motorists to obey road traffic regulations to avoid being fined.



Renovation work on the Gwagwalada LEA secretariat now completed by the Gwagwalada area council administration.

Clergyman docked for forging NSA letterhead, ID card

By Saidat Tella, IT Student

A clergyman of Karmo village, Abuja Joshua John has appeared before the Abuja Chief Magistrate Courts for forging a letter headed paper and an identity card with reference number SH/NSA/032/55 of the national security adviser to the president.

The accused person, according to prosecution statement, was arrested while posing himself as the doctor and national security adviser to the president and the documents were recovered from him.

Joshua charged with forgery and impersonation con-

trary to section 364 and 132 of the penal code denied the allegation against him.

Following the application of bail made by the counsel of the accused person, presiding chief magistrate, Othman Musa granted bail to the accused in the sum of N250,000 with two sureties.

In another development, two men, Eket Essien Asuquo and one Mohammed Jimoh now at large were arraigned before the same court for forging a letter bearing the signature of the protocol officer to

the honourable Minister of Education, Mr. Chuks Josiah.

Deputy superintendent of Police (DSP) Ibrahim Bako state on the face of the First Information Report (FIR) that the accused are charged with criminal conspiracy cheating and forgery which is contrary to section 97, 322 of the penal code.

The FIR revealed that a letter of complaint signed by Mr. Chuks Josiah with reference number HME/PROT/411/5 bearing received at the office of the deputy inspector general of police 'D' department Force Criminal Investigative Department (FCID) Nigeria police force headquarter, Abuja alleged that the two accused forged the letter with signature of the complainant.

The letter headed paper bearing the address of Ministry of Education was purported to have emanated from the office of the minister of education and presented same to the visa department of the embassy of France under false pretence and with the intention to cheat.

The prosecutor told the court that police investigation is complete on the matter, the counsel to the accused asked for the release of his client on bail.

The chief magistrate, Othman Musa granted bail to the accused in the sum of N100,000 with one surety and adjourned the case to January 31, 2004.

2005 budget: AMAC legislator review N2.6bn budget proposal

The legislative assembly of the Abuja Municipal Area council (AMAC) has begun deliberations on the proposed budget of 2.6 billion Naira for the year 2005 presented to it by the council chairman, Hon. Zaphaniah B. Jisalo penultimate week.

Briefing newsmen at the end of its preliminary deliberation on Friday, the legislative chairman on finance and appropriation, Hon. Umar Farouk Aita said the assembly will carefully scrutinise all aspects of the budget proposal in order to ensure the passage of a people oriented budget.

He reiterated that the house intends to work more on areas that could be revenue yielding for the council and consolidate the previous achievement of the council.

In his words, "Anything in the economic sector that

will not generate revenue to AMAC will not be entertained. We are expected to closely review the budget and where there is deficiencies, we will surely look at it."

On the misplacement of priorities, the lawmaker noted with concern the need to fine-tune and harmonise grey areas which could be a negation to the development of the council.

"We will expunge any irrelevant and inappropriate expenditure proposal in the budget," He stressed.

It would be recalled that the budget tagged "the budget of hope and orientation," was presented to the house a week ago by the council chairman, Hon. Zaphariah B. Jisalo.

The budget proposed has a total projection of N2,630,650,000.00.

Civil servant docked for presenting CBN fake cheques

A civil servant of the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and rural Development, Abuja, one Ekpo Ethon Okon, has been arraigned before an Abuja Chief Magistrate sitting in Jabi for presenting the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) two fake cheques in the names of Trane x Limited and Ecochile Limited.

The two cheques, according to the prosecution, which bear registration numbers 0012964 and 00013014 valued the sum of N121.5 million and N100.5 million respectively had been presented for clearing at the Central Bank of Nigeria by the accused person.

The prosecution also revealed that on September 20, 2004, the head of security service of the Central Bank, Abuja, one

Mr. A.G Ehilebo who reported the matter to the police said the two cheques, after proper scrutiny by the staff of the bank, discovered to be fake.

The prosecution said that the accused, during the police investigation, confessed that he conspired with others now at large to forge the said cheques.

The prosecution informed the court that the accused is charged with criminal conspiracy, forgery and attempted theft, punishable under sections 97, 364 and 287 of the penal code law.

The accused person pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The defence counsel, Gabriel Ebuile prayed the court to consider section 36 subsection 5 of the 1999 constitution that

presumes the accused person innocent until contrary is proved at the end of the court proceedings, stating that the court should admit the accused to bail in line of the said section so that the accused will enjoy freedom to prepare for his case. He disclosed that the accused is a staff of the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and will not jump bail, if admitted to bail by the court.

The presiding chief magistrate, Othman Musa said that he granted the accused bail following the fact that he is a staff of the Ministry of Water Resources situated in Abuja. The chief magistrate granted the accused bail in the sum of N2 million with one surety in like sum. He adjourned the case to April 10, 2005.

ABUJA TRUST

Kabo commences airlift of pilgrims amid hitches

After days of inactivity, Kabo Airlines, one of the two air carriers contracted for the 2005 Hajj operation has concluded arrangements for a hitch free take off despite the teething problems encountered.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that when the Hajj operations began last Tuesday IRS could not operate due to an impasse with Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA).

"In sha Allah and all things being equal, we will continue operations this week, as efforts are on to resolve the impasse," IRS Corporate Affairs Manager Abdulaziz Musa told NAN in Abuja.

Musa said that the IRS management led by its chairman, Alhaji Rabiu Rabiu, was

currently holding a meeting with the Minister of Aviation, Malam Isa Yuguda and officials of NCAA, to find a lasting solution to the matter.

He said the airline was committed toward ensuring the speedy and timely transportation of all its allotted pilgrims without any hitches.

"Our greatest dream is to give Nigerians first class services and also make them comfortable throughout the Hajj exercise," he added.

Musa disclosed that the airline had leased a Boeing 747 aircraft, in addition to others in its fleet, to transport the pilgrims to the holy land.

The IRS spokesman, however, appealed to pilgrims flying the airline to exercise patience as everything was being done to resolve the impasse with NCAA.

"We are also making alternative arrangement to provide other aircraft for the operation in order to minimise pilgrims' hardship," Musa added.

IRS is expected to transport about 20,000 pilgrims from Abuja, Kano, Lagos, Maiduguri and Minna airports.

NAN recalls that on Tuesday, Rabiu had accused the NCAA of delaying its participation in the Hajj operation when the exercise began with only Kabo Airline participating.

"We could not commence operations on Tuesday because the NCAA refused our aircraft entry into the country," the IRS boss was quoted as saying.

NAN learnt the NCAA

did not allow IRS to begin operation because the aircraft it was to use had not undergone the required checks.

"This has to be done before the aircraft can be allowed entry into the country," an official of NCAA, who does

want his name in print, told NAN.

A total of 65,000 Nigerians are billed to perform Hajj. The transportation of pilgrims to the holy land is expected to end on January 12, 2005.

Meanwhile, the second batch of 500 pilgrims from Nasarawa departed the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja for the holy land today, in a Kabo Air Boeing 747 aircraft.

UNIABUJA adopts dressing code for students

Disturbed by cases of indecent dressing by students, the University of Abuja has instituted measures to check the trend.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nuhu Yaqub, who spoke at the weekend on the issue, said it was posing a serious threat to the university environment.

Yaqub told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that it was disheartening to see some female and male students either exposing parts of their body or looking shabbily dressed.

"The university senate had frowned on indecent dressing by students and had therefore introduced a new dressing code to ensure that the students dress properly within the university to check indiscipline," he said.

He warned the students against indecent dressing on campus through exposing the sensual parts of their body.

"The university's management will not take such negative attitude lightly as it will affect the image of the university," Yaqub added.

The vice-chancellor said that any student found to be dressing indecently would be warned first, later suspended and if he or she persists, then the person would be shown the way out.

Yaqub, therefore, advised the students to shun intolerance and lawlessness as well as other acts which were unhealthy to the university system.

As part of measures to ensure compliance with the dressing code, he said that a committee had been put in place to monitor the behaviour of the students, especially the way they dress while on campus.

He urged parents to ensure that their children were properly dressed both at home and outside "in order to portray us in good light and also to promote our rich cultural values".

According to him: "We should be proud of our dressing pattern and adhere to it to enhance our way of living and stop copying others in the name of global village or fashion trend."

Yaqub extolled the virtues of dressing well, stressing that "it enhances the image and personality of the individual and also give value to the person now and in the future".

He mentioned a number of measures to check academic and non-academic illegalities in order to boost the image and reputation of the university.

Hajj 2005: FAAN charges food, drinks vendors

Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has placed a N5,000 charge on all food and drinks vendors operating at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, during Hajj 2005 operations.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the new charge was contained in a memo circulated to the numerous vendors who besieged the airport following the commencement of the

exercise. A copy of the memo signed by Mrs. R.A. Raji, FAAN's Assistant General Manager (Commercials) and made available to NAN stated that only those that paid the fee would be permitted to sell food and other consumables there.

She said that the authority would not allow hawkers to loiter in the airport premises, saying: "Any defaulter and those flouting the order will be penalised according to the dictates of the law".

She advised the vendors to erect only make shift structures that would be dismantled after the exercise.

NAN, however, reports that some of the vendors criticised the rationale behind what they called the "exorbitant charge", saying "this is not in tune with the reality of the present time".

"FAAN should allow us only this period to serve the pilgrims before their departure to the Holy Land.

"It is unfair to charge us N5,000 per vendor. Some of us sell things that are not worth N5,000," Mrs. Salamatu Alimi told NAN.



R-L: Hajiyu Amina Bala Zakari, executive secretary health and human services FCDA, speaking at the sensitisation seminar for FCT health workers held at the area council commission Area 3 recently, with her permanent secretary MFCT, Mr. Daji Omatade.

Second hand clothes business booms in Abuja

Dealers in second hand clothes, popularly known as "bend down boutique" or "Tokunbo" are making brisk business in Abuja this festive period.

Residents of the capital city, especially under graduates and working class ladies visit both the Old and New Wuse Markets as well as Gwagwa market to pick some of the clothes ahead of the New Year.

Most of the ladies could be seen selecting trousers and blouses of various designs while men engaged in the selection of shirts as well as sports and other casual wears.

Some housewives were seen at the markets with their children to make their choices of clothes, shoes, sandals and school bags.

A dealer, who pleaded anonymity, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the consignment came in various grades, ranging from grade one to grade three.

A good ladies trouser or skirt suit went for between N2,500 and N1,800 while the second grade would go for between N1,500 and N800 as against the boutique price of N15,000, N10,000 and N7,000 depending on the quality.

Blouses such as "spaghetti, body hug and jumper range from N500 to N200 depending on the quality". The dealer noted that men's wears were more expensive as a grade one suit with a label went for N3,500 while the other grades could be picked for N900 while the first grade of shirts went for N500.

"Linen shirts are sold N700 because of their scarcity as a hani could hardly contain more than four of such shirts."

NAN learnt that the clothes were more expensive in Abuja because of the cost of transportation from Lagos to the city.

It was also gathered that the major sources of the clothes, shoes and bags were Cotonou in Republic of Benin, Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire while in most cases the shoes were imported from Italy.

The ban placed on such items by the federal government had also contributed to the high cost of the items.

Sources at the market would, however, not disclose the routes through which the items found their way into the country.

"Smugglers are milking us in getting the items into the country through the bush path, but man must survive," a source told NAN.

One of the women patronising the dealers said: "Any time, any day I will always prefer to buy second hand clothes. The materials are durable, cheaper and has variety".

A housewife said: "I patronise 'Okrika' because of the economic situation in the country and the low quality of goods being produced by some of the textile and shoe factories in the country".

"My sister I can't use my scarce resources to purchase expensive products. I'm earning N35,000 and have five children all in school, need N7,500," she said.

"But here I need only N4,500 to buy durable sandals, bags and T-shirts," she added.

At the shoe section, many of the ladies were seen struggling for various designs of shoes, although the prices was a bit high, yet they preferred to buy from the market because of the quality.

A dealer told NAN that the prices were high because the shoes, slippers, sandals, canvas and boots were all first grade from Italy and so were as good as new.

The dealer added that boutique owners also contributed to the high prices because some of them selected the best and resold them at much higher prices.

"For that reason we too were forced to increase our prices. If the people can buy second hand shoes in boutiques at such high prices they should also be able to pay more at the market," the dealer added.

Another dealer said that there were some ladies who would not want to visit the market to buy the clothes but preferred to have the materials taken to their houses.

"Some of these ladies are celebrities, they have been dealing with us for years. We know their tastes and sizes."

"Anytime we have consignments we select for them to make their choice. Sales have been very good, but smugglers are milking us because they paid so much to bring in these items."

Okada accident claims passenger

An accident involving a commercial motor cyclist, popularly known as "Okada" yesterday in Abuja claimed the life of an unidentified passenger.

Eyewitnesses told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the accident occurred at about 8 a.m. when a speeding Mercedes Benz car hit the Okada at the Bolingo junction in the Central Area of the capital city.

The impact forced the Okada rider and the passenger to hit the flyover railings sending the passenger

plunging down to the road below where he was immediately run over by another vehicle, eyewitnesses said.

Several hours after the incident, a sizeable crowd, made up mostly of motorcyclists, was still seen at the point of the impact peering at the blood-stained road below.

One of them exclaimed as he left the scene in disgust: "What a terrible New Year's gift for that family!"

NAN learnt that the injured Okada rider was taken to a nearby hospital, although the name of the hospital was not disclosed.

KANO TRUST

NARTO flays RTEAN over FG loan scheme

National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) have accused Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN), of discouraging federal government from further disbursing money meant for transport owners as loan scheme.

The chairman NARTO, Alhaji Musa Kassim Bichi made this known to *Kano Trust* while responding to statement made by the RTEAN chairman, Alhaji Musa I. Shehu in the *Daily Trust* newspaper of 27th December 2004.

Alhaji Musa Kassim Bichi said NARTO is not only the sole owners of transport vehicles but also saddled with the responsibility of protecting the transport sector from dangers of collapse like what happened with both the air and rail sectors.

Alhaji Kassim said his association is legitimate desirable of the federal government's loan scheme as it own and manage, transport vehicles in contrast with RTEAN that neither own nor manage any vehicle but only charged with the responsibility of employing transport workers.

The chairman added that NARTO is an association for dedicated and determined workers that are committed towards achieving an

KNSG wants mentholatum coy to partner with BUK

Kano State government has made a passionate plea on the management of Mentholatum Nigeria Limited to collaborate with Bayero University (BUK) Kano, and its faculty of medicine so as to pave the way for employing indigenes of the state.

The state commissioner for commerce, industry and cooperatives, Alhaji Ishaq Mahmud Umar made the call, when he paid a courtesy visit to the factory management.

He observed that there is urgent need for indigenes of the state to make meaningful contribution in the health sector activities rendered by the company, considering that it is located in Kano.

Alhaji Umar expressed optimism that the performance and strength of mentholatum company will be revamped when Kano indigenes are employed, stating however that the measure will be perceived as pride to the overhaul of commerce activities.

The commissioner

From Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent (Kano)

enabling ground for moving the transport sector forward in the country and the state at large.

It could be recalled that, the RTEAN chairman Alhaji Musa I. Shehu had in an interview published in the *Daily Triumph* of 27th December, accused NARTO of being the sole beneficiaries of the federal government loan scheme while describing it (NARTO) as not being a trade union that have the interest of workers at mind, and therefore making NARTO to illegitimately benefit from the scheme.

He however said they have concluded arrangement in a meeting with the governor of Kano State, Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau to interfere from the further disbursement of money to NARTO as loan by the federal government.

Deaf youth condemns Buhari petition verdict

The Association of Deaf Youth for Buhari 2003 has condemned the presidential election tribunal's judgement in a case between General Buhari and President Obasanjo over the alleged election malpractices

in the last presidential elections.

The associations chairman 'Mallam Ahmad Ali' in a press statement which he signed and made available to *Kano Trust* said the judgement was totally condemned due to the fact that the April 19th presidential election was marred and massively rigged in favour of the ruling party, PDP.

"We hereby condemned the judgement given by Justice Francis Tabai because it simply implies insincerity of some of the Nigerian justices and even insincerity of the Nigerian judiciary," the statement said.

The association also expressed gratitude to Justice Sylvester Nsofor, one

of the four judges that heard the petition filed by General Muhammadu Buhari for his opposition on the lead judgement in which he alone annulled the entire April 19th presidential election.

The Deaf Youth Association further stated that with people like Justice Sylvester Nsofor in the Nigerian judiciary people will not lose confidence in the judiciary at all levels.

The association therefore expressed optimism that with the appeal of the case to the Supreme Court, Justice will



Flash back: Two Toyota buses in a head on collision at Durbunde, Kano State. 40 people, mostly women and children on a wedding trip, perished in the accident in October last year.

Deaf youth condemns Buhari petition verdict

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent (Kano)

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prevail, appealing to General Buhari not to relent in the struggle which they called a task for nation's building.

The statement further said the Deaf Youth for Buhari 2003 will persist in the struggle until enemies of democracy and the struggle have been overcome. Saying that Deaf Youth will remain at the vanguard of the struggle in search of justice no matter how long the journey may take them and regardless of the prize.

The association also condemned the present administration of PDP for its

Media houses blamed for poor Hausa translation

Media houses have been blamed for the unpalatable quality of Hausa language translation broadcasted to the people.

The change was made by the dean of Nigerian languages, Bayero University Kano, Dr. Maikudi Karaye at the 6th

Kano gives ultimatum to road contractor

Kano State governments has offered a one week ultimatum to JADCON construction company limited handling Kwanar Dogo-Tarewa road project to either resume work or have the contract revoked.

The state commissioner of works and housing, Professor Abdu Salihu disclosed this while inspecting the project in Bebeji local councils.

The commissioner explained that the company has no justification for abandoning the project since the state government had settled all the outstanding entitlements it owed the company.

Professor Abdu Salihu said that government will not invest public funds in a project and fold its arms, watching others sabotaging its efforts particularly in the provision of social amenities to the electorate.

He said the project inherited from the previous administration would soon be completed calling on the people of the area to exercise

patience over the issue.

Commenting on the project, Malam Sallau Manomi and Malam Sule Dankishiya, Tarewa expressed their concern over the non-completion of the project, saying that if the project was not completed before the rainy season, communities in the area will definitely face serious flood.

They therefore called on the state government to intensify action to ensure that the project has been completed before rainy season.

and Hausa to English language dictionary.

He also held the view that Hausa language translation problem could also be attributed to companies who want to advertise their goods and services. And for avoidance of ambiguity in meanings while translating from English to Hausa, he said companies should consult with Hausa language experts and culturists who will follow a standard rule of Hausa Orthography with sending the wrong message other than the one intended.

The don who also said that the centre had in the past recorded achievement in the editing and publishing of proceedings of the 5th International Conference and organised a workshop on developing Hausa Terminology, all in 2002 which was later published as 'Sababbin Kalimomin Hausa Littafi na daya.'

It further said Nigeria has all the resources at its disposal to rapidly develop, but due to lack of good leaders Nigerians are still suffering in almost all human endeavours. The association therefore called on Nigerians to wake up and choose creditable leaders in come 2007 election.

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EKO TRUST



Chiderie Mba (left) the newly installed president of the Rotary club of Ogbu, making a speech while his predecessor Debo Adeyemo and his wife, Helen Mba watch with interest. pic: Oladipupo Odunewu.

"FG permits NURTW to park under bridge"

The Special Implementation Assistant (SIA) to the Minister of Works, in charge of Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State, Mr. Wole Badmus has said that members of the National Union of Roads Transport Workers were duly authorized to operate a park under the Falomo Bridge in Ikoyi.

The activities of the NURTW in the area has generated stiff resistance from the elitist group operating under the aegis of Victoria Island and Ikoyi Residents

From Olumide Bajuaye, Correspondent (Lagos)

Association who insisted that their operation would worsen traffic situation around the area.

The Residents organization had on several occasions impounded the vehicles of the NURTW and arrested the drivers for operating in the area illegally.

The group vowed that it would not watch and allow Ikoyi to be messed up by the commercial vehicle operators because of the highbrow nature of the place.

The Executive Secretary of VIIRA, Rev. Olufunmilayo David told our correspondent in a recent interview that the group would guard Ikoyi and Victoria Island jealously and would not tolerate any form of environmental nuisance.

The situation took a different dimension early this month when the NURTW members mobilized to the place and started operating claiming that they had been given approval by the federal government to carry out their activities without any harassment.

The transporters reminded the traffic regulation agencies and VIIRA which had tried to stop their operations that they had been issued a temporary permit by the Federal Ministry of Works through a letter dated December 3, 2004 to operate there.

The vehement opposition of VIIRA to the development on the account that the situation would generate serious traffic congestion and that the activities of the operators would constitute nuisance, informed the decision of our correspondent to seek the views of the ministry, which

allegedly issued the provisional Permit.

However, the Federal controller of Works in the state, Dr. Adedolapo Adeniji on whose behalf the permit was issued, denied knowledge of it during an interview with our correspondent last week.

However, the SIA, Mr. Wole Badmus told our correspondent in an interview in his Ikoyi office on Thursday that his action received the blessings of the minister, Chief Adeseye Ogunlewe who appointed him.

Badmus said the operators of the park have been very orderly since they started operations about a month ago stressing that their activities were being closely monitored by his office to ensure that they do not constitute any nuisance.

He appealed to VIIRA officials to initiate a dialogue with him in order to iron out the issue.

Speaking in a similar vein, the Chairman of the Falomo unit of the NURTW, Mr. Saka Adepoju, told our correspondent in an interview on Thursday that the new park was the most orderly in the whole of Lagos.

Police arrest seven armed robbers

A gang of seven dare devil armed robbers who specialise in robbing unsuspecting Lagosians in commercial buses have been arrested by the police.

The gang members were arrested on Tuesday at Kuramo beach, on Lagos Island during a day-light operation.

Police source attached to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Pantti in Yaba told *Daily Trust* that the robbers were operating from a commercial vehicle with registration number XF 393 ENU that fateful Tuesday and were dispossessing innocent victims of cash and valuables before police got wind of their operation.

Our source further revealed that a distress call was made to the SCID by one of the victims after he escaped from the gang un-hurt.

A team of operation fire for fire policemen dispatched to trail the robbers later arrested seven of them and recovered the vehicle as well as some of their arms.

The seven suspects were being held at the SCID where an investigation to their case was going on.

In a related development, a young man identified as Bobo has been arrested for the death of a two year old

From Bola Ojuola, Correspondent (Lagos)

boy at Apapa same Tuesday. Bobo was said to have accidentally threw a piece of iron at a group of children playing outside their house located on plot 11 Ambrose street Oladi Apapa that fateful day and hit one of them identified as victor.

Bobo, *Daily Trust* learnt, with other sympathisers rushed to Victor and attempted to remove the object which landed on his head. Victor however died as a result of the incident.

Community leaders alerts Tinubu over imminent building collapse

A community leader, Alhaji Arafata Akib has intimated Lagos State Governor, Ashiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu of imminent collapse of building situated at 30 sale court, via Hawley street, Lafaji, Lagos.

In a letter dated November 30, 2004 which was also copied to Mr. Hakeem Gbujabiamita, Commission for Physical Planning, the Director Urban and Regional Planning and the Zonal Manager, Urban and Regional Planning Board the leaders said the building in question collapsed during the course of construction in May 2003.

From Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondent (Lagos)

He explained that on August 2004, part of the desk of the first floor collapsed and was refilled a day after just as the desk at the second floor was done piecemeal instead of at once.

According to him, the first part was filled on the 8th of November, second part on the 9th of November and the last on the 12th November, 2004 adding that there is no airspace left between the building and the two adjoining buildings.

Alhaji Arafata who further

NGO awards N5m scholarship to students

A non-governmental organisation, Jifeson Foundation is to award scholarships worth N5 million to five primary school pupils and five secondary school students in Lagos this year.

The President of the foundation, Mr. John Festus told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos at the weekend that the scholarship scheme restricted to recipients in public schools would be an annual event.

Festus said that arrangements had been concluded for the take off of the scheme, adding that beneficiaries, who must be indigent but brilliant, would be selected through tests and 'lucky dip'.

We are working in collaboration with several public schools' administrators and principals on the mode

of operation, in order to achieve maximum results," the president said.

Festus said that the foundation had already spent more than N3 million in providing books and other teaching and learning materials to some schools in the state.

According to him, schools that benefited from the assistance include, Anglican Girls Grammar School, Surulere, St. Joseph's Primary School, Apapa, and Lagos State University, Ojo.

Others are, the Nigerian French Language Village, Badagry, Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Ojuelejiba, Surulere, and Ire-Akar Estate Model Primary School, Ibeju. He said that the locally funded foundation would extend its assistance to schools and students in other parts of the country.

Union advises FG on monetisation policy.

The Senior Staff Association of Utilities Statutory Corporations and Government Companies (SSAUSCGOC) has charged the federal government to ensure full implementation of the monetisation policy before withdrawing fringe benefits of public servants.

"The government must ensure that the policy is properly implemented to avoid any drop in production level," Mr. Chubi Nwagbara, General Secretary of SSAUSCGOC, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos.

"If the government went ahead to withdraw transport and housing allowances from workers without ensuring that the workers got some money as alternative, then it is the job that would suffer and they would have nobody to blame but themselves," he said.

He urged government to back date the payment of monetised allowances in parastatals and agencies to 2004 in order to bring them at par with the core ministries, noting that they all bought from the same market.

"I do not know why government would come up with a policy, budget for it then when it comes to implementing it, they develop cold feet," he said.

The federal government in 2003 decided to monetise the fringe benefits of civil servants in order to avoid wastage and misuse of public properties.

The government began implementation of the policy in core ministries in 2004, de-

ferring the commencement of payment in parastatals and agencies till January 2005.

Nwagbara also commented on the new pension act, stating that if government was not careful in its implementation, "it would cause more problems than it intended to solve because of the many pit holes it contained."

NAN recalled that the federal government in July 2004 announced a contributory pension scheme for both public and private sectors.

"In as much as we are not against the contributory pension, a lot of work still has to be done to make sure the law is quite clear so that hopes do not become a source for undue agitation and restiveness in future," he said.

He urged government to stop the current deductions from workers' salaries as part of their contribution to the scheme until all administrative structures were on ground.

"Deduction so far made from workers towards their pensions, in the absence of pension fund administrators and custodians infringe on their rights as they are not in line with the act," he said.

Nwagbara appealed to government to always plan and do feasibility studies before rushing into some of its policies, stressing that planning goes a long way in ensuring effective implementation.

"All what Nigeria is doing is to copy America hook, line and sinker without putting the necessary structures in place to make these policies work," he said.



PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)



TEXT OF A PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY THE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP) KANO STATE, ON MONDAY 3RD JANUARY 2005 AT THE PRESS CENTRE KANO

1. Let me start by welcoming you to this Press Conference. We also seize this opportunity to wish you and all Nigerians, a happy and prosperous new year 2005.

2. The good people of Kano State had, in the year 2004, witnessed monumental misgovernance by a very deceptive and rudderless ANPP Government. They have patiently, but with characteristic eagle-eyes, watched a vindictive gang of pseudo-champions of morality hiding under the garb of Shari'ah to commit unprecedented misuse. But our people have now been awoken to the reality of religious manipulation in the promotion of desperate personal vendetta and deliberate rubbishing of the tremendous achievements recorded by the last PDP administration in the State. Part of this desperation has been in the form of **Kangaroo Committees and a Commission of Inquiry conducted in total and flagrant violation of all known and accepted principles of justice and natural law.**

3. While all these are going on, we in the PDP and our friends in other political parties, believe that there is no better time for all to unite in order to save the people of Kano from further religious manipulations, vendetta and bigotry.

4. The PDP notes however, very sadly newspaper comments credited to a member of our party's Board of Trustees and a former Governor of Kano State, Alh. Muhammadu Abubakar Rimi. We patiently waited for a disclaimer from Rimi but have not yet heard or seen one. It becomes necessary therefore, for us to now believe that, the open endorsement of the vendetta regime unleashed on Kano people by the cabal led by Governor Shekarau, are true representations of Alhaji Muhammadu Abubakar Rimi's interview. We take exception to those comments coming as they did at the time when all PDP leaders, members, supporters and sympathizers are busy trying to bury the hatchet and unite the party. We observe that, it is sad when great men allow themselves to be belittled by self-imposed contradictions.

5. Ladies and gentlemen, I am referring to the publication on the front page of Sunday Triumph No. 1208 of December 26, 2004. Our leader was reported as urging the Kano State Governor to implement to the logical conclusion, the recommendations of the White Paper of the A. T. Badamasi Commission of Inquiry. Rimi was also reported to have argued that

"the fact that some people were invited and refused to honour the Commission's invitation do not in any way lower the credibility of the report".

In defending the white paper, Rimi further opined that, "Look, I have read every part of the report and my conclusion is that it contains nothing but facts which are obvious ..."

6 Without mincing words, Rimi's position confirms that, he has been, and remains consistently inconsistent in matters of principles. His position sharply contravenes the principles for the respect of the rule of law. Rimi's outbursts simply put, are subjudiced. The constitutionality of the A. T. Badamasi Commission of Inquiry is being challenged before the Kano State High Court. The Court has given an injunction that all parties in the case should maintain the status-quo ante. So out

of our commitment to the rule of law and respect for the judiciary, we would not want to address Rimi's utterances on the White Paper. Suffice it to emphasize that, officials of the former PDP Government had, at every opportunity, consistently argued that, they would be willing and ready to appear before properly constituted Courts of the Land established by the Constitution in order to answer any charges pertaining to their conduct while in office.

7. Alhaji Muhammadu Abubakar Rimi had also opined that, the White Paper "contains nothing but facts". This is strange because, it is obvious that, our leader did not read the report of an earlier Committee set up by the Same ANPP Government and which gave rise to the Commission of Inquiry. The Khalil Inuwa 'Committee' on the Verification of Contracts/ Transactions Above N10m from 1999 - 2003', is a recommended reading for Rimi. The report of that Committee had documented even more facts that had effectively contradicted the White Paper's so-called facts, alluded to by Rimi.

8 In case he forgets, as it appears he does, this White Paper does not approximate to a verdict of a Court of Law or a Tribunal such as the Elegbede Tribunal that convicted Rimi of "corrupt enrichment" in 1984. The findings, observations, recommendations and follow-up matters, contained in the White Paper are not facts. They are expressed opinions of the ANPP Government on issues pertaining to an opponent. They are not products of a proper trial on the basis of the due processes of the administration of justice. They are nothing but the published views of an opponent on a party, Government and individuals they would rather have erased from history.

9. Kwankwaso would not react in the same way that Rimi did, when he was convicted by the Elegbede Tribunal. He would neither plead guilty by accepting the opinion of his opponents as Rimi did in 1984, nor would he assign his wife and associates to raise funds from friends and foes alike, in order to pay monies allegedly misappropriated. Today Rimi is talking thanks to the state pardon granted him by the Babangida Administration in 1987 on his criminal conviction.

10. Ladies and gentlemen, there are many parallels between the present vendetta and those that, Rimi himself had experienced 20 years earlier. The gang up that led to the loss of the PDP Government in Kano State in 2003 was much similar to that, which prevented Rimi from getting a second term in 1983. Also, the ANPP Commission of Inquiry was no less different, in intent and conduct, from the Rear Admiral Babatunde Elegbede Military Tribunal that tried and convicted Rimi in 1984. In addition, the framed-up indictment of former Governor Kwankwaso in Rimi's darling White Paper are hardly different from similarly 'framed-up charges' of "corrupt enrichment" that were used to jail Rimi in 1984. The only difference is that, Rimi by his reaction and conduct, accepted the guilty verdict handed down on him by agreeing to refund the money.

11. For the benefit of the younger generation of politicians, and those who, for one reason or the other, choose to ignore history, especially Rimi who seems to have forgotten his own personal political history to the embarrassment of his admirers, the reason for the Shekarau vendetta are no different from those employed to torture Rimi, in 1983/84. Some elements of the political establishment had thought that, a rising young

star with a bright future in national politics must have his wings clipped. This was the major reason for Rimi's political woes much as it is for the desperation to wipe off Kano State PDP Government's unbeatable record of performance and delivery of good governance while in office.

12. Kwankwaso's 'offence' is no less different from Rimi's 'offence' at the Elegbede Tribunal. They both performed well in office and took patriotic positions in national politics, although we sadly note a dangerous reversal on the part of Rimi out of sheer envy of the rising profile of Kwankwaso whose image is now diminishing his own.

13. Rimi had, in 1983 supported Zik against Shagari, Waziri Ibrahim and Hassan Yusuf. He promoted Chief Olu Falae against 'Yar Adua in the SDP Presidential primaries in 1990/91. He also championed the cause of Abiola presidency in 1992/93 against Bashir Tofa. He also promoted Obasanjo in 1999 under the PDP alliance. All these, we want to believe are for patriotic reasons even though there has always been some lingering beliefs that Rimi's support was hinged on cash and carry basis.

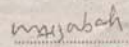
14. We would like to, reiterate that we will continue to accord respect to all our leaders irrespective of their approach to issues. But we call on our leaders in particular to respect themselves and work towards unifying our great party. Our focus should be on ridding Kano State of the menace of the Shekarau deceptive cabal. While the likes of Rimi are busy pointing their guns at the wrong direction, the ANPP Government is happily busy misruling Kano and wrecking its fortunes at will under false pretences to Shariah implementation. The fight to negate that trend is appropriate direction to which, we must all channel our energy. The kind of unprovoked challenge in Rimi's media comment is therefore ill-intended and ill-timed.

15. The Shekarau Government has assaulted our collective psyche. It has turned cheap blackmail and wanton propaganda into instruments of governance leading to clear misgovernance. The pariah status imposed on Kano by the bereft and deceptive ANPP State Government, the unnecessarily sharp divisions that this bankrupt ANPP regime has inflicted on our society, the false claims to transparency by the most insincere administration Kano State has ever witnessed, must all be reversed in the interest of our people.

16. All of us, especially those of us in positions of authority in the party, must unite and get Kano State back on track. All these, and more, are reasons, which must unite us as a party in order to lead the way to liberate Kano State from the marauding forces of ANPP misgovernance. We invite all and sundry to join us in this crusade.

17. Thank you and happy new year.


Alh. Uba Jigo
State Chairman


Alh. Aminu Labaran
State Secretary General

News

Obasanjo outlines plans for agriculture

President Olusegun Obasanjo has revealed plans to boost the agricultural sector this year through increase productivity in the farming and manufacturing sectors.

President Obasanjo said, "Raising national productivity and single minded pursuit of a goal of better life for all Nigerians will therefore remain the primary focus of our administration in 2005."

He stated this in his New Year broadcast to the nation

By Hassan Idris, Agric Reporter

He urged the citizens to take cognisance of the raising population, pointing out that the best way to tackle the existing economic pressures was to embark on massive production of goods, both for local consumption and export.

He said, "let me appeal to Nigerians to make a resolution to pay attention to farming, all aspects of farming: poultry, vegetables, tubers, grains, large animals, small animals, tree crops, flowers, fruits and aquaculture."

He believed that processing and semi-processing of these will develop the small and medium scale enterprises.

He added that the survival of Nigerians depends on how passionate and successful they are in putting aside an economy dominated by just mere consumption, trading and commission agency.

NUJ laments education decay in Jigawa

The Nigeria Union of Journalists has expressed concern over the state of education in Jigawa state and the inability of the government to settle students scholarship allowances which it said has jeopardised the sector and future of children in the state.

Arising from a state executive council meeting in Dutse over the weekend, the union while commending the efforts of the state government so far however expressed dismay over the cancellation of the common entrance and the junior secondary school certificate examinations.

According to a statement signed by secretary of the union Alhaji Mustapha Gide the action of the government

From Hassan A Karofi, Correspondent in Dutse

did not go down well with the people of the state especially that the chances of both the primary school pupils and those going for SS1 at some federal schools were deprived.

The union also frowned at the problems being encountered by the Jigawa state students over payment of their scholarship at the various institutions and universities in the country, stressing that it has become imperative for the government to respond to the crucial need of assisting the students by settling their scholarships in order for the sector to move forward.

Additionally the NUJ

called on the state government to also re visit the issue of NECO and WEAC examination payments to the teeming final year students of the state as parents especially in the rural areas have no means of doing so due to the economic woes of the nation.

The NUJ however, commended the collaborative efforts between the state government and the DFID especially on the training and retraining of the state's civil servants, even as it called for the same opportunity to be extended to the council members.

The union reminded the state government that as the future leaders of tomorrow the youths must be trained adequately in order for the future to be secured, this they said has made it imperative for the government to concentrate on all efforts that would enhance the chances of its teeming youth in the future so as to make them ready for future engagements in the nation.

Meanwhile the NUJ has informed the general public that henceforth all press conferences must be held at the NUJ secretariat and that any body or individual who organise any conference outside the secretariat would pay special charges to the union.

The union also called on all stakeholders in the women journalism to attend a crucial meeting at the state secretariat on Wednesday ahead of the scheduled NAWOJ elections that would soon be conducted nationwide.

Zamfara vows to enforce girl child education

The Zamfara State government has reiterated its determination to encourage and promote girl child education across the state.

Speaking to newsmen in Gusau, recently, the Governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Ahmed Sani, noted that there was apprehension by parents on girl child education due to western influence.

Alhaji Ahmed Sani, said government has embarked on mass mobilisation and enlightenment to encourage girl child education in the state.

The governor noted that poverty was the major problem to girl child education, saying that the state government has introduced scholarship scheme to encourage

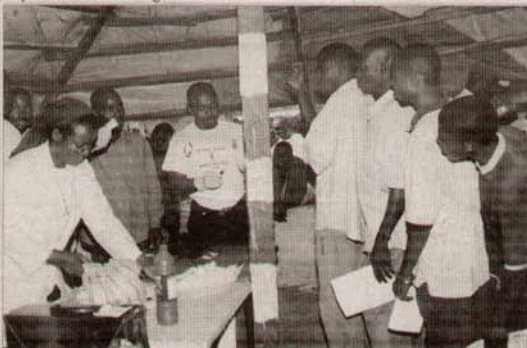
From Abdulfatai Abdulsalami & Salisu Maradun, in Gusau

parents to allow their children, female in particular to attend school.

He said medical students get N5,000, engineering (N3,000) and others (N2,000) respectively.

The governor said with the incentive, more parents allowed their children to attend school.

Alhaji Ahmed Sani stressed further that with the introduction of the Zamfara State integrated development programme, there was improvement in education, with the construction of 2,000 classroom.



Gede foundation organised HIV/AIDS free test for members of the public to mark 2004 world AIDS day campaign and rally, held at the Eagle Square, Abuja... recently. Pix: Felix Oigbunde.



UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA

P.M.B. 117, ABUJA, NIGERIA.

Post-graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) 2004/2005

The Institute of Education, University of Abuja will commence Post-graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme as from 2004/2005 session.

The programme is designed to, among other things, provide access to professional training for teachers with non-teaching qualification leading to the award of the PGDE on part-time and sandwich basis.

Duration:

The programme is to run for 18 months

Admission Requirements:

First Degree and HND

Study Centres:

Abuja, Zuba, Gwagwalada.

Method of Application:

Application forms are obtainable directly from the UBA PLC, Gwagwalada branch, at the cost of N5,000.00 (Five Thousand Naira)

Closing Date:

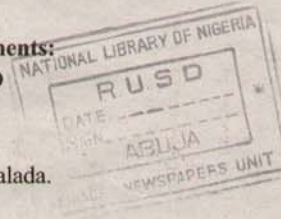
28th January, 2005.

Completed forms with photocopies of relevant documents should reach:

The Ag. Director,
Institute of Education,
University of Abuja,
P.M.B. 117,
Abuja, Nigeria.

On or before 28th January 2005.

Signed
ALHAJI UMAR BAPPAH
Ag. Registrar



News

NOA urges reward for excellence

The Director-General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Alhaji Idi Faruk, has called on Nigerians to recognise excellence at any level and reward it appropriately.

Alhaji Idi Faruk, who spoke at the reception held by the National Orientation Agency (NOA) in honour of the Director-General of Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Dr. Tonnice Iredia, said people with special leadership drive and talent in the society must be recognised and so respected.

Dr. Iredia, the immediate past Director-General of the National Orientation Agency, was being hosted on his national honour of the Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON) by President Ousegun Obasanjo.

Taraba to reactivate Lau sugar coy

From Ado Adamu Freelancer (Jalingo)

The Taraba state government has announced plans to reactivate the Lau Sugar Company and establish a flour mill industries in collaboration with some investors from Turkey in the state capital, Jalingo.

This was exclusively disclosed to *Daily Trust* in Jalingo by the state commissioner of commerce and industries, Alhaji Iliya Goje.

He said the projects are very vital as they will also address the problem of unemployment most especially among the youths in the state, and will as well reduce the high level of dependence, which according to him often "lead to the escalation of certain misdemeanour in the society".

The commissioner also said that his ministry was able to record tremendous success because of the cooperation of the state government.

Alhaji Iliya Goje further unveiled that the state government is not only on the march to reactivate the Lau Sugar Company or establish a flour mill industry, but is equally determined to motivate farmers whose produce are very essential to the sustenance of the companies. To achieve this, the state government according to Goje, has distributed twenty two tractors to farmers on hire purchase.

On the numerous trips of the state governor abroad, the commissioner said such trips were fruitful as investor was brought to the state.

The Savannah Sugar Company would play a supervisory role for the Lau Sugar Company by the first quarter of 2005 while investors from Turkey, who have shown much interest in the establishment of a flour mill industry in the state, have been promised free land and infrastructural facilities by the state government.

In his words, "this gesture will surely encourage more investors into the state".

While recognising citizens of honour and valour however, he advised that the sheep must be separated from the goat by discouraging the use of frivolous titles and unearned awards.

"We must rescue the honours system to give it value and meaning" he charged.

The director-general who took the unpleasant development as a challenge to NOA, said that the right environment must however, always be created for good conduct to flourish by creating a regime of non material rewards.

Such reward when conferred on the right people, he said, "will create an inspirational distinct for others to emulate".

He therefore appealed for the cooperation of every Nigerian with NOA, in its arduous task of transforming the country's value system in a way that the right premium would be placed on national unity, hard work and integrity.

Explaining why Dr. Iredia was being honoured, Alhaji Idi Faruk regretted that people seem not to genuinely value success especially at the top echelons. Rather, he said people tended to indulge in pull down syndrome.

Commending Alhaji Idi Faruk for the honour, Dr. Iredia said the time has come for the development of a culture of appreciation and good will in the country.

Unemployment retards development in Borno

— Gov. Sheriff

The high level of unemployment has negative impact on the economy of Borno State, Governor Modu Sheriff has said.

Speaking at this year annual Dikwa Development Association festival, held in Dikwa, Borno State over the weekend, Governor Sheriff said that high level of unemployment in the State led to the introduction of the skill acquisition programme as part of the poverty alleviation efforts of the government.

The government noted that the 2005 budget was carefully drafted to accommodate the unemployment problem and enhance the living standard of the people.

He said handwork would be provided to the unemployed youths to encourage the establishment of small scale enterprises.

On the Dikwa development, the Borno state government said a fund raising event that would bring key figures in the country into Borno State would be organised this year for the development of the town.

He said a permanent site would be created for the annual festival.

The Dikwa Development Association which took place last Saturday, was the 26th of its kind, aimed at bringing together Dikwa people.



A cross section of Emirs during the inauguration of the members of the Board of Trustees and National executive council of Arewa Consultative Forum in Kaduna ... recently

Minister advocates parliamentary system

The Minister of Communications, Chief Cornelius Olatunji Adebayo, at the weekend threw his weight behind the parliamentary system of government, saying "Nigeria would have benefited far more from the reversion to the old system".

Fielding questions from newsmen at his country home, Oke-Onigbin,

From Abdurazaq Adebayo Correspondent in Ilorin

Irepodun Local Government Council, Kwara state, Chief Adebayo, one time governor of the state in the aborted Second Republic said "I still believe in that and nothing, even my participation in government does not stop me from holding my believe".

He said as a member of the movement for National Reformation who subscribes to the ideals, of the movement over the necessity for the restructuring of Nigeria, "we did demand and insisted actually on the sovereign national conference".

Apparently, approving the idea of a national dialogue proposed by President Obasanjo, the minister said "but some of us have since said a conference at all should be most welcome even if it is not sovereign, provided the people have an opportunity to air their views, to determine

what is important to them with regards to the necessity for fresh restructures or adaptation of the old structure."

"People in the MNR including myself believed that Nigeria would have benefited far more from the reversion to the old system of parliamentary system of government," he declared.

Chief Adebayo who was also a member of the senate, said "but again this is left to those who will come to work for the agenda that I had had privilege to contribute to as a member of the committee that concluded the job."

"So if Nigerians come together and to dialogue on the future of our country, they will come out with the wisdom to guide them and arrive at a solution to the problem that would be acceptable to 'ige-rans, and that would fit the unity, progress and permanent oneness of Nigeria," the minister stated.

On the proposed rural telephony project in the country, Chief Adebayo said an understanding had been reached between Nigeria and China to give the federal government a soft loan of 200 million dollars to prosecute the project.

The minister also observed that the inter-party crises within the country's political parties was not unusual or peculiar to Nigeria and called for patience and tolerance as "we go through the learning process in the political system."

Auto crash kills 2 Police officers

Two policemen serving with the Bayelsa State Command lost their lives in different motor traffic accidents during the yuletide period.

The two officers who were on off-duty were rushing home to spend Christmas with their families when they met their death.

One of the officers, a sergeant, was killed when a Mazda 323 car with registration number AE 944 MHA he was travelling in had a head-on collision with a Toyota Coaster bus, number AA 962 BBS on the Ahoada-Misama road in Rivers. Two other com-

Akume wants taxi service in Benue

Governor George Akume of Benue state has inaugurated 10 new buses for the state transport company, Benue Links, with a call for the introduction of taxi service in the state.

Except for bus services in selected market routes in Makurdi, other major cities such as Gboko and Okpoko are serviced only by commercial motorcycles.

Inaugurating the 10 buses, valued at N283.4 million for the transport company in Makurdi Akume urged the company to also introduce taxi service in the state.

Akume, who was represented by his deputy, Mr. Ogiri Ajene, expressed displeasure that there was no taxi service in all major towns in the state, including Makurdi, the state capital.

The governor commended Benue Links' management for running the company without government subvention and challenged other state-owned companies and parastatal agencies to emulate the strides of Benue Links.

Earlier in an address, the General Manager of the company, Mr Emmanuel Manger, said Benue Links had a total of 172 buses in its fleet plying various routes in the country.

Manger said only 52 of those buses belonged to the state government, while 120 were leased to the company on its "contract vehicles" programme.

The general manager said the 10 new buses being inaugurated were procured with a N283.46 million loan secured from Afribank Plc.

He said only six of the vehicles had been delivered to the company, adding that the remaining four were still being expected from ANAMCO in Enugu.

The general manager said Afribank had earlier granted a loan totaling N111 million to the company to procure vehicles for its operations and that the loan had since been repaid.

He appealed for government assistance to enable the company to obtain a

license to lift petroleum products directly from the NNPC depot in order to reduce its operational costs.

Manger put the company's asset base at more than N1 billion and called on the government to increase its equity share to enable the company to be quoted on the stock market.



Some of the suspected armed robbers paraded by FCT Police Command in Abuja ... recently

maires died in the accident.

The other deceased policeman, a constable, lost his life in another accident on the Patani-Wari road.

Bayelsa Police Command spokesman, Mr. Oborodudu Andrews, who confirmed the incidents, said the corpses of the policemen had been deposited in the Okolobiri General Hospital mortuary.

Andrews said Rivers Police Command was investigating the death of the Sergeant.

Since the accident occurred in the state.

Inside Politics

Benue won't accept Ogbeh's removal -Dabo

Mr. Godwin Dabo, a social and political commentator, is a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He spoke yesterday in Abuja with Hanmeed M. Bello on the position of Benue leaders of thought in the planned removal of PDP national chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh, a fellow son of Benue state, among other current crises rocking the PDP. Excerpts

Questions by PDP National Chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh to President Obasanjo and the president's reply have elicited reactions and criticisms in the public. What is your overall assessment of the import of both letters?

The position here is that Audu Ogbeh had and still has access to Mr. President. They did discuss and you see, there are people who work for history. Most people in this country realize that the reform the president has been implementing over the last four and a half years have been very painful, but you see the Anambra state crisis was becoming a cancer on the nation's body politics. Audu Ogbeh, the National Chairman of the PDP has a history responsibility to draw the president's attention, and honestly the language Audu Ogbeh used in his letter, to me is not offensive. To me it was a kind of drawing attention to the problem in the country. Audu Ogbeh and Obasanjo are in the same boat. They are all members and leaders of the PDP. The president is the leader of the PDP, Audu Ogbeh is the National Chairman of the PDP and the PDP relies on two of them. But Audu Ogbeh's hands have been tied because, the main character in Anambra crisis, Chris Uba, is known to have very strong links in the presidency and consequently everybody's hand are tied. Why should the police not have arrested all those involved in the burning down of Anambra state?

I think that there is nothing wrong with Audu Ogbeh's letter. What is wrong was how that letter leaked to the press. Obviously, the president's reaction shows clearly that he was upset and reacted in anger. If I were Mr. President, I would have ignored that letter inspite of the fact that it was leaked. Or may be I would have tried to find out how the letter leaked because we confronted Audu Ogbeh in Benue state and asked him whether he leaked the letter and he said no, he did not leak the letter, obviously there were mischief makers who had access to the letter and wanted to use it to put Ogbeh and the president on a collision course.

The comments in the public showed that people feel Audu Ogbeh had spoken the minds of millions

of Nigerians yet the substance of his letter was misconstrued, especially his concern about the intractable situation in the country vis-a-vis the Anambra crisis, and that Ogbeh articulated the grievances of many who could not confront Obasanjo.

I agree with you completely that he spoke the minds of many Nigerians. But I have learnt one thing in my life in the past thirty one years I have learnt that majority of Nigerians are sadists. Since Ogbeh became the National chairmanship in 2001, he had an excellent working relationships with the president. Obviously those who are interested in taking over the National Chairman ship in November are at play. They want to instigate a crisis because the way Audu Ogbeh was going, he would possibly have had another chance. That is to say he will survive the he at the November convention when he is bound to seek a fresh mandate. I see people who desperately want the office of Ogbeh and cannot wait till 2007. The National chairmanship is supposed to remain in the north central, like the presidency is to remain in the south west till 2007, but these people feel it is too long for them to wait. That is why the intrigues have started.

But lets look at it more realistically. I agree that Audu Ogbeh should have gone to Mr. President and speak to him one on one. But there are times when you are blocked in the presidency may be for reasons which I cannot explain, may be he was blocked because some people saw how Ogbeh and

What happened was that we started hearing about alleged fraud at the national secretariat. We heard so many allegations against Ogbeh and were asking, is it the same Audu Ogbeh we know? Obviously Audu Ogbeh is a proud man and proud people can't be fraudulent because they love their name. Audu Ogbeh is a man who has a royal carriage. When you are proud you don't want to destroy



Mr. Godwin Dabo

Obasanjo argued or may be Ogbeh did not have access to the president at the time and he considered the contents of the letter very important and crucial.

But if I were Ogbeh I should not have written that letter knowing the kind of president I am working with. He should have met him personally, he may show or say I should work out of his office but there would not be the record that will have a boomerang effect.

You did suggest that leaders of thought in Benue state had a meeting with Ogbeh on Sunday where you asked him many questions and he gave you responses, which informed your current stand on the issue, could you briefly explain your encounter with Ogbeh and what you decided after the meetings.

What happened was that we started hearing about alleged fraud at the national secretariat. We heard so many allegations against Ogbeh and were asking, is it the same Audu Ogbeh we know? Obviously Audu Ogbeh is a proud man and proud people can't be fraudulent because they love their name. Audu Ogbeh is a man who has a royal carriage. When you are proud you don't want to destroy

yourself by being corrupt.

Two years ago, I asked Audu Ogbeh to give me a note to one of the governors but he refused and said he wouldn't do that. He told me sorry and gave me some money and said he does not want to compromise his position by giving anybody note. And he said this on Sunday before the Benue leaders of thought. He said we should confront any governor or Mr. President if I have asked him any contract, Ogbeh said he had been surviving though charity of his colleagues who come to him and say take. He said he was prepared to go under the microscope to defend himself, his honour and Benue state. He said if he is found guilty, it means Benue state is guilty, and the other thing Audu Ogbeh said which we believe him is inspite of all provocations he was committed to posterity. He wanted it to be said that two illustrious sons of Benue state had laid a solid foundation for sustainable democracy and he does not want anything to damage it. We told him to tell us the truth and he said he surrendered himself to the will of people of Benue state.

We are saying that why is it that nobody accused chief Audu Ogbeh until he had a misunderstanding with the president and they started digging out all the rubbish about him. This is not fair what has happened is that anybody who offends Mr. Presidents, people gang up to destroy that person. This is unfair, can't Mr. President forgive and forget? He is a Christians and I watch him every Sunday on TV preaching. This is the time the president should exercise his wisdom as a Christians and say he has forgotten and forgiven

At the meeting with Audu Ogbeh in Makurdi on Sunday, who and who were there and were you satisfied with explanations by Ogbeh?

All PDP leaders and even non PDP leaders were at the meeting because it was a Benue matter. It is not a matter of PDP or ANPP. The state Governor, George Akume was there, national Assembly Members and all PDP leaders from Benue state were there and we deliberated as a family and Audu Ogbeh satisfied us that he was innocent of the allegations. Our advice to the PDP leadership when they meet tomorrow is to set up a committee to investigate the allegations against Audu Ogbeh. This is a party matter. If Ogbeh and the National Working Committee members are found guilty they should face punishment. What we are saying is that the PDP convention is about seven to nine months from now and why can't they wait for Audu Ogbeh to finish his tenure and disengage to give him a second term. But they know they don't have the right to remove him. It is the convention that can do that. They know that they will be defeated at the convention, that is why they are using this back door to prevent majority of the members from exercising their right. But even before, the convention, if they are able to supply incontrovertible evidence that Ogbeh was a thief, a bad leader or corrupt, he would logically not ever seek a second term, he would resign. We are saying there are too many leadership changes in PDP. Under six years, the party has had three national chairmen. Ogbeh is the third one. Why is it that there are no corrupt people in the south west, south-south, south-east, north-east, north west, why is it only the middle belt that you have bad people. Why is it that we, who have been the most marginalized, being destroyed, why. We are poor but we are proud and industrious, we are farmers

and have made many sacrifices for Nigeria's.

The National Executive Committee of the PDP is billed to meet tomorrow in Abuja and the expectation is that the planned removal of Ogbeh would feature prominently, although Anambra is said to be the major issue. There has been ongoing mobilisations for the sacking of Ogbeh ...

I want to give a word of caution. We in the middle belt are capable of versisting and can resist badly. We are saying that a special convention can be fixed but all we are saying for those who want to remove Ogbeh to wait for appropriate time and venue which is in November. We are not saying that he cannot be removed but he should be removed for a just cause. But we have no evidence. Even if they succeed in removing Audu Ogbeh, the slot is still zone to Benue which will produce the chairman until 2007. But what we are saying is that its absolutely unnecessary. We found Ogbeh competent to be the chairman. He should be commended for moving PDP from 18 states to 29 states. The other point is that Audu Ogbeh alone cannot sign a cheque of the PDP. The treasurer is there, the auditor and secretaries are there, the other secretaries are there to raise the appropriate private memos which are approved by appropriate officers. He is not the only signatory to the PDP account, they are about three and in the absence of Ogbeh, other people sign the cheques.

There is already a major chasm in the PDP ahead of the calculations for 2007 which may see as a bad omen for the party and could lead to its split.

We are talking of presidential election now. We have two solid camps to go. In a presidential system, winner takes all and consequently there has to be a desperate struggle for power. You must plan and strategise. Fortunately the three camps working now are working parallel. You have the Marwa camp, the Babangida and Atiku camps. But those who have eyes should be able to see the direction our politics is going.

People have predicted crisis and doom between 2005 and 2007 in view of the ongoing battle for 2007. Do you share similar views?

Crisis yes, but doom no. Nigerians have learnt to survive all kinds of tribulations before and we don't expect Nigeria to break up because we have self-controlling mechanism within the system.

"Audu Ogbeh's hands have been tied because the main character in Anambra crisis, Chris Uba, is known to have very strong links in the presidency and consequently everybody's hand are tied. Why should the police not have arrested all those involved in the burning down of Anambra state?"

SPORTS

Premiership: South American exports flounder

It is now 27 years since Ossie Ardiles and Ricardo Villa left Argentina's World-Cup winning squad to join up with Tottenham.

The global market in footballers has grown and grown since then. But it is striking how little impact South American players have made on English football.

The continent currently has 12 representatives in the Premiership - none of whom are likely to be in contention when the player-of-the-season awards are handed out.

It is often argued that South Americans are not suited to the English style of play. In the case of some players this is undoubtedly true.

But decades ago Ardiles proved that the gap can be bridged. It is surprising that it has not been bridged more often in the subsequent years. And it is hard to escape the conclusion that English football is missing out.

South Americans have long played a key role in Italian and Spanish football, which is only to be expected given the cultural ties involved. But in recent years, much less predictably, South Americans have also become a key force in Germany.

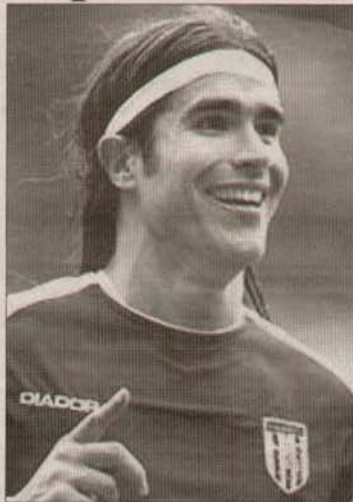
Bundesliga clubs get full value from experienced players such as the Brazilians Ailton and Ze Roberto, from flowering talent like the Argentine D'Alessandro, and even from youngsters such as the Peruvian Guerrero and the Paraguayan Haedo Valdez.

If South Americans can adapt to life on and off the pitch in Germany, then surely they can do the same in England. So why aren't they?

Perhaps part of the explanation lies in an interview Hernan Crespo gave to the Argentine press soon after he joined Chelsea.

"I have to go to the bakers, I have to go shopping, the electrician is coming round, I have to get the car serviced, and for all these things I have to go and speak in English.

"They might seem silly little things, but in reality it's



Colombia's Juan Pablo Angel was bemused by the lack of support he received from Aston Villa.

not so easy. We're latins, and all through our lives we're used to someone giving us a hand. But that's not the anglo-saxon way. The cultures are different."

The English take notions of personal independence for granted. But the South Americans tend to be much more dependent.

In many cases they lack self-esteem, and can be terrified by some of the situations Crespo described above.

Juan Pablo Angel was

bemused by the lack of support he received from Aston Villa when his wife fell ill.

Agustin Delgado never felt at home at Southampton. It is hard to escape the conclusion that English clubs have not done enough to help their South American acquisitions find their feet off the field.

To get a work permit in England a player needs either an EC passport or to have played in 75% of his country's recent inter-

national. German football does not have these restrictions.

Consequently, the number of South Americans in Germany is much higher - 38 in their top flight, more than three times as many as the Premiership.

It means that the player arriving in Germany, or

Spain, or Italy finds a ready made support structure - his compatriots will welcome him, show him around the town, help him sort out problems and generally ease his passage into European football.

It is noticeable that some of the South Americans who have done best in England

have operated in pairs - Ardiles and Villa at Tottenham, Edu and Gilberto Silva at Arsenal.

It shows the importance of the support structure - a lesson English football needs to learn to get the best of players from the continent that has won the World Cup more than any other.

Stoudemire shines as Suns stop Trailblazers

Amare Stoudemire poured in a career high 50 points and grabbed 11 rebounds as the Phoenix Suns cruised to a 117-98 win over the Portland Trail Blazers on Sunday, improving their record to an NBA best 26-4.

In a dazzling display of rim-rattling dunks and shooting, Stoudemire easily eclipsed his previous high of 38 points to become just the third player this season to score 50 points, joining Allen Iverson of Philadelphia 76ers and Dirk Nowitzki of Dallas Mavericks.

Quentin Richardson added 20 points to the Phoenix cause while Shawn Marion and Joe Johnson each scored 15 to guide the Suns to their 13th victory in 14 games and eighth consecutive home win.

The Suns took control of the contest with a 41 point explosion in the second quarter taking a 63-56 lead into the break and never took their foot off the gas.

In Dallas, Nowitzki had 39 points to lead the

Mavericks past the struggling Milwaukee Bucks 123-104 for their third straight win.

Josh Howard added 13 rebounds and 25 points, including 11 in the final quarter, to help defuse a Bucks comeback.

Led by 20 point effort from Mike James, the Bucks had six players in double figures but still absorbed their second consecutive loss and seventh in 10 games.

In Houston, Tracy McGrady scored 25 points and Bob Sura added 24 and 10 rebounds as the Rocket blasted the Utah Jazz 99-80. Yao Ming chipped in with 15 points while Juwan Howard had 14 as the Rockets (16-15) moved above .500 for just the second time this season.

Gordan Giricek scored 15 points for the slumping Jazz, who lost their fourth game in a row and eighth in nine games.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant poured in 42 points sparking the Lakers to a 99-91 win over the Denver Nuggets.

Bryant's performance spoiled the home-coming for Nuggets new coach Michael Cooper, who played 12 seasons for the Lakers.

Cooper, who took over when Jeff Bzdelik was fired on Tuesday, got his debut win on Friday and trailed the Lakers by just two points after two quarters on Sunday but could not clinch back-to-back victories.

Carmelo Anthony, who missed six games with an injured ankle, led the Nuggets with 27 points.

Monty eyes return to world's top 10

Seven-times European number one Colin Montgomerie has set his sights on returning to the world's top 10 after experiencing a difficult 2004.

The 41-year-old Briton has slipped to 81 in the official world rankings after struggling with his game for much of last year while in the throes of a divorce.

"I spent 12 years of my 17 as a pro in the top 10 in the world and I want to try to get back there," Montgomerie told BBC radio on Sunday.

"It might take six months to a year at least, but that is the ambition.

"I have just got to try to get my own ranking up to where I feel it should be, at least in the top 25 in the world if not higher," he added.

Montgomerie, who held the winning putt for Europe in their runaway Ryder Cup victory over the United States last September, was a regular in the world's top 10 from mid-1994 to mid-2001.

Although no longer the force he was when dominating the European game from 1993 to 1999, the straight-hitting Scot is still capable of success at the highest level.

An inspirational figure for Europe in the Ryder Cup, he produced scintillating form in last month's Target World Challenge in California, leading by two going into the final day before tying for third, three behind winner Tiger Woods.

He then ended the year on a memorable note by becoming an Officer of the Order of the British Empire

(OBE).

"This honour is wonderful for me personally and I'm very pleased to get it," he said. "I feel I have a lot more to give and it fills me with confidence going into 2005."

However, Montgomerie conceded he considered quitting tournament golf after the break-up of his 14-year marriage to wife Eimear.

Carragher blasts referee Riley

Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher has accused referee Mike Riley of mistakes which could tilt the Premiership title race in Chelsea's favour.

Carragher was angered by Riley failing to award a penalty after Tiago's handball in Chelsea's win at Anfield.

He also highlighted a hotly-disputed penalty Riley gave Wayne Rooney in Manchester United's clash with Arsenal.

"He has got it wrong in the two big games he has refereed this season," said Carragher.

"Those two decisions could prove the difference between Arsenal or Chelsea winning the league.

"If Arsenal had got the right decision at Old Trafford, who knows what might have happened then?"

"Top games need top refs. And with those mistakes the FA have to ask whether this referee should be up there.

"He was in a great position to see what happened in our game.

"He was putting his whistle into his mouth and I don't know if he lost his nerve or what."

Golovin eases to Gold Coast win

Rising French star Tatiana Golovin cruised into the second round of the WTA Uncle Toby's hardcourt event.

The 16-year-old took just 52 minutes to knock out Chinese qualifier Zi Yan 6-1, 6-4 and set up a Gold Coast clash with defending champion At Sugiyama.

Golovin was ranked 355 a year ago but had advanced to 27th in the world by the end of November.

In other action, Australia's Samantha Stosur ousted Croatian fourth seed Karolina Sprem 6-4, 6-2 in 70 minutes.

The victory continued Stosur's recent dominance

over 20-year-old Spanen, who defeated Venus Williams at Wimbledon last year.

She now faces rising Czech star Iveta Benesova on Tuesday.

Another Australian, Jaslyn Hewitt, the younger sister of men's star Lleyton, was beaten 6-4, 1-6, 6-2 by Klara Koukalova of the Czech Republic.

Swiss second seed Patty Schnyder was rarely troubled by France's Virginie Razzano in a 6-2, 6-4 win.

Russia's Elena Likhovtseva, seeded seventh, dropped the first set against Emilie Loit of France but recovered to win 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-2.

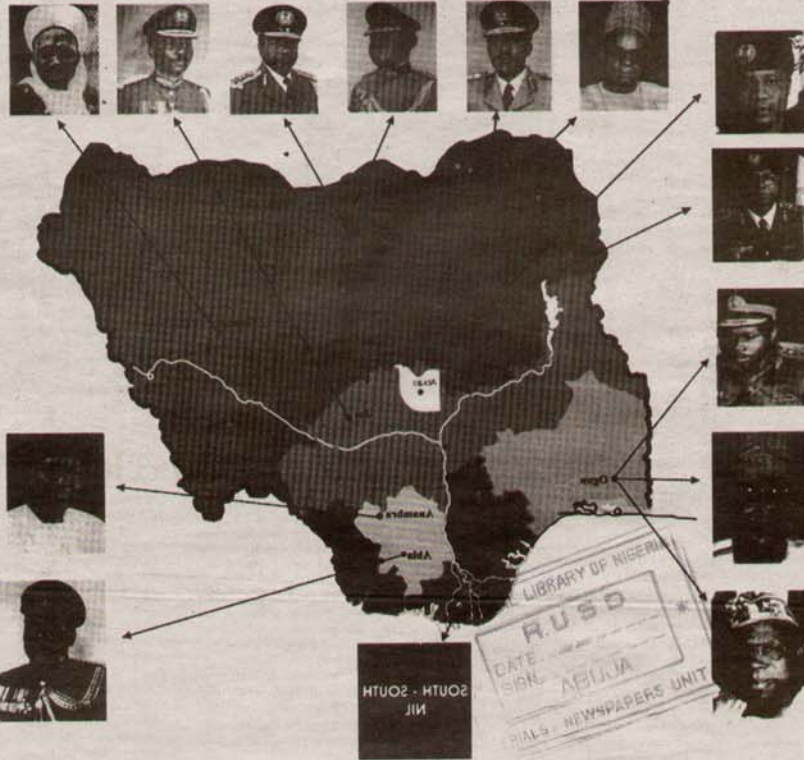
Germany's Anca Barna

went down 6-2, 6-4 to Camille Pin of France, while Bulgaria's Sesil Karantantcheva beat Italian Maria Elena Camerin 6-2, 6-4.



Golovin

THE FACT OF THE MATTER & OUR PAST LEADERS THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN



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|---|--|---|
| 1 | <div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #800000; margin-right: 5px;"></div> NORTH WEST | → Alhaji Shehu Shagari (Oct 1, 1979-Dec 31, 1983)
Gen Murtala Muhammed (July 29, 1975-Feb 13, 1976)
Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (Dec 31, 1983-Aug. 27 1985)
Gen. Sani Abacha (Nov 17, 1993-June 8, 1998) |
| 2 | <div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #800000; margin-right: 5px;"></div> NORTH EAST | → Alhaji Tafawa Balewa (Prime Minister) (Oct 1, 1960-Jan 15, 1966) |
| 3 | <div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #800000; margin-right: 5px;"></div> NORTH CENTRAL | → Gen. Yakubu Gowon (July 29, 1966-July 29, 1975)
Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (Aug 27, 1985-Aug 26, 1993)
Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar (June 9, 1998-May 29, 1999) |
| 4 | <div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #800000; margin-right: 5px;"></div> SOUTH EAST | → Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (President) (Oct 1, 1960-Jan 15, 1966)
Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi (Jan 15, 1966-July 29, 1966) |
| 5 | <div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #800000; margin-right: 5px;"></div> SOUTH WEST | → Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (Feb 14, 1976-Oct 1, 1979)
Chief Ernest Shonekan (Aug 29, 1993-Nov 17, 1993)
Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (May 29, 1999-Date) |
| 6 | <div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #800000; margin-right: 5px;"></div> SOUTH SOUTH | → NIL (1960-DATE) |

Sports

Beattie joins Everton

Southampton striker James Beattie will join fellow Premiership side Everton for six million pounds (8.4 million euros) after the England international agreed personal terms with the Goodison Park club.

The Merseysiders hope to complete the move on Monday after the player completes a medical before they finalise what will be a club record deal.

"James Beattie is poised to become Everton's record signing after agreeing personal terms on a move to Goodison Park," said a

Ferdinand leaves Bolton

Former England international striker Les Ferdinand has left Bolton by mutual consent it was announced.

The 38-year-old former Spurs and Newcastle star made use of a clause in his contract that allowed him to leave Wanderers if he could not agree an extension on his initial deal.

Ferdinand had found it difficult to make an impact in the first team starting just one match, though he made 11 appearances as a substitute in all competitions scoring two goals.

"Les has had limited opportunities at first-team level and we agreed he could leave the club for a fresh start," said Bolton manager Sam Allardyce.

Allardyce said part of the reason was that Ferdinand wanted to play for a club closer to his home in London - one of his former clubs Queens Park Rangers has been mentioned - as he had been travelling up to Bolton from the capital by helicopter.

"He is keen to move closer to home and I am sure that is what he will do now," said Allardyce.



Ferdinand left Bolton by mutual consent.

statement on the Everton official website.

"The 26-year old has decided that his future lies on Merseyside and he looks set to put pen-to-paper within the next couple of days."

Beattie, who joined the Saints from Blackburn in 1998 and scored 76 goals in 233 appearances, had also been linked with a move to Aston Villa.

Earlier Southampton boss Harry Redknapp, keen to bring in reinforcements to boost his side's battle against relegation, told Beattie to make his mind up quickly over whether he was moving to either Everton or Villa.

However, Southampton won't bank all of the money from the sale as Blackburn are entitled to a share.

Redknapp is desperate to invest in a defender but admitted that his hopes of landing five players in the transfer window could prove too much with the amount of money he has available.

"I would guess I might have around four million pounds to spend and it is hard to bring in four or five players for that amount," he said.

"You don't get a lot in the Premiership for around 700,000 pounds a player. I would like to get five in but there is no point bringing people in just for the sake of it," added Redknapp, who has been linked to out-of-favour Liverpool duo Stephane Henchoz and Igor Biscan.

But the former Portsmouth manager denied speculation he was interested in Newcastle centre-back Titus Bramble.

"I have not enquired about him," he said. "But we need people with a bit of pace because this team has not got any really."

"We were never able to kill Livy off. When we got the goal I thought that would settle us



Celtic's Brazilian midfielder Juninho is tackled by Livingston's Oscar Rubio, left, and Gus Bahoken, right, during their Scottish Premier League match at Celtic Park in Glasgow on Sunday. Celtic won 2-1.

Celtic go three points clear in Scotland

Celtic went three points clear at the top of the Scottish Premier League with a 2-1 win at home to Livingston.

Goals from strike pair John Hartson and Chris Sutton were enough to secure the victory, with Jim Hamilton getting Richard Gough's side level briefly just before the break.

Though Martin O'Neill's side were well on top throughout they could not kill off the stubborn visitors and escaped a scare at the death when Gus Bahoken wasted a great chance to equalise.

"The Celtic boss was happy with the win but admitted the performance could have been better.

"We were never able to kill Livy off. When we got the goal I thought that would settle us

down but we weren't able to capitalise on it," said O'Neill.

"Livy got the equalising goal just before half-time and who is to say they didn't deserve it.

"We upped the tempo in the second-half, created a few chances and got the goal and again I thought we would go on from there.

"But we just couldn't finish them off and when that happens you get moments like the one at the end when Rab Douglas pulled off a great save.

"If that had gone in we would have had no time to get the ball and try and do anything to win the game and so it was a wonderful save. It certainly wasn't a great performance but naturally I am delighted to have won the game.

The home side went ahead in the 16th minute.

Hartson won a free-kick wide on the right when he was hauled back by Spaniard Oscar Ramos Rubio.

Alan Thompson fought the ball across and the big Welsh striker's glancing header left goalkeeper Colin Meldrum rooted to the spot.

The goal failed to settle Celtic and with both sides struggling to string more than a couple of passes together the game continued to be a very scrappy affair with few chances at either end.

Rab Douglas in the Celtic goal was finally called into action in the 39th minute when he had to track back to tip a 25-yard lob from Bahoken over his bar.

But, against the run of play, the visitors were level a minute

later. Goran Stanic's left-foot volley from 20 yards was deflected into the path of Hamilton and from six yards out he prodded the ball home.

Celtic emerged from the break in a determined mood to regain their lead. Aiden McGeady went close with a free-kick from 20 yards on 49 minutes which beat Meldrum but drifted inches wide.

Hartson then almost grabbed his second when he got on the end of Thompson's corner but his powerful header was expertly tipped away by the Livingston keeper.

Celtic were rewarded for their efforts when Hamilton was adjudged to have handled in the box and referee Craig Thomson pointed to the spot. Sutton stepped up and stroked the ball home giving Meldrum no chance.

Livingston tried to fight their way back into the game and while they began to enjoy more possession they did not look likely to trouble Douglas.

In injury time Livingston almost stunned the home side with a last gasp equaliser.

Luxemburgo begins new Real regime

with extra training

Vanderlei Luxemburgo has begun his new job as Real Madrid coach by introducing twice-daily sessions for the players following the short winter break.

Players will train in the morning, have lunch together and then remain at the club's base in Las Rozas on the outskirts of Madrid until they take part in an afternoon session.

Former coach Jose Antonio Camacho, who quit after three league games at the start of the season, had asked for a similar regime to be introduced but his request was refused by the club.

Midfielder David Beckham arrived 45 minutes

late for the team's first session on Sunday owing to problems with the private jet that was due to take him back to Madrid after seeing in the New Year in England.

Real return to action on Wednesday when they play the remaining seven minutes of their league match against Real Sociedad after the fixture was abandoned shortly before the final whistle because of a bomb scare at the Bernabeu with the score at 1-1.

They then face city rivals Atletico Madrid at the Calderon on Sunday.

Atletico's Uruguayan midfielder Marcelo Sosa

began the build-up to the local derby with some controversial comments about Beckham.

"There are 10,000 players better than him," Sosa told sports daily Marca on Sunday. "All that happens is that he appears in the press and fashion magazines. He is only at Real because of marketing, but as a player he doesn't worry me at all."

Real Madrid fullback Michel Salgado was dismissive of Sosa's opinions.

"The best thing to do is to ignore him," he said. "He hasn't been here long enough

to show such a lack of respect for other players. I don't understand what he's trying to say."

FC Porto to suspend Brazilian stars

European champions FC Porto will suspend four of their Brazilian players, including teenage playmaker Diego, after they failed to return on time from their Christmas holiday.

Diego, along with striker Derlei, defender Pepe and winger Maciel, were banned from training with the rest of the squad on Sunday, club spokesman Acacio Valentim, told national news agency Lusa.

The four were due back at club headquarters on Friday

but Diego, Pepe and Derlei only showed up at training on Sunday while Maciel, whose brother has reportedly been shot in Brazil, has not returned.

"It is not right to be late but we are going to talk now to see what can be done," Derlei told TSP radio.

Meanwhile, Sporting Lisbon are still without their Brazilian striker Liedson, the leading scorer in the league with 12 goals, who has yet to return from his vacation in Brazil. He was due back on Tuesday.

Sports

Eaglets off to Angola

The national Under-17 team, the Golden Eaglets, will depart Lagos today for Luanda ahead of their decisive African Junior Championship qualifying match this weekend against hosts Angola.

Head coach Godwin Izilein has said that the Eaglets are well prepared for the task ahead despite the

recent administrative changes in the Nigeria Football Association (NFA). "We have continued to train for our match in Angola and are adequately prepared for the game," said Izilein. The sports ministry is expected to take charge of the team before the new NFA management led by Segun Odegbami takes over later this week.

The team eliminated 2003 championship finalists Sierra Leone on the away goals' rule after both teams were tied at 1-1 aggregate in the first round of the qualifying campaign while Angola walked over Lesotho, who withdrew. The overall winner of this match-up will qualify for the African Junior Championship in Gambia in May.

Galadima hopes on better year

Chairman of the Nigerian Football Association (NFA), Ibrahim Galadima, has expressed optimism that the New Year promises more for the country's football than 2004.

Galadima told KICK OFF: "We in the Football House

are looking for a better year. Most importantly we want to actualise our objective of being in the next World Cup finals in Germany."

He further said, "Nigeria cannot afford not to be in a World Cup final. That is why I see the present lead of Angola as temporary. We shall certainly be in Germany, by the grace of God."

Reviewing the year that just ended, the NFA boss stated that it was a mix of "good and bad".

He said Enyimba made it a memorable moment for the country "by winning the Champions League back-to-back, while the Falcons and the Falcons shone brilliantly."

Nigeria also finished 2004 as the leading African nation in the FIFA rankings.

The FA chief argued that the league has not lived up to its billing and disclosed that, "something worthwhile will be done to give it direction and result in the New Year."

Injury knocks out Odemwingie

Super Eagles striker Osaze Odemwingie sprained his ankle during indoor training with his French club on Sunday and will now be sidelined for about a month.

The 23-year-old Nigerian has scored twice in 12 Ligue 1 games for Lille this season but did not play in the UEFA Cup group stage as he joined from Belgian club La Louviere after the initial registration deadline.

Lille, who are second in the French top flight ahead of its resumption on 11 January, will play FC Basel 1893 of Switzerland in the Round of 32 of Uefa Cup.



Odemwingie

Liverpool survive Norwich revival

Liverpool had to overcome a nervy final few minutes before running out 2-1 winners away to relegation-threatened Norwich in Monday's early kick-off Premier League match here at Carrow Road.

Liverpool were comfortably 2-0 up following second-half goals from Luis Garcia and John Arne Riise before Norwich pulled one back two minutes from the end of normal time thanks to a superb first Premier League goal from 18-year-old substitute Ryan Jarvis.

Victory saw Liverpool bounce back from their New Year's Day defeat by leaders Chelsea and meant they leapfrogged Middlesbrough into fifth place just three points behind local rivals Everton who are currently in the fourth and final Champions League spot.

Afterwards relieved Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher told Sky Sports: "It was a tough game, Norwich put us under pressure. We were disappointed to concede the

goal at the end to put us under pressure.

"It was very important to get the three points," added Carragher who praised Garcia's opener and admitted Liverpool's overseas stars were struggling to cope with the busy holiday period. "At the time the game could have gone either way and fortunately a bit of class from Luis has decided it for us.

"Foreign players can't believe we play four games in nine days so the important thing was the result not the performance.

"It's the Champions League spot we are after and it was good to get a result because it puts a bit of pressure on them (teams above us).

"Our performance was very good against Chelsea, one of the best teams in Europe, and gave us a lot of confidence. We were unfortunate not to get a result."

Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez added: "In the first half they played well but we controlled things in the second half. The game was



World number one Roger Federer of Switzerland returns a backhand to his Spanish opponent David Ferrer during their Qatar Open tennis match in Doha...yesterday

very tough but we had better possession and got the two goals. It was a little nervous in the last 10 to 15 minutes."

Boro will have a chance to regain fifth when they face Chelsea on Tuesday.

Defeat left Norwich just a point above the relegation zone and facing the prospect of dropping into the bottom three if some of Monday's other results went against them.

Liverpool had an early chance when Norwich goalkeeper Robert Green miskicked a clearance but Neil Mellor shot high and wide after being released by Antonio Nunez.

Norwich central defender Gary Doherty went close in the ninth minute when he shot wide following a corner.

At the other end Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard saw a 25-yard strike just go past Green's left post.

But it was not until the 58th minute that the game had its first goal. Norwich lost the ball on the edge of the Liverpool box and the ball broke to Riise in the centre circle.

His long, crossfield ball over the top of the Canaries defence, found Garcia and the Spaniard capped a well-timed run with an expertly taken lob over the head of England international Green from just inside the box.

On the hour mark Benitez brought on Florent Sinama-Pongolle and the striker

played a key role in creating the visitors' second goal in the 64th minute.

After the ball fell to him in the box, French forward Pongolle smashed a shot from the penalty spot which Green brilliantly saved one-handed. But before the keeper could recover, Riise lashed home the rebound.

Basketball: Top clubs chase Okoro

In order to present a solid team for the coming season two Atlantic club-sides, Union Bank and newly admitted Delta Force Basketball clubs of Lagos and Asaba are on the trail of former Gboko Heat basketball club point guard, Victor Okoro.

The two clubs are confident that they would have the player on their roster come next season which is to dunk off late January 2005 as officials of both clubs at different time told this writer that the player would be theirs come next season.

Delta Force coach, Lateef Erinfolami, however, believed it is not a do-or-die situation in getting the player but hinted that the club management had held discussion with the player concerning next season.

In his word, "yes, we are interested in having Okoro in our team for the coming season so as to boost our chances in the league, but if

it turned out the other way round that we can't have him then we are not going to lose sleep over the issue, but all I can say to you right now is that Okoro is not a small boy who does not know what he is doing and if he felt Union Bank or any other for that matter would serve his interest most then we can only wish him good luck", Erinfolami concluded.

Both Union Bank coach, Emma Okolo and team manager, Rotimi Savage are more than confident that Okoro would rather be the banker hoped to recruit the him to serve as back up to Junior Tigers captain Shola Atayande.

Feelers from the Lagos based banker camp have it that Okoro has already resume training with the club and was part of the team trip to Cotonou, Benin Republic last November which points to the fact that Union Bank may be at the verge of completing the player's movement.

All-Ghana final ends in draw

A last-gasp strike has saved Hearts of Oak from a home defeat at the hands of their fellow Ghanaian arch-rivals Asante Kotoko in the first leg of the 2005 Confederation Cup final in Accra.

Louis Agyeman rescued Hearts with the late equaliser which was virtually the last kick of the match to force a 1-1 draw.

Michael Osei had given Kotoko the lead in the 61st minute from a rebound after Charles Taylor's free-kick was poorly collected by Hearts' keeper Sani Mohammed.

The goal came shortly after Mohammed had made two brilliant saves.

In the 50th minute, he had denied Kotoko the lead,

saving a shot from unmarked Taylor.

Taylor's opportunity was the first clear chance of the match.

Mohammed also stopped a hard shot inside the box from Osei moments later.

Hearts responded fiercely after conceding with Prince Tagoe going close but Kotoko also pushed forward.

Kotoko had dominated the early 15 minutes, creating scoring chances but it was Hearts who finished the first-half strongly.

The draw in Accra now gives Kotoko the upperhand for the return game in Kumasi on Sunday 9 January.

Kotoko will need a goalless draw to win the first Caf Confederation Cup.

This Space is
for Sale

EDITORIAL

Eggs from Cotonou

The Obasanjo administration has banned the importation of poultry and poultry products into the country. The policy is a response to calls from those local producers who have access to ears in the governing party, PDP, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and the Presidency. In a democracy, these pressures (or "inputs") into the channels of policy making; on the one hand, and the response by government (or "outputs") constitute the texture of what are called "dividends of democracy"; and are vital for building and sustaining the fuel of support or "legitimacy", for the government in power, as well as the polity itself, among those making these demands.

Economists would emphasize to government such factors as: saving the foreign exchange earned from oil from being exported to foreign producers of poultry and poultry products; saving local producers who took bank loans from bankruptcy and attracting new entrants into the sector either as producers or marketers; the creation of jobs for those unemployed hands that big time poultry producers would call up; jobs for employees needed by restaurant owners who can afford to hire them because locally produced poultry are cheaper; bigger markets for other non-food products such as furniture, clothing and marriages because there is extra money to spend since poultry products are cheap and the food bill is lower, etc.

Security chiefs would draw attention to the dangers to national sovereignty if the country must rely on imported food to feed its volatile urban population and troops; imports which can be stopped through blockades on the high seas or through diplomatic isolation and trade boycotts. The chemists in NAFDAC would fear for harmful levels of antibiotics and cancer-causing chemicals ingested by poultry or used as preservatives by foreign producers and exporters.

These are some of the considerations which inform our endorsement of the government's ban on poultry imports. The impact of the ban on producers in the FCT alone, has been lauded. From about ten the number of producers in the FCT has climbed up to about two hundred. The impact on prices for consumers may yet be only indirect, such as through prices of local chicken going down because hotels are not swooping on roadside poultry sellers and buying all their stock at higher prices. The dependence of local producers on imported inputs such as egg crates, medicines, feeds and high interest of bank loans, accounts for high prices charged by local producers. Some local producers pay exorbitant salaries to white "experts" whose expertise may primarily be in the colour of their Caucasian skins.

The enormous profits to be earned from the Nigerian market accounts for reports that eggs from South Africa are being shipped into Benin Republic for onward smuggling into Nigeria. While we can understand the temptation to test Nigeria's capacity for enforcing the ban, it would make for better economic relations between Nigeria and South Africa if the smugglers came and invested in production inside the Nigerian economy. The criminal approach has, in recent weeks, cost the lives of Nigeria's brave and patriotic Customs Officers who were shot by smugglers. Nigeria's poultry farmers should stand up to commend the work of Nigeria's Customs men and women; and support their bereaved families. South Africa's eggs flown into Cotonou should not enter the Nigerian market floating in pools of tears.

Printed and published by Media Trust Nigeria Limited. Corporate Office: No. 22 Lanika Street, Off Binnar Street, Wuse Zone 6 Abuja. Tel: 09-5235787, 5238726. Fax: 09-5238725. New fax number: 2721036. Lagos Office: News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) premises, National Theatre Complex, Ikorodu. Tel: 01-4707296, 861008. Kaduna Office: No. 6, Suburbosa Close, Off Kature Road, Ungwar Saki, G.R.A. Kaduna. Tel: 062-245916. Fax: 062-245496. e-mail: dailytrust@yahoo.co.uk, or letters@weeklytrust.com. All correspondence to P.O. Box 6473, Wuse, Abuja. Editors: Ifeoluwa Madako, Kano.

DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Tribute to Dr. Rufa'i Omar Madaki

By Ujudud Shariff
(ujushariff@yahoo.com)

We are beginning this year not so much on a sad note but rather paying tribute to a great nationalist, a teacher, mobilizer, motivator and a highly principled politician. At a certain stage in his life, he was also a banker, a journalist and an administrator of men and materials. The cold hands of death snatched his life at the high point of his life on November 28, 2004 at the age of 51 in far away Saudi Arabia. We mourn his death because we believe Nigeria has lost one of her great faithful.

My last encounter with him was two days after the salah celebration when I visited him in his house in Kano. Though he was just recuperating from an illness, he was his usual self. We spent the greater portion of the more than two hours discussing mother Nigeria, her problems and prospects. At a point, he insisted that I had to read an article sent to him from abroad on leadership and the problems of Nigeria. We all agreed that the cardinal problem of Nigeria is poor leadership and unless that is solved, we would only



Late Umar Madaki

be drifting and moving in a vicious circle. We also discussed the PDP of which he was a founding member and the role he played in the emergence of President Obasanjo in 1999. Some of the stories were in deed mind boggling especially the behind the scene maneuvers during Jos PDP convention and the victory of the PDP in Kano State. He was in deed an encyclopaedia of the history of PDP and was always ready to share his experiences as nauseating as some of them were. To the last minute of our discussion, he believed Nigeria is still viable and could be salvaged as all the bad policies and programmes being imposed on her are reversible. His faith in Nigeria was absolute and his dreams for Kano State quite glittering. He was advising those of us on the sidelines to come back and join active politics in order to salvage the state and embarrassing poor representation of the state at all levels. That was how we ended the discussion hoping to continue when we meet next. But alas! It was barely two weeks later or so that I received the shocking news of his death in a Saudi hospital in Jeddah and was buried there according to Islamic injunctions on that same day. We mourn the death of a compatriot and a mentor. We cry for the loss of a benefactor who was worried about the poor conditions of his native state and his country and decided to do something about it. He was always fond of saying that the era of bemoaning our plight is over. We should all do something about it within the democratic space and opportunities.

Looking at his entire life and career on earth, we have every cause to celebrate and not grieve. In the short period

of 51 years, having been born on December 7, 1954 in Kano City, he excelled in almost every endeavour he put himself. A graduate of English Language from Abdullahi Bayero College, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, he moved to University of Reading in the United Kingdom for a Masters degree in Linguistics Science.

To cap it all, he crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the University of Michigan in the United States for a Doctor of Philosophy (PHD). He began his teaching career from the Department of English, Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto. From the academic life, he crossed over to journalism when he was appointed the Editor of the Sunday Triumph Newspaper in 1984. After a brief stint with the editorial department, he was moved to the books department as manager. By 1987, he became the Managing Director of the Triumph publishing Company the publishers of the Daily Triumph, Sunday Triumph, Al Fajr and Al Bishir newspapers.

From the Triumph, he joined the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Company (NDIC) as a pioneer staff in Lagos. After about two years or thereabout, he resigned and went into private business and politics. Though this is not to suggest that he was never in politics. In fact, I first met him through politics when sometimes in 1974 as a student leader of the Abdullahi Bayero College; he visited us in the then Kano State College of Advanced Studies (CAS) where he gave us a brilliant and inspiring lecture. He was an orator and great student union activist. That was how our paths crossed each other and we remained friends and brothers thereafter. He was always willing and ready to assist and guide at all times.

He opted for a private life to consolidate his business except for the brief moment he served as a Director in the New Nigerian Newspaper Company Limited in Kaduna. It was the PDP that brought him back into public glare during the presidential campaigns and his eventual appointment as the Managing Director of the Nigerian Export-Import Bank Limited (NEXIM). Without doubt, he did his best within the short duration of his stay by reengineering and refocusing the Bank for greater efficiency and result oriented. At the end of his tenure when he resigned to contest the governorship election in Kano State, NEXIM was a much better place than he met it. As we all know, the 2003 elections was in many places a sham.

In several states where the PDP was in control, there were hardly any primaries. In those states, it was the PDP governors that manipulated everything in their own favour and that of their cronies. After a bitter struggle to ensure the reign of democracy through free and fair elections failed, he decamped to the NDP where he contested the elections for the governorship of Kano State. Though he could not make it to the Government House, he succeeded in making the point that no one could stop him from contesting the elections. He was therefore a winner of sort as he made the point beyond all reasonable doubt.

As we grieve for his loss, we are proud of all his achievements in life. He was so many things in many places and has touched the lives of many people in many places. As we continue to pray for the repose of his soul and the fortitude to bear his loss, our consolation is that his ideals would never die. We also pray for his children and congratulate them for having him as their father for the good name he has left for them. His vision for Kano State and Nigeria as a whole would continue to light our path as we trek the road of destiny. Adieu, Dr. Rufa'i Omar Madaki.

...WADANAS

Just as I was finishing the tribute to Dr. Madaki the news came from the BBC Hausa Service of the death of Alhaji Wada Nas the former Minister of Special Duties under the late General Sani Abacha. This illustrious son of the north will be missed and remembered for generations yet to come. He was a great fighter and defender for the north and its single and most vibrant voice. His death was certainly the end of an era and even his enemies would not deny him that. We condole his family and all northerners for the demise of a great champion. We will surely miss his weekly column in the Weekly Trust Newspaper and his ever-incisive commentaries on national issues. May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace, amen.