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We'll resist rigging in 2007 - Oshiomhole

Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) president Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, said yesterday that the Labour movement will now turn its focus to mass political mobilisation nationwide, so that together with other civil society organisations, they will lead Nigerians in the struggle against any move to rig the Year 2007 general elections.

Oshiomhole, who paid what he described as "a thank you visit" to the head office of Media Trust (publishers of *Weekly Trust* and *Daily Trust* newspapers) in Abuja, yesterday, disclosed that he often feels frustrated by the challenge of leading mass struggles against "insensi-

By Ahmed I. Shekarau,
Group Business Editor

...tive government policies", but that he has never allowed such burden to overwhelm him because, "when someone is imposing very harsh policies like arbitrary price increases on you and you say there's nothing you can do because that person controls the police and all other means of coercion then you are giving room to such leader to kill you."

The NLC president, who fielded questions on several issues during the visit, charged Nigerians to remain resolute in their determination to resist unpopular government policies such as arbi-

Contd. on Pg 2



From left are former Heads of State, General Yakubu Gowon, former President Abaji Shehu Shagari, the former Head of the Interim Government, Chief Ernest Shonkan and former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar during the council of state meeting held at the State House, Abuja... yesterday.

Pix: Joe Oroye

National dialogue now political reforms confab

- To last three months
- Representation multifaceted

Federal Government has adopted a name for the proposed National Dialogue, it is to be known officially as the National Political Reforms Conference.

Governor Ahmed Makarf of Kaduna said that the new

Ogbeh didn't resign under duress - NEC members

Five members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the PDP debunked the stories making rounds that the party's national chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh was forced to resign maintaining that Chief Ogbeh bowed out because of the mass of cheques, vouchers, internal audit query and hard evidences of financial impropriety amounting to N5.2 billion.

A release signed by Ahaji Ahmed Gusau, Chief Okunola Oluosola, Decon A.E. Afolabi, Dr. O.N. Obiola and Dr. Tayo Dairo described the resignation of Chief Audu Ogbeh as motivated by the determination of over Ninety (90) mem-

By AbdulAzeez Abdullahi,
Group News Editor, With Agency Report

...name was agreed upon at yesterday's meeting of the National Council of States.

The meeting also agreed that no citizen would be asked

By Isa Saunsi, Political Reporter (Senate)

...bers of the party's NEC to go to the bottom of the fraud in the national leadership of the PDP.

"Members of the executive opined that if there was any gun that made Ogbeh to resign, it is the mass of cheques, vouchers, internal audit query and hard evidences of financial impropriety amounting to about N5.2 billion unaccounted for and irregular expenditure that are in possession of most NEC members. If there is any bullet, it is the cold reality of over 90 members of the NEC who have signed up, determined

Contd. on Pg 2

his or her religion or ethnic background at the forthcoming National Population Census.

Makarfi, who briefed newsmen at the end of the meeting supported by his colleagues from Ondo and Borno, noted that invitation letters to those to be nominated to the conference would soon be dispatched.

He said that the duration of the conference had been tentatively put at three months "with a possibility for an extension".

He added that nominations would be based on po-

litical parties, senatorial districts, religious groups, students, civil society organisations and the disabled.

Makarfi said that at least 400 delegates, including about 60 to be nominated by the federal government with six coming from each of the 36 states of the federation.

Reps move to ban fuel importation

A bill seeking to compel oil companies operating in Nigeria to locally refine their crude oil instead of importing it into the country has passed its first reading in the House of Representatives.

When the law comes into force, it might constitute an offence for any importation of

"We did not try to limit numbers but the recommendation was largely based on group representation," Makarfi, who was chairman of the committee that prepared the grounds for the conference, said.

He said that all former heads of state would be made delegates at the conference to tap from their wealth of ex-

By Hammeed M. Bello
Senior Political Reporter

...refined petroleum product into Nigeria.

Entitled a bill for an Act to amend the Petroleum Act, Cap. 350, laws of the Federation, 1990 was presented to the House yesterday by the chairman of the Petroleum Committee, Hon. Cairo

experience, but stressed that no elected official serving would be invited.

On no-go-areas, Makarfi said: "This conference is not about re-inventing Nigeria, but about improving the system"

"Nigeria is a reality, it is indivisible and it is a federation, and this issue is not

Contd. on Pg 2

America's presence in Iraq worsens crisis - Khatami

The continued presence of Americans is worsening the Iraqi crisis, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has said.

"Today in Iraq, instead of peace, there is increased terror and instability. We are against these continuous attacks," the Iranian leader said.

Khatami spoke in Abuja yesterday at a lecture entitled: "Harmony, peace,

By Elkannah Chawli,
Reporter (Foreign Desk) with Agency Report

...equality and tolerance in a heterogeneous society."

He affirmed his country's quest for peace, but said that such could only be rooted on the basis of justice.

The Iranian leader challenged America to talk about cohesion; saying that the world must rise against vio-

Ojuigbo, who sponsored it along with 28 others members. It passed its first reading yesterday.

At a press briefing yesterday jointly addressed by the committees on emergency

Contd. on Pg 2



Speaker Aminu Masari

"From underdevelopment, Contd. on Pg 2

News

Hajj: Saudi closes Medina gates

2400 Borno pilgrims yet to be airlifted

By Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (Maiduguri), in Medina & Isa Umar Gusau, Correspondent (Maiduguri)

Saudi Arabian authorities have closed the gates of the Holy City of Medina for pilgrims arriving from Jeddah by road ahead of the beginning of Hajj. The city, however, still remains open and accessible for pilgrims arriving by air from the King Abdul Azeez Airport in Jeddah.

Daily Trust checks in Medina showed that of the few Nigerian pilgrims who were lucky to be airlifted to the Holy Land for the 2005 Hajj, many have made it to Medina in order to pray in the Mosque of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) and visit other religious sites in the Holy city before the Hajj proper starts.

Those who could not pay for the air ticket to Medina from Jeddah (since individuals also have to pay for themselves) or who do not wish to begin their Hajj by visiting Medina first have proceeded to Mecca for Umra before the start of Hajj.

Our correspondent also reports that Nigerian pilgrims from Nasarawa State who have arrived early to Medina have also proceeded to Mecca for Umra after staying

thousand four hundred Borno pilgrims were yesterday at the Borno Hajj camp, waiting to be airlifted, as only 712 out of the state's over 3000 pilgrims have so far been airlifted. The executive secretary, Borno State Pilgrims Welfare Board, confirmed yesterday in Maiduguri.

According to the secretary, Alhaji Kalli Inam, Borno pilgrims have so far been airlifted with three IRS aircrafts, with the planes airlifting 171, 291 and 250 respectively since the commencement of the airlift on Sunday.

Inam said that IRS airline management had promised to make additional aircrafts available for smooth airlift of pilgrims.

The secretary stated that his hope was raised with the take-off of the 3rd aircraft yesterday, which airlifted 250 pilgrims, making the total number of the state's pilgrims in Saudi Arabia to 712.

Daily Trust gathered through investigations that the state's Ameerul Hajj, the deputy governor, Adamu

Shattima Dibal, was furious with the chairman/CEO of IRS, Rabiu Isyaka Rabiu, who allegedly kept on deceiving the Ameerul Hajj that he was sending aircraft for airlift of Borno pilgrims.

It was gathered that the deputy governor had on an information from the IRS CEO that he had sent plane on Tuesday evening, wait into the control towers, and opted to seek the monitoring of moving aircraft to ascertain the information from the IRS boss, but the deputy governor was surprised not to have seen an indication of any IRS aircraft on air.

Consequently, Daily Trust gathered that the deputy governor went furious as he spoke on phone with the IRS chairman, after which the 3rd aircraft was provided with a difference of about 40 hours from the departure of the 2nd flight.

Meanwhile, Kabo airline has airlifted about 1008 pilgrims from Yobe State, with about 800 pilgrims waiting to be airlifted, amidst optimism since a stationed aircraft had been going and returning on good time.

Rigging

Contrary fuel price hikes, saying that though oil marketers in the country, particularly the major marketers appear to be sacred cows, who break the law with impunity, the recent reversal of increases in pump prices of petroleum prices by the federal government was an indication that the mass struggles of the populace cannot be in vain.

Speaking specifically on the NLC's planned mass political mobilisation, Oshiomhole said that with the successes recorded by Labour alongside other civil society groups in the struggle against fuel price hikes, "I'm now convinced that we can also channel this politically. And that, I think, should be the major project of NLC and the civil society; the political project, the electoral process, free (and fair) elections."

"In the first place, you are dealing with the consequences of government insensitivity. Government will never be sensitive for as long as the electorate does not matter. And the electorate will never matter if the electoral process is not cleaned up."

"So I've come to the conclusion, therefore that ultimately, the struggle for good governance, for a better Nigeria, must start with a transparent electoral process", he stressed, adding that "I want to see a situation in which, between now and next year we (NLC) will begin to educate and enlighten the people on the danger of people who are not elected and are allowed to govern."

He stressed further that through political mobilisation, which will now be the focus of the NLC, "Nigerians will be able to rise up and say, okay, you've declared yourself elected, but you can't govern us", adding that the recent happenings in Ukraine are good pointers to the possibility of similar occurrences in Nigeria.

On the brazen refusal by oil marketers to revert to previous oil prices as agreed upon by Labour and government, through the Ibrahim Mantu-led committee, Oshiomhole challenged Nigerians to investigate the ownership of the six major oil marketing companies to know who are behind them, as they turn into sacred cows by violating the provisions of the Petroleum Act, in the face of government's helplessness.

The Labour leader also expressed NLC's reservations about some provisions of the new Pensions Act, which he said, does not shield contributors from the consequences of inflationary pressures, price instability, among others.

Oshiomhole also lamented the contradictory and haphazard implementation of the federal government's monetarisation policy. He, however, cautioned those dismissing the work of the Mantu-led committee as a worthless exercise, saying that the committee, and other

National Dialogue

tion, and this issue is not about the north being against the south or vice versa." Turning to the 2005 census, Makarfi said that the council discountenanced the issue of ethnicity and religion because "these are very volatile issues that had caused a lot of problems in our country."

He said that the council also gave President Obasanjo the go ahead to fill two state vacancies at the NPC and another vacancy at INEC.

He said that the issue of limitations of federal governments tax consultants was also discussed and an agreement reached that they should not encroach into the functions of state revenue board.

Reps

and disaster preparedness and petroleum, Hon. Cairo Ojuigbo, who is the petroleum committee chairman said the bill seeks to make Nigeria self sufficient in the energy sector by providing enabling environment for local refining and exporting same.

This, he said, will generate employment and shore up the revenue base of the country, and will evade some taxes depriving the country of wealth. The bill will also ensure local availability of refined products.

He said oil companies are the ones that have the necessary equipment to refine fuel, adding however, the committee is mindful of the opposition that would come against the bill by the oil companies but that they are

determined to give a smooth passage.

He said a situation whereby oil companies take over crude oil outside the country to refine and sell back to us at exorbitant rates is no longer acceptable to Nigerians.

He said although licences have been given to about 18 companies and individuals to establish refineries in the country, they could however not take off because they are not sure of getting the crude, which he said explains why the bill was conceived as the alternative.

"The oil companies do anything in Nigeria and get away with it; that is why we are putting in place checks and balances," Cairo Ojuigbo said.

Ogbeh

to get to the bottom of the fraud in the PDP house," the release stated.

The release noted that the denials of fraud in the party by the National Treasurer as un-substantive saying: "The NEC shall look into the allegations with documentary evidence to back it up. We expect the treasurer to prepare his defence for the next meeting."

"Our attention has been drawn to publications and newspapers items by some propagandists who have tried consistently to distort realities on the goings on in the People's Democratic Party. These sets of propagandists who have consistently twisted facts in the past four years have in the last one week sold lies as news items."

Meanwhile, a political scientist, Dr Ayo Akinbobola, says the resignation of the National Chairman of the PDP, Prof. Austin Ogbeh, raises

critical questions about the country's stability.

Ogbeh, deep in conflict with President Olusegun Obasanjo, had on Monday announced his resignation with effect from February 28.

Akinbobola, a senior lecturer in the department of political science, University of Lagos, said Ogbeh's resignation showed that the PDP was "incoherent and unstable", stressing: "It portends negative consequences for the country."

"The resignation is evident that the PDP is unstable and not strong, and it is a significant development that has negative consequences for the nation."

He said the party should have resolved all its internal problems without any key officer of the party resigning.

Akinbobola urged the PDP to exhibit discipline, strength and uprightness in resolving its problems.



The FCT Minister, Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai and the minister of works during the press briefing on the outcome of the FEC meeting held at the State House, Abuja, yesterday. Pic: Jos Osoye.

America

people all over the world to understand themselves, saying that "there was a need to boost regional and international harmony."

"We must all know that all humans are from a single origin, and the world needs a sound spiritual foundation to co-exist," he said.

"Humans must eradicate colour to respect life," he said. Earlier in his address, Nigeria's President Olusegun

Jimoh (Lagos mainland II) noted that Ogbeh had sacrificed himself for the survival of the country's democracy.

"Ogbeh is a great democrat who sacrificed himself for democracy to survive," he told NAN.

He advised the PDP to put its house in order and spare the polity of "unnecessary over-heating".

Balogun said the "power play" in the ruling party was

capable of destabilising the polity.

He urged politicians in all the parties to learn to be tolerant and respect party supremacy.

"The PDP should lead by example and all its functionaries should respect the supremacy of the party. All politicians should submit themselves to their party's leadership," Balogun, representing Surulere II, said.

Obasanjo had called for closer ties between Nigeria and Iraq.

Obasanjo was represented by Foreign Affairs Minister, Olu Adeniji said that Iraq's ability to produce one million cars every year was worth emulating by Nigeria.

Khatami, who started a three-day visit to Nigeria yesterday, is expected to round off bilateral talks with his host tomorrow.

The Iranian leader is the 10th Iranian president to visit Nigeria.

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News

Plateau assembly against establishment of varsity

Members of the Plateau state House of Assembly have kicked against the establishment of the proposed Plateau state university.

The state Assembly members who spoke against it while deliberating on the 2005 budget proposals presented by Governor Joshua Dariye, noted that the infrastructures were not in place for such.

They advised that efforts should be concentrated on the development of old institutions, while stressing the need for government to ensure the development of the

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

education sector from the primary level for enhanced education standard to the state.

Governor Joshua Dariye in the 2005 budget proposal presented to the state House of Assembly, had indicated that N1.23 billion was allocated to the education sector and its sub-sectors for various projects among which is the take-off of the proposed Plateau state university.

Meanwhile, the House of Assembly members also stressed the need for strict

budget discipline and transparency to ensure good governance in the state.

While describing budget discipline as very vital, the members said there was the need for the House to ensure periodic review for proper implementation.

They enjoined all government agencies in the state to live above board.

The state's debt burden was also a source of concern to the members and called on the state executive arm to make public the figure and ensure transparency in the process of repayment.

President Olusegun Obasanjo today directed the ministers to get fully involved in agriculture by developing their own farms.

Briefing State House correspondents at the end of today's Federal Executive

N40bn HOUSING FUNDS Reps probe NNPC, NEPA, Others

The House of Representatives yesterday ordered investigations into the N40 billion National Housing Funds (NHF) money said to have been lost by the federal government to the Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC), the National Electric Power Authority among others.

The House also resolved to mandate its committee on Housing and Urban Development to investigate the non-compliance with relevant laws by employers of labour and to ensure recovery of all outstanding sums from the employers and remit same to the Federal Mortgage Bank (FMB).

The committee was given two months within which to accomplish its task.

The House decision followed a motion moved by the chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Committee, Hon. Ota Uzuaso, drawing attention to anomalies in the housing sector which his committee uncovered along with non-compliance with the provision of the National Housing Act (NHA).

Hon. Uzuaso noted that Section 1 of the NHA 1992 and Section 5 (1) (c) of the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria Act, 1993 provides that 21.25% deductible from workers salaries in both private and public sectors above N3000 per annum, be remitted to the FMB, being the custodian and recognised manager of the said fund.

The committee, according to Uzuaso, however discovered that some major government establishments like NEPA, NNPC, and private organisations "have refused, neglected or failed to adhere to these provisions, and as a result of which the federal government has lost about N40 billion since the laws were enacted.

The staff of the said organisations, Uzuaso said, have not maximally benefited from the national housing scheme in the way it was intended.

The committee chairman also told the House that considering the deliberate and

Obasanjo directs ministers to establish own farms

Council meeting, (FEC) FCT Minister Nasir el-Rufai said that President Obasanjo believed that ministers should

lead by example.

Accordingly, El-Rufai said that he had concluded plans to start a fish farm in the FCT as his own area of interest.

He said that the meeting, among others, reviewed the nation's performance in agriculture and how to further enhance it, noting that a decision to involve the private sector in irrigation agriculture was discussed.

The minister said that under the strategy worked out by a special committee, government would encourage the private sector to put more than three million hectares of land to irrigation.

"Of the 3.14 million hectares of irrigable land and 31 billion cubic litres of irrigation water available in the country, less than 800,000 hectares are utilised," the minister of state for water resources, who was also at the briefing, said.

El-Rufai said that the nation was anxious to feed its teeming population and also have a surplus to export, adding that there were numerous irrigation sites ready for use.

Other issues discussed was the achievement of the millennium development goals, for which, he said, a special committee headed by the president with membership drawn from relevant ministries and donor agencies had been established.

He said that a quarterly review of how far government had gone on the implementation of the targeted millennium goals was to be presented to FEC with a view to ensuring that poverty and other target goals set by the UN was reduced by 2015.

Ozinaso informed the House that many workers who would have qualified for the loan, even as he noted that the objectives of the housing scheme include among others to enable greater percentage of Nigerian workers own personal accommodation through the loan, and to provide proper policy control over the allocation of resources between the housing sector and other sectors of the economy.

The NHF Act 3 of 1992 was enacted to provide housing loans to workers at affordable prices in both public and private sectors, to ensure constant supply of loans to Nigerians to build, purchase or improve existing residential houses.

The permanent secretary in the Department for Local Government and Chiefdom Affairs, Alhaji Abu Karofi, disclosed this yesterday in Katsina at a news conference.

Karofi explained that part of the money would also be advanced to farmers under the state's agricultural credit scheme to improve their output for the season. He stated that the amount had already been released for contractors to supply the commodity so as to make it available and subsequent distribution to farmers before the rainy season.

He also revealed that a sum of N468 million was re-

leased to the 34 local government councils in the state last week for the execution of projects.

He warned that his department would not hesitate to expose any chairman found to have embezzled public funds. Karofi said only 30 per cent of the councils' monthly allocations from the Federation Account would be given to them, adding that this would likely rise to 100 per cent if the chairman performed well.

He also announced that a local government council was only allowed to spend N2.5 million on a project, adding that any project above the amount must be vetted by his office.

Karofi advised the council chairmen to live above board by working for the development and progress of their areas.



The Editor-in-Chief, Media Trust, Mallam Kabir Yusuf (L) in handshake with NLC president, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole (R) while the Editor of Daily Trust Newspapers, Mallam Is'haq Modibbo Kawa (middle) and others watch during the president's visit to Media Trust Headquarters in Abuja...yesterday. Pix: Kennedy Egonofe

SAN opposes national lottery bill

Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Mr. Ricky Tarfa, yesterday opposed the passing into law of the proposed national lottery bill by the joint committees on sports, social development and judiciary, saying that the National Assembly had no constitutional powers to legislate on the issue.

Mr. Tarfa (SAN) held the position on ground that the members of the house lacked the competence to deliberate on the said bill under section 299 of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria.

"The subject matter of this legislation cannot be found anywhere in the exclusive nor concurrent lists which makes it a responsibility of the state house of assembly," he posted.

But five other public speakers held a different position, arguing instead that the proposed bill if passed into law, has many benefits for the nation.

Retired General Sam Teldi, of the ministry of sports held that the federal government

By Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter (Reps)

alone should not carry the responsibility of funding all the sectors with a view of developing the country, while Otunba Ayodeji Osighogun said that the lottery is being done in other parts of the world "proceeds from the lottery can be used to advance the cause of neglected people," although sports is the unifier of this enterprise."

Mr. Bolaji Balogun in his presentation said that the lottery will afford the sectors an opportunity to complement government efforts, and that the best part of it is that everybody is a winner.

"Governments around the world support lottery as opposed to gambling, and are mindful of its proper regulation," he said in an effort to quell the fear that the enterprise is a way of enhancing advance free fraud in the country.

The national lottery bill 2004 has as part of its corporate responsibility according

to representative of the speaker, house of representatives who doubles as the chairman of the hearing, Alhaji Bala Ibn Na'Ala, "to support sports development and other good causes, provide direct employment to over 160 Nigerians, create about 10,000 indirect employments for retailers, suppliers and business partners and support poverty alleviation."

Reps donate N7.2m to Tusanami relief fund

Members of the house of representatives are to donate N7.2 million to the Tsunami relief fund to assist countries affected by the Tsunami disaster which occurred late last year, and claimed over 156,000 lives.

This was confirmed by chairman, committee on emergency and disaster preparedness, Hon. Jerry Sonny Ugokwe, shortly after the plenary session by members of the house where the decision was made yesterday.

It was decided that each

of the 360 members donate nothing less than N20,000 to the fund, while condolence letters are to be sent to the embassies of the affected countries in a few days.

The House of Representatives is also expected to donate a total of \$51 thousand aside from their donations in a show of empathy towards the victims of the disaster "we want them to know that we sympathise with them on this tragedy. The world is a global village, and any misfortune that befalls any country, affects us as well," said Hon. Ugokwe.



President Olusegun Obasanjo

Katsina LGS vote N600m for fertiliser

Local government councils in Katsina State have contributed the sum of N600 million for the purchase of fertiliser for this year's farming season.

The permanent secretary in the Department for Local Government and Chiefdom Affairs, Alhaji Abu Karofi, disclosed this yesterday in Katsina at a news conference.

Karofi explained that part of the money would also be advanced to farmers under the state's agricultural credit scheme to improve their output for the season. He stated that the amount had already been released for contractors to supply the commodity so as to make it available and subsequent distribution to farmers before the rainy season.

He also revealed that a sum of N468 million was re-

News

Court rejects EWI's application for injunction

A federal High Court sitting in Lagos and presided over by Justice Mohammed Shuaibu has turned down the prayers of Econet Wireless International (EWI) to obtain injunction restraining Econet Wireless Nigeria (now V-mobile) from holding its planned extra-ordinary general meeting even as he ruled that the subsisting case should proceed to trial.

Counsel to the plaintiff, Professor Kwassunnu (SAN) told the court that he has filed an affidavit acquainting it of current development (the resolve by Vmobile to hold an EGM) regarding the matter

From Mohammed Shosanya, Stringer (Lagos)

since the last time the contending parties appeared in the court.

According to him, the proposed Extra Ordinary General meeting billed to take place on January 25 has been served on the plaintiff by the first defendant contending further that the planned meeting was a breach of the order of the court as well as undertakings of the parties.

The presiding Judge ruled that the parties should proceed with the subsisting case with despatch while plaintiff counsel prayed for enough time to enable him

Peoples national conference kicks-off in Lagos

The proposed National Conference organised by the elder statesman, Pa Anthony Enahoro and others kicked off yesterday tagged peoples national conference.

The conference according to PRONACO is aimed at setting an agenda that will usher in modalities for setting up a national conference that will be acceptable to every Nigerian.

The concerned Nigerians operating under the aegis of PRONACO, said the conference was set up to look at all issues that affect the progress and unity of the country.

Reading the opening speech on behalf of the group, Mr. Edet Uno said the group would come up with an agenda that would be in the interest of all Nigerians.

Uno maintained that since most Nigerians are convinced on the need to set up a National Conference, and the setting up of a national dialogue by the presidency, said the one set up by the presidency would only look at issues from governing aspect and its term of reference appears to make amendment to the 1999 constitution.

He, however declared that the National dialogue would not usher in solutions to the threatening unity and advancement of the country.

He stressed that several workshops, conferences, bilateral and multilateral consultation amongst concerned organisations had worked out modalities and approaches for a popular national conference that will lead to federal restructuring and transformation of the country.

"The issues to be tabled for discussion at this meeting will include the structure, composition, agenda and

From Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent (Lagos)

timetable of such a conference.

Judge condemns police's investigation methods

Kogi Chief Judge, Justice Umaru Eri, has described as inhuman and unfortunate, the method adopted by the police in criminal investigations. He alleged that the police criminal investigation department manhandled suspects in trying to extort information from them.

Eri made the observation on Tuesday, in Kabba during his ongoing state-wide tour of prisons within his jurisdiction.

He expressed displeasure at the sight of open wounds and lacerations inflicted on an armed robbery suspects by the police while in their custody.

Apparently touched by the situation, the Judge promised to get to the root of the matter and to exert appropriate sanctions with a view to checking such inhumanity, saying this had become the hallmark of police investigations.

In a determined move to curtail the excesses of the police, he ordered the immediate release of two suspects being illegally detained by the police.

Eri ordered that one Suleiman Lawal, popularly known as A-1 (A-one), be released immediately to facilitate the commencement of his trial along with his three accomplices, currently in Kabba prisons. The Judge reviewed 52 case warrants of suspects awaiting trial; five regained freedom and another five were granted bail while 42 other cases were said to be at various stages of adjudication.

obtain certain documents he has requested from the Cooperate Affairs Commission. Further proceedings on the matter has been fixed for January 27 this year.

Jigawa contractors get N530m

Contractors handling various road projects in Jigawa state have been given N530m down payment as part of government determination to ensure the completion of ongoing road projects in the state, commissioner for Infrastructure, Alhaji Aminu Yanleman disclosed this during the disbursement of checks among contractors in Duste.

He said the release of the funds is to motivate contractors and ensure the completion of all projects in the state before the end of this year.

Yanleman added that the contractors, handling Gimbo-Gantisa road have been given N105m while polycot got N30m an opportunity to see many technological developments in the state that could assist in furthering the development of this country.

"In the last 20 years of my experience as a minister I have never seen a state that has developed its agricultural and ICT potentials which are in abundance like Jigawa state," he revealed.

This he added has spurred him to believe that with adequate assistance and co-operation between the two, his country stands to benefit a lot from the abundant natural resources of Jigawa state.

He therefore, revealed that this country will be ready and willing to open its doors for investor from Jigawa state.

Court orders liquidation of sugar coy

A Federal High Court in Abuja today directed the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) to wind up activities of the Sunti Sugar company in Mokwa, Niger State.

The court also ordered the appointment of Otumba Olatola Senbore of Olatola Senbore & Co., Chartered Accountant as the liquidator for the company.

Justice Binta Murtala Nyako gave the directives at the resumed hearing of a petition filed to this effect by counsel to BPE, Mr Tokunbo Agoro. Incorporated in May 1974, Sunti Sugar was jointly owned by the federal government and Niger State with 90 per cent and 10 per cent shares respectively.



From left are, Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarf of Kaduna state, his Katsina state counterpart Alhaji Umaru Yar'adua and the Head of Service Yiyale Ahmed during the council of state meeting held at the State House Abuja...yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye.

Poor funding threatens housing policy

By Godwin Tyanouge, (Reporter Abuja)

The government-private sector initiative designed to provide 16,000 houses to Nigerians by year 2007 may hit the rocks due to poor financing. The initial concept of the partnerships in housing was for 40,000 houses to be built every year in four years beginning from year 2004.

But Mr. Seun Jegede, the media consultant with Adkan Nig. Ltd, one of the private developers engaged by the ministry of housing for the purpose, told Daily Trust that the banks responsible for giving out loans to private developers "are not helping matters."

Mr. Jegede who expressed fears about the present economic environment urged the federal government to take the burden of providing infrastructures in the estates as according to him, it will make the cost of purchasing houses to drop.

Daily Trust gathered that at the moment, a 1 bedroom flat to 4 bedroom luxury duplex price ranges from N2.8 million at the sun city estate

located close to the games village, Abuja. Associate Discount House, the firm financing the Sun City project which consists of 2,000 housing units has put the cost of constructing the estate to the tune of N12.8 billion.

Daily Trust learnt further that the mode of payment for the houses now is for 50 per cent deposit while the balance is to be completed in 6 months. The second phase of 372 units is to be launched in March.

Daily Trust also learnt that the federal Housing Authority (FHA) which is supposed to be the major agency to facilitate the partnership initiative has been sidelined from it. Rather, the private developers have been engaged by the ministry of Housing to handle the projects. These include; Adkan Nig. Ltd, CITEC Nig. Ltd and Balhans Nig. Ltd.

It will be recalled that the National Housing Programme NHP launched in 1994-1995 collapsed for reasons of inadequate funding, grandiose scale, inadequate planning, party patronage syndrome, flaws in execution, problems of access to NIIF etc.

ID cards will be ready before end of year - Director

Department of National Civil Registration (DNCR) has assured all eligible Nigerians that they will get their ID Cards before the end of the year. Malam Shu'aibu Birni, DNCR director gave the assurance yesterday in Abuja in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

"By the end of the year production of the cards must have been completed and everybody who registered must have received his or her card," he said.

He called on Nigerians to exercise patience, adding that government would ensure that the production process was no longer interrupted.

"We are not envisaging any stoppages in the production because government has made every provision to ensure that the contractor is paid. The machines are in place and the workers are receiving their entitlements," he said.

"There is no question of whether the production will be completed within the tenure of this administration or not," he said.

He said that the company producing the cards, was now running two shifts from 6 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 10 p.m. According to him, the production will go into three shifts as from February to cover 24 hours while the output will rise to 200,000 cards per day. NAN reports that so far ID cards have been distributed in the FCT, Bayelsa, Yobe and Opun States. According to the director, "production for Benue has been completed and we are currently producing for Adamawa State."

"When that is completed, the distribution for the two states (Benue and Adamawa) will be carried out concurrently," he said.

On the installation of facilities at police stations and banks to assist in accessing information on Nigerians who registered for the ID cards, the director said that the institutions were expected to install such facilities in their offices.

"It is not part of the contract, the banks have to install such facilities by themselves," he said.

"However, I think we need to complete the card production first, before we begin to worry about such facilities because you must first have the card," he added.

Opinion

2005 Hajj: Matters arising

By Hauwa M. Abdullah

State Pilgrims, there is need for the Hajj Officials to make arrangement whereby centre officers and preachers were attached with their pilgrims in order to guide them to the various places of worship throughout the period of Hajj. Many pilgrims especially women get lost even inside the holy mosque in Makka in trying to perform their Tawaf.

They tend to disappear, one will not see them until the day the pilgrims are going to Makka from Madina. Pilgrims who have no companions experience untold hardship as they are left to wonder around like camels lost in the desert.

Even through a single accommodation was provided for the whole Kano

"There is need for the Hajj Officials to make arrangement whereby centre officers and preachers were attached with their pilgrims in order to guide them to the various places of worship throughout the period of Hajj. Many pilgrims especially women get lost even inside the holy mosque in Makka in trying to perform their Tawaf"

State Pilgrims, there is need for the Hajj Officials to make arrangement whereby centre officers and preachers were attached with their pilgrims in order to guide them to the various places of worship throughout the period of Hajj. Many pilgrims especially women get lost even inside the holy mosque in Makka in trying to perform their Tawaf.

When pilgrims are grouped and guarded, a great service will have been done to them towards performing Hajj Mabruur. Their moral conduct

could also be monitored and checked at all times. In view of this, the accommodation of centre officers and preachers should not be separate from that of their pilgrims.

Medical teams and Welfare officers by virtue of their training are known to be carry, humanitarian and sympathetic. They are therefore requested to double their effort to ensure that they perform their duties effectively with minimum complaint from the pilgrims thus observing "adaidaita Sahu".

Experience showed that most pilgrims were left in darkness as regards when and where an exercise is taking place. For example, pilgrims who were taken to Madina have every right to know how many days they are going to spend there and when they are going to be taken to Makka. While in Makka they need to know how their movement is going to be. But in most cases, pilgrims were left like prisoners.

This situation result to a lot of rumour mongering among pilgrims, confusion

insubordination and lack of control by the Hajj Officials. Communication is very vital as such there is need for proper flow of genuine information.

The role of centre officers could not be over emphasised on this aspect because they are the pilgrims gate way in and out of the holy land.

A lot of females and aged pilgrims suffered on the day pilgrims are going to be transported to Arafat ground from Muna and from Arafat to Muzdalifa in trying to struggle to catch the bus. Many pilgrims got wounded during this struggle. Enough buses should be booked throughout the period of the Hajj exercise. There is need for the officials to coordinate this trip as well to ensure that every pilgrim joins the right bus allocated for him/her on the Boarding pass without sweat.

Success has never been achieved in one day and whatever other muslims countries can do as per Hajj exercise I believe Kano State Government under the leadership of Pious and

strong muslims can also do, thus, the renting of the Estate which no black race has ever rented is a clear testimony that a new focus was given to the whole exercise.

In view of this, I wish to call on the Hajj Officials especially the Commissioner of Information and the Chairman taskforce to observe all the problems areas and ensure that a face lift was done to them.

Muslims irrespective of language or race are the same before the eye of Almighty Allah, it is therefore necessary for the preachers, while in holy land, to preach to the fellow pilgrims to emulate the good conduct of their fellow muslims from other countries.

Human behaviour is not dynamic as some people assumed Kano people to be. It is absolutely wrong to conclude that Kano People are difficult to control, the problem is with the approach and the ways implementers present themselves.

While hoping for a huge success on the whole exercise we also called on the officials and pilgrims to carry "Adaidaita Sahu" to the holy land and pray for Kano State and Nigeria during their dawaf.

Hauwa M. Abdullah is Senior Public Relations Officer of Amina Kano Teaching Hospital Kano.

Is Shekarau carrying vengeance too far?

By Abubakar Babba

Since the release of the white paper on the commission of inquiry into the financial activities of the Kwankwaso administration headed by Justice Badamasi, Kwankwaso has been fighting back ferociously like a cornered rat. Using both the print and the electronic media directly and through associates and using sponsored articles like the one by one Muhammadu Buba of Yola in Adamawa state.

It seems to me that Kwankwaso has not learnt any lesson. He still has no regard for the intelligence of the people of Kano. He failed to grasp the simple fact that the incredible amount of propoganda about his supposed achievement couldn't win him re-election because the people of Kano know an achiever if they see one. And Kwankwaso is far from being that in spite of claims to over 600 projects and in spite of programmes like *Aiki sai mai shi*.

Mallam Buba, if at all you exist, you must be a person who only come to Kano on visits and therefore do not understand what makes the kanawa tick politically. The KSIP building, a white elephant project if ever there is one, was started by Rimi's government and there after abandoned. The then Kwankwaso administration

at first wisely tried to sell it, they advertised for buyers but perhaps because they could not find any they reverted to the folly of completing it. The building is still uncompleted but Kwankwaso commissioned it all the same. He lied to the Emir and the people of Kano when he commissioned an uncompleted building. My evidence is the statement of the consultant architect Malam Adamu Tahir of multi systems, appearing before the Engineer Khalid committee of inquiry. Infact the contractor is owed a lot of money and has now handed over the building.

One of Kwankwaso's greatest mistake and failures is in the supply of potable pipe borne water. Kwankwaso, a water engineer with an alleged PhD in water engineering failed to significantly improve the supply of potable, water to Kano metropolis. The ductile iron pipes that he run from Tamburawa to Kundila estate round about has two basic problems. The first is that there is simply no water to fill the large pipe. Tamburawa water works is too small and too inadequate to supply water to fill even 500m pipe, let alone 1000mm pipes. What should have been done was to boost the intake of raw water and production of treated water then the

laying of the pipes. But Kwankwaso chose to put the cart before the horse. What an engineer?

The second problem is that the pipes were laid very badly, so bad you don't need to be a civil or water engineer to see the problem. The joints were an inverted "V" the levels taken, if taken at all, were wrong and many other technical deficiencies. Both the first and the second problem are now being addressed by the present administration. By the way, the old contractor was asking for extra N200 million naira to complete the bad job. To remove the pipes and relay them correctly at N64 million is a great saving any day. We know one sure thing in Kano and that is where there was no water in Kano metropolis before Engineer Dr. Kwankwaso became governor there was still no water when he left. What an achieving engineer.

The Kano lodge in Abuja or Amino Kano House is another white elephant project. The project was and is unnecessary for at least two reason! The first being, we have an existing lodge in Abuja where our chief executives stay, it is not correct that they stay in hotels. The second being there is an abandoned liaison office building whose completion would have fetched the state government money from rentals of the rooms. And

again let me say that the commissioning of the lodge was fake. Julius Berger Plc had not completed and handed over the project. Infact at that time the state owed them over N300 million naira, the building is still in their possession.

To criticize Mallam Shekarau because he allowed a peaceful demonstration in a supposed democracy is ironic, even if that demonstration turns violent. It there is a failure by anyone it is that of the police not the governor. If the police have done their duty there would have been no problem at all. But the federal police have a history of failing to control crowds.

Perhaps they don't teach them crowd control in the police, academy. But sometimes even bad things have their uses, for if that violence in Kano have not taken place the killing in plateau would have continued unabated, the president would not have declared a state of emergency in Platem state, he would have continued to turn a blind eye and it would have perhaps spread to other state with similar population mix and you Mallam Buba would have perhaps by now be a roasted chicken on in your case roasted fish.

As for the polio vaccine

controversy, I believe Mallam Shekarau has handled it as well as can be, considering the tremendous national and international pressure, threat and blackmail. But let me say this "In Ba Rami? Me Ya Karwo Ba Rami?" if the contamination is not harmful why is it there. After all at first the federal government denied there is any contamination and later accepted there is, but that it is not harmful.

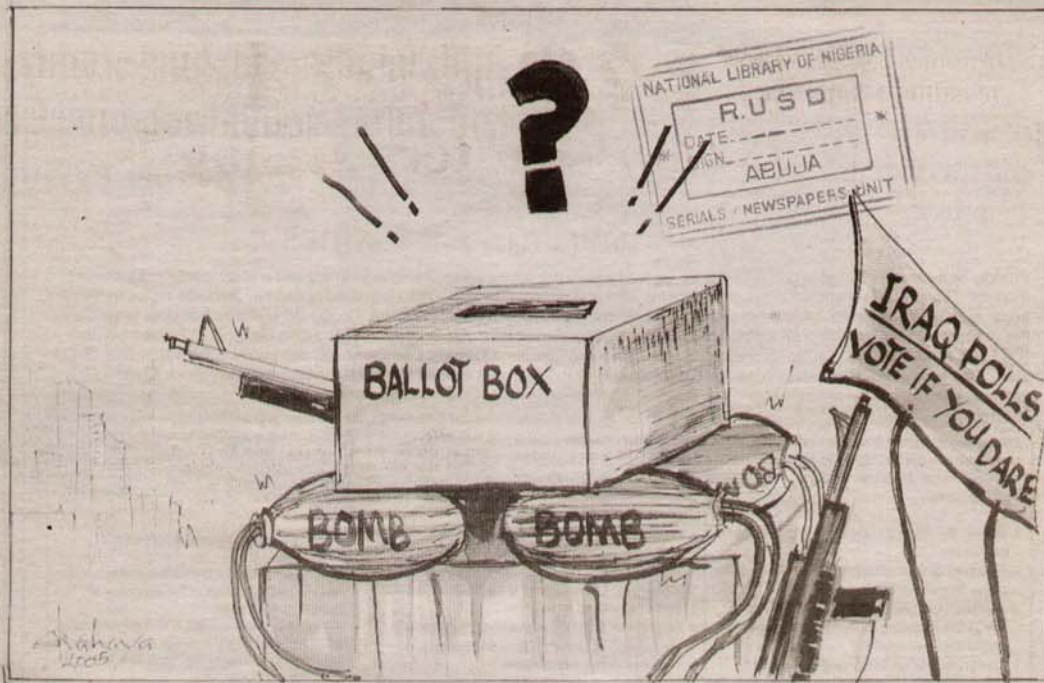
Mallam Buba, may be stealing public funds in Adamawa state is nothing and that is why you are

where you are today, but here in Kano it is a big deal. And we insist Kwankwaso must explain satisfactorily, legally and financially what he did and why he did what he did with our almost one billion naira.

Considering the fact that Ex-governor Kwankwaso has him self set up "commissions of inquiry" during his time, we in Kano found it amazing that he refused to appear before the Badamasi commission to defend and clear his name.

Abubakar Babba writes from No. 1 Ahmed Talib street, NNDC quarters Shurada, Kano.

"The ductile iron pipes that he run from Tamburawa to Kundila estate round about has two basic problems. The first is that there is simply no water to fill the large pipe. Tamburawa water works is too small and too inadequate to supply water to fill even 500m pipe, let alone 1000mm pipes. What should have been done was to boost the intake of raw water and production of treated water then the laying of the pipes. But Kwankwaso chose to put the cart before the horse. What an engineer"



YOUR LETTERS

Mr. President, don't forget Feb, 10 2005

Mr President Sir, I would like to remind and beseech you not to forget to declare February 10th as a public holiday. If you do that, you will be extending the same courtesy to your Muslim subjects whose first day of the year (01 Muharram 1426 AH) falls on that day of February 10th 2005. Again, if you do that the benefit will not stop with your Muslim subjects, rich or poor alone; your Christian subjects too will benefit from it.

Perhaps some of your advisors will tell you to ignore my entreaty to you because as they are likely to tell you this is an emotional or sentimental request. They are both right and wrong. They are right in saying it is an emotional or sentimental request, but Sir, any decision not to declare 2nd January also has emotional and sentimental implications. For this reason anyone who says my request should be disregarded is wrong, unless, and until that person can show that your decision to declare 2nd January 2005 public holiday is not emotional or sentimental.

Just to clear the air, I am not against you declaring 2nd January 2005 or any other day of the year as public holiday. After all I once lived in a foreign country where they have so many

mondays in the summer declared as bank holidays, the basis of which I never got to fathom. My argument is that whatever you do should be fair and just and seen to be so. You are supposed to cater for all your subjects.

I am making this observation because I know it is within your power to do so, but that is not the only grudge I have against public holidays in this country. However, I will reserve such my grudges until the time of the national conference (sovereign or otherwise). But as a pointer, my son who is in his 6th year in a Federal secondary school has been home for *Eid-el-Kabir* only once, and he has never been home for *Eid-el-Fitr* even once since he started attending the school. Yet he has always been home for *Easter* and *Christmas*, occasions that are only peripherally significant to him.

In the meantime Sir, please do not forget to declare February 10th as a public holiday. Incidentally, I looked at this year's calendar and noticed that Christmas and 2006 New Year's first day fell on Saturday, just like the preceding year's. We hope you will be in the right mood to repeat the generosity.

B.D Dodo, Abuja
(bdodo@hotmail.com)

Anambra as PDP's nightmare

As a concerned citizen of Nigeria, I feel like crying, watching the ruling party wobbling and fumbling with our democracy. The political crisis in Anambra State proves that PDP is in disarray. I wonder why the ruling party is watching happily while Chris Uba turns Anambra State

into a gangsters' paradise. Does this so-called godfather of Anambra state politics think he can become the Governor of the state if Dr. Ngige, is removed from office? Or why didn't this power-thirsty moneybag contest the guber election in 2003 in the first place if he thought really he was

popular in Anambra? For God sake, what will this ambitious multimillionaire gain if he ruins Anambra completely? Perhaps, if he becomes the governor or Sole Administrator, as he seems to desperately want, would he rule dead bodies or ruins? I think he should wait for his own time, when another guber election in 2007, would be rigged.

He should calm his veins as he surely knows the details of how political robbery is being done by the PDP. The basic fact is that PDP, as the ruling party, can no longer maintain law and order. So, Nigeria has become a lawless nation-state, where constituted authority, legalizes all sorts of immoralities, which the leadership of PDP shamelessly called "family affairs".

For instance, the revelations by President Olusegun Obasanjo that Doctor Chris Ngige admitted that he did not win the elections had lent credence to the belief by the opposition parties that the so-called landslide victory by the PDP was a ruse.

In fact, it is very

disheartening to know that the ruling party has been encouraging and participating in political robbery and illegality. And that explains the kind of leadership Nigeria has?

However, the ruling party has a lot of things to do in order to redeem its image. In the case of Anambra state, those groups of renegades, and thugs should be brought to book in order to serve as deterrent to others. Then, the stolen mandate of the state should be given back to the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) candidate, Mr. Peter Obi, who won the guber election freely and fairly.

In addition, other stolen mandates should be handed back to the right candidate especially the nullified PDP elections. Those still occupying illegal offices should vacate their seats. Yes, PDP must learn the truth of history.

Finally, the leadership of PDP should remember that Nigeria, being watched internationally, needs a political system built on the values of justice, fairness and fairplay.

Adeola Victor, Wuse Abuja.

Ogbeh, why resign so soon?....

Kindly give me a space to express my unhappiness over the resignation of Chief Audu Ogbeh as the Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

I expected him to remain and tell the country the truth about their dirty

deals in the 2003 elections; we know that the PDP is ruling the country on stolen mandate.

God thank you and we are expecting more to happen in the party.

Atiku Abdul - Azeez
Aatiku@Dantata.Com

Gov Goje and projects in Gombe

I read with dismay, a letter written by one Bashir Abdullahi in your letter page of Friday January 7, 2005 concerning roads in Gombe state. The letter, to say the least is probably a sponsored write-up from the opposing camp.

Any visitor to Gombe in the last one year will notice a lot of physical development in the state capital and its environs. According to Bashir, "the roads which were constructed only a year ago had started to rupture."

All these are campaign of calumny against the progressive government of

Danjuma Goje. Within this period the peoples governor has established a university and presently he is working towards construction of airport for the state.

Before long, I learnt, a NNPC mega station will be constructed in the state to alleviate the sufferings of motorists.

My advice to people like Bashir is to support Goje to succeed in the onerous task to develop the state rather than cast aspersions on his efforts.

Malam Inuwa
Abubakar Chairman
National Unity Forum No. 2, Asaba road, Kakuri, Kaduna.

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



UNIQUE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Proudly Nigerian, the Dangote Group is one of the leading private sector conglomerates in Africa and a clear leader in its chosen markets. The Group is engaged in the manufacture, sale and distribution of food and non-food consumer products including cement, sugar, salt, flour, pasta and related products that command a substantial brand premium. Continued significant organic growth and the challenge of implementing an ambitious strategy have created unique career opportunities within Dangote Industries Limited (DIL) and associated companies- Savannah Sugar Company, Obajanna Cement Company; and especially in the Flour, Salt, Sugar and Pasta operations, all of which have been restructured as independent entities to be listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

Ref: DIL 001 - Financial Controller	Ref: DIL 002 - Finance Managers	Ref: DIL 003 - Financial Accountants
<p>This challenging role makes a significant contribution to the strategic direction and management of divisional financial assets and encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving the financial efficiency of divisional operations • Developing, implementing and updating SOPs of the finance function • Development and ownership of key financial processes including budgeting, management and financial accounting • Designing and implementing systems to ensure compliance with tax and other financial regulatory provisions • Maintenance of sound financial controls • Overseeing proper capturing of financial transactions • Collating and consolidating trial balance and financial reports • Preparation of comprehensive, proactive and timely financial and management information, including tax, cash flow and statutory accounts • Liaising with the internal & external auditors • Managing key banking relationships to facilitate divisional operations <p>The Person Able to deliver within tight timeframes, cope well with pressure and solve complex financial problems. Must have at least a first degree and a professional accounting qualification; a minimum of 10 years post qualification experience of which 5 must have been at management level. A post graduate degree will be an advantage. The right person must be familiar with ERP-type financial applications, self-motivated, diligent, and enthusiastic with a strong business orientation. The person must demonstrate strong analytical skills, leadership ability and the ability to communicate effectively.</p>	<p>This senior management role makes critical contributions to the achievement of business plans through advice and implementation of financial policies and systems. The role encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of sound accounting framework and ensuring compliance with statutory provisions • Provision of prompt and up-to-date accounting information on business transactions to facilitate proper recording and control • Preparation of financial and accounting reports • Preparation of financial plans and budgets to support business operations • Preparation of useful, meaningful accurate and timely financial information • Review of periodic returns submitted by the plants with a view of generating exceptions report for clearance • Provision of accurate and timely monthly reports of the operating performance of the division to enable generation of consolidated group performance report. • Monitoring to ensure funds from all sales points reach treasury operations within specified timelines • Overseeing periodic closure of the books • Overseeing general system and procedures at the division • Liaising with Treasury operations on funding of operations • Preparation of periodic performance reports <p>The Person The right person must have at least a first degree with a professional certificate ACA, ACCA and minimum of 8 years relevant and 4 years management experience. A post graduate degree will be an added advantage. The person must be Able to solve complex financial problems, competent in the use of computers, self-motivated, analytical and with a strong business orientation, leadership ability and communication skills.</p>	<p>The focus of this role is to promote sound financial management and accounting practices to ensure accurate recording and reporting of financial transactions. The primary responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection and consolidation of financial information • Liaising with internal & external auditors • Review and validation of the accuracy of general ledger codes • Assisting in the preparation of comprehensive, proactive and timely financial and management information, including tax, cash flow and statutory accounts • Supervising the maintenance of the fixed asset register <p>The Person The job demands good business knowledge and the ability to diagnose and solve financial problems. The ideal person must have at least a first degree with a professional certificate ACA, ACCA and minimum of 6 years relevant experience of which 3 years must have been at management level; A post graduate degree will be an added advantage. The person must also be competent in the use of computers to enhance work performance, self-motivated, diligent, and enthusiastic with a strong business orientation. The person must demonstrate strong analytical skills, leadership ability and the ability to communicate effectively.</p>

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdrive@ng.dwc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
Please note that only short listed candidates will be contacted.

News

Doctors' strike: NLC gives Health Minister ultimatum over remittances

Following the on-going strike by the National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) over the N7.994 billion outstanding emoluments of workers recently approved by President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) has urged the Minister of Health, Prof. Eytayo Lambo, to ensure that the necessary remittances to the account of the health institutions are effected within 48 hours as to pave way for the on-going strike.

In a letter signed by the NLC President, Comrade Adams Aliyu Oshiomole and addressed to the Minister of Health, Prof. Eytayo Lambo, said that the nation can harvest the progress, if the process for the release of the funds and payments to the affected workers is fast-tracked.

The congress said it remains a matter for grace regret that the authorities

By **Abdullahi Deji Ajikobi, Ijaern (Abuja)**

allowed the nation's health institution to be grounded by strike for six weeks on an issue that was patently avoidable.

According to the congress, the incidence of shortfalls in the personnel budget of agencies of the Ministry of Health reflects an inexcusable lack of fiscal planning on account of which the nation is losing thousands of citizens to avoidable deaths.

The congress told the ministry that it also reflects a cavalier attitude to the welfare of medical workers and insensitivity to the plight of millions of ordinary Nigerians for whom public health institutions remain their only hope.

The congress said the leadership of the ministry needs to do more in furtherance of its mandate of competent overseeing the health care delivery system.

BEROM ELDERS FORUM State council of chiefs chairmanship tops agenda

The chairmanship of the Plateau State council of chiefs and land issues topped the meeting between the Plateau State Governor, Chief Joshua Dariye and the Berom Elders Forum in Jos yesterday.

While the Berom elders want to think the governor for returning the chairmanship of the state council of chief to them, the governor asked them to give up their lands for development projects.

The *Gbong Gwom Jos*, Da Victor Pam, had led the Berom Elders Forum (BEF) to the Government House to thank Governor Dariye for restoring the chairmanship of the Plateau State council of chief to him as the holder of the oldest classified traditional stool in the state.

The chairmanship of the state council of chiefs was passed to the *Long Gwomat* of Shendam, Hubert Shaldas II, in acting capacity in August 2003 following the death in late 2002 of the former *Gwong Gwom Jos*, Dr. Fom Bot.

Although a new *Gbong Gwom Jos*, Da Victor Pam was appointed in the chairmanship of the state traditional council remained at Shendam even throughout the period of the state of emergency which terminated on November 18, 2004, and the reinstatement of Dariye as Governor.

A few weeks after his return, Dariye paid a courtesy visit to the *Gbong Gwom Jos*, in what observers saw as the beginning of the normalisation of relationships between them.

A week after the visit, the governor invoked the provision of the council of chiefs law No. 3 of 1979 and the council of chiefs' law

urging the ministry to take urgent measures to avoid a repeat of this national tragedy.

Cash scarcity poses obstacle to Ed-el-Kabir in Zamfara

Non-availability of funds is posing a serious threat to Ed-el-Kabir celebrations in Zamfara State.

Investigation carried out by *Daily Trust* in some market across the state had shown that due to lack of sufficient fund, many people may not be able to make such sacrifice as they could not afford the money, despite the fact that prices have come down by almost 80 per cent.

According to the investigation, a ram sold at N20, 000 the previous year (2004) is now between N10, 000 and N12, 000.

The investigation further revealed that coupled with late payment of the December salary (2004), and the subsequent deduction of huge amount of money out of the salary for the settlement of both ZAPA and ZACAREP loans, most of the civil servants were forced to go into another loan individually in order to survive. "Although the rams are cheap, but I don't think we can afford it because perhaps we will not get salary before Sallah", said one of the civil servants.

Also speaking to our correspondent, another civil servant narrated that the prices of the animals must come down as according to him, all other businesses, not only that of animals, "solely relied on us the workers, so whenever they realise that there is no money, they know that we have not being paid", he explained in anonymity.

In Maradum, Bakura and Shinkafi, the problem is the same as no fewer than 2 to 3 hundred people could be

From **Jubril Dauda, Regional Editor (Jos)**

(Amendment) Edict No. 6 of 1989 and reconstituted the Plateau State council of chiefs, restoring the chairmanship of the council to the *Gbong Gwom Jos*, with 13 other members.

In an address read on behalf of the *Gbong Gwom Jos*, the Chairman of the BEF, Da Yusufu Dawang, commended the governor for the restoration of the chairmanship of the council of chiefs to the *Gbong Gwom Jos*, while the *Gbong Gwom Jos* himself pledged the support and loyalty of his people to the government.

Kwara to construct N128m abattoir

The Kwara State government has approved construction of a modern abattoir in Ilorin at a cost of N128m.

The Commissioner for Agriculture, Alhaji Ja'afar Bisi Ibrahim, who disclosed this at a joint executive council press briefing, held at the Government House, Ilorin, said the construction of the modern abattoir in conjunction with Ilorin east local council would be completed in nine months.

Similarly, the government also approved the institution of a N5 million trust fund for the family of Late Michael Agbolola, the former accountant of the State Primary Education Board (SPEB) brutally murdered by hired killers last year.

According to the Commissioner for Information, Alhaji Raheem Adedoyin, another sum of N39,733million has also been approved for the

The federal government yesterday in Abuja released the results of bids for the assets of the liquidated Federal Urban Mass Transit Agency (FUMTA).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that out of the 35 investors that bid for various categories of assets, only 29 participated at the bidding session held on Tuesday in Abuja.

Announcing the winners, the Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Transport, Alhaji Nu'uman Danbatta, said that Bravos Nig. Ltd., Kaduna, won the bid for Mercedes Benz bus model 0365 spare parts at N7 million.

The same company emerged winner for Russian bus spare parts for N2.5 million and Bedford spare parts at N2 million.

Danbatta said the company was adjudged overall winner in all the categories having bid other companies, organisations and individuals that took part in the exercise.

He also said that Bayo Tayo Enterprises, Abuja, won the bid for Nissan Civilian bus spare parts at N7.5 million while A.I. Hummayat Nig. Ltd., Karu, Abuja, clinched a ferry "M.F. Orashi" for N950,000.

He, however, said that "the bids for the Nissan bus and the ferry were only accepted, but will still be subject to further assessment and

FUMTA assets: FG releases bids results

considerations by the bid's technical committee."

The permanent secretary further said that bids for jetties and an undeveloped land in Abuja have been put on hold pending the outcome of a committee set up by the presidency to tackle the matter.

Also, results of other Mercedes Benz bus models spare parts, workshop tools, bus terminals, residential houses, furniture and fittings were not announced.

Sources close to the ministry and the consultants said that more technical work and assessments of the bids needed to be carried out before the winners would emerge.

NAN reports that the bidding exercise was witnessed by the interested investors, ministry officials and the media.

Among the items bid were ferries, boats, various spare parts of Mercedes-Benz buses, Russian and Nissan buses, workshop tools, bus terminals, landed property in some parts of the country, furniture and fittings and undeveloped plots of land in Abuja.

NAN recalls that FUMTA, which was liquidated about two years ago, left behind a debt of N3.6 billion.



PUBLIC NOTICE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT (FMENV)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) OF THE PROPOSED QUARRY PROJECT FOR THE OBJANA CEMENT COMPLEX BY DANGOTE NIGERIA LIMITED

In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act No. 86 of 1992, which makes it Mandatory for proponents of all new major development activities to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment of proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces a twenty-one (21) working days Public Notice for information and comments on the draft EIA Report submitted by Dangote Nigeria Limited.

VENUES OF DISPLAY

- i) Kogi State Ministry of Environment, Lokoja, Kogi
- ii) Lokoja Local Government Area Headquarters, Lokoja, Kogi State
- iii) Federal Ministry of Environment Office, Lokoja, Kogi State
- iv) FMENV Liaison Office, Games Village, Surulere, Lagos.
- v) FMENV Office, Plot 444, Aguiyi-Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja

Project Description/Location

The proposed project, located near Oyo-Iwa Village, will involve exploitation of abundant limestone deposit required for the Objana Cement Factory located about 9 kilometres from the quarry.

DURATION OF DISPLAY

Date: 12th January - 10th February, 2005
Time: 8:00a.m. - 4:00p.m

ALL COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT ON OR BEFORE 10TH FEBRUARY, 2005.

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Trust International

Tsunami: Indonesia wants foreign troops out

Indonesia told foreign troops helping tsunami victims to get out of the country soon and defended tough new restrictions on aid workers, while rich nations prepared to freeze Jakarta's debt repayments.

Vice President Yusuf Kalla said foreign troops should leave tsunami-hit Aceh province on Sumatra island as soon as they finish their relief mission, staying no longer than three months.

"Three months are enough. In fact, the sooner the better," Kalla was quoted by the state Antara news agency as saying.

The armed forces of Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States have all rushed task forces to Aceh in the wake of the December 26 disaster which killed at least 106,500 Indonesians out of a total of more than 159,000 deaths in Asia.

United Nations officials struggling to coordinate a massive relief operation have welcomed their participation, particularly to deliver aid to isolated coastlines accessible only by sea or air.

But their presence in Indonesian territory has been a sensitive issue for the world's largest Muslim-populated nation which has traditionally kept foreign military, particularly the United States and Australia, at arm's length.

The vice president said Aceh in the near future would need foreign medical workers and engineers instead of military assistance.

"Foreign troops are no longer needed," he said.

Kalla's comments came after the country's military imposed sweeping new restrictions on foreign relief workers operating in Aceh, claiming they were in danger from rebels waging a long-running separatist war.

Group accuses Nepal's rebels of rights abuses

The London-based human rights group, Amnesty International, has accused Maoist rebels in Nepal of committing serious human rights abuses.

It has urged the rebel leadership to investigate such abuses and take action against the guilty.

In an open letter Amnesty International said it had been receiving reports of abuses by the Maoists.

It alleged the rebels - who have consistently denied abuses - have been engaged in killings and abductions.

In an open letter to Maoist leader Prachanda, the director of Amnesty International's Asia Pacific region, Ingrid Massague, urged him to guarantee the safety of all civilians and unconditionally release those who had been abducted.

She said that many of those targeted had criticised Maoist policies.

But an Indonesian doctor whose ordeal at the hands of rebels has been used to justify the government restrictions disputed the official version of the incident.

Mulia Hasyimi, the head of Aceh's health office, confirmed he was seized by the rebels, but told AFP he was not shot and his time in captivity lasted less than an hour, contrary to government claims he was reportedly held for several days and shot.

Analysts have said they believe the government move was an attempt to reassert the military's control over the province and an accusation the government has denied.

Senior officials said foreign journalists would also be confined to major towns in the province, closing a post-disaster window of press freedom in the region which was locked down almost two years ago during a military offensive.

Bin Laden worries Iraqi insurgents

Osama bin Laden's Web site told foreign militants to stop coming. The group, which defines itself as both nationalist and Islamic, said it needed money, not more recruits.

"We have concrete information that a sharp division is now broiling between Iraqis waging a nationalist war and foreign Arabs spurred by militant Islam," said Mouwafak al-Rubaie, the Iraqi government's national security adviser.

"They are more divided than ever," Al-Rubaie said one reason was the perception among Iraqis that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian militant whom bin Laden endorsed as his deputy in Iraq, was of little help during the American onslaught on the Iraqi insurgent hotbed of Fallujah in November.

"Al-Zarqawi and his group fled Fallujah and let the Iraqis face the attack alone," al-Rubaie said in a telephone interview.

Some Iraqis may have drawn parallels between the debacle in Fallujah and what happened in Afghanistan after it became bin Laden's headquarters.

Since Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown by the American-led war in April 2003, insurgents including foreign fighters have waged a guerrilla war aimed at forcing out U.S. troops. The Iraqi interim government says it has detained more than 300 foreign fighters, among them men from almost every Arab country.

Some streamed into Iraq shortly before the war, invited by a desperate Saddam. Muslim militants are believed to be behind some of the deadliest attacks against U.S. and Iraqi forces.

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Osama bin Laden

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Israel launches strikes on Gaza

Israeli air forces launched two missile strikes on the south of Gaza City early yesterday, while army tanks stormed the city, residents and Palestinian security officials said.

It hasn't been made clear yet what was Israel's target this time.

Also there are no reported deaths or casualties.

Israeli military officials said on condition of anonymity that a "limited operation" was underway, including the air force and tanks, adding that officials said that the operation started with warplane firing warning shots into an open area. Army officials didn't explain what the raid's target was.

After firing the missiles, the helicopters struck the area with machine gun fire, and Israeli tanks entered Gaza City, city residents said.

Palestinian fighters engaged in gunbattles with the occupation forces, who entered the Ajlun neighborhood of the city, witnesses said.

In previous raids, Israeli air force used to fire at Palestinian fighters, or at buildings they said are being used as weapons factories.

Yesterday strike is the first Israeli military operation since Mahmoud Abbas was elected as the Palestinian President on Sunday.

In another development, Islamic militants detonated a bomb near a Jewish settlement in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, killing an Israeli civilian and wounding three soldiers, the Israeli army said.

Islamic Jihad, a violent group that has carried out dozens of attacks on Israeli targets, claimed responsibility for the attack. It said two of

its members were killed in an ensuing gunbattle.

Israeli military officials said the explosion went off near a military vehicle near the settlement of Morag. They said one civilian in the area was killed in the blast and three soldiers were wounded.

The army had no further information, saying an investigation was continuing.

On Tuesday, the Israeli occupation forces advanced into the northern Gaza Strip and shut down Salahuddin's main road which connects northern to southern Gaza.

Israeli troops backed by a military tank escorted two tractors into that road, blocking the Palestinian traffic.

According to local sources, the tractors were leveling vast areas and wreaking havoc in the vicinity of the industrial area near Beit Hanun (Erez) crossing.

Witnesses said that Israeli soldiers were searching any citizen who tries to cross the Matahen and Abu Hawli roadblocks.

Paris Club discusses Tsunami relief

Paris Club finance officials who represent rich creditor nations yesterday went into discussion on a possible freeze on debts owed by tsunami-affected countries.

The proposal already has the support of several leading members, but questions remain over the terms of any deal on yesterday due to the large sums owed.

Indonesian debt alone is expected to generate more than \$3 billion in principal repayments to the Paris Club in 2005, and the tsunami-stricken region should have generated a total of \$5 billion.

Some development lobby groups, including UK aid agencies Oxfam and Action Aid, have called on the Paris Club nations to write off the debt altogether.

However, analysts suggested that Paris Club members may propose the concerned governments use their own financial resources to respond to the disaster rather than having to make debt payments.

The G7 of leading industrialised nations, currently chaired by UK finance minister Gordon Brown, backed a freeze on repayments on Friday.

Indonesia's foreign minister has already cautiously welcomed any promise of a debt moratorium, but said his country needed donations rather than new loans.

Foreign Minister Hasan Wirajuda added on Monday that Indonesia expected Western creditors to allow it to freeze up to \$3.2 billion in debt repayments through 2006 to deal with the disaster.

That would amount to about one third of its \$8.8 billion in scheduled repayments over the next two years to the group of sovereign creditors.

US denies debate on Syrian incursion

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld dismissed as "nonsense" a report that the Pentagon is intensively debating a so-called "Salvador option," in which US Special Forces or Iraqi squads would pursue insurgents into Syria.

Rumsfeld said US Special Forces are not going into Syria in pursuit of insurgents. When asked whether that had been considered, he said: "Why would I even talk about something like that?"

The US defence chief said he had not seen the story published by Newsweek magazine, only reporting about it.

"But everyone's talking about it, and it's nonsense," he told reporters, after raising it himself at a press conference with visiting Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov.

"The reality is that the responsibility of the commanders there and the coalition and the Iraqi government is to see that the Iraqis are trained up to provide security

for that country," he said. "And somebody has been reading too many spy novels and went off in flights of fancy, which I hope have been put to rest," he said.

Newsweek said the Pentagon, under pressure in Iraq, was intensively debating an option to use special squads to target insurgents much the way "death squads" were used to kill rebel leaders in El Salvador during the early 1980s.

It said one Pentagon proposal would send US Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border into Syria.

The report said it was unclear whether this would be a policy of assassination or so-called "snatch" operations to capture insurgents and send them to special interrogation facilities.

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Odd World

Rats can differentiate languages - Study

Rats can use the rhythm of human language to tell the difference between Dutch and Japanese, researchers in Spain reported on Sunday.

Their study suggests that animals, especially mammals, evolved some of the skills underlying the use and development of language long before language itself ever evolved, the researchers said.

It is the first time an animal other than a human or monkey has been shown to have this skill.

"These findings have remarkable parallels with data from human adults, human newborns, and cotton-top tamarins," the researchers wrote in their report, published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes*, which is published by the American Psychological Association.

For their study neuroscientists Juan Toro and colleagues at Barcelona's Scientific Park tested 64 adult male rats.

They used Dutch and Japanese because these languages were used in earlier, similar tests, and because they are very different from one another in use of words, rhythm and structure.

The rats were trained to respond to either Dutch or Japanese using food as a reward.

Then they were separated into four groups — one that heard each language spoken by a native, one that heard synthesized speech, one that heard sentences read in either language by different speakers and a fourth that heard the languages played backwards.

Rats rewarded for responding to Japanese did not respond to Dutch and rats trained to recognize Dutch did not respond to the spoken Japanese.

The rats could not tell apart Japanese or Dutch played backwards.

"Results showed that rats could discriminate natural sentences when uttered by a single speaker and not when uttered by different ones, nor could they distinguish the languages when spoken by different people," the researchers wrote.

Human newborns have the same problem, although tamarins can easily tell languages apart even when spoken by different people, the researchers said.

"It was striking to find that rats can track certain information that seems to be so important in language development in humans," Toro said in a statement.

The study shows "which abilities that humans use for language are shared with other animals, and which are uniquely human. It also suggests what sort of evolutionary precursors language might have," he added.

Teenagers bomb school from aircraft

Two teenagers were arrested on charges they bombed their high school with a bucket of eggs from a low-flying airplane.

During the incident last June, panicked officials evacuated about two dozen people from the top floors of a hotel when the two-seat plane circled low over downtown Gettysburg, then disappeared.

"You hate to think what might have happened — even unintentionally," prosecutor Brian Sinnett said. He called the prank "one of the most bizarre cases that I've been involved in."

The two Gettysburg High students were arrested Friday on charges including risking a catastrophic and reckless endangerment. They were caught after telling others about the incident, authorities said. They were not identified because they are juveniles.

During the incident, police tried to signal the plane using flashlights. Fog and darkness prevented authorities from reading the tail number.

The airplane, which belonged to the father of the boy at the controls, apparently landed at a private family airstrip. The boy does not have a pilot's license, Sinnett said.

Posh toilets on sale for \$13M

Swiss authorities are bringing the city's public conveniences up to scratch — at a cost of \$13 million for just 35 new toilets, *Swiss daily Le Matin* reported Tuesday.

Each sparkling new facility is designed by a different architect at a cost of \$313,000 — about the same as a 1-bedroom, city centre apartment.

Three of the toilets have already been installed. "Inside they are functional and equipped to a high sanitary standard," the city council said on its Web site. "On the outside, each public toilet is different and adapted to its surroundings."

Patrons will be charged 50 centimes (US\$0.42; euro0.32) for each visit to a self-cleaning toilet, which is accompanied by music.

But councillor Alain Dupraz said the construction costs were justified, telling *Le Matin*: "Some (older) toilets are vile and revolting."



Kadhafi of Libya

I could accept Bush's policies - Kadhafi

Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi said he could accept the policies of US President George W. Bush but for the "Iraqi disaster", in an interview with Greek television broadcast.

"If the catastrophic disaster in Iraq had not occurred, we could say that he (Bush) is a man with acceptable policies," Kadhafi told the private Star channel.

He also condemned British Prime Minister Tony Blair for "finding himself mixed up in Iraq."

"Otherwise, I would like him a lot," as "he is left, optimistic and dynamic," said the Libyan leader.

Kadhafi said he had also warned to French President Jacques Chirac, who visited Tripoli in November. "I have changed my opinion (of him) after our meeting. I found him very good, courteous, modest, and cooperative. I liked him a lot."

The Libyan leader was interviewed by Dimitra "Mimi" Liani-Papandrou, the widow of Greek former Prime Minister Andrea Papandrou. The two men had close relations in the 1980s.

Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi also revealed that there were no prisoners of conscience in the country and that he was open to any calls for an international investigation.

"Those who accuse us of holding prisoners of conscience are wrong. Those (countries) in the world that wish to come and check, may come," he told the Libyan General Peoples Congress, or parliament in Syrte.

"We are holding only heretics, those who use religion to foment coups d'etat and attack societies and the entire world," he added, a reference to Islamic extremists.

In a report published in April 2004, rights group Amnesty International reported that the Libyan authorities had released

Darfur fighting rages despite peace deal - UN

More police, human rights monitors and African Union peace-keepers are urgently needed in Sudan's western Darfur region where fighting rages on despite a peace accord ending a separate conflict in southern Sudan, a senior U.N. official said on Tuesday.

Jan Pronk, the special U.N. envoy for Sudan, told the U.N. Security Council arms were flooding into Darfur, violence was spreading beyond camps for the homeless, banditry was on the rise and rebels were staging attacks near oil facilities.

"We may move into a period of intense violence unless swift action is taken," Pronk said. "I do not exclude

the possibility that the signature of the agreement (on the south) will be followed in the short term by an intensification of violence in and around Darfur."

Pronk said he had asked the United Nations to send in 117 human rights observers and the African Union hoped to soon deploy 150 of a promised 800 police officers.

But more help was quickly needed and possible options included police officers from the European Union, more AU peace-keepers, and a small civilian monitoring protection team similar to one now deployed in the south, Pronk said.

U.S. Ambassador John Danforth backed Pronk's proposals.

"I am for protecting the lives of the people of Darfur. I am for doing that on a very urgent basis," he told reporters. "We must be focused on what practical steps can be taken."

About 1.7 million people are homeless and 70,000 are estimated to have died in Darfur, a region the United Nations says is one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

The conflict was sparked in 2003 when rebel groups took up arms against the government in a struggle over resources and power. Khartoum retaliated by arming nomad militias now accused of murder, rape and arson.

At the Security Council's urging, the African Union has pledged to deploy more than 3,000 troops and monitors in Darfur but to date has sent in only a third of these and says it needs more outside help to send more.

The United States, which says genocide is taking place, wants the council to increase the pressure on the parties by imposing sanctions on their leaders. But some members including Russia and China

Uganda's LRA must leave Sudan - Garang

Joseph Kony's LRA rebels must vacate southern Sudan or face the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) following the peace agreement between the SPLA and Khartoum on Sunday.

SPLA leader and first vice-president designate, Col. John Garang, said the rebels "are unwelcome in our territory."

He gave Kony 72 hours from Sunday to leave the Sudanese territory.

"They will be treated as enemies of the United Sudan. They have no business being on our territory," Garang said while answering questions from journalists in Nairobi on Friday after meeting with US secretary of state Colin Powell.

Garang said the order affected all armed groups operating in southern Sudan. President Yoweri Museveni, along with at least a dozen world leaders including Powell, witnessed the signing of the historic agreement.

"It's our responsibility to ensure that the Sudanese borders in the south are safe. This means no foreign troops will be allowed in and armed groups like the LRA will have to find another place to operate from," he said.

A peaceful settlement of the LRA war is being brokered by former minister Betty Bigombe but the progress has been slow. Museveni said the peace deal between the SPLA and Khartoum "will be good for the people of Uganda and Sudan."

UK Minister begins tour in Africa

Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown opened a week-long tour of Africa with an appeal for the developed world to back a "new Marshall Plan" to ease the continent's chronic poverty.

Brown said it was unacceptable for current conditions to continue as he visited a school in Kibera, Nairobi's largest slum, and urged a major boost in aid to education.

"It is simply not acceptable in the modern age for the rest of the world to stand by and have hundreds of millions of children not getting the chance at education," he said yesterday, outside the Olympic Primary School.

Funding for education to the tune of 10 billion dollars over the next 10 years is a key element in Brown and British Prime Minister Tony Blair's ambitious plans to use Britain's 2005 presidency of the G8 group of industrialized nations to help Africa.

"It is surely for 10 billion dollars a year, one of the best investments we could ever make both for security reasons and social, educational and economic reasons to give every child the chance at primary education," he said.

"Over the next 10 years, we provide, as developed world, the resources necessary to get the teachers, the buildings, the staffing, the

equipment, the books that are necessary — things that we take for granted in our countries that are not expensive in the long run," Brown said.

"I believe passionately that that is the way forward," he said.

Brown said last week that rich nations had a duty to address the underlying causes of poverty and suggested a plan modelled on former US secretary of state general George Marshall's blueprint to restore the European economy from the devastation of World War II.

Other components in the proposal, which ultimately seeks to double global aid to the developed world to 100 billion dollars under the International Finance Facility, include debt relief and trade benefits.

Speaking ahead of his visit, Mr Brown said that other Western countries need to back Britain's pledge to support Aids research by promising to buy thousands of doses of any workable vaccine.

Britain's Finance minister, the most powerful member of the UK Government after Premier Tony Blair, said that Aids vaccine needs to be treated not as a race between profit-making drugs companies but a shared project for the good of humanity.

Trust International "Nigeria-Ukraine business ties ripe"

Mr. Serhiy Hlinchuk is a Ukrainian and one of the pioneers of the Nigeria-Ukraine proposed chamber of commerce. He was in Ukraine recently during the orange protest over the election controversy that raged. He also monitored the election among the Ukrainians living in Nigeria. In this interview with Jibrin Abubakar of our Foreign Desk, Mr. Serhiy notes that Nigeria-Ukraine business ties is an issue whose time has come. Excerpt:

How would you describe the recent Ukrainian election?

The election in any country, though controversial, but it is an election that expressed the feelings of the Ukrainians. It was an election that showed that the Ukrainian people were ready to take their destiny in their hands. It also goes a long way to tell the world about commitment of Ukraine to the principles of democracy. Although there were disagreement and court action between the two contenders - Victor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich, but at the end there was a free and fair election that brought Yushchenko into power. We hope that the election of the new president is a dawn of a new era for Ukrainians all around the world.

Tell us about the orange revolution at the heel of the election?

The orange revolution is a protest by the people against the election fraud. People came out en masse in all their works of life to protest against the early result of the election that tend to bring back the incumbent Prime Minister into power, it was peaceful protest, people came out voluntarily wearing the orange colour and addressed the parliament on the need for a free

and fair election.

How would you describe the voting pattern at your embassy in Abuja?

Far away from Ukraine, people voted in Abuja. 85 percent of the voters voted for Ukraine's future, for Yushchenko. They understand the overwhelming political spirit in Ukraine. They yielded to the plight of their siblings in Ukraine. Yushchenko won the poll here in Abuja. In short, Ukraine Embassy in Abuja is Yushchenko's Embassy. It was also a very organised election.

Do you think President Yushchenko has the potentialities to take your country to the promised land?

First and foremost, the new president is a very organised, composed, educated and generous person. We knew him better in the recent years when he held the position of the Prime Minister of our country for a short time.

Then, he displayed qualities rare among the contemporary political elites. He carried out many projects geared towards development in Ukraine, he then gathered the best set of political team who were committed to the development of our country.

Do you think the election of Mr. Yushchenko will further



Mr. Serhiy stands amidst other orange protesters in Ukraine...recently.

enhance the economic and political ties of Ukraine around the world?

Yes given his banking background and his political orientation, he is in a better position to rule the country and stabilise its economic ties with outside the world. There is a growing belief that international investment will be encouraged in my country, his hands are clean. Leaders worldwide want to do business with leaders whose hands are clean. I also believe African countries will not be exempted in this new administration. Already, he is welcoming everybody. He wants to open up Ukraine for people around the world to do mutually benefit business.

What is the state of the Nigeria-Ukraine chambers of commerce?

It is in progress and very

soon we would come on board, we have already worked out all the modalities for the chamber of commerce and new administration. Ukraine fully supports the vision. Soon, it will come out. And when it comes out, it would promote a strong economic relations between my country and Nigeria. Already many people are asking, for instance the NIPC executive Secretary, Engineer Mustapha Bello had also asked the same question because he want to promote investment inflow into Nigeria and open up Nigeria-Ukraine business ties. All we can say for now is that the chamber of commerce is in the offing.

What kind of business do you think Nigeria businessmen can benefit from your country?

Nigeria is a very important place for business. It has a very big capacity, and large market.

We can also partner on the agriculture, irrigation, preservation like juice and many more areas. These are small scale industries that we can work together. We can also have partner on the pharmaceutical area to boost the Nigeria's medical industry. We also want to work in the gas and oil for the Nigerian people.

Though it began from this foundation, my dream is that it would translate into a political thing who; the two presidents will share the same vision and dream. Then we can get more benefit from our struggle. It would also lead to an increasing ties in the area of students exchange, doctors and in all human endeavours.

So what is your message to Nigerians.

My message for Nigerians is that I wish their commitment of the season while looking forward to a better relations.



Ukrainian President, Viktor Yushchenko.

Hajj Bonus! Hajj Bonus!! Hajj Bonus!!!

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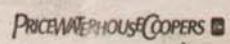
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<p>The focus of this role is to promote sound financial management and accounting practices to ensure accurate analysis, documentation and reporting of financial transactions to enable effective decision-making and management of the divisional operations. The roles encompass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of management accounts • Collation and analysis of inputs in the preparation of annual budget • Monitor and report on budget performance • Reviewing and agreeing operational expenditure against budget • Reviewing and determining the costs of the business processes, services and products • Preparation of management reports • Preparation of profitability analysis • Reconciliation of revenue accounts • Preparation of variance analysis reports • Design, maintenance and update of efficient costing system for the operations • Preparation of product cost structure • Preparation of product margin contribution analysis • Analysis of financial performance <p>The Person</p> <p>Good at solving complex financial problems, the person must have at least a first degree with a professional certificate ACA, ACCA and minimum of 6 years relevant experience of which 3 years must have been at management level. A postgraduate degree will be an added advantage. The right person must be competent in the use of computers to enhance work performance, self-motivated, diligent, and enthusiastic with a strong business orientation. The person must demonstrate strong analytical skills, leadership ability and the ability to communicate effectively.</p>	<p>This role makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the company's revenue growth objectives by applying effective credit control measures to drive sales. The company requires credit controllers to be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and monitoring implementation of credit control procedures and guidelines • Reviewing the debtors position, querying variances and advising management on appropriate actions • Assisting in the formulation of credit control policies and procedures • Monitoring and ensuring customers are operating within agreed payment terms • Recording and lodging of payment receipts and updating of the sales ledger • Preparing month-end reports • Carrying out age analysis of debtors and prioritising aged debt collection • Processing of credit application forms • Designing and preparing management reports on impacts of credit policies to senior management team <p>The Person</p> <p>Good under time pressure and able to diagnose and solve complex financial problems, the person must have at least a first degree with a professional certificate ACA, ACCA and minimum of 6 years relevant experience of which 3 years must have been at management level. A postgraduate degree will be an added advantage. The right person must be competent in the use of computers to enhance work performance, self-motivated, diligent, and enthusiastic with a strong business orientation. The person must demonstrate strong analytical skills, leadership ability and the ability to communicate effectively</p>	<p>The focus of this role is to ensure availability and adequacy of funds to finance the divisional operations. The responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection and management of cash from sales transactions • Analysis of the funding needs of the divisional operations and ensuring that operational activities and plans are funded in line with budget • Analysis and reporting on the liquidity position of the division • Allocation and disbursement of funds for business operations • Forecast of cash flow based on revenue targets and planned/approved expenditure plans • Liaising with local lending institutions to arrange funds for financing the operations of the division • Processing and documentation of foreign exchange transactions of the Group • Nomination of banks to bid for imports • Preparation of regular reports on treasury activities for management and provision of comprehensive information to support decision-making. <p>The Person</p> <p>The individual must have a first degree with a background in finance, accounting and/or business administration with a professional certificate ACA, ACCA or CPA. A postgraduate degree will be added advantage. He or she must have treasury a minimum of 6 years post qualification experience, of which 3 must be at management level within treasury /funds management function of a multi-product FMCG company or banking environment. The person of choice must demonstrate strong planning and organizational skills; excellent relationship management and negotiation ability; analytical and communication skills; and competence in the use of computers to enhance work performance.</p>

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdrive@ng.pwc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
Please note that only short listed candidates will be contacted.



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

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.
PFI - Lagos 9:00a.m.
4:30p.m.

Abuja - Kaduna 2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja 1:30p.m.

IRS Airlines

CBQ - Abuja 8:00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos 9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna 9:30a.m.

Kano - Lagos 7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano 11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos 11:00a.m.

Lagos - Abu/MM 2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM 1:45p.m.

MM - Abuja 3:45p.m.
Abuja - CBQ 5:15p.m.

Kano - Abuja 1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano 2:30p.m.

Kano - Lagos 3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano 6:00p.m.

EAS Airlines

Lagos - Abuja 8:15p.m.
11:45a.m.
5:45p.m.

Abuja - Lagos 10:15a.m.
7:15p.m.

Lagos - Jos 11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos 2:30p.m.

Dasab Airlines

Auja - Lagos 8:30 a.m.
Lagos - PHC 10:30 a.m.
PHC - Lagos 12:30 a.m.

Lagos - Kano 2:30 p.m.
Kano - Lagos 4:30 p.m.
Lagos - Abuja 6:30p.m.

ADC Airline

Lagos - Abuja 7:15 a.m.
12:45 p.m.

Abuja - Lagos 8:55 a.m.
Lagos - Calabar 11:15 a.m.
Calabar - Lagos 7:20 a.m.
PFI - Lagos 9:45 a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

OPEC shuns Iraq's request over Jan. 30 meeting

Oil ministers will meet on January 30 as scheduled despite a request from Iraq to move the date of the meeting to avoid a clash with the Iraqi elections, an Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) spokesman

said yesterday. "The meeting will go ahead as scheduled. All the ministers have been consulted and a decision has been reached," the official said. Ministers from the OPEC are expected to consider production cuts at the January 30 meeting to prevent

By Hamisu Muhammad, Reporter (Business) with Agency report

stocks building too fast and pulling down prices.

OPEC last month agreed to cut back 1 million barrels per day (bpd) of excess supply over formal quota limits from January 1 in an effort to stem a slide in world oil prices.

Crude has fallen nearly \$10, or 17 percent, from record highs hit in late October but prices have rallied in recent days, partly on the expectation of an OPEC cut. US crude was 34 cents up Wednesday at \$46.02 a barrel.

Global supply outages have helped revive prices, with more than 500,000 bpd of output in the US Gulf of Mexico and Norway's North Sea offline.

Iraq's own exports have also been stymied by continued sabotage on its northern pipeline infrastructure and power problems in the south.

Traders fear that violence leading up to or following the January 30 elections could further hamper oil flows, singled out as a prime target by al Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden.

Even so, ministers from Iran and Qatar have said that oil markets are still oversupplied.

Milder-than-normal winter temperatures in the U.S. Northeast, the biggest heating oil market in the world, have tempered

demand and eased concerns about low fuel inventories.

Oil prices rose 34 percent in 2004, driven up by rising consumption in China, India and the United States. OPEC pumped at its highest level in 25 years to meet the demand.

Okonjo-Iweala, others review plights of weak nations

Nigeria's Finance minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and her foreign affairs counterpart from Sierra Leone, Momodu Koroma are among speakers at a forum on aid to weak nations.

A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) also named former

Afghan finance minister and special adviser to the UN during the Bonn Agreement as a speaker.

The international experts according to the programme would re-examine how to provide effective development assistance to "weak and fragile states."

Those in turmoil and those on the brink of collapse will also come under focus during the forum scheduled for today and tomorrow, January 13-14, 2005.

The UNDP said while world attention was focused on the tragedy of the Tsunami, which itself hit some of the most fragile regions in Asia, it was important to proper solution to problems of other nations.

"It is critical that we do not forget the millions of citizens in other countries around the world who are struggling against problems of poverty, poor governance, insecurity

and conflict," it noted. The two-day forum on development effectiveness in fragile states, hosted by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), is convened by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the European Commission, the UNDP and the World Bank.

"Fragile states are those crippled by weak institutions and governance that fail to meet the basic needs of their populations, are home to about 500 million of the world's most disadvantaged citizens and provide fertile ground for many emerging global and regional security threats," said Paul Collier, a professor at the University of Oxford.

EU kicks off new programme for SMEs

The European Commission (EC), the executive arm of the European Union (EU), on Monday adopted a programme to assist local banks and other credit institutions, particularly in the ten new EU member states.

The programme strives to alleviate the difficulties of financing business, especially for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), according to a press release of the EC.

The funding will be channeled through international financial institutions.

These are the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the Council of Europe Bank.

The initial 6 million euros (about 7.8 million U.S. dollars) of annual funding of technical assistance and capacity-building will be multiplied by a further 30 million euros (about 39 million dollars) of the participating financial institutions' own funds.

EC vice-president, Gunter Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprises and Industry, said "I know that particularly small businesses in new member states are often struggling to obtain financing."

"Our initiative will help entrepreneurs to create and develop businesses and jobs." In Europe, more than 90 percent of enterprises are small enterprises.

Such businesses have specific financial needs and many, however, face difficulties in accessing credit.

BP targets 10% rise in daily output

British oil giant BP said its average daily production for 2004 was expected to be around 3,995 million barrels of oil equivalent, an increase of more than 10 percent compared with a year earlier.

Production was expected to be around 4,090 million barrels of oil equivalent per day during the fourth quarter, up 4.0 percent from the same period in 2003. BP said

Wednesday in a trading

update to the London Stock Exchange.

BP added that fourth-quarter group costs were expected to be around 250 million dollars (191 million euros) more than during the third quarter, in part due to higher exploration write-offs and Hurricane Ivan, which damaged oil operations in the Gulf of Mexico last September.

BP was to publish its final full-year results on February 8.

IMF faults rapid growth of Chinese economy

China has not been able to moderate its rapid economic growth despite taking a series of steps to achieve a soft landing for the world's most populous nation, says the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Last year, the Chinese authorities took a number of steps, largely in the form of administrative controls, to moderate the pace of economic growth, which has been at a blistering average of 9.7 percent a year from 1990 to 2003.

The controls included bank lending, but in late October Beijing also announced a modest rise in interest rates.

"There have not been clear signs of growth moderating to a level that can safely be viewed as sustainable," said IMF first deputy managing director Anne Krueger said Monday at a conference in Washington.

In the third quarter of last year, she said, China's growth picked up in fixed investment, industrial production and retail sales and "there continue to be bottlenecks, especially in the energy and transport sectors."

"It is therefore too soon to be confident that the much talked-about soft landing has, as yet, been successfully engineered: the jury is still out," she told the conference organised by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

But Krueger said fears of a hard landing for the giant

Chinese economy tended to be overdone, adding that its impact on neighbors was likely to be less than many have suggested. Beyond Asia, she said, a hard landing in China would have only a small impact.

"The impact for some Asian economies might be significant. But such a shock should be manageable given the fairly robust outlook for the region as a whole," she said, citing an assessment done by the IMF last year.

Krueger said the study showed that a decline in investment growth rate of 5.5 percentage points in China would lead over time to a 4.0 percentage point drop in Gross Domestic Product and a 10 percent dip in imports for the rest of Asia.

Investment in a critical benchmark for China because it accounts for over 40 percent of its GDP.

Krueger said the assessment showed that such a relatively sharp fall in Chinese imports would have a relatively small short-term impact, reducing world GDP by perhaps one third of a percent in the first year.

That figure might rise to three quarters of a percent over several years, with most of the longer-term impact in Asia and the bulk in China itself, she added. Krueger said the United States and the European Union were still important export markets for Asian economies.

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<p>This challenging role makes a significant contribution to the continuous improvement of the Group's business processes and controls and encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional reporting to Group Audit Committee and the CEO • Develop and implement the annual internal audit plan • Direction of the internal audit function, establishing operating guidelines, procedures, and performance standards • Develop and implement the internal audit plan to provide assurance that financial statements and reports comply with corporate policy; internal accounting controls are effective in promoting efficiency and protecting the assets of the company; operational policies that promote the well-being of the company are enforced; controls over the development, maintenance and operation of electronic data processing systems are sufficient to result in the process of accurate & complete data. • Providing guidance and monitoring self auditing by business units • Assessing compliance with laws, regulations and code of business practices • Coordination with the external auditors on audit scope • Confirming that risk is rigorously profiled and managed <p>The Person</p> <p>The individual we require must demonstrate the following technical exposure and personal competencies: A graduate accountant who qualified from a reputable practice firm with ACA/ACCA. A keen sense of the business drivers and risk/control factors in manufacturing enterprise are essential to the success of the individual in this position. He or she must have finance and people management experience of over 10 years in a multi-national manufacturer; analytical skills, leadership ability and the ability to communicate effectively are core competencies required and well as drive, enthusiasm and the ability to extend the boundaries of the role, excellent planning, communication, organisational and computer skills are advantageous.</p>	<p>The focus of this role is on monitoring and ensuring compliance with the business control and operating policies, guidelines and procedures. The primary responsibilities encompass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading field teams to monitor and evaluate compliance with operating guidelines, procedures, and standards of performance to ensure that internal accounting controls are effective in promoting efficiency and protecting the assets of the group. • Participating in the development and implementation of an efficient internal audit plans to provide assurance that financial statements and reports comply with corporate policy • Initiates and ensures effective implementation of approved business control policies and procedures • Reviews and updates business control policies and procedures • Plan and supervise the conduct of routine audits • Review, preparation and issue of internal audit reports • Plan and carry out special investigations • Providing guidance and monitoring self auditing by business units • Assessing compliance with laws, regulations and code of business practices • Coordination of audit coverage with the external auditor for effectiveness and efficiency • Confirming that risk is rigorously profiled and managed <p>The Person</p> <p>The ideal person must be a graduate in accounting, finance and economics or related discipline who qualified from a reputable practice firm and has ACA/ACCA. A strong grasp of business drivers and risk/control factors in manufacturing enterprise are essential requirements for this position, with finance and people management experience of over 8 years, post qualification, in a multi-national manufacturer. The demonstration of sound analytical skills, drive, attention to details, team leadership and planning ability are requisite for success in this position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and carrying out routine audit of all business operations • Conducting special investigations • Analysing issues and raising audit queries. • Preparing audit reports • Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of audit recommendations • Conducting prepayment audit of all payments • Conducting checks on business unit activities • Vouching of transactions <p>The Person</p> <p>The individual for this position must be a graduate in accounting, finance and economics or related discipline who qualified from a reputable practice firm and has ACA/ACCA. The person must demonstrate good knowledge of business drivers and risk/control factors in a manufacturing enterprise, strong analytical skills, ability to communicate effectively and competence in the use of computers to deliver work efficiently. He or she must have a minimum of 5 years post qualification experience in a multi-national manufacturer.</p>

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdrive@ng.pwc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
Please note that only short listed candidates will be contacted.

Business Trust

Briefs

NIPOST

Following incessant complaints from customers, Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) said it has reviewed some of the guidelines for the acquisition and maintenance of Private Mail Boxes (PMB).

NIPOST's public relations manager, Harsana Ayo, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja that the management has decided that customers would only renew their boxes 12 months after acquiring them.

Prior to the decision, some customers had complained that the postal agency compels them to renew their contracts on boxes every calendar year instead of following their own anniversaries.

On complaints that the agency charges exorbitant rates to renew boxes every year, she said N2,100 renewal charge was based on a calculation of what it would take to render efficient services for a whole year.

She said the supervising department charges N200 each for those who delay in renewing their boxes after three months of the stipulated time.

"Acquiring a new box costs N3,600 and it covers the cost of a postal directory, ID card, key deposit and other demands for processing," she said.

LG Electronics

LG electronics said it is making inroads into the wireless electronics market with the launch of a 15-inch wireless LCD TV.

The LCD(TV), LS LWIR, it said, was developed to provide "the utmost in convenience when switching TV or any other kind of media without having to worry about the limits of conventional wires."

NITEL

The management of the North West zone of Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) is to hold its 2005 zonal customary forum.

According to a statement issued by the zonal deputy general manager, marketing and sales, NITEL, the forum tagged "ZONACUF 2004," is scheduled to hold today, January 13, 2005, and is aimed at having a close and informal interaction with the company's customers in the zone.

The statement said that the forum will also showcase the company's new products as well as discuss milestone achievements and the way forward.

NPA

In furtherance of its community relations efforts, the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has reaffirmed its commitment to assisting in how communities in all major seaports cities.

The port manager of the Rivers Port, Mr. Sam Ikhobue, in his address in Port Harcourt recently, when he marked a delegation of community leaders of the Rivers Kingdom also paid him a courtesy call. The delegation comprised of Mr. Bonny Kenneth Tanimuomol, executive and Dr. Philip Onuoraokoro.

The federal ministry of finance has exempted the Association of Processed Wood Products Exporters of Nigeria (APWOPEN) from displaying to Customs and inspection agents sample formats of their products for export.

The executive secretary of the association, Mr Gabby Uka, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos on Monday that the exemption was contained in a letter from the ministry to the Customs controller-general and inspection agents.

He said that the ministry had now fully interpreted the export guidelines policy on export of furniture and wood components in order to ensure strict compliance.

Uka said that the association was exempted because such products were not exportable in complete knock down (CKD) components, adding that prohibition export guidelines on wood only banned exportation of rough timber.

He further said that this development would end controversies that had trailed the policy since it was made.

Wood exporters get exemption on production

According to him, with the letter, only exporters of furniture and furniture components required to assemble a unit of each particular furniture are expected to display their export products in the presence of Customs and inspection agents at the point of loading.

He commended the ministry for the exemption,

adding that due to Customs wrong interpretation of the policy on export guidelines, its officials had frequently confiscated members' containers of semi processed wood at the ports.

He said that the development would give Nigerian products a

comparative advantage in the international market.

Uka explained that the association, with an asset base of about 5 billion US dollars, contributes US\$4.2 million annually to the nation's economy.

He said that the sector is the largest employer of

labour and was capable of reducing poverty in the country.

The secretary urged the government to ensure proper funding of the agriculture sector and also provide the enabling environment to make business thrive in line with its economic diversification policy.

Fruit sellers seek credit facility

Fruit sellers in Adamawa State have solicited for credit facility from the state government to boost their trade.

A cross-section of fruit traders interviewed by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Yola on Tuesday decried the lack of capital base which, they said, threatened their business.

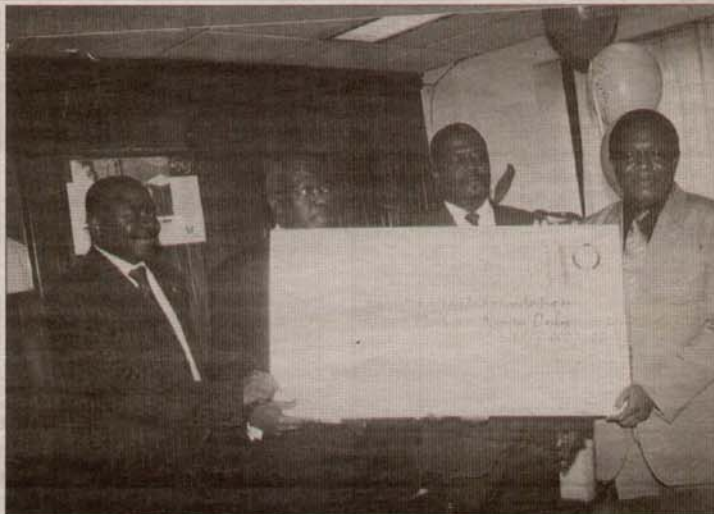
Malam Babawo Bauchi lamented the frequent loss they suffered due to the perishable nature of their produce.

He explained that trading in fruits required basic facilities such as refrigerators and power generating sets for preservation.

"The state government should make credit facility available to us for the purchase of standard facilities required for fruit preservation," the fruit seller said.

Another seller, Malam Muhammadu Yaro, urged Governor Bontu Haruna, to show concern for the fruit business by providing financial assistance to the traders.

He noted that government's intervention in form of credit facility would boost the business and reduce the risk of diseases associated with the consumption of contaminated fruits.



Ex-directors of NAL Bank Plc, from left: Mr Demola Fadunmi, Gumbo Ahmed, Garba Isam and Dr. Samuel Omokhodion at the presentation of the bank's N4 million Save-A-Child's Heart fund to beneficiaries, in Lagos, recently. Pic: Oladipapo Odunewu

AU charged to intensify fight against poverty

The acting head of mission, German Embassy, Lagos, Mr. Hans Koepfel, has charged the African Union (AU) to intensify the fight against poverty on the continent.

Koepfel, who spoke in Lagos during a New Year reception for journalists, also charged the body to advance the process for peace among warring groups in Africa.

He frowned at the spat of conflicts among brother African countries and groups, saying the conflicts had further aggravated the problem of poverty among the citizens.

"Ethiopia and Eritrea should fight poverty instead of themselves," Koepfel said, adding that the German Government was determined to ensure that Africa overcame the problem of poverty.

"We cannot allow the spectre of genocide to hover again over the continent; we have to sustain and consolidate the peace deal worked out by the parties."

"Most fundamentally, Germany, Nigeria and the

African continent share the desire to change the world for the better and the conviction that it is firmly in our own interest to do so.

"The partnership I want to see developing between Africa, Nigeria and Germany is not just

based on our strong German-Nigerian bilateral relationship, nor even on our action in Africa, but one in which we will work together globally". Koepfel said.

FG calls for supply of fertilisers

Farmers in the country may be in for good times this year as the Federal Government has called for the supply of various brands of fertiliser.

In a statement issued yesterday in Abuja, the federal ministry of agriculture said this was under its fertiliser market stabilisation programme for the 2005 wet season farming.

The Director (Fertiliser) in the Ministry, Malam Bello Sule, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja that bids for seven brands of fertilisers have been invited.

According to him, the brands, NPK (three types), Urea, Agric-lime, SSP and Micro-nutrient fertiliser, were popular with farmers and were in high demand.

He said these were to be distributed through the 36 states, FCT, Special Programme on food security and the River Basin Development Authority.

Sule said that the ministry distributed 180,000 tonnes of

fertiliser to farmers last year out of the 247,000 tonnes proposed for that period.

He said that the contract sum for the supply of the 247,000 tonnes was N13 billion but explained that only 75 per cent supply was achieved.

According to the director, 80 bidders sealed through the due process procedures then out of which 75 per cent of the suppliers met the expectation while 25 per cent could not.

He then urged fertiliser dealers nationwide to take advantage of the invitation to bid early for the commodity for the 2005 farming season. (NAN)



Malam Bello, agric minister

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(S)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES	TOP 10 TRADERS YESTERDAY
CUTIX PLC	3	1.50	14,200	21,300.00	SYMBOL
AGRICULTURE					VOLUME
THE OKOMO OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	14	15.40	29,292	453,459.35	VALUE
PRESCO PLC	16	12.00	79,584	955,674.84	TRADES
Sector Totals	30		108,876	1,389,134.19	PRISTALUM 3,424,010.00
AVIATION					URIN 2,474,346.00
AVIATION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PLC	1	1.01	1,143	1,154.43	AP 1,330,664.00
Sector Totals	1		1,143	1,154.43	NAL 6,951,060.00
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE					MANNYBANK 8,241,841.00
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC	48	1.98	2,257,960	4,308,096.58	DELIGLAS (0.003,758.00
INCAR NIGERIA APLC	1	1.30	300	390.00	COOPHAM 10,320,100.00
R. T. BRISCOE PLC	6	7.22	8,332	60,518.04	CHARTERED 12,670,669.00
Sector Totals	55		2,266,642	4,369,004.62	UTD 15,591,363.00
BANKING					IMD 19,519,071.00
ACCESS BANK PLC	6	3.42	2,211.19	75,646.98	
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	15	0.49	71,167	473,163.21	
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	3	2.47	2,108	73,001.28	
CHARTERED BANK PLC	166	1.00	12,106,669	45,137,302.94	
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC	19	0.75	10,330,100	13,932,135.00	
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC	1	2.00	2,000	4,000.00	
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	1	2.26	2,000	4,516.56	
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	1	2.26	2,000	4,516.56	
FSR INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	1	2.26	2,000	4,516.56	
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC	100	11.69	9,083,340	10,737,732.60	
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	13	0.86	5,482,500	529,107.00	
HALLMARK BANK PLC	1	1.06	10,100.00	10,600.00	
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC	90	0.74	19,510,071	14,545,952.79	
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	5	7.84	4,000.00	276,728.75	
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	10	1.00	10,000.00	471,559.99	
LEON BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	13	0.94	1,233,285	1,215,276.76	
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC	13	0.94	1,233,285	1,215,276.76	
NAL BANK PLC	68	2.14	6,951,060	14,848,439.87	
OKADANG BANK PLC	13	0.70	305	1,921.50	
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	6	2.41	60,834	137,996.00	
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	12	1.42	38,937	238,449.07	
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	12	1.42	38,937	238,449.07	
TRADE BANK PLC	96	9.22	556,257	809,964.24	
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	20	8.71	1,745,892	16,439,384.10	
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC	47	1.03	15,491,163	51,042,729.03	
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	22	3.93	1,878,452	16,500,688.78	
WEMA BANK PLC	83	15.89	677,750	7,382,316.36	
ZENITH B.A.M.E. PLC	1,880		84,999,632	10,626,052.50	
Sector Totals				285,480,359.92	
BREWERY					
CLAMPON BREWERIES PLC	2	4.68	200,001	890,084.68	
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC	170	113.00	444,026	49,567,308.04	
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC	818	41.95	955,306	40,068,529.70	
Sector Totals	890		1,599,333	90,520,742.42	
BUILDING MATERIALS					
ASHLAKA CEMENT PLC	119	24.45	308,288	7,544,498.05	
BENUL CEMENT COMPANY PLC	4	1.00	1,000	1,000.00	
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	29	7.00	343,337	2,451,301.00	
WEST AFRIC PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC	47	11.99	182,789	2,146,701.01	
Sector Totals	196		834,405	11,953,242.16	
CHEMICAL & PAINTS					
BERGER PAINTS PLC	18	4.70	145,308	680,881.69	
CAP PLC	9	7.00	41,756	291,057.50	
D. N. MEYER PLC	11	5.00	78,260	391,390.00	
IPWA PLC	11	0.50	29,030	14,525.00	
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC	12	4.25	72,524	313,577.00	
Sector Totals	59		371,938	1,713,441.19	
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT					
HALLMARK PAPER PRODUCTS PLC	1	0.87	300	261.00	
Sector Totals	1		300	261.00	
CONGLOMERATES					
A. O. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC	6	1.14	105,269	121,222.04	
C.F.A.O. NIGERIA PLC	14	5.09	158,187	799,019.71	
CHILL ARAMS PLC	4	2.00	2,000	4,000.00	
JOHN HOLT PLC	1	0.99	513	509.55	
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	194	16.71	800,806	13,211,230.59	
F.Z. INDUSTRIES PLC	98	12.88	499,540	6,020,699.58	
S.C.O.A. NIGERIA PLC	6	1.19	109,116	130,923.92	
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC	6.5	14.17	150,491	2,699,257.47	
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC	3	1.20	161,512	193,814.40	
Sector Totals	393		2,027,484	23,168,002.97	
CONSTRUCTION					
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC	5	0.96	4,464	4,172.36	
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	7	16.00	30,200	483,200.00	
Sector Totals	12		34,664	487,372.36	
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
CUP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	48	24.70	188,755	4,675,533.48	
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	232	37.60	41,756	791,057.50	
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	57	16.61	146,856	2,439,278.16	
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	83	57.40	156,146	8,981,340.87	
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC	70	150.00	209,019	31,483,369.04	
Sector Totals	480		1,144,216	73,833,932.84	
HEALTHCARE					
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	22	3.30	1,217,700	4,032,704.00	
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	14	5.01	193,898	1,078,772.98	
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	1	1.13	50,000	56,500.00	
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC	13	1.85	169,600	497,276.00	
PHARMA-DEKO PLC	4	4.75	4,000	19,000.00	
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	36	8.15	27,762	2,511,166.10	
Sector Totals	90		1,912,960	8,065,419.08	
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS					
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC	33	1.12	2,434,010	2,655,729.18	
B.O.C. GASES PLC	104	0.73	144,604	434,332.00	
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC	16	4.24	118,504	502,456.96	
VONO PRODUCTS PLC	1	1.90	1,384	2,629.60	
Sector Totals	60		2,698,502	3,595,127.74	
INSURANCE					
AICO INSURANCE PLC	14	2.01	587,487	1,180,848.87	
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC	4	1.32	91,301	118,116.22	
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC	4	0.73	26,008	18,985.84	
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC	2	1.30	1,500	2,000.00	
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	9	1.59	464,568	767,483.12	
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) PLC	1	0.79	468	369.72	
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	1	4.03	10,000	120,900.00	
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC	4	3.53	51,000	180,030.00	
UNIC INSURANCE PLC	8	1.15	79,865	90,100.91	
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC	15	2.84	115,704	890,356.16	
Sector Totals	67		1,647,901	3,369,420.84	
MANAGED FUNDS					
C & I LISING SEC.	16	1.68	558,400	948,034.00	
NIGERIAN ENERGY SECTOR FUND	17	889.00	20	17,780.00	
Sector Totals	33		558,420	965,814.00	
PACKAGING					
AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC	3	0.72	50,376	36,270.72	
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	7	1.15	27,700	30,520.00	
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC	28	3.38	10,083,758	53,362,364.52	
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC	2	0.54	20,508	11,070.00	
Sector Totals	40		18,182,334	83,388,225.24	
PETROLEUM/MARKETING					
AFRIOL PLC	15	0.86	511,754	440,108.44	
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	131	67.86	3,330,664	226,878,882.25	
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC	31	2.21	392,942	883,456.78	
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC	53	179.67	67,976	12,146,707.90	
CONOIL PLC	78	127.00	47,256	5,988,127.00	
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC	31	167.00	25,967	4,365,518.45	
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	51	179.50	62,754	11,260,490.82	
OADDO PLC	242	107.10	235,114	25,229,735.86	
Sector Totals	632		4,673,420	286,693,022.50	
PRINTING & PUBLISHING					
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	5	1.64	66,600	109,224.00	
Sector Totals	5		66,600	109,224.00	
REAL ESTATE					
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC	50	9.00	633,905	5,665,384.44	
Sector Totals	50		633,905	5,665,384.44	
TEXTILES					
APPRINT NIGERIA PLC	1	0.51	400	204.00	
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC	17	2.49	139,243	346,715.07	
Sector Totals	18		139,643	346,919.07	
Overall Totals	4,674		115,916,718	825,048,504.11	



SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
PRISTALUM	3,424,010.00	7,835,729.18	311
URIN	2,474,346.00	61,042,729.61	448
AP	1,330,664.00	226,478,882.25	131
NAL	6,951,060.00	14,848,439.87	68
MANNYBANK	8,241,841.00	10,466,740.61	52
DELIGLAS	(0.003,758.00	53,302,364.52	28
COOPHAM	10,320,100.00	13,932,135.00	15
CHARTERED	12,670,669.00	45,137,302.94	166
UTD	15,591,363.00	16,500,688.78	76
IMD	19,519,071.00	14,545,952.79	90

SYMBOL	LAST CLOSE	YESTERDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
NESTLE	166.00	150.00	+4.00
ASHARACEM	23.30	24.45	+1.15
PRESCO	11.30	12.00	+0.70
OKOMUOH	18.90	15.40	+0.50
LEVBIRDS	16.35	10.71	+0.32
DELIGLAS	5.13	5.38	+0.25
PZ	12.07	12.28	+0.25
CBAD	4.85	5.09	+0.24
JITAFIHAM	6.04	6.28	+0.20
UAC-PROP	8.80	9.00	+0.20

SYMBOL	LAST CLOSE	YESTERDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
CADBURY	60.50	57.60	-2.90
TOTAL	182.00	178.30	-3.50
TEXACO	169.00	167.00	-2.00
UNIPETROL	188.00	167.10	-20.90
NBC	78.40	57.40	-21.00
NIGLITHM	122.50	127.90	+5.50
FREDEBANK	24.80</		



Ref: DIL 010 Head, Human Resources	Ref: DIL 011 Human Resource Managers	Ref: DIL 112 Administration Manager
<p>This senior management role makes a significant contribution to the strategic direction and management of the group's business through advice and implementation of human capital solutions to ensure effectiveness in attracting, managing, developing, motivating and retaining top quality staff. The role encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing, implementing and upgrading of a comprehensive people strategy and operating plans ensuring alignment with Group business strategy and key business objectives • Directing and being accountable for all matters concerning employment legislation and contract issues to ensure that Group liabilities are managed and there is compliance with relevant laws • Working collaboratively with group divisional heads and line management to determine key performance requirements, develop people within the business units, ensure delivery of prioritised, tailored and focussed HR interventions that add value and meet business objectives • Communication of human resources strategy and operating plan to business units and other functional areas to ensure understanding and commitment. Provision of strong leadership to enable effective delivery of HR strategy across the business • Design and implementation of Group training strategy, operating plans and infrastructure to ensure that training and career development needs are identified and appropriate training and development interventions are delivered to drive performance across the Group • Developing and providing guidance to Group Executive Management in the implementation of effective succession planning system and supporting processes to a consistent supply of high calibre staff to fill jobs at senior management and other positions across the business • Direction and motivation HR function staff to ensure clarity of roles and key deliverables specified in service level agreements (SLAs) <p>The Person</p> <p>Deep technical and up-to-date knowledge of HR developments, Good knowledge of the Group's business strategy and objectives; Leadership and mentoring capability. Able to exercise judgment, initiative and discretion at all times. Strong interpersonal and communication skills. The ideal person must have a first degree in sociology, industrial relations, industrial psychology or any other social science discipline and a professional membership of IPM and minimum of 10 years relevant experience of which 5 years must have been at management level. A postgraduate degree will be an added advantage.</p>	<p>This position is responsible for the provision of technical advice and guidance in the implementation of human resource policies and systems to ensure effectiveness in people management across the group. The role focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining contacts with Business units leaders and determine staffing needs and performance requirements • Monitoring and ensuring proper implementation of and compliance with approved HR policies and procedures across divisions and departments units • Conducting periodic assessment of the industrial relations climate to ascertain conduciveness and improvement solutions • Identifying comparators and benchmark compensation data to ensure competitiveness of compensation and consistency with the group's pay philosophy. • Monitoring and providing support to line in ensuring that all staff have agreed personal plans and work performance objectives • Evaluating performance appraisals and preparing performance review reports • Collating and discussing staff upward feedback with the applicable supervisor, on a quarterly basis and organising half-yearly meetings with Departmental Heads • Liaising with line management to develop appropriate capabilities (skills and competencies) for respective areas of business operations • Initiating, defining, clarifying and facilitating the communication of the group's corporate culture, vision and values. • Identifying opportunities to achieve (and exceed) HR targets and standards and recommending appropriate improvement solutions • Initiating actions to develop new and better ways of human resource management within the Group, using past experience and any mistakes as positive opportunities for improvement <p>The Person</p> <p>The person must have at least a first degree in social science sociology, industrial relations or psychology, business administration and professional membership of IPM. A minimum 8 years relevant experience of which 4 years must have been at management level. A postgraduate degree will be an added advantage. The right person must be a self-starter with good influencing skills, strong interpersonal and communication abilities and competent in the use of computers to enhance work performance, ability to lead and communicate effectively</p>	<p>The focus of this job is the provision of efficient administrative support to business operations through effective management of the use and maintenance of the Group's facilities, working tools and equipment. The jobholder is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating and implementing approved administration policies and procedures • Forecasting, proposing and agreeing capacity requirements and accommodation standards • Managing the provision of general support services, including dispatch, cleaning and upkeep of office premises and official residences. • Documenting and updating records of all movable and Fixed Assets and ensuring these are properly valued, accounted for and safeguarded • Liaising with utility service providers to ensure uninterrupted services and prompt payment of electricity, telephone and water consumption bills. • Monitoring the use and handling of facilities and equipment to ensure optimal functionality • Developing and implementing a preventive maintenance schedule for facilities/equipment and arranging for immediate repairs where applicable • Managing the purchase, storage and distribution of office consumables, stationery, utilities and general work areas tools; • Developing guidelines for the purchase, storage and distribution of the Group's physical assets • Monitoring the use and/or handling of office facilities, equipment and working tools • Overseeing the fleet management function, ensuring that adequate transportation is provided for staff in support of business operations • Managing relationships with auto workshops to ensure adequate and cost-effective maintenance vehicles • Managing the reception of the Group's guests, ensuring they are well catered for with regards to accommodation, transportation, etc <p>The Person</p> <p>The individual should be a graduate with a background in business administration, finance, or a related social science discipline. A Masters degree and membership of the Nigerian Institute of Management and/or other relevant professional bodies would be of added advantage. In addition, the person must have a minimum of 10 years relevant experience of which 5 years must have been at management level in a large conglomerate or multi-product FMCG company. Strong planning and organisational skills, people management skills, negotiation, computer literacy and communication skills are required for effective performance on this job.</p>

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdrive@ng.pwc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
Please note that only short listed candidates will be contacted.

TRUST DIALOGUE HOLDS TODAY

MEDIA TRUST LIMITED

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**Invites the General Public
To the**

2nd Annual Trust Dialogue

Topic:

Reforming Nigeria, Which Model?

Speakers

Professor Mike Kwanashie
Professor Sam Aluko
Malam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi

(Special Adviser to the Vice President on Economic Matters)
(Former Chairman National Economic Intelligence Committee)
(DGM Risk Management Department UBA)

Chairman of the Occasion

Chief Ernest Shonekan
(Former Head of Interim Government)

Special Guest of Honour

Vice President Atiku Abubakar
Turakin Adamawa

Chief Host

Malam Nasir el-Rufa'i
FCT Minister

Royal Father of The Day

His Royal Highness
Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Yahaya Abubakar

Other Important Guests include:

Senate President and all Senators, Speaker House of Representatives and members, House of Representatives, State Governors as well as Speakers of State Houses of Assembly.

The occasion will also witness the Formal Presentation of the book: *Carrying a Burden* which is the proceedings of the 1st Trust Annual Dialogue held on January 15, 2004 by the Special Guest of Honour, Vice President, Atiku Abubakar

Venue: Ladi Kwali Hall, Abuja Sheraton Hotels & Towers

Time: 10:00am

Signed
Management
09-5235787, 5236054, 6705987





Ref: DIL 013 Head, Information Technology	Ref: DIL 014 Information Technology Managers	Ref: DIL 015 Enterprise Risk manager
<p>This challenging role makes a significant contribution to the group's business performance improvements and ensures the full and effective implementation of the information management systems. The primary focus of the job is to ensure the maximum automation of business processes and the functionality of the IS infrastructure in support of the Group's operations. The role encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional reporting to an Executive Director • Maintaining the strategic information technology plan of the group in line with current business needs and changing requirements • Developing and implementing information technology and management systems policy, establishing the operating guidelines, procedures, and standards of performance to ensure the department meets or exceeds the Group's information system needs and objectives • Defining annual operating plans and budgets for the IT function (managed directly) and the use of IT within the wider business (managed indirectly). • Managing the delivery of seamless IT services to users across the group in line with business requirements and service level agreements • Developing (or procuring) and coordinating the delivery IT solutions to the business in accordance with agreed priorities, plans and standards • Proposing and coordinating the implementation of major IT Development projects • Providing guidance and ensuring the progressive development of user capabilities across the group through sound in-house IT training and hands-on support services to staff • Developing and maintaining service level agreements with vendors and ensuring vendor performance • Monitoring and controlling the financial and operational performance of the directly managed IT function <p>The Person</p> <p>The individual we require must demonstrate the following technical exposure and personal competencies: A minimum of 10 years post qualification experience, with 5 years at a managerial position; a degree in computer science or a related field; strong project management skills; experience in Wide Area Network management and deployment of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems; business focused, strong leadership; interpersonal and communication skills.</p>	<p>This role supports the group's business performance and process improvements and is key to the effective implementation of the information management systems and automation of business processes. The job has primary responsibility for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering operational IT services including office systems, business systems, support to corporate web site(s), user support, back-ups, disaster recovery, etc. • Providing IT support and/or help desk services in line with service level agreements with user departments and the business needs and/or changing operational requirements of the Group • Initiating and implementing information technology and management systems policy, establishing the operating guidelines, procedures, and standards of performance for their various sub-units • Providing on the job training and guidance, to ensure the progressive development of user capabilities across the group • Working with different units in the organisation to ensure that user requirements are defined, documented and implemented • Participating in the development (or procurement) and delivery of IT solutions to the business in accordance with agreed priorities, plans and standards • Preparing request for proposals (RFPs), vendor selection and ensuring that service delivery meets specifications • Developing and maintaining effective vendor relationship; testing all equipment supplied by vendors and signing-off on acceptability and adequacy of the equipment <p>The Person</p> <p>The individual we require must demonstrate the following technical exposure and personal competencies: A minimum of 8 years post qualification experience, with 4 years at a managerial position; a degree in computer science or a related field; a solid understanding of networking/distributed computing environment concepts; good understanding of principles of routing, client/server programming, the design of consistent network-wide file system layouts; Hands-on knowledge of major ERP systems and experience using relational databases. Experience in defining IT related processes, procedures and system controls and project management experience is required. Strong leadership, interpersonal and communication skills.</p>	<p>The focus of this role is ensure proper management of business risks by monitoring progress and assisting other managers in reporting relevant risk information across business areas and Group-wide. The role encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing strategies and action plans to minimize and/or eliminate identified or potential risks to the Group's business and growth plans • Defining policies and procedures governing enterprise risk management, monitoring various departments operations to ensure compliance; defining the escalation procedures to be followed in the management of any risk across the business • Liaising with the heads of Corporate Planning and Projects to identify potential risks to success and ensuring that adequate controls are put in place to support effective implementation of approved plans and projects • Promoting enterprise risk management competence throughout the Group, including facilitating development of technical enterprise risk management expertise and helping managers align risk responses with the Group's risk tolerance framework guided by appropriate controls • Providing guidance to heads of business units/ functions and managers in the integration of enterprise risk management with other business planning and management activities • Reviewing internal (infrastructure, personnel, processes, technology) and external (economic, natural, political, competition) factors in the operating environment to ascertain potential risks to the Groups business operations and growth plans • Conducting periodic risk assessment across the Group's value chain to determine its efficiency and impact on achievement of business objectives and determine improvement solutions <p>The Person</p> <p>The individual should be a graduate with a background in business administration, accountancy, economics, finance or related disciplines. An MBA degree from a reputable university would be an added advantage. A keen sense of the business drivers and risk/control factors in a multi-national manufacturing enterprise are essential to success in this position. The person must have business audit, risk management and people management experience of over 10 years in a multi-national manufacturing company and/or management consulting; Strong analytical skills, leadership ability and communication skills and the ability to extend the boundaries of the role, excellent planning, organisational and computer skills are strongly required</p>

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdrive@ng.pwc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
Please note that only short listed candidates will be contacted.



Ref: DIL 016: National Sales Manager	Ref: DIL 017: Area Sales Manager	Ref: DIL 018: Relationship Manager
<p>This senior management role makes a significant contribution to business and revenue growth through effective coordination of sales activities nationwide and implementation of strategies to grow the customer base and market share for the Group's products. The role compasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating sales, pricing and credit policies to ensure that the Group's products compete favourably in the market • Developing and implementing strategic Sales plans to achieve business objectives • Setting and reviewing sales targets and performance standards • Preparing annual sales and growth targets for the Group's products • Developing, managing and maximising national accounts sales through national distribution networks • Directing market channel development activity and coordinating distribution by establishing territories, quotas and goals • Overseeing the gathering of data on sales performance and evaluating market information on the performance of the Group's products • Coordinating national and area sales activities to maximize accounts sales • Establishing and maintaining excellent relationship with national distribution networks. • Interfacing with warehouse, logistics and factory heads to ensure that sales orders are serviced promptly • Preparing consolidated sales performance reports to executive management for decision making <p>The Person</p> <p>The right candidate must have excellent analytical, negotiating and selling skills with a strong ability to solve business issues. Good under pressure and able to manage sales operations and teams in different locations the person must also have good planning and organizing ability, be self-motivated and capable of meeting and exceeding projected sales targets. Furthermore, the person must have at least a first degree in marketing, business administration, Economics or related discipline minimum of 12 years demonstrated revenue-driven experience within the FMCG (including 8 years at management level). A post graduate degree and profession qualification will be an added advantage.</p>	<p>This position is responsible for creating new business opportunities in designated/ earmarked geographies by developing new customers and diversifying sales at existing accounts related to the Group's product lines. The tasks performed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the groups sales policies and strategies in the designated area • Planning and controlling sales activities with the area • Monitoring and reporting on market trends and movements within the area • Liaising with organised product end users to ascertain quality of products sold to customers • Developing lists of target accounts through use of sales leads, networking, customer referrals, business directories, newspapers and other sources • Providing support and leadership to Relationship Managers on sales management, credit risk, loan structuring and negotiations on larger &/or more complex transactions and accounts. • Agreeing targets with Relationship Managers, reviewing their performance and provide coaching when necessary • Negotiate prices, credit terms, and sales contracts • Acting as a primary point of contact for customers in the area • Acting as a resource on information for customers by demonstrating a high degree of competence in regards to product and industry knowledge, as well as products and services provided by Dangote Group • Facilitating customer service in responding to customer requests for order information and expediting delivery requests • Liaising with warehouse, logistics and factories to facilitate delivery of products to customers • Preparing reports of business transactions and keeping expense accounts <p>The Person</p> <p>Good under time pressure and able to lead sales teams with minimum support, the person must have very strong knowledge of the Group's products, selling and customer management skills, good negotiation ability and influencing skills. The job also demands enthusiasm, strong analytical skills, leadership qualities and the ability to communicate effectively. The person must have at least a first degree in marketing, business administration or related discipline with minimum of 10 years relevant experience within FMCG, of which 5 years must have been at management level. Possession of a postgraduate degree, preferably MBA, will be an added advantage.</p>	<p>This customer-facing role is focused on maximising customer potential, recruitment, retention and satisfaction by developing and maintaining strong business relationships and proactively responding to changing needs and expectations. The role encompass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and developing a portfolio of customers with responsibility for the total customer relationship, including sales, service and lending. • Protecting existing revenue and maximising potential new business through a highly proactive and partnership approach with segment customers. • Identifying customer needs and providing tailored solutions from the Group's broad range of products and services. • Monitoring and controlling credit quality of own portfolio, reviewing and recommending for approval credit applications for customers within portfolio. • Developing and growing own portfolio by proactively identifying and fulfilling the service needs of customers within the portfolio, using the sales management processes and techniques. • Completing high quality Credit applications, complying with the Group's policies and procedures. • Maintaining acceptable standard of credit quality for portfolio. • Maintaining acceptable customer satisfaction levels. <p>The Person</p> <p>The ideal candidate for the job must demonstrate excellent coaching, sales and relationship management skills; strong credit risk analysis and negotiating skills; sound knowledge of the Group's range of products and customer service orientation. The person must have at least a first degree in marketing, business administration, Economics or related discipline minimum of 8 years demonstrated revenue-driven experience within the FMCG (including 4 years at management level). A postgraduate degree and profession qualification will be an added advantage. The right person must be competent in the use of computers to enhance work performance, numerate with a strong business orientation and engaging personality.</p>

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdrive@ng.pwc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
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Science & Education



History of Technology students identifying various metalworking residues

100 university lecturers killed in Aceh

At least 103 lecturers of the Banda Aceh-based Syah Kuala University (Unsyiah) were reportedly killed in the Dec. 26, strong earthquake and deadly tsunami.

The tsunami devastated coast areas in Indonesia's westernmost province of Aceh as well as North Sumatra province, the Unsyiah rector said.

"The report received from their families said some 103 lecturers died in the tragedy and 92 others are still missing," Dr. Abdi Wahab was quoted by the official Antara news agency on Sunday as saying.

"Unfortunately," the rector said, family members of the lecturers reported missing till now failed to inform the university's management about that, Abdi Wahab said. He was speaking at a meeting of the State Universities' Rectors of West Indonesian region on the same day.

So far, the university said that it had lost around 195 lecturers, thus placing it in a shortage of human resources. Some 144 children of the Unsyiah university's lecturers were also reported missing and killed.

The number of the university's students killed in the tragedy was more than 1,000 and around 202 units of the lecturers' houses were also totally damaged.

The university chief said that the school building re-

mained intact and that essential damage was not found in the tsunami attack, because it was located in a high plot of land.

"Unsyiah has decided to ban all students to move to other state universities on a temporary basis, for example one or two semesters with a long distance study status.

"But half of the total students are allowed to move on a permanent basis, there is no other way except dissolving Unsyiah," he said. The State

Universities' Rectors Meeting for West Indonesian Region has 15 members.

Its chairman Prof. Sutjipto said other members were ready to provide Unsyiah with mobile lecturers in replacement of missing 195 lecturers.

This is in addition to accommodating around 200 students of the medical faculty to have medical practices and a test. Sutjipto is also the rector of the Jakarta State University.

NYSC boss plans better package for staff

NYSC Director-General Yusuf Bomo has promised to place a high premium on the welfare of staff of the directorate for the success of the scheme.

A resolution of the NYSC annual management meeting issued today in Abuja, said that the plans would allow an open door administration for an effective running of the scheme. Bomo promised to build a highly motivated workforce for effective service delivery through an open door administration and the involvement of all staff in policy implementation.

He said the scheme would also embrace information technology through archiving and documentation of NYSC activities.

Bomo said the scheme had initiated discussions with relevant superior authorities

to ensure that the long delayed promotion results of deserving staff were released.

"Considering the high cost of building materials in the market, we are looking at the possibility of reviewing upward the amount of money given as loan to staff to benefit from the loans," he said. Bomo said there was need to train and retrain staff to be up-to-date with current management skills.

He charged the staff management unit of the directorate to explore avenues such as ASCON and Centre of Management Development for the training of staff.

He said that plans by his office to initiate a forum of former director-generals and chief executive of the scheme. Bomo said this would enable the management tap from the wealth of experience of the past chief executives.

Higher Education This Week

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

VCs and the maintenance of discipline

As the physical infrastructure in our tertiary institutions continues to undergo rehabilitation, one also expects that the decayed moral fabrics of campus life would be given serious attention so that in totality, the lost glory of our tertiary educational system would be restored. But before we proceed further, we crave your indulgence to digress briefly.

Recent and emerging evidence indicate that the federal government appears bent and serious to rehabilitate the dilapidated physical infrastructure in our campuses. For example, a January 6, 2005 news report by THISDAY newspaper revealed that the Federal Executive Council (FEC) has approved the execution of contracts in six universities with the desire to renew the face of old ones and help the younger ones build additional infrastructure'. (see THISDAYonline: <http://www.thisdayonline.com/news.php?id=6356>). The details of the revelations made by the Honorable Minister of Education, Prof. Fabian Osoji (while briefing reporters after the meeting), show that (1) Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi has two projects namely the construction of its Senate building, and the School of Environmental Technology, Phase Two; (2) Federal University of Technology, Yola is to have a building for its Department of Architecture constructed; (3) University of Lagos is to have a two-storey building for its Faculty of Social Sciences constructed; (4) University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus is to have a research laboratory for its Faculty of Health Sciences completed; (5) University of Uyo is to have a building for its Faculty of Engineering and Environmental Studies constructed; and lastly but not the least (6) University of Calabar is to have a ring road constructed on its campus. In the spirit of our last two articles on this additional cheering news, we commend the efforts of the federal government along this line. By the way, we would in future inquire on how far these contracts are going so that we do not (like in the distant past) end up only earmarking these projects. We wait people to actually 'eye-mark' them this time around. Now back to the thrust of today's topic namely the need for maintenance of discipline in our campuses.

The beginning of a New Year is a good time for re-assessing the moral and ethical values currently underpinning behavioural activities in our tertiary institutions. This is the time to decide either to continue in some of our old and morally offensive and of course less productive ways of doing things on campuses (which presently leave much to be desired), or to change for the better. It is no secret that our higher institutions which were once respected for their high ethical standards, are now in a deep moral mess and nostalgically a shadow of their past for the last twenty years. Revelations from the reports of the last Visitation panels provide insights into the low level of ethical standards on campuses.

Tertiary institutions are supposed to serve as the moral conscience of our society. And in a society in dire need of ethical revolution, the need for our higher institutions to wake up to this challenge of serving as an effective vanguard cannot be over-emphasized. This can only be done if the institutions themselves, along with their staff and students possess what it takes to give leadership to the entire society in this direction. The need for discipline is therefore required now more than ever before.

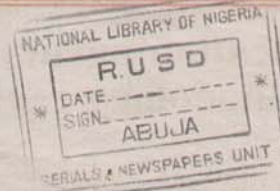
It is against this background that one welcomes the insistence of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja, Prof. Nuhu Yaquib that both staff and students should adhere strictly to academic regulations guiding teaching and learning in the institution. At a forum with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) and reported by the Daily Trust newspaper, the VC

abhorred the disheartening level of truancy and laxity toward the institution's commitment to learning and scholarship by both lecturers and students. He announced that the university authorities would monitor both lecturers and students with respect to attendance to lectures. He said further that students are expected to meet the required minimum attendance of 75% in classes to qualify for examinations with lecturers taking and keeping records of such attendance. On the other hand, students are to be given the opportunity to assess the performance of their lecturers. In his characteristic serious manner with respect to matters of this nature, Prof. Yaquib warned that his administration would not tolerate indiscipline and other negative attitude to learning. He then made what we call a claim that he can beat his chest that there are no more sharp practices either in the area of sale of hand outs, examination malpractices or admission racketeering in his institutions. (see <http://www.dailytrust.com/education3.htm>).

We believe that Prof. Yaquib is on the right track and we encourage him to remain focused and steadfast. However, we are not comfortable with his statement that there are no more sharp practices in his institutions in the areas he identified. We know that these ills are not ones and for all phenomena, but are rather products of a dynamic environment. More importantly, it is difficult for us to accept his optimism about the non-existence of these ills from the perspective of social science. To do so is to deny or underestimate the dynamics of social problems in a corrupt environment as ours. While we accept that the level of social ills on campuses can be considerably minimized in such a way that the no longer constitute major problems, we do not want any one to go under the illusion about the total absence. Such a belief would unwittingly create a culture of administrative complacency that would see the flourishing of such ills to degenerate. Social ills on our campuses are products of the wider fundamental, political, economic and social crisis in our prevailing socio-order that are even more generative and prolific of them. And as a result of this, these ills would be occurring from time to time even after being ripped in the bud at a period in time. What is required therefore is eternal vigilance rather than an unintended administrative complacency that may accompany the belief that they have been totally eradicated.

Put differently, while campus ills may be more and highly problematic in one institute characterized by poor leadership, they may be less on the other hand in another institution with good and exemplary leadership that creates disincentive for their prevalence either through positive motivation (eg. good working conditions) or by sheer existence of effective mechanisms that serve as deterrent. This explains why we commended Prof. Yaquib above for being right tract but we do not want him to relax under the illusion that the enemy is no more. Some of the ills may re-surface even before the current session ends or they may come back as the admission of new set of students or even still with the employment of new staff. The likelihood of the re-occurrence of the social ills on our campuses further raises the crucial question of how VCs can maintain discipline in our universities. We would address this in the next concluding part of this article.

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



Ref: DIL 019 Head, Marketing	Ref: DIL 020 Brand Managers	Ref: DIL021 Corporate Planning Manager
<p>The role has primary responsibility for promoting the Dangote brands and delivering a seamless marketing strategy that will ensure optimal market acceptability through product promotion, implementation of sound market penetration, customer development and retention plans. The key tasks performed include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulating and implementing creative marketing strategies to expand the market share and/or achieve/maintain leadership position in target markets Leading and developing a proactive marketing function that will keep the company brands and operations as market leaders at all times Aligning product and Group marketing strategies to ensure proper management and implementation of market penetration and development plans Conceptualizing, building and maintaining sustainability of brand equity on all the company's products Development and management of creative and unique advertising strategies, implementation and evaluation of its impact on market growth, sales and profitability Monitoring to ensure that the corporate identity of Dangote brands is projected and protected at all times, especially through events, promotions and sponsorships Managing the relationship with regulatory bodies, ensuring that all regulatory requirements are fulfilled whilst always portraying a positive and socially responsible image of the company. Coordinating the conduct of manage market intelligence and developing appropriate responds strategies to protect and enhance the market position of Dangote brands Partnering with heads of production, sales and distribution to ensure high level of customer service delivery and timely response to customer requests and complaints Coordinating the preparation of periodic reports on marketing activities and programs for decision making <p>The Person</p> <p>The individual we require must demonstrate the following technical exposure and personal competencies: A graduate in marketing or related social science disciplines with membership in a recognized professional marketing institution. He or she must have marketing experience of a minimum of 12 years of which 5 years must have been at management level in a multi-national FMCG company. Success in this role requires a pleasant, outgoing and enthusiastic disposition, strong persuasive and influencing abilities and self-drive. The individual must also be highly motivated, energetic, well organized and business oriented with a deep understanding of the Dangote range of products. The demonstration of strong interpersonal skills, a strong network of relationships, drive and leadership ability are requisite for success in this position.</p>	<p>The primary focus of this role is to enhance the competitive performance of Dangote brands and ensure optimal market acceptability through product promotion, implementation of sound market penetration and growth plans as well as customer retention strategies. The role encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and implementing marketing plans and strategies to enhance the performance of Dangote brands, product profitability and improve return on spend Conducting market research and analysis of market performance of Dangote products Monitoring developments and trends in the business environment, especially the FMCG market, analysing impact on Dangote products and developing response strategies Articulating ideas and advising on new product development and launches Initiating and implementing product/brand promotion strategies and campaigns to drive sales and revenue on a sustainable basis Positioning the group's brands as the products of choice in all chosen markets through focused and targeted promotions and advertising campaigns Liaising with heads of production, sales and distribution to ensure high level of customer service delivery and timely response to customer requests and complaints Tracking competitor activities and developing appropriate responds strategies to protect and enhance the market position of Dangote brands Preparing periodic reports on marketing activities and programs for decision making <p>The Person</p> <p>The person for this job must have a degree in Business Administration, Marketing or related discipline with at least 10 years cumulative experience, 5 years of which must be at management level. To succeed in this role, must have a pleasant, outgoing and enthusiastic disposition, strong persuasive and influencing abilities, highly motivated, energetic, well organised and business oriented with a deep understanding of the Dangote range of products. The person must also demonstrate strong analytical skills, leadership ability and the ability to communicate effectively. A post graduate degree will be an added advantage</p>	<p>The focus of this role is on strengthening the Group's competitive position through the articulation of strategic business and corporate development plans to enable effective achievement of set objectives. The role encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing strategic planning assistance and support to management in defining and validating the business direction: vision, mission, and strategy of the Group Facilitating the development of corporate and business unit/functional strategies, objectives and implementation plans Monitoring to ensure that the Group's operations are in line with approved business plans and support the business objectives Conducting market analysis and continual assessment of information relating to the group's business in target markets Developing, planning, proposing and initiating measures to strengthen the Group's competitive position Monitoring the continued growth of the business and analyzing the profitability of all the Group's business streams including subsidiaries and associate companies Overseeing the development of business plans of the various associate companies and subsidiaries Collecting and analyzing data on the business environment (i.e. market, competition & other economic variables) and ensuring availability of data for effective planning and decision making Identifying & evaluating new business opportunities for the Group <p>The Person</p> <p>The position requires a graduate with background in economics and business administration, supplemented by topical training in capital management, investment planning, strategic concepts, competitive analysis, interpersonal relations and communication. He or she must have approximately 10 years of diverse experience in marketing, sales, technical operations, market research, finance, human resources and business management with a keen sense of the business drivers and risk/control factors in a manufacturing and multi-product environment. Strong analytical skills, leadership ability and communication skills and, excellent planning, organizational and computer skills are essential for success. An MBA degree from a reputable university would be an added advantage.</p>

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdtrs@ng.pwsc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
Please note that only short listed candidates will be contacted.

Science & Education

Adult education agency to set up methodology centre

The Kano State Agency for Mass Education, in collaboration with the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education, is to set up five "reflect circle centres". The centres are for the introduction of "reflect methodology" in the teaching of adults in the state.

The Executive Director of the Agency, Alhaji Muhammad Aliyu, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kano today that the methodology, being a new strategy of teaching adults, would be introduced through

Tsunami early warning system by 2007

The government is in the process of establishing a tsunami early warning system at a cost of Rs 125 crore, India Minister for Science and Technology and Ocean Development Kapil Sibal said on Wednesday.

He said the system was expected to be in place in the next two to two-and-half-years.

"The system will be able to provide information beforehand on the speed of the tsunami when it hits the coast and the regions that will be harmed the most," he told reporters.

The process of establishing the system involved installing Deep Ocean Assessment Reporting Technology at a depth of six km in oceans. The technology would be connected to data voice, Sibal said.

The warning system also involved developing necessary software technologies, he added. Earlier, inaugurating Microsoft Research India's operations in Bangalore, Sibal stressed on the need for building spatial technology to create a database for the country.

"With the help of spatial data and aerial photography, each village needs to be mapped," he said. The minister said a national spatial data infrastructure policy was expected to be unveiled soon.

The Centre was planning to expand the 'Mapping the neighbourhood' programme, which was launched in some schools a year ago, to 30,000 schools in the country, the minister said. Under the programme, students are given a device with which they list locations of schools, health centres, water sources, dwellings and buildings.

SMS/News.

a "reflect circle programme".

He explained that under the programme, five pilot areas for the reflect circle had been mapped out in the state, namely Gani, Nasarawa, Shamono, Kayu and Goron Maje villages.

He stated that two persons from each of the selected

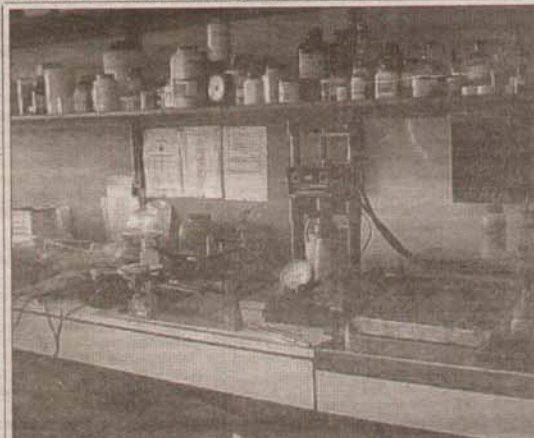
areas had already been trained, preparatory to the take-off of the project.

The executive director said under the project, adults, apart from receiving basic literacy education, would be taught in a participatory learning process with the aim of making them look inwards

to societal development.

The reflect methodology would be based on dialogue and discussions in a participatory manner, with the circle members (learners) identifying problems pertaining to their communities, analysing them and proffering solutions.

Aliyu stressed that the reflect circle was also aimed at making adults resourceful, apart from sensitising and awakening them to become productive.



Sample preparation equipment: (left to right) metallographic sampling saw with diamond edged Made, thermoresistant Bahalite mounting press, and strips of grinding paper with successively finer grit surfaces.

Saudi women discuss role of science at Cairo forum

For the first time, the Ministry of Higher Education sponsored the participation of five women delegates from Saudi Arabia in a three-day international forum on the role of Arab women in science and technology which concluded in Cairo yesterday.

The conference, inaugurated by Suzanne Mubarak, was hosted by the Egyptian government and brought together delegates from 20 countries for an exchange of ideas on how Arab women could play an active role in harnessing science and technology for national development.

Saad Al-Hagan, manager of public relations at the Ministry of Higher Education, said the five delegates from the Kingdom were: Princess Mashaal Al-Saud from King Abdul Aziz Centre for Science and Technology (Riyadh); Dr. Fatima Jamjoom of King Saud University (Riyadh); Dr. Tahya Matmani of King Abdul Aziz University (Jeddah); Dr. Dalal Al-Tamimi of King Faisal University (Dammam); Dr. Sheikhah Ashour of Ummul Qura University (Makkah).

Al-Hagan, who attended the conference, said the theme of the deliberations was how Arab women could be integrated into the knowl-

edge community. The forum covered four main areas: The role of science and technology in the development of rural women; the role of women in science and technology; the economic approach to technology; Arab women and information communications and technology for development.

Al-Hagan said Princess Mashaal spoke on the role of Saudi women in the development of science and technology, especially in the field of environmental protection in the Kingdom. Another topic of discussion was tele-education and its role in national development.

Besides the ministry, public sector organizations have also started encouraging Saudi women to engage in scientific research. In a pioneering move, the Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) has set up a Prize for Environment named after Crown Prince Abdullah.

According to Ibrahim Alshuwaier, secretary-general of Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz International Prize for the Promotion of Scientific Research, the prize has been set up to reward both men and women who excel in the fields of applied environmental sciences.

The prize has been divided into three categories:

Environmental protection and combating desertification; petrochemical, metal and plastic industries; water and agriculture technology. The winner in each category will be presented with a cash award of SR600,000, besides a commemorative medal and a citation. The last date for receiving entries is Feb. 28, 2005.

In a related development, King Abdul Aziz City of Science and Technology (KACST) has instituted a third category for the Al-Mara'i Prize for Scientific Excellence, exclusively for women researchers. The other categories, for best scientist and best innovative work, are open to both men and women.

Secretary-General of the King Khalid Charitable Foundation Princess Moody bint Khaleed has also announced that the foundation will endow SR1 million annually to support post-graduate research studies by Saudi women. The amount will be given for a period of five years, specifically for scientific studies at the Research Centre of the King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh. Last year, there were six Saudi women students enrolled at the centre for the first time, four seeking doctorates and two working on master's degrees.

Arab News

Taiwan-US technology, industry forum to be held in Taipei

The Taiwan-US Technology and Industry Forum is scheduled to be held in Taipei Jan. 13-14, officials of the Taiwan Industry Technology Promotion Association (TITPA) said Tuesday.

The two-day event, co-organized by the TITPA and the North American Taiwanese Engineers' Association (NATEA), will bring together 150 technology experts from the Industrial Technology Research Institute, the Institute for Information Industry (III), National Chiao Tung University, the National Center for High-Performance Computing and various science-based industrial parks around Taiwan, the officials said.

The purpose of the forum is to conduct an exchange of viewpoints on the semiconductor, display, digital content and biotechnology industries, which have been dubbed the "two-trillion, two-star" project in Taiwan. On the first day of the forum, digital content creation, transmission and display technology

and business opportunities will be discussed, with Bill Anker, vice president of Activision, Chen Yen-kuang, a senior researcher of Intel Corp. and Chung Pin-jung, a manager of Intel Corp. making keynote speeches. Huang Kuo-chun, vice chief executive officer of the III is scheduled to deliver a keynote speech on business opportunities created by Taiwan's digitalization process, and many senior members of the NATEA will offer advice regarding the digital content industry.

On the second day, Vice President Annette Lu, at the invitation of the organizing committee, will give a speech and present the "Golden Root Awards" to enterprises that have kept their business roots in Taiwan while investing in other countries, while Wu Maw-kuen, chairman of the Cabinet-level National Science Council, and Lin Feng-ching, a member of the Science and Technology Advisory Group under the Executive Yuan, will make keynote speeches.

CNA News.

Japan sets technology goals

The Japanese government plans to set itself 10 national goals in 10 critical technology fields to strengthen the country's global competitiveness according to local reports.

The government aims to become the leader in the areas which include supercomputers and measurement and seabed research technologies, the Yomiuri Shimbun said, citing government sources.

The report also said bio technology, nanotechnology and other advanced science and technology fields in which Japan, the United States and Europe are in fierce competition, were to be included.

According to the paper, Tokyo had decided to narrow its major strategic goals to allow for an efficient distribution of limited budgetary and human resources.

The goals will be included in the government's third-term basic plan for science and technology, which will cover the period between the financial years 2006 to 2010, to be compiled in the year to March 2006, the Yomiuri said.

The strategic goals were set by a government advisory panel committee, the Council for Science and Technology. "The roots of the nation's vitality and presence in the international community lie in the international competitiveness of its industries," the committee said.

The committee set an immediate goal of developing by 2010 a next-generation high-speed computer to replace the Earth Simulator,

which was the world's fastest supercomputer when it was built in 2002, the Yomiuri said.

Concerning seabed research, the committee placed the greatest importance on discovering energy resources and useful microbes and enzymes and deciphering the mechanisms of marine earthquakes, it said.

Agence France-Presse

Call for science, technology awards entries

By Paul Vecchiato Cape Town

The deadline for entries for the seventh Science and Technology Awards is 31 January, says the organiser, the National Science & Technology Forum (NSTF). The awards are endorsed by the Department of Science and Technology with Minister Mosibudi Mangena being the official patron.

The awards recognise work in the fields of research, innovation, development, engineering and science and technology education. "Enter your work, your colleagues' work or your organisations' work for the NSTF Awards and you might win one of the prestigious trophies or at least gain recognition for your or their efforts," the official NSTF statement says.

It also says that even if the entrants do not win they might inspire others to take the route of science, engineering and technology.

IT Web.

INDEPENDENT CORRUPT PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED OFFENCES COMMISSION

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT OF STAFF VACANCIES

Applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified and experienced candidates to fill the following vacancies in the Commission:

1. DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

[a] ASSISTANT CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER - GL 14

Qualification and Experience: A degree in any of the disciplines of the Social Sciences or Humanities plus a minimum of twelve (12) years cognate experience.

[b] PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER - GL 13

Qualification and Experience: Same as in [a] above plus minimum of eight (8) years cognate experience.

[c] ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER II - GL 09

Qualification and experience: A degree in any of the disciplines of the Social Sciences or Humanities with evidence of NYSC discharge certificate.

[d] EXECUTIVE OFFICERS & CONF. SECRETARIES - GL 08

Qualification and experience: A holder of HND Business Studies/Public Admin/ Secretarial Studies from recognized Institution.

2. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS

[a] ACCOUNTANT I - GL 10

Qualification and experience: A degree in Accountancy from a recognized University plus a minimum of three (3) years cognate experience.

[b] ACCOUNTANT II - GL 09

Qualification and experience: A degree or Higher National Diploma in Accountancy.

3. PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT

[a] ASSISTANT CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT (LEGAL) - GL 14

Candidates must have obtained at least an LL.B (Hons) degree and must be a qualified Legal Practitioners of not less than ten (10) years working experience in the Public or Private Sector.

[b] PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT (LEGAL) - GL 13

The qualifications are as in 3 (a) above but with at least eight (8) years working experience in the Public or Private sector.

[c] SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT (LEGAL) - GL 12

The qualifications are as in 3 (a) above but with at least four (4) years working experience in the Public or Private sector.

[d] SUPERINTENDENT (LEGAL) GL 10

The qualifications are as in 3 (a) above but with NYSC and Law School Certificates only.

4. INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT

[a] ASSISTANT CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT (INV) - GL 14

Candidates must have obtained at least a degree in Law, Criminology, Sociology, Human Psychology or any other relevant discipline with at least ten (10) years working experience in the Public or Private Sector.

[b] PRINCIPAL SUPERINTENDENT (INV) - GL 13

Qualifications are as in 4 (a) above but with at least eight (8) years working experience in the Public or Private sector.

[c] SUPERINTENDENT (INV) - GL 10

Qualifications are as in 4 (a) above but with at least three (3) years working experience in the Public or Private sector.

[d] ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT (INV) GL 09

The qualifications are as in 4 (a) above but with NYSC Certificate.

[e] SENIOR INVESTIGATOR (INV) GL 08

Candidates with Diploma in Law, Sociology, Human Psychology and other relevant discipline with not less than three (3) years working experience in the Public or Private sector.

5. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT

[a] PRINCIPAL INFORMATION OFFICER - GL 13

Candidates must possess a good honours degree in Mass Communications, English or any other relevant discipline with at least eight (8) years post qualification experience in the Public or Private sector.

[b] SENIOR INFORMATION OFFICER - GL 12

The qualifications are as in 5(a) above but with at least six (6) years post qualification experience in the Public or Private sector.

[c] INFORMATION OFFICER II - GL 09

The qualifications are as in 5(a) above but only with evidence of completion of one year NYSC certificate.

6. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[a] PRINCIPAL EDUCATION OFFICER - GL 13

Candidates must possess a good honours degree in Mass Communications, English or any other relevant discipline with at least eight (8) years post qualification experience in the Public or Private sector

[b] SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER - GL 12

The qualifications are as in 5(a) above but with at least six (6) years post qualification experience in the Public or Private sector.

[c] EDUCATION OFFICER II - GL 09

The qualifications are as in 5(a) above but only with evidence of completion of one year NYSC certificate.

7. DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH AND REVIEW

[a] PRINCIPAL PLANNING/RESEARCH OFFICER - GL 13

Candidates must possess a good honours degree in relevant discipline with at least eight (8) years post qualification experience in the Public or Private sector

[b] PLANNING/RESEARCH OFFICER - GL 10

Candidates must possess a good honours degree from a recognized University in the relevant discipline with at least four (4) years post qualification working experience in the Public or Private sector.

[b] SYSTEM ANALYST - GL 10

Qualification and experience: A degree in Computer Science with 3 years cognate experience

[c] LIBRARY OFFICER - GL 08

Candidates must possess Diploma in Library/Information Science from any recognized Institution.

METHOD OF APPLICATION:

Applications, which should be accompanied by Curriculum Vitae and copies of credentials including evidence of previous employment(s) if any, should be addressed to:

The Secretary

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission

Plot 802 Constitution Avenue

PMB 535

Garki - Abuja.

Candidates are requested to indicate the post applied for in the top left hand corner of the envelope.

DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS:

All applications must be submitted not later than two (2) weeks from the date of publication of this advertisement. Only candidates that meet the requirements will be contacted for interview. Candidates who had previously submitted applications need not re-apply.

The Commission is not obliged to enter into any further correspondence on the outcome of applications submitted to it.

Signed

DR. T. B. INGAWA, mni

Secretary

Independent Corrupt Practices and

Other Related Offences Commission

Plot 802 Constitution Avenue

PMB 535

Garki - Abuja.



Ref: DIL 022 Inventory Manager

This senior management role makes a significant contribution to business assurance and continuity through advice and implementation of business control policies, guidelines and process as well as monitoring compliance. The role encompasses:

- Developing and implementing a system of internal controls over the company's stock
- Managing company warehouses including stock level planning, warehouse procedures and warehouse space
- Planning, executing and monitoring stock movement within the company's operating locations
- Maintaining, updating and controlling inventory records in all company locations
- Monitoring stock ageing to control inventory build up and obsolescence
- Designing and preparing management reports on inventory to senior management team
- Liaising with Distribution Manager to anticipate and plan exit strategies for slow selling merchandise
- Plan monthly inventory consolidations to maximize sales in key locations

The Person

The individual we require must be able to manage operations and teams in different locations; work well under time pressure and able to diagnose and solve complex financial problems. The person must have at least a first degree in Finance, Economics, Accounting or Engineering with a professional certificate ACA, ACCA and minimum of 10 years relevant experience (including 4 years at management level). A post graduate degree will be an added advantage. The right person must be competent in the use of computers to enhance work performance, self-motivated, diligent, and enthusiastic with a strong business orientation. The person must demonstrate strong analytical skills, leadership ability and the ability to communicate effectively

Ref: DIL 023 Distribution Manager

To ensure effective and efficient distribution of the company's products. The primary responsibilities include:

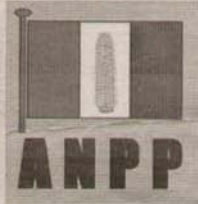
- Designing sound distribution management programs to ensure that the Group's products, goods and materials are delivered on schedule with minimal or zero defect.
- Coordinating the distribution process to ensure timely and cost effective deliveries
- Reviewing and approving the registration of third party transporters
- Initiating and articulating proposals for the development and implementation of distribution strategies, policies & procedures
- Preparing distribution cost build up for products to support management the Group's overall cost and price management policies and decisions
- Reviewing and processing third party transporters bills for approval and payment
- Investigating and reporting on transit losses/disputes in products deliveries
- Relaying pre-delivery arrangement information to customers, warehouse transport and inventory control to enable speedy actions
- Liaising with transport unit to monitor and ensure that delivery vehicles are booked and ready for timely loading and take off to destination points as scheduled
- Monitoring to ensure timely processing and approval of loading documents in line with customer requirements and delivery agreements
- Coordinating the process of self-collection by customers and distributors to minimise delays and facilitate timely release of good from warehouses/factories
- Monitoring to ensure that service delivery notes/way bills are signed by recipients and returned for filing
- Reviewing and setting delivery targets and standards to meet customer expectations
- Implementing a delivery control system, including verification of deliveries and follow-up on exceptions to ensure that the correct quantities of goods are delivered on time and in good condition.

The Person

Good under time pressure and able to diagnose and solve logistics and distribution management problems in a multi-product environment, the person must have at least a first degree in business administration, Economics or social science and in-depth knowledge of local environmental dynamics as well as State and Federal laws and regulations relating to haulage and logistics. The possession of relevant post-graduate degree(s) and professional certification and/or membership of a recognized professional body are distinct advantages. Minimum of 10 years working experience of which 5 years must be at management level. The right person must possess sound commercial sense, be extremely versatile, resourceful, self-motivated, diligent, and enthusiastic with strong analytical skills and leadership ability as well as good knowledge of a multi-product FMCG environment.

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdrive@ng.pwc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
Please note that only short listed candidates will be contacted.



ALL NIGERIA PEOPLES PARTY

KATSINA STATE SECRETARIAT

P.O. Box 1311, Tel:065-432471

IBB Way, Opposite Katsina State Investment House, Katsina

Date: 7th January, 2005

RE-PURPORTED REMOVAL AS KATSINA STATE CHAIRMAN

My attention has been drawn to a press release issued and signed by certain individuals in the ANPP from Katsina State announcing my removal as the State Chairman at a meeting held on December 26th, 2004 which was chaired by ANPP presidential flag bearer in the 2003 election, General Muhammadu Buhari at Daura.

Since the day Buhari joined politics and registered as a member of the party which I did for him as the state chairman in his 'Sarkin Yara' ward A of his country home, Daura, I have observed with dismay, the circles of sycophants and misguided element which surrounds him. The subsequent event later, due to the activities of these sycophants which Buhari prefers to choose as his representatives and advisers under the disguise of "The Buhari Organisation" have not only affect the fortune of the ANPP but it has greatly affect the relative peace being enjoyed in the party both at the state and National level.

Without being economical with truth, it was after the series of effort to get me to do the bidding of Buhari and his cohorts on certain issues inimical to the interest of the party met brick wall, that the Buhari group within the party issued a letter dated 29th September, 2004 suspending me as the chairman of the party in the state which was signed by General Muhammadu Buhari without following the constitutional provision of the party.

Following this development a committee was said to have being set up by the group to investigate my activities as regards the three allegations adduced for the reasons of my suspension without representative from the National Headquarter of our party. In their Kangaroo arrangement I was alleged to have operated in a way inimical to the court case of Buhari over the presidential election by signing a letter for the suspension of the party National Chairmah, Chief Don Etiebet. And also I was alleged of presenting two chairmanship candidates on behalf of ANPP to SIEC for the Sabuwa Local Government election in March 2004, while the third accusation was of collecting money on behalf of the party without accounting for it, which was tagged anti party activities.

It is noteworthy that while efforts are being put in place to further solidify the party pursuant to its slogan "justice" that some people are masterminding against my leadership which had resulted in the party winning 2 Senatorial Seats, 7 House of Representative Seats, 11 State House of Assembly Seats, 4 Chairmanship Seats and over 50 Councillorship Seats in the various elections that took place in Katsina State, among other notable achievement recorded under my leadership.

It is ridiculous to note that General Muhammadu Buhari who claims to be championing the cause of truth and justice will chaired a meeting of some stakeholders of the party on December 26th, 2004 in Daura his country home and endorsed my removal as the state chairman on the two charges of presenting two chairmanship candidates for Sabuwa and signing a letter for the suspension of Chief Don Etiebet as the National Chairman, without giving me an opportunity to defend the allegations.

On the issues of presenting two chairmanship candidates to SIEC by ANPP during the March, 2004 councils poll in Katsina State, the truth of the matter is that the party primaries was conducted for Sabuwa the result which was fully endorsed by the ANPP supervisor who is Assistant State Secretary Katsina Senatorial Zone Alb. Sani Bature Gafai, Divisional Police Officer, agent of State Security Service, SIEC and others. The results show that two people contested, Sagir Usman and Abdullahi Yau. Sagir got 1 vote, while Abdullahi got 70 votes.

In the spirit of justice which the party stands for, the name of Abdullahi was forwarded to SIEC on a form which was duly signed by me. To my surprised, Buhari phoned me insisting that Sagir's name must be presented to SIEC. Despite all effort to let him realised the effect on the party, he insisted. Then I told my other executives about the development follow which we agreed to forward the name of Sagir to SIEC without any signature.

The SIEC later wrote a letter to the party on the issue of the two candidates and indicated its intention to disqualify the two of them if proper thing was not done. Then the two elders of the party, Dr. Bishir Kurfi and Tukur Ahmed Jikamshi got involved and confronted Buhari on the issue which he confirmed to them. My greatest dismay was for Buhari to preside over a meeting were allegation on the issue was raised, and for his silent posture over the matter. This portray nothing sort of a deceit about a man championing the cause of truth and justice in the politics. The issues of signing suspension letter of Etiebet was a majority decision, nothing to do with court case and I have no regret of doing it.

To further demonstrate the hatred of Buhari towards my uncompromising leadership of the party, at the ceremonial occasion in Sokoto in June last year, I was sick and subsequently placed on admission on the 20th June of 2004 at Usman Dan Fodio University Teaching Hospital Sokoto before being transferred to Federal Medical Centre Katsina on 25th June where I eventually stayed for additional 31 days under intensive medical care. Throughout my 36 days of admission in the hospital I did not receive a telephone call from Buhari talk less of getting any sympathy message from him, despite the fact that I am the State Chairman of the party under the umbrella of which he is seeking the presidency.


Since my travails in the party, no meaningful achievement has been recorded, the saddest part of it was the ANPP to only won a councillorship seat in the election conducted in 28 Council Areas of the state on December 18th contrary to the achievements recorded when I was allowed to run the party effectively. I wondered how highly respected Buhari will succumb to the agenda of selfish politicians in ANPP who are working towards hijacking the party machinery in the state.

The ANPP in Katsina State is now in an unfortunate situation where the founding elders of the party like Dr. Lema Jubril (Dan Yan Katsina), and Alhaji Samaila Isa Funtua who contributed greatly to the survival of ANPP in the state have decided to remain silent over running of the affairs of the party following the preference accorded by Buhari to sycophants over the respected members of the party.

While I still remain as the state chairman of ANPP, I implore all our supporters to remain loyal to the party. We, the founding members will not quit, rather those who joined to destroy ANPP will be shown the exit way. Although, sad and painful, notable individual from Buhari hometown like Abdulrahman Dan Mallam, former Police Commissioner Abu Daura, Mamman Daura and a lot of others who encouraged Buhari to join ANPP have left the party, following the preference of Buhari to listen to sycophants and selfish individuals than loyal party members.

I thank the party supporters for their unwavering support for the cause of truth.

SIGNED


Alhaji Yau Sagir
(State Chairman)



Ref: DIL 024 Logistics Officers

The role contributes significantly to the effectiveness of in supply chain by ensuring efficient movement and delivery of the Group's products, goods and materials to customers and user locations. It encompasses:

- Route planning and management (determining which goods are going where);
- Arranging and providing transportation for the movement of goods, ensuring timely delivery of finished products, monitoring the goods in transit and providing activity reports
- Collecting and analyzing data on logistics requirements, performance challenges and improvement solutions
- Negotiating rates with third party transporters, ensuring cost effectiveness in goods delivery
- Generating confirmation delivery reports, reconciling deliveries and producing activity reports; maintaining all necessary documentation in orderly fashion for easy tracking and audit trail management
- Monitoring to ensure that goods are delivered in good condition, processing credit notes for goods delivered in damaged condition
- Maintaining accounts of transporters, liaising with the transporters, warehouses
- Carrying out comprehensive investigations on missing or undelivered goods, writing reports and following the appropriate escalation procedures

The Person

The person must have at least a first degree in business administration, economics or social science and good knowledge of local environmental dynamics as well as State and Federal laws and regulations relating to haulage and logistics. He or she must have logistics management experience of over 7 years in a multi-national FMCG company. Strong planning and organizational skills, people management skills, negotiation, computer literacy and communication skills are strongly required for the job.

Ref: DIL 025 Legal Officers

This role contributes significantly in protecting the Group's interest in all business transactions with the public through the provision of advice on legal matters and guidelines on compliance. The role compasses:

- Provision of legal counsel to specified organizational units of the Group
- Responding to legal issues as assigned, and counselling management in order to develop legal strategies and solutions
- Drafting, reviewing, and interpreting policies and procedures, regulations, bylaws, and other legal documents.
- Researching and analysing laws and regulations; educating and enlightening Dangote staff about legal issues
- Conducting and/or assisting in the conduct of legal research and analysis; preparing written and verbal opinions of counsel as needed
- Reviewing and preparing contracts involving leases, licenses, purchases, sales, insurance, employment and related matters
- Representing Dangote management, as assigned, in administrative hearings; participating and/or assisting in the representation of the Group and its officials in litigation, as appropriate
- Assisting in negotiating settlements involving legal issues or transactions on behalf of the Group

The Person

The individuals we require must have LL.B and B.L.; at least 3 years post-call experience that is directly related to the specified duties and responsibilities; ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; good knowledge of: principles and procedures of legal research, current and developing legal issues and trends, institutional policies and procedures, regulations and bylaws, and the legal environment within which they operate.

If you meet the requirements above, please forward your application and a copy of your resume electronically to projectdrive@ng.pwc.com quoting the relevant reference code for the position applied for the top right-hand corner.

Application closes two weeks after the date of publication
Please note that only short listed candidates will be contacted.

ABUJA TRUST

el-Rufai tasks Okada riders to obey traffic rules

The Minister of the FCT, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai has urged the national executive members of the Amalgamated Commercial Motorcycle Owners and Rider Association of Nigeria (ACOMORAN) to educate their members on the need to obey traffic rules in the Federal Capital Territory.

He made this call while he was receiving in audience the

... to secure motorcycle loan for staff

The Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) is to secure a bank loan to enable its junior staff buy motorcycles.

FCT Minister Nasir el-Rufai made this known when the Grand Patron of Amalgamated Commercial Motorcycle Owners and Riders Association of Nigeria (ACOMORAN) Senator Isa Kachako, paid him a courtesy visit in Abuja.

"We have concluded arrangements to secure a loan from a bank to purchase motorcycles at subsidised rates for our junior staff," el-Rufai said.

The minister, who described the Okada business as a source of employment in the country, stressed that it also makes those involved self-reliant.

He called on the grand patron of ACOMORAN to however organise the members on the need to obey traffic rules.

El-Rufai directed the Executive Secretary (Transport) and the FCT Directorate of Road Traffic Service to work with the association in the areas of support and technical services.

Earlier, Kachako had said that some of the aims of the association included regulating the activities of commercial operators all over the country.

He called on the FCT minister to have a change of heart about the motorcyclists operations in the city.

"We have to recognise and appreciate these young boys who operate these commercial motorcycles as it is a form of employment to our youth and also keeps them away from restiveness," Kachako said.

The patron who said that the association has set up a task force to monitor the behaviour of the Okada riders, emphasised, "we are more organised now".

In another development, el-Rufai, has called on Nigerians to contribute towards the welfare of the children of the nation's fallen heroes.

By Ebenezer John Baoro, Reporter (Abuja)

national executive members of the association led by its national grand patron, Senator Isa Kachako and the national general secretary, Alhaji Sani Hassan.

While accepting his nomination as national patron of ACOMORAN, Mallam Nasir described Okada riding as a source of employment to people and pledged the readiness of his administration to collaborate with the association.

The FCT minister promised to direct the executive secretary of transport and FCT directorate of road traffic Services to work with the association in the areas of support and technical assistance.

According to ACOMORAN Grand patron, some of the aims of the association is to regulate the activities of commercial motorcycle operations (Okada) all over the state of the federation and to ensure that all traffic laws are obeyed for maximum safety.



MFCT Permanent Secretary, Mr. Deji Omotade (left), with the Chief Press Secretary to the Minister, Mr. Kingsley Agha, addressing pressmen after an official function at the minister's conference in Abuja ... recently.

MFCT, Nationwide Transport Ltd. sign N10 bn agreement to import buses

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

Transport Limited, Alhaji Bawa Garba (ABG) who he said, is well known for his track record of entrepreneurship and business success.

Responding, Chairman of Nationwide Unity Transport Ltd., Alhaji Bawa Garba said that his company, in conjunction with COMIL, a Brazilian company, would bring in 250 buses annually for the next four years, bringing the total number of buses to 1,000.

Alhaji Bawa Garba also said that Abuja being similar

to Brasilia, the new capital of Brazil, would get a befitting transport system with added value services which would offer transport services at subsidised rate.

Executive Secretary, Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), Engineer Sani Alhassan, who spoke on behalf of the executive secretary, transport in the ministry, said the FCT is presently undertaking some major reforms aimed at ensuring the development of a good, efficient, clean and

cost effective mass transport system in the FCT.

He said the reforms are all-encompassing and would cover four areas viz: an integrated mass tourist system, a rail network, a modern taxi fleet, and the creation of a transport regulatory agency for the FCT.

"It would be recalled that in 2001, the FCT signed an agreement with another operator for the provision of bus mass transit service in the FCT, but for various reasons the operator was unable to

fulfil its obligation under the agreement," the executive secretary said.

He expressed optimism that the agreement signed will herald a new era in public transportation in Nigeria.



Nasir el-Rufai, FCT Minister

Muslim group holds marriage seminar

Worried by the frequent friction among married Muslim couples, an Islamic Da'awah Group (IDG) in Abuja is organising a seminar aimed at building solid Muslim homes.

The one-day seminar which has as its theme: "Towards Creating a paradise on earth: Starting from the Home" will be held at the conference Hall of the National Mosque, Abuja, on January 29, 2005.

In a statement in Abuja today, the coordinator of the group, Mr. Mutinillah Odelade, said the programme would from January be a monthly event for married Muslims and interested members of the public.

Odelade listed Dr. Taofiq

Abdullah, Hassan, University of Agriculture, Abokir (UNAAB) and Imam Fuad Adeyemi, Director, Al-Habibiyah Academy, as resource persons.

Others are Imams Abdul-fatah Adeyemi, Lecturer, Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa and Sheikh Tajudeen Bello, Imam Fouad Lababidi Mosque, Abuja.

Highlights of the programme include frank talk, counselling, home making and management strategies among others.

"This unique seminar is aimed at building solid Muslim homes with the capacity to achieve peace and tranquillity in the country, which is one of the aims of marriage in Islam," Odelade added.

Demolition: Kubwa traders drag el-Rufai to court

A group of traders has instituted a civil suit against the FCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, over a proposed demolition of a market located in Kubwa, a satellite town in Abuja.

The plaintiffs, led by Pastor George Ogbese, is seeking a Federal High Court order restraining the minister from "evicting, ejecting or demolishing" their landed properties in the market located at Phase IV, Kubwa.

Other respondents to the suit included FCDA and its Chief Planning Officer, Bwari Area Council, its Chief Marketing Manager and one A.Z. Dakwo,

an engineer.

The matter was mentioned today before Justice Binta Muritala-Nyako and was adjourned to February 14, for further hearing.

In the motion ex-parte filed by the plaintiffs counsel, Mr. Friday Odifiri, he sought leave to apply for the enforcement of his clients fundamental right to personal property.

The plaintiffs claimed that they were allotted open space plots by the Bwari Area Council

where they developed the market.

They contended that they variously invested huge sums of

money to erect shops in the market in accordance with the conditions and terms in their allocation papers and that they paid rates to the council annually.

The plaintiffs alleged that the Planning Office of FCDA served them a demolition motion and marked their shops for demolition without prior notice or attempt to compensate in respect of their interests in the property.

They sought the order of court restraining the respondents from carrying out the demolition and thereby interfering with the enjoyment of their fundamental rights to property

ABUJA TRUST

Kuje chairmanship candidate appeal election tribunal's judgement

The All National People Party (ANPP) chairmanship candidate for Kuje area council in March 27, 2004 election, Hon. Samuel Lanto has appealed against the judgement of the area council election petition tribunal sitting in Abuja over the petition he filed in challenge to the election of the incumbent Alhaji Usman Jibrin Wowo.

The appellant through his counsel, Chief Kerina Tunya appealed to the Upper court to set aside the judgement of the lower court, dismissing the appellants' petition. He also prayed to the appeal tribunal to nullify the election of the area council chairman, Usman Wowo and order a fresh election to be conducted.

Counsel to the appellant, Chief Tunyan, submitted

By Saidu Tella, (Intern)
before the Upper tribunal on Monday that the Lower tribunal fell into error in law to have assumed that Kujekwa ward in Kujekwa town consist of one polling unit whereas he said, there are five polling stations in Kujekwa ward during the election.

Meanwhile, tribunal in its ruling held that testimony given by four petitioners witness on the issue of violence could not be trusted because there is contradictions in their piece of evidence and struck out the paragraph of the petition in his ruling.

But, Chief Tunyan argued in notice of his appeal that paragraph 6 (v) of the petition which alleged that there was violence at Kujekwa ward was abandoned by the tribunal at

the beginning of the judgement, saying that contradiction, on issue of violence cannot be a reason for disbelieving the witnesses in respect of issue of time.

The appeal made on eleven ground along with particulars also argued on the decision of tribunal on issue of time which election was conducted as well as manner in which the election was conducted. "Conducting an election outside the official closing hour of 3pm amount to substantial non-compliance with the principle of the Electoral Act," he stated.

Here counsel to Alhaji Usman, Sam Ologunorisha submitted at the appeal tribunal that the time which election started doesn't matter once the election is free and fair. He added that no any place in the electoral

Act 2002 and amendment of 2004 that specify hour which an election should start and end except in the INEC guideline which he said that is not the law.

The appellant further argued against the decision tribunal when it held that the respondent remain an elected officer up to March 27, 2004 when he contested as chairman Kuje area council and his tenure as chairman of the council expired on May 29, 2002 (1999 - 2002) regime.

Sani Ologunorisha made in his submission the Alhaji Wowo was in office at the period of March 27, 2004 when the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) appealed to the president to make him to appoint some officers into the office of the five area council existing in the FCT among which was Usman Wowo.

Meanwhile, the five members of the appeal tribunal led by Honourable Justice Salisu Garba adjourned the sitting to January 27, 2005 for judgement.

Residents speak on benefits of GSM

By Shu'abba Abubakar, (intern)

The invention of Global system Mobilisation (GSM) popularly known as "General Street Madness" in Nigeria has brought about significant changes in the way people communicate.

Our reporter spoke to some customers at selected GSM commercial centres in Abuja yesterday, concerning the recent changes in the price of GSM, a regular customer known as Garba lamented that it is a great achievement in the country, initially people found it difficult to communicate because the charge is too much but now with this development we can talk to friends and well-wishers across the globe without paying much.

In addition to that, he said "my expectation by the end of January was that it will still go down to ten Naira or even less than that sometimes I used my personal handset instead of commercial especially if I load a credit because of the privacy and convenience," said Garba.

Abuja Trust investigation reveals that some GSM operators collect 20, 25 naira while others 15 naira per minute. Moses James has been in the business since November 15, 2004, he said the line determine the charges, although some operators uses about three lines to avoid overcrowding and also make more profit likewise, if one handset is faulty he can equally use the good ones so as to satisfy his

customers. According to Jibrin who engaged in the business two years ago, the GSM revolutionised people's life, he said: "I now have job, what makes me to start this business is lack of job opportunity in the country and I have responsibilities particularly, school fees for my brothers and sisters, and other basic needs of the family."

Despite that, another GSM operator who lives in Jabi area said he join the business because no one will sponsor his education he only comes out from Monday's to Thursday's that's means on Fridays and Saturdays he will be in school for his part-time diploma programme.

Furthermore, "before the advent of GSM I was stranded doing nothing anxious to get work in order to be self-reliant and solve my family problems particularly the schools fees of my younger ones, which I now found it easier," said Mustapha.

In related development, Yafis called on the federal Road Safety commission to take precautionary majors concerning those who use GSM while driving he said that could easily cause accident. He also appealed to the federal government to create public awareness and enlighten the GSM users on the peril involved in communicating while on the road.

AEPB commences house to house inspection

The Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) has commenced a house to house inspection to secure the quality of the environment for healthy living in the FCT.

A letter to this effect, signed by the board's director, Hajiya Hadiza Abdullahi, has been circulated to residents of the federal capital city.

A copy of the letter, made available to NAN stated that the board "shall from Jan. 1, 2005, commence daily house to house inspection to ensure that residents are protected from any activity or habits likely to breed and encourage unclean and unhealthy situations."

It stated that section 36 (1) (a) of the decree setting up the agency empowers its staff to enter any premises between the hours of 6:00am-7:00pm for the purpose of inspection, issuing of notices and arrest of an offender.

"Any person who insults, assaults or manhandles any member of staff of the AEPB in the course of his/her duties, is guilty of an offence," it warned.

It further explained that such a person on conviction would be liable to a fine of N5,000 or a six months imprisonment term or both.

Abdullahi told residents that Environmental Health Officers will be moving from house to house to inspect residential and commercial buildings and urged for cooperation.



Round huts earmarked for commercial centre at the Games village, Abuja.

Nigerian Turkish International College organises Mathematics competition

The Nigerian Turkish International College, Wuse Abuja has said that despite the fact students develop phobia for mathematics subject, the college has recorded hundred percent success in the junior secondary examination since the last three years.

Disclosing this yesterday in a press briefing on the school's 2nd annual Mathematics Competition, the Vice Principal Academics of the college, Mr. Anchor Joseph A. said the college which has been operating in the federal capital since the last six years has contributed immensely to the teaching and learning of sciences in the country.

Mr. Joseph A, who stood in for the managing Director, Hassan Aydogun at the

By Rabi Othman (Intern)

briefing said experience have shown that students have developed a phobia for mathematics subject adding that this explained why the college put in place the annual mathematics competition for primary school pupils.

The Mathematics competition involves two editions, the first editions of this competition took place in December 2003. The second edition comes up on 5th of February 2005, the competition examination will be taken place in eighth zones/centres within the 36 states of the federation and in two stages-stage one will take place simultaneously in that examination centre within the federation and the

final stage will take place in Abuja, date will be announced later.

Notwithstanding the benefits/rewards for the participants, the NTIC management has put in place hand some prizes/rewards for participants of the competition. During the first edition, a total of sixty seven thousand naira was spent, only in Abuja.

The main aim of the mathematics competition along with the scholarship is to encourage the students to gain interest in learning and knowing mathematics as a subject because mathematics is the queen of science, science is foundation of technology and technology is the bedrock of modern society.

Bwari council chairman tasks youth corpsers on service

By Maimuna Yusuf, Reporter (Abuja)

The 2004 batch B of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members, serving in Bwari area council of the Federal Capital Territory have been called upon to be loyal ambassadors of those who sent them and the community they serve.

The call was made by the executive chairman, Bwari area council, Hon. Tshah Dara Bwari on the occasion of the official welcoming of Batch 'B' 2004 corps members at the council chambers, Bwari. The chairman admonished the corps members to live up to expectation and to remain steadfast while undergoing their primary assignment. He warned against the carry over of cultism from their schools to their host communities.

Speaking earlier, the liaison officer (CLO), Mr. Essien Ekong A. with service No: FCT/04A/0104 had requested for while undertaking community projects.

The CLO informed the gathering and corps members

that many projects are already in different stages of completion. To buttress his claim, he mentioned the construction of a dispensary at Kogo village at Bwari central ward, the construction of volleyball/table tennis courts and a football pitch at Government Secondary school in Kubwa ward, with benches and chairs at Model and Pilot Primary schools Bwari which are self sponsored by corps members.

Mr. Ekong gave kudos to the councillor of Bwari central ward for his support and asked other councillors to emulate him.

In her remarks, the co-ordinating inspector in charge of Bwari area council, Mrs. Oludolapo Ahile thanked the chairman for his gesture and giving prompt attention to NYSC matters. She appealed to the chairman as a father not to be tired with their demands.

KANO TRUST

Dantata advised to redeem pledge

Alhaji Aminu Dantata has been advised to fulfil his pledge to execute a project worth 10 million naira in one of each 44 local government areas in Kano State.

Honourable Ismaila Yusuf Yauyasa, a member of Kano State House of Assembly, representing Tudun Wada constituency made the plea while noting the slow pace at which the Dantata endowment fund is moving.

Earlier on, it could be recalled that the Kano based business man had promised to undertake a project worth 10 million naira in each of the existing local governments in the state.

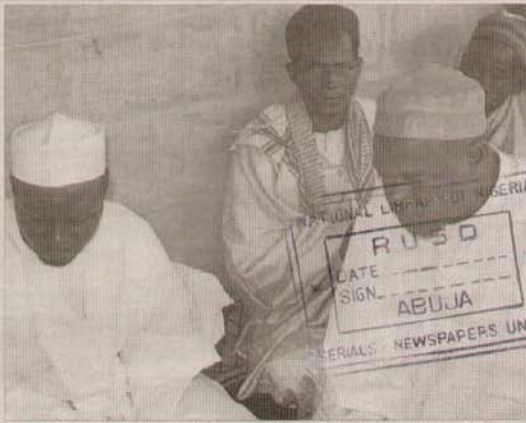
The pledge was in solidarity support for Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau administration through the Dantata endowment fund which was supposed to have started since.

Aminu Dantata who said the capital project will be carried out through

By Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent (Kano)

alphabetical order of the local governments in order to complement the works of the present administration in its human developmental programmes.

However, a member of Kano State House of Assembly commended the singular effort of Aminu Dantata, saying that the business man is capable of executing the projects considering his enormous wealth and called on all business individuals in the state to emulate this courageous virtue.



Governor Ibrahim Shekarau left, and Caretaker Chairman Dawakin Kudu Alhaji Sani Gani during a condolence visit over the death of Ubaie Isyaka Councillor, Dan Magina ward in Dawakin Kudu L.G., recently.

Two children die in inferno

By Jamilah Nuhu Musa, Correspondent (Kano)

Two children have been burnt to death in a fire incident which gutted their house in Fagge Kano State.

The children Shamsudeen who was 6 years old, and Osama who was 4 years died in the inferno, both were children of a Liman Mallam Lawal Fagge of Faggee DI ward.

Mallam Lawal who confirmed the incident said that the fire started in the early hours of the morning, when a kerosene lamp fell from where it was and fire caught the item in the room and spread to other areas.

The father of the children who led the early morning prayers at the Mallam Muntar mosque in the area said that he had gone to the mosque at that time, while their mother had come down stairs to attend to some domestic chores.

He contended that the inferno was the will of the almighty Allah and called for assistance from the Fagge local council and other individuals in the society, as according to him, property worth about 500,000 (five hundred thousand) was also lost to the fire.

Meanwhile the vice chairman of the council, Alhaji Tukur Mohammed, who consoled the family on behalf of the chairman of Fagge local government said that necessary assistance would be given to the bereaved family.

Road construction, rehabilitation gulps N100m in Kunchi

Over 100 million naira was expended on road construction and rehabilitation in Kunchi local government area of Kano State.

The chairman of the council, Alhaji Danlami Zakari Unguwar Gyartai, disclosed this at the weekend that the road construction was spread unilaterally across the local government area to alleviate the sufferings encountered through transportation.

Alhaji Danlami Zakari said the roads which include Kwanar Sadawa to Kunchi, Sabuwar Kunchi to Makoda and Garin Bello to Kunchi

gulped about N37 million and were about 95 per cent completion.

Roads from Kwana Uku to Unguwar Gyartai have so far been completed. While roads linking Kwana-Uku-Yandad Bagorma Shashawa to Shiwaki and Mata Fada to Kunchi will soon be awarded to a competent contractor.

Gyartai further confirmed the effort to connect the council with national grid at a cost of N40 million which will soon be completed.

He said his council has

purchased drugs worth N500,000 to be distributed to health sectors in the area coupled with employment of post natal and ante-natal consultant while health ports at Jodada, Gadabi and Kuku were constructed and fully operational.

In the area of water supply, he said his administration repaired and drilled over 30 hand pumps at the cost of N7m while embarking on the construction of 50 more pumps in the area.

Kumbotso LG to get 11 boreholes

The federal government is to sink eleven boreholes in Kumbotso local government area of Kano State.

A member of House of Representative, from Kumbotso constituency, Alhaji Bala Ya'u Bayero, disclosed this while receiving Naibawa Youth Friends forum.

Alhaji Bala Ya'u said the gesture is being made to facilitate portable drinking water to the populace in the area without fear of contamination through water-borne diseases.

He however pledged a personal donation of electrical facility which will complement NEPA's effort in curtailing the prevalent power shortage experienced in Naibawa area of Kumbotso.

Earlier on, the Kumbotso local government has put in place sixty electrical poles to be used by NEPA in boosting electricity in the area.

The Chairman of Naibawa Youth Friends Forum, Mallam Ibrahim Musa, expressed his satisfaction with the laudable projects being carried out in their area and called on stakeholders to render their assistance to the unemployed youths of the area through acquisition of skills or trades.

Ibrahim Musa called on indigenes of Kumbotso to

Cattle sellers record low patronage

Cattle dealers in Jigawa have expressed fears of a gloomy trade due to low patronage.

This development comes barely a week to the Eid-el-Kabir festival when Muslims slaughter rams for sacrifice.

An investigation by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at Sara market in Dutse, the Jigawa capital, showed that due to the low patronage, prices had dropped drastically since Christmas when they recorded appreciable increases.

At the Shuwarin market, a major cattle market in the North, prices have also gone down, a situation which has reduced the volume of trade.

Some of the traders told NAN that prices would further go down due to the poor patronage.

Malam Zakari Alhassan, a seller, said the prices of sheep and goat had decreased in the last three weeks.

An average bull is now

being sold at N40,000 as against N60,000 in the last six months, while a ram attracts N6,500.

The prices of sheep and goat also indicate sharp decrease, as a sheep is now sold at between N3,000 and N4,000, while a goat goes for N5,000 as against N6,000.

The traders attributed the fall in the prices to poor

economic condition, pointing out that the trend would reduce the volume of trade.

However, the price of beef has risen in the market, as many families can only afford to eat meat on Fridays and on festive occasions due to the exorbitant prices.

Six months ago, one kilogram of beef cost N300,

but the same kilogram now sells for N400.

Malam Hamza Yunusa, a resident of Dutse, said the poor economic situation in the country had affected their purchasing power and made some people to eat meat only on Fridays.

He said although prices had gone down, he could not afford a ram this Eid-el-Kabir.

KNSG spends N27.8m for Madobi LG projects

Funds to the tune of N27,894,06 has been spent by the Kano State government for the rehabilitation of bridge, and relocation of NEPA electric pole wire in Madobi local government area of Kano State, the Commissioner for Works and Housing, Prof Abdu Salihu, has said.

Speaking at the commissioning ceremony of the project, the commissioner lamented that the bridge has claimed the lives of many people while property valued at thousands of naira were lost

development projects are underway.

In his remark, the caretaker

He added that government's concern and readiness to do away with any predicament militating against the well being of the populace to facilitate its resolve to execute the project.

Prof. Salihu maintained that any responsible government will not hesitate to unmask timely devise to improve the living condition of the people, stating however that other

Chairman of the council, Alhaji Musa Iiyasu Kwankwaso, applauded government for excellent performance, saying the project will halt the increasing loss of lives and property caused by accidents on the bridge.

He said since assumption into office, series of roads projects were executed to complement government's efforts in reducing road accidents.

The council boss enjoined people in the area to make optimum use of the project and avert the activities of saboteurs.



Gov. Shekarau

EKO TRUST

Tinubu's stand on LG's election unconstitutional—FG

The federal government has said that the persistent statement of Lagos State governor, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, that he would not re-conduct elections into 20 constitutionally recognised local governments is a complete violation of the 1999 constitution and it negates his agitation for constitutionalism and rule of law.

In a press release made available to *Eko Trust* and signed by special assistant to honourable minister for works Legal Matters and public affairs, Barrister Kolte N.T. Oyedele disclosed that section 197(1) (B) and section 4(a) part 11(B) third schedule 1999 constitution established and specifically spell out the powers of State Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to organise, undertake and supervise all elections to local government councils within the state.

"No section of the constitutions that gives governor Tinubu the power to organise and/or supervise election," Barr. Oyedele stated.

He said that the only role assigned to governor Tinubu to compose the members of Lagos State Independent Electoral Commission has been accomplished since 2001 and described the statement of the governor denying the conduction of election to the 20 local government areas recognised by the constitution as hoax.

The special assistant to the Hon. Minister therefore called on the Lagos State governor to allow the Lagos State Independent Electoral Commission (LASIEC) to enjoy its independence and perform its functions as envisaged by the 1999 constitution.

"The interference of governor Tinubu constitutes an impediment to the establishment and development of democracy at the grassroots," he stated.

Barr. Oyedele also called on well meaning Lagosians to prevail on governor Tinubu to abate the suffering of the local government workers, traditional rulers by reverting the 20 constitutional recognised local governments and conduct elections to same as the backlog of local government councils allocations could be released.

The Police in Epe have denied any involvement in the upheavals which occurred in the town last week, which led to the death of two persons and property worth millions of naira destroyed.

The Divisional Police Officer in the town, Mr. Emmanuel Ajayi made the clarification in Epe on Tuesday while reacting to a petition sent to the Lagos State Governor, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu by the Chairman of Epe Local Government, Chief Kayode Muritala which in-



Commendation ceremony in honour of Mr. Olawole Edun to mark his glorious exit from the Lagos State public service held recently at Villa Medici, Victoria Island Lagos. From left, accountant general Lagos State, Mrs. J.O. Williams, Mrs. Adewun Edun wife of the former commissioner for finance, Mr. Olawole Edun former commissioner for finance and commending him, the present commissioner for finance, Dr. Adebayo Adewusi.

Police deny involvement in Epe strife

dicted the police in the mayhem.

Ajayi explained to newsmen that he mobilized his men when the crisis started to disperse them and in the process got three of the rioters arrested and taken to panti on the instructions of the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ismael Ajao.

The council chairman had in his petition to Tinubu alleged that the perpetrators of the wicked act were still mov-

ing freely in the town and that they had concluded plans to launch a fresh attack during the forthcoming Eid-el-fitr celebrations.

Muritala alleged that the crisis was sponsored by a prominent politician in the town who cashed in on the current face off between two transport unions in the town to cause the mayhem.

The council boss said the

role of the police in entire scenario left much to be desired because the people arrested were released the same day making them to be harassing innocent residents of the

town. He therefore called for a full investigation of the matter before it would degenerate into a full-scale intra ethnic crisis.

Reasonable pricing system expected from private sector -MAN

Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN) has said that a reasonable pricing system is expected to evolve with the introduction of the new waste management policy of the Lagos State Government involving the Private Sector Participation.

In an exclusive interview with our correspondent on Wednesday, the Executive Secretary of MAN, Ikeja Branch, Mr. Segun Ajayi-Kadir said although the association was appreciative of efforts made by the state government to rid the state of waste, it is expected that with the entrance of more than one participant in the waste management system of the state, it would lead to competitiveness.

"With the state version of the PSP waste disposal we had expected that with the entrance of more than one participant in the process, competition would have been introduced in the system and the private sector would have full control of the system, limiting the impact of the state government".

He said infusing competition into the system is bound to drive the high prices billed individuals and companies down but this seemed not to

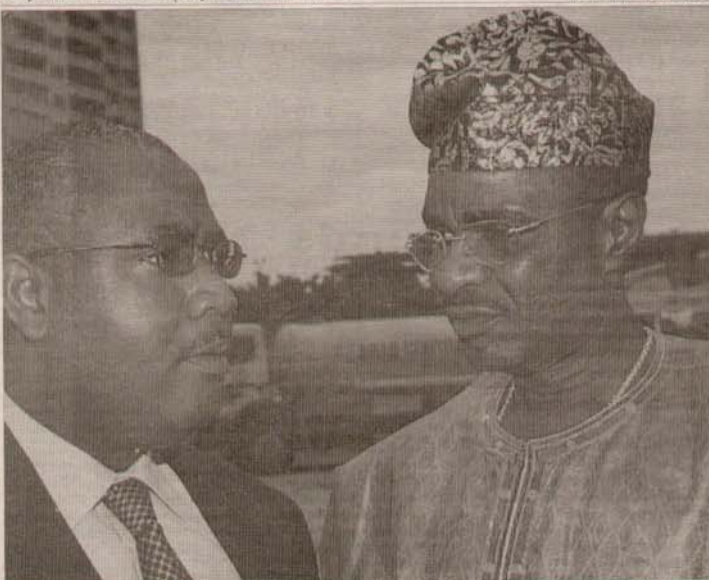
be the case as of yet.

According to Kadir, the Organized Private Sector was charged about N15,000 when its refuse was being serviced by Lagos State Waste Management Board but with the advent of the new PSP programme, the bills charged now range between N100,000 to N200,000.

He said it would be unfair to speak about the charging of bills by the PSP without service rendered in some manufacturing companies in the state because the association had protested to the Ministry of Environment and the Commissioner for Environment, Mr. Tunji Bello had written to say that there were some anomalies in the new system that was still being rectify.

He said the commissioner had also written in the letter that individuals and companies were free to make complaints to the ministry, which he said would be swiftly honoured.

"We still feel that the waste management system of the state can evolve a reasonable pricing system that would not impact too much on individuals and companies; the disparity in pricing is too high."



Eng. Akem Ghababamila, commissioner for physical planning (left) and Mr. Folarin Gbadebo Smith, chairman, Ikoyi/Obalende L/G at ceremony to flag off the Ozamba Mbadise Loop beautification project in Lagos...recently. Pic: Oluadapo Odunwole.

News

NUEE urges FG not to privatise NEPA

The National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) has urged the federal government to put off its planned privatisation of NEPA for now.

The Head of the Information Department of the NUEE, Mr Jos Ajero, told the News Agency of

Nyame advises public officials against distraction

From Bassey Ita, Correspondent (Calabar)

Governor Jolly Nyame of Taraba State has described undue distractions of the democratic process as the worst enemy of development, advising that public officials who mean well for their people should not be distracted by the tendencies of such persons.

Governor Nyame who was in Cross River State to inspect facilities at the Tinapa, Obudu Ranch Resort and Tourism Development Project, said that he was highly impressed with the infrastructural development being put in place in the state, particularly in the tourism sector.

He asserted that when completed, the project will be comparable to those in Dubai and South African in terms of commerce and tourism, stating that the Cross River state government's investments in tourism are capable of attracting the world to the country and the state in particular.

The Taraba governor described Governor Donald Duke as a visionary and committed leader who initiates policies and programmes that have both long and short term effects not only on the people of Cross River State, but all Nigerians at large.

On a possible partnership between Cross River and Taraba, Nyame said the Obudu Rolling Hills including the Ranch Resort stretches to the Mambilla Plateau in Taraba State and that they share the same weather in which his state will wish to partner with Cross River in the area of tourism.

He disclosed that Taraba State will run an air transport outfit in the state to convey tourists to the Ranch and Tinapa among other locations in the state.

Nyame who was accompanied by his Special Adviser on Tourism Development, Mr. Joshua Sangari and some officials of the Taraba State government, was conducted round the project sites at the Ranch, Tinapa and others by Governor Donald Duke of Cross River State.

Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos yesterday that "the country's energy sector has not got to the stage of privatisation."

"There is no country in the world that has privatised its electricity with it having about 80 to 90 per cent accessibility and by World Bank studies, Nigeria is still under 35 per cent accessibility of electricity supply."

He said though the workers were not opposed to reforms in the sector, it would be drastic for Nigeria to privatise the sector now that it was producing only 3,000 megawatts, as most communities lacked electricity. "Is the government saying that a private individual will have more money to run NEPA than the government?" Ajero asked.

"Nobody is talking of how the place would be administered after it has been sold; all they are interested is to sell, that is not the ultimate."

He said the workers wanted things done in the proper way.

"You don't sell something that is not there and it would be good-bye to rural electricity and industrialisation if NEPA is privatised as it is now."

Ajero argued that it was wrong to talk of privatisation before industrialisation, noting that privatisation was a post-industrialisation concept.

"When there is electricity everywhere as well as a level of circulation and everybody has the commodity, then the government can look into the option of privatising if it wants to hands off completely," he said.

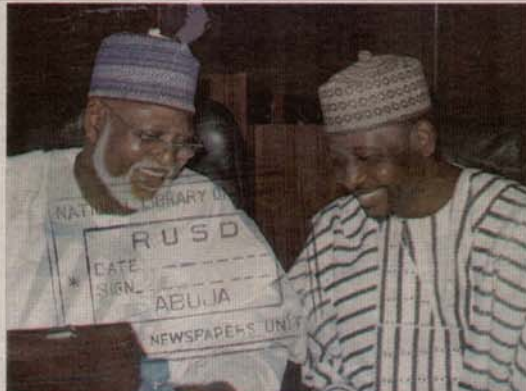
He urged the government to liberalise the sector, stressing that "those who feel they can do business in the energy sector should be allowed to come on board."

"The government should encourage public and private sector participation just like in the aviation and telecommunications sectors to come and complement what the government already has; then, Nigerians would be sure that they have a choice."

Dariye optimistic about peace in Plateau

Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State has expressed optimism about peace and security in the state this year.

He made the observation on Tuesday in Jos when he received a delegation of the Birnin Elders Council, led by the Gbog Gwom Jos, Chief Victor Pam.



Former Head of State, General Abulsalami Abubakar and the Zamfara state Deputy Governor, Abaji Mahmoud Aliyu Shinkafi during the Council of State meeting held at the State House Abuja yesterday.

Pix: Joe Oroye

Cattle sellers record low patronage

Cattle dealers in Jigawa State have expressed fears of gloomy trade due to low patronage.

This development comes barely a week to the Eid-el-Kabir festival when Muslims slaughter rams for sacrifice.

An investigation by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at Sara market in Dutse, the Jigawa capital, showed that due to the low patronage, prices had dropped drastically since Christmas when they recorded appreciable increases.

At the Shuwarin market, a major cattle market in the north, prices have also gone down, a situation which has reduced the volume of trade.

Some of the traders told NAN that prices would further go down due to the poor patronage.

Malam Zakari Alhassan, a seller, said the prices of sheep and goat had decreased in the last three weeks.

An average bull is now being sold at N40,000 as against N60,000 in the last six months, while a ram attracts N6,500.

The prices of sheep and goat also indicate sharp decrease, as a sheep is now sold at between N3,000 and N4,000, while a goat goes for N5,000 as against N6,000.

The traders attributed the fall in the prices to poor economic condition, pointing out that the trend would

reduce the volume of trade.

However, the price of beef has risen in the market, as many families can only afford to eat meat on Fridays and on festive occasions due to the exorbitant prices.

Six months ago, one kilogram of beef cost N300, but the same kilogram now sells for N400.

Malam Hamza Yunusa, a resident of Dutse, said the poor economic situation in the country had affected their purchasing power and made some people eat meat only on Fridays.

He said although prices had gone down, he could not afford a ram this Eid-el-Kabir.

Water scarcity hits Lafia

An acute water scarcity has hit Lafia, the Nasarawa State capital, and its environs.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the water scarcity, which has entered its third day today, has resulted in hordes of residents of Lafia roaming the town in search of water.

As a result of the problem many private borehole owners have cashed in on the situation to make brisk business.

At one of such boreholes on Abuja street, a long queue of residents searching for water, along with water vendors, was seen buying the commodity.

The scarcity has made water vendors increase the price of a 20-litre jerry can of water from N10 to N20.

Some residents who spoke to NAN said they had resorted to the use of unclear water with the inherent health hazards and called on the state government to address the problem on time.

The General Manager of the state water board, Mi Dubagari Abizabo, said the problem was caused by the non-availability of diesel to run the generators that would pump water to the public.

He said the board had ordered for some quantity of the petroleum product, but was experiencing some delay in the delivery of the material.

The general manager assured the public that the problem would soon be a thing of the past and called for patience.

Census: Ekiti Dep. gov. urges chairmen to create awareness

Femi Oladipo, Correspondent (Ado-Ekiti)

He urged them to give the National Population Commission (NPC) in the state the necessary support in order to ensure the success of the census in Ekiti State, saying their cooperation is necessary in terms of logistics to avert the unpalatable experience which the state had in 1991 during the last census.

He observed with concern that the Ekiti State area of the then old Ondo State was grossly under-estimated, saying the lapses actually affected the development of the area since.

Earlier, the Secretary to the state government (SSG), Mr. Ade Alofe who is also the Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the census in Ekiti State noted that the ongoing exercise and the head count are important as would be the first since the creation of Ekiti State.

He expressed the fear that lack of understanding of the importance of enumeration areas and their demarcation in the past had wrecked a lot of havoc on the state's political, economic and social fortunes of the state.

He said the state government should create awareness among the people over the coming population census in the country.

Aluko at a meeting with the local government chairmen and members of Inter-Ministerial Committee on population census in Ado-Ekiti, said the chairmen should also ensure success of the on-going demarcation of enumeration areas in the state.

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Survivors told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Ibadan on Tuesday that several other passengers were seriously injured in the accident.

They said the crash occurred when a luxury bus with registration number XA 695 MMA, travelling from Lagos to Kano and moving on a wrong lane, collided with another bus with registration number XV 49 KJA going from Abuja to Lagos.

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Some of the survivors were also seen at the hospital receiving treatment under the Road Traffic Accident Emergency Scheme.

20 persons die in auto crash

No fewer than 20 persons died in the early hours of Tuesday when the buses in which they were travelling in collided head-on on the Ibadan-Ife expressway.

Survivors told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Ibadan on Tuesday that several other passengers were seriously injured in the accident.

They said the crash occurred when a luxury bus with registration number XA 695 MMA, travelling from Lagos to Kano and moving on a wrong lane, collided with another bus with registration number XV 49 KJA going from Abuja to Lagos.

The survivors blamed the accident, which occurred at about 4 a.m., on poor visibility caused by the harmattan haze, as the drivers could not see clearly.

At the time NAN visited the scene of the accident, some corpses were being removed from the vehicles by FRSC officials, while some of the passengers were still trapped in the buses.

Mr Sola Akande, who led the FRSC rescue team, said the corpses were deposited at the Adecoy Hospital, Rir Road, Ibadan.

Some of the survivors were also seen at the hospital receiving treatment under the Road Traffic Accident Emergency Scheme.

News

Akume launches scholarship schemes for Sankera students

The Benue State Governor, Mr. George Akume, has launched a N10million scholarship scheme initiated to support students of tertiary institutions from the Sankera federal constituency of the state.

Named Hon. Gabriel Tar Suswam Scholarship Scheme (HGTSSS), after the founder and financier, Hon Gabriel Suswam representing the area in the National Assembly, the governor performed the ceremonial award of the scholarship to the 461 benefiting students at Katsina-Ala; headquarter of the constituency, Tues-day.

Mr. Akume who recalled distribution of furniture and instructional materials, donated by Hon. Suswam during the initial days of his second term in the National Assembly, described the scholarship

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

scheme as a manifestation of the lawmaker's desire for the upliftment of the social and economic base of his people.

"This is a wonderful gesture; it is commendable. If other well meaning individuals of our state will emulate this gesture, the sky would be our limit," said Governor Akume who therefore supported the project with a personal donation of N500,000.

He also called on the 10 other House of Representatives members from the state to put their monies in the education of their people, while advising the benefiting students to make full use of the opportunity offered them by studying hard to become responsible citizens in their endeavours.

In his speech, the lawmaker, Rep. Suswam said the problems of the constituency are bigger than others and thereby translates into both infrastructural and human developmental needs and aspiration of the heavily populated area.



Gov Akume

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has commissioned the training equipment for the unemployed youths in the Gwagwalada area council so as to acquire technical skills.

Speaking at the commissioning ceremony in Gwagwalada area council, the National Coordinator of NAPEP, Dr. Magnus L. Kpakol who said UNDP and NAPEP presented the council one auto electrical and mechanical equipment to address youths' unemployment, said NAPEP was empowered by the federal government to impart new skills and knowledge on the youths and women and provide them with resources to make them self-reliant.

Dr. Kpakol, who said the fighting against poverty must be visible, urged the Gwagwalada area council to help the executives of NAPEP in the Federal Capital

NAPEP/UNDP commissions training equipment

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi - Stringer (Abuja)

Territory (FCT) with the base line data of the level of poverty in the council so that they will know whether or not the battle was won.

Also speaking on some abandoned equipment for training by the six area councils in the territory, the programme officer of the FCT, UNDP Abuja branch, Alhaji Usman Abdullahi, urged the councils to ensure that the equipment presented to them to train the unemployed were used to achieve the set objectives.

Alhaji Abdullahi who revealed to audience that the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) released some money to unemployed youths on micro-loan scheme to be disbursed by UNDP, FCT branch, said the invitations

would soon be forwarded to all the area councils in the territory.

In his response, the Chairman of Gwagwalada area council, Alhaji Zakari Angalla Dobi, who assured NAPEP and UNDP for maximum utilisation and maintenance of the facilities, said that the council decided to add tailoring equipment to be part of the facilities.



Dr. Magnus L. Kpakol

Jigawa, B/Faso sign pact on agric, ICT development

From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent (Jigawa)

The Jigawa State government has signed a bilateral agreement with the government of Burkina Faso over the development of agriculture and information technology.

In a visit to Jigawa State over the weekend, Burkina Minister for Agriculture, Salfi Diato, said his country has perceived the development of ICT with utmost importance, hence its decision to prioritise and spend a lot on training of personnel in the area of ICT development.

He said with the recent bilateral agreement with Jigawa State, his state would now begin to train its manpower on ICT, thereby reducing the huge foreign exchange being expended on training in the developed world.

Diato added that his recent visit had afforded him quite a lot.

He also announced that Broni Prono got N68m while Abdul Hajaj Nigeria Ltd. was given N45m.

Additionally, contractors handling Sule Tankarkar - Maigatar, road; Finjingu-Jahunu, Kazare and Lamel township road, all got payment in order to facilitate prompt completion of project.

The commission revealed that government is determined to enforce the construction of all economically viable roads in the state before the end of its tenure as a way of boosting socio-economic development in the state.

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We need a manager to lead on learning support. The post holder will develop and manage an enhanced and exciting programme of learning support services, which meets the researched needs of our different target audiences supporting country objectives and regional targets. Take forward the development of core education networks, particularly the English Language Network as key support to the English language in Africa strategy. The post holder may also be required to undertake other projects as required by Centre Director and Centre Manager.

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Learning and Support programme

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- Manages Education Information services and resources, including education enquiries in line with corporate standards. Manages public access to education information service and develops proactive programmes for promotion to institutions and groups in Lagos.
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- Leads and manages at least one learning and development product or project (e.g. setting up distance learning programme).
- Collection management
- Collection policy on learner support resources developed and implemented in partnership with project managers and the senior management team, in response to customer feedback in line with Country Plan.
- Managing staff
- Personnel management of 3 staff in line.
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- Budget management as delegated by the Centre Manager.
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Inside Politics

AD criticises electoral bill

The Alliance for Democracy (AD) has criticised the draft electoral bill presented to the National Assembly by INEC,

saying, "it is full of imperfections." In a statement yesterday in Abuja the party that the bill "did not reflect the submissions and deliberations of the political parties at Kaduna and Abuja conferences organised by the commission last year."

It said that many areas highlighted to be responsible for electoral malpractice were left out of the draft.

AD alleged that INEC only concentrated more on acquiring power to disqualify candidates, saying that INEC was not independent enough to be given such powers.

"The reasons why the commission refused to avail the political parties of the opportunity to peruse the draft bill before submitting it to the Assembly are better imagined," the statement added.

APGA: Okorie denies N60m fraud

National chairman of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Chief Chikwara Okorie has denied embezzling N60million of the party's funds, saying APGA's total income stood at only N43million.

Okorie, who was responding to allegation of fraud and mismanagement leveled against him by a faction of the party, also denied that he operated the party's accounts single-handedly.

Speaking yesterday in Abuja at the meeting of the party's National Executive Committee (NEC), the chairman explained that APGA's funds were prudently managed as certified by external auditors if the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

"Let me state in my honour that I neither embezzled nor misappropriated the sum of N60million belonging to APGA as leveled against me by my accusers. I did not operate accounts single-handedly," he said.

Okorie said further that APGA received only N11.75 million from INEC, while the total nomination fees collected from candidates in 2003 election was N24.8million.

Thus as at December 2003, the party had generated a total of N43million. "From January 2004 to this day, no fund has accrued to APGA as a political party," he explained.

According to Okorie, INEC's auditors' report was endorsed by leader of the break away faction, who is also the party's national treasurer, Mr. Victor Umeh.

Reviewing events in the party since its registration in 2002, the chairman said APGA had grown into a formidable opposition party to be reckoned with.

He assured that the tempo would be maintained for the enhancement of democracy

By Habeeb L. Pindiga, Political Reporter (Senate)

and the rule of law in the country.

Group advocates Bukar Abba/Kalu ticket

By Opita Eyum Ene, IT Intern

A group, Tsangaya Association of Nigeria (TSANi) has called on Yobe state governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim and his Abia state counterpart, Orji Uzor Kalu to pick a joint ticket for the 2007 presidential race as presidential and vice presidential candidates respectively.

The group's national secretary, Ish Ibrahim Issah in a press release made available to Daily Trust in Abuja, said that the call became necessary as the global trend today is towards dynamic leadership.

"The two governors have shown such dynamism in their pursuit for peace and collective action for progress," he said, adding that they are most qualified to lead the country as president and vice president in 2007.

Alhaji Issah said that governor Ibrahim and Kalu were two humble leaders that have dedicated their resources to the achievement and sustenance of national unity and the development of their states in strict adherence with democratic standards.

"We have made far reaching contacts and the duo appear to have been accepted by a majority of youths, women and other segments of the progressive forces," he added asserting that the two will lead Nigeria to an unprecedented height of glory.



Discussing here are from left, the Education Minister, Dr. Fabian Osuji, the FCT minister, Mallam Nasir Ahmed el-Rufai, the minister of state defence, Dr. Rowland Oritsejfor and the Health Minister, Prof. Eyiayo Lambo during the FEC meeting held at the State House, Abuja...recently.

Pic: Joe Oroye

Middle Belt group rejects Ogbeh's resignation

The Middle Belt Alliance (MBA), a Benue State based pressure group has rejected the resignation of People's Democratic Party (PDP) National chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh, saying the Middle Belt region will not accept another exit of its son engineered by anti-democratic forces.

"We join other stakeholders in rejecting the forceful ouster through a purported letter of resignation hand-written on a plain sheet of paper under duress," said the group in a press statement signed by its programme director, Prof.

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

Ada Ugah in which he urged citizens of the region to whom the position has been zoned not to accept any overture to succeed Chief Ogbeh.

"We enjoin citizens of the region to whom the position has been zoned not to accept stepping into Chief Audu Ogbeh's shoes as his tenure still subsists till the next convention of the party or when he (Ogbeh) voluntarily

relinquishes it," added the statement.

Prof. Ugah expressed the group's shock at what he described as "the attempt made by anti-democratic forces to force him out of power by extra-democratic means," re-affirming its confidence on Chief Ogbeh's leadership of the party.

"We enjoin our teaming members and supporters of Chief Audu Ogbeh to remain calm and law abiding," added Prof. Ugah.

Oyun LG condemns attack on Gov Saraki

The people of Oyun local government council have condemned former chairman of Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, (FRCN) Alhaji Yekini Alabi and his group for destabilizing the area and attacking governor Bukola Saraki's administration.

At a press conference held at the NUJ press centre, Ilorin, chairman of Oyun local government council, Engr. Hammed Adebayo Ajimoti also fingered "some political ingrates who are currently enjoying both elective and appointive positions, for their anti-progress stance against the community."

The chairman accused the special assistant to governor Bukola on micro-credit, Mr. Raufu Lambe and honourables Razaq Taiwo and Raufu Olatunbosun from Odo-Okin and Oke-Ogun constituencies in the state house of

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

assembly for their unholly acts against the community and state government.

"It is unfortunate that people of untutored mind like Yekini Alabi and some political ingrates who are currently enjoying both elective and appointive positions could use the occasion meant to raise funds for Ojoku community to pour aspersions on the administration painting the entire Oyun people as if we are against the present administration," Engr. Ajimoti, who was flanked by community leaders, declared.

Engr. Ajimoti said "the dividends of democracy have been generously extended to our people in road construction, and rehabilitation works, renovation of schools, provision of health facilities, improvement of water works, and political patronages, among others."

Reaffirming the unalloyed loyalty and support of the people of the area to governor Bukola Saraki's administration, the chairman said those behind the acts of destabilization would be brought to book and severely punished appropriately to serve as deterrent to others in future.

The crisis in the local government council began on Ojoku day celebration with

for a commissioner for state duties, Alhaji Rasaz

the last administrative attendance an invitation to the community later received.

However, reports said the former FRCN chairman caused a refusal to be made by the Ojoku community with an apology, a development which set the community people against the ruling government.

Ohanaeze cautions against destabilising APGA

The Youth Wing of Ohanaeze, the pan-Igbo cultural organisation, has cautioned against acts capable of destabilising APGA.

"We are dismayed that the rank and file of APGA is about derailing the party," the Ohanaeze Youth Forum said in a statement today in Abuja.

The statement, jointly signed by the Forum's President and Secretary-General, Solomon Chukwu and Ambrose Obioha, respec-

Ohanaeze Youth Forum will not take it lightly with any person or group of persons, no matter how highly placed, to be a dog in the wheel of progress of APGA," it said.

The Forum called for an "equitable and fair assessment of the activities of the leadership of the party."

Sports

Italy salutes Inter's comeback

A stirring comeback from Roberto Mancini's men meant a dark week for Italian football ended on a high note...

Fascist salutes by football players. Hands up who thinks it's a disgrace? No, not you Paolo. Oh, I see. After three days of controversy over Paolo Di Canio's stiff-armed 'Ave' at Thursday's derby (and, yes, after Alessandra Mussolini's promise of a thank-you note for his 'sweet gesture'), this weekend Italy was delighted to find itself with another story to talk about - and a much more entertaining one indeed.

Naturally it featured Inter, team of a 1000 comebacks and a 1001 collapses, who this Sunday stunned Serie A with their most surreal result yet. Picture the scene: it's Sunday afternoon at the San Siro in Milan and amidst two large 'Ave Di Canio' banners, 59,000 fans are gathered to see Inter take on Sampdoria.

Samp were the first love of Inter's manager Roberto Mancini and currently lie neck and neck with the neozaristi in the race for fourth place. They arrive in Milan, however, without last season's big goalscorer Fabio Bazzani, who has, to all intents and purposes, eloped to Rome with a showgirl.

Inter make the early running, but a well-organised Sampdoria defence and a very off-form Adriano conspire to keep things goalless. Cambiasso and Vieri test Samp's keeper Antonioli around the half hour mark, but then three minutes from half-time the visitors suddenly strike, left back Max Tonetto sweeping downfield and catching Francesco Toldo out of position to send Samp in for their oranges with a handy one-goal lead.

Whoops, as Mancini no doubt remarked in the locker room. The second half begins in similar fashion. Mancini throws on a third striker, the Nigerian teen Obafemi Martins, but with Adriano producing more misses than Eric and Julia Morley put together (Hugh Hefner?) Inter

still can't find the equaliser. With 15 minutes left the Brazilian is taken off, for the first time this season, and replaced by Alvaro Recoba, but five minutes later it's Samp who score again through their substitute Vitor Kutuzov. Inter now trail 2-0, and when in the 87th minute a furious Recoba crashes a shot against Samp's upright, Inter's fans take it as their cue to abandon the stadium.

Their mistake, because here's what happened next: one minute later, Recoba picks out Martins just outside Samp's area, and with the outside of his foot the Nigerian somehow contrives to send the ball spinning round the keeper into the far corner. 2-1. Two minutes later in injury time comes another Martins gem; Oba Oba shaking off a challenge and leaping to volley a lost ball back over his shoulder into play and onto the waiting foot of Christian Vieri, who - thwack! - rifles it home. Get in, etc.

It was now 2-2, and Inter had salvaged yet another draw from the jaws of defeat - except they weren't finished yet. In the very last minute of time added on, Recoba grabs a loose ball on the edge of the area and, while clocks stand still around the stadium, cannons it straight into Sampdoria's net. 3-2! The San Siro erupts while Samp's players, who until the 88th minute had been enjoying a 2-0 victory, stand around quite literally gobsmacked.

"Extraordinary!" marvelled Inter owner Massimo Moratti. "This is a great advert for Inter and for football!" "This may be the turning point at last" agreed

Mancini, though in much the same way that your father used to say 'It's just around the next corner' on car trips.

This being in fact the eighth time this season that Inter have had to claw their way back into goals (December's late 2-0 to 2-2 recovery at Juventus being the previous highlight), turning points are one thing they're not short of. Still, it was a remarkable comeback and a victory which puts Inter back in control of fourth and perhaps even in sight of neighbours Milan.

The rest of the day's games

saw a further 25 goals scored - six of them in Turin, where Juventus overcame a Livorno side playing without any centre-forwards for a 4-2 win. Livorno manager Franco Colomba was fired the next day for, amongst other things, carelessly leaving the word 'strikers' off the pre-trip checklist.

Elsewhere, Parma - now under Pietro 'Gedeone' Carmignani - produced a 1-0 win over relegation rivals Siena, promptly causing Siena to fire their boss Gigi Simoni. And Lazio - who'd finally changed their manager over Christmas -

continued their fine start to the year. With former Siena and League of Gentlemen man Giuseppe Papadopulo now at the helm, they followed Thursday's 3-1 derby win over Roma with a 3-2 victory in Florence. Di Canio scored the first, just as he had against Roma, but was deluged throughout the game by whistles and calls of 'Fascist!' by the Fiorentina fans.

Fair enough, I'd say. The day's final game meanwhile produced the only 0-0 as, on Sunday night, Milan got held up down in Palermo, a noble tradition and all that. Much as in the recent Juve-Milan game in Turin, the rossoneri put in plenty of work but weren't able to get behind their host's

defences. Now, since Palermo had already held both Juve and Inter to draws away this season, the result is no disgrace. But it does see Milan slip back to four behind Juve in the title race, with the relentlessly spectacular Udinese closing in fast, five points behind them in third.

As fate would have it, it is Udinese that Milan must face this coming Sunday afternoon at the San Siro, a fixture, readers may recall, that the rossoneri managed to lose last season. Juventus meanwhile feature in the Sunday night game away to the fearsome Cagliari of Gianfranco Zola OBE. It all looks set for a dramatic end to the first half of the season, and for the delight of viewers everywhere both games will be transmitted live on British Eurosport. And on that happiest of notes, Ave to you all until next week.

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Sports

Stoudemire help red-hot Suns overwhelm Heat

Amare Stoudemire collected 34 points and Shawn Marion added 26 points and 11 rebounds to help the red-hot Phoenix Suns crush the Miami Heat 122-107 in Tuesday's clash of the NBA's conference leaders.

Hyped as a possible rehearsal of the NBA finals, the contest was dominated by the high-scoring Suns, who topped 100 points for the 18th time this season to improve their league-leading record to 31-4.

Shaquille O'Neal (34) and Dwyane Wade (23) combined for 57 points for the Eastern Conference-leading Heat but had no answer to the host Suns, who have made the best start in franchise history.

The Western Conference-leading Suns opened with 40 points, the most allowed in the first quarter by the Heat this season.

Winners of six straight games, Phoenix has been the NBA's biggest surprise, their 31 victories already surpassing last year's total of 29.

In Cleveland, LeBron James once again flirted with his first career triple-double while Drew Gooden notched seven of his 17 points in overtime to power the Cavaliers to a 100-98 victory over the expansion Charlotte Bobcats.

James, still wearing a facemask to protect a broken cheekbone, has feasted on the Bobcats, averaging more than 23 points a game in three meetings this season. He enjoyed another good night Tuesday, hitting for 29 points, nine assists and eight rebounds.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas also grabbed 22 points and 11 rebounds as Cleveland posted its fourth straight victory.

Gerald Wallace and Primož Brezec had 18 points apiece for the Bobcats while former Cavs guard Brevin Knight re-

corded 15 points and 20 assists.

In New York, Baron Davis and PJ Brown registered double-doubles as the New Orleans Hornets stung the Knicks 88-82 to claim back-to-back wins for the first time this season.

Davis claimed 21 points and 10 assists while Brown had 17 points and 12 rebounds as the Hornets improved their NBA-worst record to 4-29.

In East Rutherford, Rasheed Wallace scored 19 points and snared 13 rebounds while Richard Hamilton chipped in with 18 points as the NBA champion Detroit Pistons downed New Jersey 89-80 to end a miserable day for the Nets.

Earlier, the Nets learned they would be without leading scorer and rebounder Richard Jefferson for the rest of the season due to a wrist injury.

Jefferson watched from the bench as the Nets lost for the fourth time in five games.

In Atlanta, led by 18 points from Tyrronn Lue, the Hawks received double-figure contributions from seven players to halt a six-game losing skid with a 103-80 rout of the Milwaukee Bucks.

Al Harrington added 14 points to the Atlanta cause. Predrag Drobnjak had 13 and Josh Childress and Antoine Walker 10 apiece to deny the Bucks a season-best fourth consecutive victory.

In Memphis, Jermaine O'Neal drained a game-high 35 points, included two free throws in the final five seconds, as the Indiana

Pacers edged the Grizzlies 86-85 to snap their six-game winning streak.

In Sacramento, Peja Stojakovic nailed 27 points

and Mike Bibby 18 to help the Kings overcome Denver 109-100, handing the Nuggets their fifth consecutive loss and 11th in 12 games.

In Seattle, Ray Allen piled up 31 points to inspire the SuperSonics to a 104-99 triumph over the Los Angeles Clippers.



Phoenix Suns forward Amare Stoudemire, takes a shot over Miami Heat forward Udonis Haslem, right, in the fourth quarter on Tuesday in Phoenix, Arizona, USA. Stoudemire scored 34 points as the Suns defeated the Heat 122-107.

Net suffer Jefferson blow

New Jersey Nets leading scorer Richard Jefferson has been ruled out for the rest of the regular season with a wrist injury.

A scan revealed that the small forward had ruptured a ligament in his left wrist and he is set to undergo surgery in the next two weeks.

But Jefferson, 24, said he hoped to be ready for the post-season if the defending Atlantic Division champions found a way to get that far without him.

Jefferson attributes his injury to a collision with Detroit guard Chauncey Billups.

He was hurt when Billups bumped him on a lay-up attempt on 27 December, causing him to fall on his wrist.

"I wouldn't say it was a cheap shot," said Jefferson.

"I don't think it was retaliation. Was it a dirty play? Yes. Is Chauncey Billups a dirty player? By no means."

Dementieva opens with Sydney win

Third seed Elena Dementieva started her first competitive tournament of 2005 with victory over Elena Daminidou at the Sydney International on Wednesday.

The Russian, who beat Venus Williams to win a high-quality exhibition event in Hong Kong last week, came through 6-3 3-6 6-2 against the Greek.

Australia's Samantha Stosur beat Tatiana Golovin 6-2 4-6 6-2 and meets top seed Lindsay Davenport next.

And fifth seed Nadia Petrova thrashed Daniela Hantuchova 6-0 6-2.

Seventh seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland eased past Magdalena Maleeva 6-4 6-2.

Meanwhile, top seed Guillermo Coria of Argentina had to dig deep to beat Frenchman Cylil Saulnier 6-3 4-6 7-6 (7-3) in Auckland.

Coria reached the quarter-finals of the Heineken Open, but only after losing the second set following a late break.

Meanwhile, two seeds were dumped out. Dominik Hrbaty - a finalist in Auckland for the last two years - lost 7-6 (7-5) 6-3 to Argentine Jose Acasuso.

And American Robby Ginepri beat fourth-seeded countryman Vince Spadea 7-5 6-3 in another surprise result.



Dementieva

Johansson suffers injury setback

Joachim Johansson, who knocked Greg Rusedski out, was forced to retire through injury against Max

Mirnyi at the Sydney International.

The third-seeded Swede was 4-1 down in the first set when he

pulled out of the match with the hamstring problem he first suffered against Rusedski.

Johansson said it was too early to determine whether he would have to withdraw from the Australian Open.

"It's a new injury, I've never had it before," he said.

"It was sore when I was practicing. I couldn't give 100%, and at this level, there's no way you can win a match.

"I will go to Melbourne this evening and see what the doctor says."

Leyton Hewitt produced a run of five games on the trot in his match to see off Arnaud Clement and book a place in the last eight of the Sydney event.

Hewitt won the first set comfortably but was 4-1

down in the second before producing his spurt of successive games to wrap up a 6-2 6-4 win.

"Momentum changes so much on days like today when it's so hot out there," said Hewitt.

"Once you start getting down on yourself a little bit it can snowball but when you're positive it's a lot easier to play good tennis and win a few games in a row."

He will meet Thomas Johansson next after the Swede beat Wayne Arthurs of Australia 7-6 (7-4) 7-6 (7-3).

Taylor Dent secured his progress with a win over fellow American Marly Fish 7-6 6-1.

Andrei Pavel, seeded four, beat Jarkko Nieminen 6-4, 7-6 and Ivo Minar of the Czech Republic defeated Spain's Fernando Verdasco 6-1 6-2.

Els primed for Hawaiian hattrick

Ernie Els is confident his early season form will guide him to a third consecutive Sony Open title in Hawaii.



Els

The world number three has never finished worse than fifth at Waialae Country Club in what is the first full-field event of the PGA Tour.

The 35-year-old said: "It's a beautiful spot and three wins in a row here would be pretty special."

"From the way I played at last week's Mercedes (Championships in Hawaii), I feel confident about my game."

Els finished two shots behind eventual winner Stuart Appleby but, despite his good form in Kapalua, he warned:

"Waialae is a completely different type of challenge."

"There isn't the same degree of elevation change and the fairways are much tighter."

"There are a few more doglegs as well, so you can't just reach for your driver and bomb it. The greens are smaller, too."

Tiger Woods, who shared third with Els at the Mercedes Championships, has opted to miss this week's event.

But world number one Vijay Singh, Els' countryman Retief Goosen and 15-year-old prodigy Michelle Wie will start.

Wie missed the cut at last year's event, despite a second-round 68.

Sports

African soccer digest

A digest of soccer stories from around Africa in recent days:

CAMEROON - New national coach Artur Jorge believes Cameroon have to win all their remaining World Cup qualifiers to have any chance of reaching the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany.

Jorge was appointed as replacement for the German Winfried Schafer on Monday and tasked with ensuring Cameroon qualify for their fifth successive World Cup finals.

"It's imperative that we win all (five) of our remaining games. I'm hoping for success in this new mission, which is going to be an exciting adventure, but I'll admit it is going to be extremely difficult too," he told reporters.

Cameroon trail group leaders Ivory Coast by four points at the halfway mark of the African Zone Group Three campaign. The Indomitable Lions play their next qualifier at home against Sudan on March 27.

SOUTH AFRICA - Premier league leaders Orlando Pirates are to resign former South African captain Mbulelo Mabizela, club officials said on Tuesday.

Mabizela was sold by Pirates to English Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur in 2003 but had his contract cancelled last September after a series of disciplinary breaches.

Mabizela, who had several unsuccessful trials at English club thereafter, has opted to return home to continue his career at home also losing his place in the national team.

The 24-year-old was stripped of the South Africa captaincy after reporting late for training at the end of June.

IVORY COAST - A friendly has been arranged between the Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo in Rouen, France on February 9.

The match serves as a warm-up for both countries who have key World Cup qualifiers in March. The Ivory Coast hosts Benin in Abidjan on March 27 while the Democratic Republic of Congo meet Ghana in Kinshasa the same day.

The friendly in France will be the fourth for the Ivorians in the last three years while the Congolese had two separate training camps in France last year, during which two players absconded from the team.

BENIN - The African Youth Championships will get underway in Cotonou on Saturday with the eight participants playing for places at the World Youth championship in the Netherlands later this year.

The hosts will play Nigeria while the Ivory Coast and Mali meet in the other match on the opening day in Group A. Angola, Egypt, Lesotho and Morocco compete in Group B, which gets underway on Sunday. Egypt are the defending champions. The first four finishers at the championships proceed to the world championships in June.

Liverpool close to Morientes deal

Liverpool are on the verge of signing Spain striker Fernando Morientes from Real Madrid for £6m.

Morientes, 28, is thought to have agreed a four-year contract and could make his debut against Manchester United on Saturday.

"We are very close, it could be just a matter of hours," said Reds manager Rafael Benitez on Tuesday evening.

Benitez added: "I believe we have an agreement and I want the deal completed as

soon possible." Morientes must sign by the end of business on Thursday if he is to make his bow at home to United.

The Spain star would also be available for next Tuesday's rearranged FA Cup third round tie at Burnley.

Benitez appears to have won the race to sign the forward despite a late bid by French club Lyon, and a plea to Morientes from England captain David Beckham.

"We have tabled an official bid to Real for

Morientes," said Lyon's managing director Marino Faccioli on Tuesday.

That bid was thought to be around £6m which forced Liverpool, who previously had a £3.5m offer rejected, to raise the stakes.

Morientes is highly-prized in French football after his goals, while on loan from Madrid, steered Monaco to the final of the Champions League last season.

But it now appears he would rather stay at the Bernabeu than move

anywhere else should his Liverpool transfer collapse.

Beckham, a team-mate of the striker at Madrid, said: "I think Morientes is a star player and he is very important for the fans."

"He was at Monaco last year and now he is back here. I think he should stay here, but that's not up to me or the players. He's a good person and an excellent player."

Morientes was the top scorer for Monaco last season on their Champions League run, and was recalled to Real when new manager Jose Camacho took over in July 2004.

But Camacho lasted only until September, when he was replaced by Mariano Garcia Remon, who in turn was ousted in favour of Wanderley Luxemburgo in December.

Throughout the changes, however, Morientes has remained fourth-choice at the Bernabeu behind Ronaldo, Raul and Michael Owen, who left Liverpool for Spain in the summer.

Morientes has to pass the formality of a medical and Benitez said: "We have spoken about him for two weeks now and the player wants to join Liverpool which is a good thing."

"We are ready for his arrival as soon as a deal can be completed. I'm not sure how player registration works in England but we are hopeful that he could be ready for the week-end."

"We will use the player as soon as possible. The important thing is he wants to come to Liverpool and play for us." Morientes, who has previously outlined his admiration for Benitez, would become the fifth Spaniard to be signed for Liverpool by their compatriot manager, after Luis Garcia, Xabi Alonso, Josemi and Antonio Nunez.

Argentine defender Mauricio Pellegrino has also joined from Benitez's old club Valencia.



Morientes will be joining the Reds ranks at Anfield

Real linked with Gravesen swoop

Real Madrid are closing in on a £2m deal to sign Everton's Thomas Gravesen, according to reports in Spain.

Spanish daily Marca claims a meeting will be held with Everton on Wednesday to finalise the move.

But an Everton spokesman told BBC Sport: "We have had no contact whatsoever with Real Madrid."

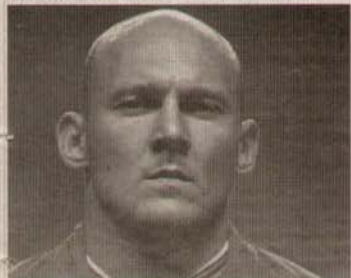
The 28-year-old is available on a free transfer in the sum-

mer, and Real will have £6m to spend when Fernando Morientes moves to Liverpool.

Everton manager David Moyes has defiantly claimed that he expects Gravesen to still be at Everton when the transfer window closes at the end of January.

Moyes said: "I speak to Tommy regularly and we know where we are at."

"There's been no contact. We don't want to lose him. We don't think we will."



Gravesen

Chelsea thwart Geremi hopes of Riverside return

Chelsea will resist attempts by Geremi to leave Stamford Bridge for Middlesbrough during the transfer window.

The Cameroon midfielder has been frustrated by his limited first-team opportunities this season and is attracted by the prospect of a return to the Riverside Stadium. Chelsea, however, cited his appearance from the start in the 3-1 FA Cup third-round win over Scunthorpe as evidence that he remains in

the manager Jose Mourinho's thinking.

"Geremi can get frustrated but he played on Saturday, so his timing's not the best," said Mourinho's assistant Steve Clarke.

"We want to keep everyone here; that is why we have the squad that we have. We have a lot of difficult matches between now and the end of the season and we will need everybody here."

Geremi said: "I am not satisfied at Chelsea. Mourinho is not giving me

opportunities and I don't like to be on the bench. I would prefer to leave."

Southampton have been offered Mido on loan from Roma as a replacement for James Beattie. The 21-year-old Egypt striker has failed to hold a regular place after moving from Marseille last summer.

West Bromwich have put the Swiss international Berni Haas and Macedonia's captain Artim Sakiri up for sale.

The former England



Geremi

midfielder Darren Anderton has signed a contract with Birmingham which will see him stay until 2006, provided they stay in the Premiership.

Panathinaikos have said their Greece midfielder Angelos Basinas will not join Portsmouth this month. A spokesman said: "I don't think there is any possibility of a transfer at the moment. But if they come back in June we may be able to sort something out."

The prospect of Liverpool and Everton ground-sharing ended after the city council confirmed that both clubs formally rejected the proposal.

Bolton willing to let Pedersen go

Bolton striker Henrik Pedersen has been put on the transfer list just five weeks after his contract was extended.

The Dane, who has scored nine goals this season, is being made available so boss Sam Allardyce can strengthen the squad to escape the relegation battle.

"It was especially disappointing to hear Bolton want to sell me after such a good season," he told the Manchester Evening News.

"I'll try and keep scoring and make it obvious that I want to stay."

Pedersen is one of seven players who have been put up for transfer and assistant manager Phil Brown says there is every possibility of major changes to the squad before the transfer window closes.

"There has been interest already," he told BBC GMR.

"It has set the ball rolling and who knows by the end of January we might have two

or three players in and two or three out."



Pedersen

Sports

Blatter commissions Technical Centre in April

FIIFA president Sepp Blatter will commission Nigeria's Technical Centre in April when the construction work is scheduled for completion.

NFA board chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima, who is on the crest of his new status as the executive boss of the football house revealed yesterday while inspecting the project at the National Stadium Complex, Abuja.

Galadima, who was visibly elated with the progress of work, said with the stride with which the project was being executed, he was certain the April deadline for its completion would be met.

"I was here first, just before the CAF Champion's League final between Enyimba and Etoile de Tunisie. Few weeks after, I must say, I am impressed with the progress of work so far done."

The board particularly wants the technical centre completed because the future of Nigeria football rests here. We want to build subsequent senior national team around youths that will graduate from this centre. The centre

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sports Reporter (Abuja)
will be a training ground for the untapped talents that abound in the country."

The chairman declined comments on the lingering hiccups in the football house noting instead that his board was glad that the technical

centre would be one of its legacies.

"The board is happy that the project is being executed during its tenure. The centre has pivoted role in the development of youth talents, and its serene environment for concentrated training for

both coaches and youth, makes it worthy of our total commitment."

The chairman said the NFA would explore the possibility of fencing the three hectares of land given by the Sports Ministry for the centre.

Galadima, who lauded the

Ministry for granting the NFA the land, led five other board members, Dickson Adejuge, Sabo Jumba, David Saleiman, Sam Sam Jaja and Orduen Dura to inspect the centre.

Aaron Nigerian began the construction of the centre on December 8, 2004 and should complete it within 30 weeks.

Omotayo, Ibrahim top tennis ranking

Top Nigerian men's and women's tennis players, Sunday Maku and Omotayo Ibrahim, respectively maintained their number one positions in the December 2004 rankings, according to the latest ratings issued by the Nigeria Tennis Federation (NTF).

While there were no significant changes in the women's rankings, where the top three of Ibrahim, Margaret Olagundoye and Alice Izomor maintained their positions, the men's group saw Toyin Dairo and Lawal Shehu swap places.

Dairo, who was number three in the last rankings issued in August, moved a step upwards to second while Shehu, dropped to third place in the latest rankings released yesterday.

Dairo won the Central Bank Open, which is the premier tournament on the NTF calendar.

Osaro Amadin, the female national champion and winner of the Central Bank Open, retained her eighth position on the ladder.

TENNIS RANKINGS

Following are the top 20 rankings:

Men	
1.	(1) Sunday Maku 252
2.	(3) Toyin Dairo 209
3.	(2) Lawal Shehu 179
4.	(4) B. Abba Mutami 167
5.	(6) Benjamin Baikon 162
6.	(7) S. Nwokedi 87
7.	(5) Muhammad Abdul 72
8.	(8) Michael Godwin 69
9.	(9) Moses Agera 67
10.	(10) Taiwo Owolabi 55
11.	(20) John Olu 54
12.	(12) Cansly Idoko 49
13.	(11) Sunday Easien 47
14.	(17) Teka Nambu 42
15.	(14) Tolum Tjry 42
16.	(10) M. Ighaviova 40
17.	(14) Ibrahim Westu 39
18.	(15) Okwadihi Ehirim 39
19.	(22) N. Onwagbufor 34
20.	(23) Sunday Ighaviova 33

Women	
1.	(1) Omotayo Ibrahim 510
2.	(2) M. Olagundoye 320
3.	(3) Alice Izomor 254
4.	(5) Hannah Eke 220
5.	(4) Nova Eozae 152
6.	(6) Aninat Balogun 122
7.	(7) Fatima Abina 101
8.	(8) Osaro Amadin 100
9.	(11) S. Ghoshanwi 87
10.	(12) Uja Bca 78
11.	(9) Lilian Amadin 74
12.	(13) Ngugi Dirisu 74
13.	(10) Imoke Ajulo 64
14.	(18) Blessing Samuel 62
15.	(14) Arinda Isa 59
16.	(15) Julie Uaguu 58
17.	(16) Pluma Kadiri 56
18.	(25) Binta Akigbade 54
19.	(17) Olatunji Ayo 54
20.	(20) Annet Oyeleke 52



Ibrahim Babangida of Kaduna Sitter polo team, right, vies with an unidentified player during the President's Cup contest at the going VMobile Niger Delta Polo Tournament in Port Harcourt.

Nasarawa FC recruits 20 new players

Nasarawa United football club of Lafia, has recruited 20 new players in preparation for the premier league.

The Nasarawa state Commissioner for Youths and Sports, Mr Silas Agara, told a correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday that besides enhancing the salary of the players, the state government had released sign-on fees for the players.

The commissioner, who declined to disclose the monetary value of the sign-on fee said the state government decided to embark on such efforts, to ensure that the club did not just participate but performed well in the league, due to commence in February.

Agara, who described the performance of the boys in last year's soccer season as "splendid," said he was optimistic that the club would not let the state down in the league.

He called on both the players and the technical crew to justify the state government's huge investment by performing well in the league.

A former international soccer star, Daniel Anokuchi is now an assistant coach with the club.

VMobile polo tourney underway in P/Harcourt

Lovers of the Polo game are in for a swell time as lots of entertainment programme have been put together to make the 2005 edition of Vmobile/Niger Delta polo tournament which got underway on Tuesday at the Port-Harcourt Polo Club.

By Ismaila Umaru Lere, Group Sports Editor

This event, which is the only Nigerian Polo Association (NPA) certified polo tournament in the South-South and South East zones, always starts polo season in the country. With all the

activities put in place, the fiesta promises to be filled with classic polo action as leading clubs and players in Nigeria have indicated their intention to participate in the annual polo fiesta. So far, teams from nine States have perfected arrangements to start moving to Port Harcourt.

Leading the pack is Kaduna El-Amin, mounted by Mohammed Babangida and Sani Gote's Lagos MRS, while Albert Esiri's Lagos Ashbert Raiders would be joining others this year to slug it out for the prizes up for grabs. A number of clubs are turning in teams from nine states for high and medium goals categories, which include General Hassan Cup and the President's Cup.

According to the Vmobile Nigeria HOD, Events, Sponsorship and Binna Ariwodo, "arrangements have been concluded for the successful hosting of the championship, adding that, Vmobile's key interest in the tournament as in others the company is involved in is the development of sports and the game of polo in particular

Gusau stadium for completion next month

The rehabilitation of Sardana Memorial Stadium Gusau will be completed before the commencement of Premier League next month, a top government official has said.

Alhaji Hassan Nasika, state commissioner for Youth and Sports, who gave the assurance on Monday in Gusau while conducting new sign round the stadium project, said when

completed, the stadium would accommodate 5,000 spectators.

The facility, he said, would have a dressing room for players, toilets and press gallery. "By the time the inspection team from the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) arrives next week, about 90 per cent of the work would have been completed," said Nasika.

The commissioner

appealed to the state government to release more funds so that the ministry could complete the job without hitch. The project would require between N20 million and N25 million more.

Nasika, then urged fans in the state to give the ministry all the necessary support during the league in order to achieve the desired objective.

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Election without choice

The recent local council elections in Katsina state do not appear to have departed from the usual pattern on the conduct of elections by state electoral commissions in Nigeria. Like the local elections conducted earlier in most other states of the federation, the December 2004 elections in Katsina give very little cause to cheer for democracy in Nigeria. Although many people have always maintained that state electoral commissions are more prone to manipulation, the problem of the Katsina elections may not have been too different if they were conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

It is no longer news that the election was marred by violence in many places leading to a number of deaths and burning of vehicles and houses. There are also reports of the involvement of government officials and even members of the national assembly in the subversion of the people's will. Of course the law enforcement agencies have since learnt to see or hear no evil as far as election rigging and manipulation is concerned. As the recent judgement on the 2003 Presidential election showed, the security agencies are active participants in the subversion of the will of the Nigerian electorates.

What is more worrying now is the brazen and organised way in which the will of the people is being subverted in the election process. It is done in such a way as to show that the electorates do not really matter in our democracy. How else do you explain the way in which the choice of candidates by all parties but especially the ruling parties is manipulated in such a way that only the chosen candidates emerge? This absence of democracy in the procedure for selecting candidates certainly undermines the legitimacy of the process.

The Tazarc syndrome which seeks to ensure the 'continuity' of the elected officials in the country saw serving caretaker chairmen foisted on the electorates as candidates for the ruling Peoples Democratic Party. It is ironic in these elections that the actual elections are an anti-climax in the sense that becoming the candidate of the ruling party whether PDP or ANPP means for most candidates in the council elections that they may as well start celebrating their tenure there and then.

Even with the dice so heavily loaded in their favour, it is a sad commentary on our democracy that people are still denied the choice of a free and fair voting on election day. Like many reports of the Katsina exercise suggest, thugs were sponsored to scare people away from the polling stations so that ballot boxes could be stolen in broad day light. Such stolen ballot boxes are then stuffed with thumb printed ballot papers in favour of the chosen candidate. What is even more puzzling about the level of collusion is the way such stolen votes find their way into the official electoral commission result. At the end of the election day, most people find that they had really no choice in who 'won'.

This newspaper is worried that this trend, which was evidenced in the INEC conducted 2003 General Election and is now being taken to new heights by the State Electoral commissions, will do great damage to our effort to nurture democracy in our fatherland. It will also make people to lose hope in democracy which is supposed to provide them with an opportunity to change their leaders through the ballot box. Without justifying the violent reactions to such rape of their will, it is important to point that the gross abuse of the democratic enterprise in most of the local elections and indeed other elections in Nigeria could pose a threat to the maintenance of law and order. It is axiomatic that when people are driven to the wall, they may have no option than to turn against those who deny them the one chance they have to show that they also matter.

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DAILY TRUST

THURSDAY COLUMN

Thursday, January 13, 2005

Problems of everyday life

Is'haq Modibbo Kawu
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Those who are familiar with the history of the twentieth century would immediately recognise that the title of my column today is located in one of the most important events of that century, the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. This is in fact the title of a collection of articles by Leon Trotsky.

Trotsky was one of the leading Bolsheviks who staged the socialist revolution, and the collection of essays I am talking about had attempted to explore the sources of rudeness, vulgar language, absenteeism and other problems of everyday life, with the assuredness that the post-revolutionary construction of a new state would provide a cultural ambience to overcome these problems. The subsequent history of Soviet rule, with the intra-party intrigues, the ascendancy of Stalin, the purges and the ruthless authoritarian state, all conspired to render those hopes of a cultural renaissance a failure.

I've recalled that interesting book today for a lot of reasons. In the first place, I was not really too sure of what to write on these pages this week. Last week, our Editorial Board's meeting had taken a very significant amount of time analysing the NEC meeting of the PDP. It seemed to be a good topic to examine, that was until Adagbo Onoja did his beautiful deconstruction of the Obasanjo persona. It became obvious that I can't be writing about such a serious subject.

The last week has in fact been very difficult for my family and I as my twins, Aaniash and Haswara, have been very sick for all of the period. The problem is the stooling that accompanies teething; the fact that they have lost a lot of body fluid has heightened my anxiety as well as taken the better part of my time too.

The last thought on my mind has been focusing on the problems of politics and their effect on our lives. But rescue for me came from an unexpected source, and therefore the decision to explore those problems of everyday life that underscore the confusion of our contemporary Nigerian life. We had published an article in our ABUJA TRUST pages, sometime last week, about a certain beggar who allegedly disappeared into thin air, after snatching the sexual organ of a man, and yet another beggar who also 'stole' a woman's.

The respected Abaji Maraji Dambatta had then written us a letter pointing out the incredulity of the story. We published the letter, but committed the mistake of omitting his name. Then just yesterday night (Tuesday), he had called me to poke fun at the series of mistakes that had followed the original story. We spoke about that and several other issues. I informed him about the discussion I held with the young intern who authored the story, and what for me is the mindset that would have believed such a story in the first place.

A few weeks ago, I had read in SUN newspaper the tragic killing of a graduate of one of our Universities, by a mob in one of the markets of Abuja. He had been accused of having 'stolen' the organ of a trader in the market. He never pulled out of his state and so was a promising life tragically wasted on a ridiculous premise. The first time I came across the bizarre story of stolen organs was during secondary school in 1972.

One of the students at GSS Ilorin, who had the rather colourful nickname of Mickey Dansco, had alleged that a man who had come to attend some evening program at the school, had shaken his hand and somehow, his manhood had 'disappeared'. That unlucky man was set upon by other students and derived from being killed but for some policemen who came to his rescue.

Then somehow during the final years of the Gowon administration, there were reports almost everyday in the papers of people alleging the same thing happening to them all around the country. The mob would set in and quite a number of lives were lost. It became such a security issue, that the government threatened a shoot-at-night policy against whoever alleged the loss of his manhood.

The fact that these allegations are still with us at the beginning of the twenty-first century, for me, is an indication of how far away we still are from modernity. There co-exists in the sub-conscious of most of us a melange of philopobic identities derived from traditional belief systems, some ill-digested religiousness and a half-baked or incompletely understood scientific thought process. So rather like a mongrel, the minds of a lot of us apprehend social existence with a veritable confusion. Otherwise, how would we believe that it was possible to 'steal' sexual organs and the thief

then disappears into thin air?

There are other absurdities and illogicalities in our everyday life, arising from the fact that we live in the interface between a pre-industrial consciousness and modern existence. Unfortunately, especially in recent years, modernity does not seem to be working for most of our people, when all around us the evidence of a failed state surrounds our existence; a Nigerian state incapable of securing the lives of its citizens, paupers and brutalises them, etc. Therefore, a retreat into pre-industrial, peasant-based mumbo jumbo has become more and more the order of the day.

A visit to our Universities today will reveal that instead of being centres of inquiry, disputation and learning, they are the hot beds of cults, of ethnic associations as well as of religious zealotry that is a throw back to medieval times. It's a problem that pervades our entire society, which seems to cherish obscurantism in preference of phenomenism. It is therefore usual to ask people to pray for the economy to work, instead of rigorously learning the basic laws of economic science. Similarly, our rulers exploit this tendency to obscurantism to further obfuscate issues of governance and consequent deepen the misery of the Nigerian people.

Everyday, problems of unemployment, petty rivalries in matrimony, problems of health care and the difficulties of a mal-administered transition to modernity are then mystified and often are exploited by all kinds of priests, mullahs and their ilk, again to the detriment of the people. It's like being caught up in a vicious circle. In recent years, all kinds of religious sects have emerged in Nigeria - from the most exotic Indian-souced meditative outfits, to the so-called prosperity churches - each one of them exploiting the lack of surety in the lives of Nigerian people, to extract money and loyalties, while the priests of these religious groups live in opulence and vulgar luxury.

Problems of everyday existence consume people's souls and in their desperation for a solution they make even greater show of being religious, and so allow those problems manifest in greater confusion and a need for deeper levels of material and spiritual dependence by our people; unfortunately, the charlatans who cat-in on this spiritual longing merely

the people's yearnings. I am not naive to think the rational thinking can drop from the sky. On the contrary, it is the product of a societal transformation, in terms of a seismic shift in the objective foundation of society, through a rigorous process of transformation of the productive forces and at the super-structural level, through an educational revolution. It is within this process of transformation that rational thinking can become the dominant pattern of societal life.

It is within these rational paradigms that we can then combat those bizarre tendencies to lynch people for allegedly 'stealing' the sexual organs of other individuals; see a witch as lurking behind every problem of existence or accept that challenges of national development somehow have an origin other than within the socio-economic or political frames and the international conditions which define them.

The rationally thinking individual is not easily manipulable and is the type of conscious individual who can understand the basic workings of a complex, modern society. He is an asset because his consciousness is in fact a deterrent against dictatorship and an aid to the flowering of democratic culture. In fact it is therefore, that when we can truly appreciate the interconnectedness of phenomena, simple problems of everyday life, somehow, can have very lasting impact on the social fabric of society? Then it is not a useless venture attempting to understand them after all.

But why does subjectivism retain an appeal for the mass of people in society and/or can be so easily manipulated by the ruling classes as well as religious mandarins at the expense of the people? There are no easy answers really. But it seems to me that it is a reflection of the pains of transition to modernity. In our case these pains have been unnecessarily prolonged by a Nigerian state unable and unwilling to midwife the process with a historical sense of purpose.

It is part of the manipulation I have been talking about, when for instance, President Obasanjo is broadcast on national television each week, during his otherwise, private devotion in the Villa Chapel. One of the many issues raised with the visibility gained is to impress upon the mass of viewers a commonality of spirituality with their President. The fact that he would leave the realm of religion to compound the problems of everyday life for the Nigerian people, with his neo-liberal economics policies speaks volumes about the nature of Nigerian ruling class. So unless we properly situate the roots of the problems of everyday life we shall continue to be overwhelmed by them.