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VOL. 10 NO. 47 TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2005 DHUL HAJJ 14, 1425 A.H. N80

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**NEWS**  
700 TB patients get free medication in Jigawa

**BAN GWA GWA NE**  
MISO UWA YASO DANTA

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The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has declared former assistant general manager and head of Abuja branch of Fountain Trust Bank, Mr Francis Oluhenga Ajala, wanted.

According to a press statement signed by the commission's head of media and publicity, Ostita Nwaja,

## Balogun: EFCC declares former bank manager wanted

By Anas A. Galadins, Reporter (Business)

Mr Ajala is wanted for questioning over allegations of conspiracy, stealing, official corruption and money laundering.

Daily Trust gathered that the manhunt by the EFCC may not be unconnected with investigations currently going on over alleged finan-

cial misappropriations levelled against former Inspector-General of Police, Tafa Balogun.

It will be recalled that after his retirement from the force last week, the EFCC chairman,

Nuhu Ribadu revealed that the commission is investigating the former police boss over alleged lodgements of substantial amounts in several bank accounts including one in Fountain Trust Bank.

A reliable source also informed Daily Trust last week that the EFCC had

discovered about N1 billion in an account in Fountain Trust Bank allegedly linked to Tafa Balogun.

The source who is with the commission also revealed that "the huge funds in that account was actually meant for some police welfare but was diverted."

Nuhu Ribadu himself confirmed that the commission is currently interrogating some top officials of Fountain Trust Bank who may have colluded to facilitate the diversion of the alleged stolen funds.

A source revealed that former managing director of the bank may have been arrested in connection with

Contd. on Pg 2

## MONEY LAUNDERING

# London police probe more Nigerians

The two British detectives in Nigeria to testify in the money laundering charges against Governor Joshua Dariye say there are several other Nigerians being investigated in the United Kingdom.

Messrs Robert (Bob) Ingram and Peter Clark of the London Metropolitan Police, told newsmen at the high court premises in Kaduna yesterday, that Dariye's case was the one they detected earlier and pursuing up to

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief, Kaduna

this end.

The detectives who said they were cautious so as not to prejudice any case by mentioning specific details, said they are working in a joint operation with the EFCC.

The encounter went thus: **Question:** You are here to testify in this money laun-

dering case. What specific evidence do you have?

**Answer:** The evidence has been obtained over a long time from various financial institutions in London. Most of the evidence is bank related and we have been

working quietly with the EFCC. It has been a joint operation between the UK and Nigeria.

**Question:** What exactly do you have that you think can nail the accused? Did you find money on them?

**Answer:** I cannot comment on that because it could

prejudice the court's case that might be happening in London. If I mention what we have actually got, it could cause damage to the other case.

**Question:** What are actually your functions in

London?

**Answer:** Our functions in London is to investigate all forms of financial crimes, for example, money laundering, confiscation and forfeiture.

We undertake such inquiries in London.

**Question:** Are you here Contd. on Pg 2

## Passport syndicate uncovered in Jeddah

The Amirul Hajj and head of the federal government delegation to this year's Hajj, Senator Ibrahim Mannu, has uncovered a hajj passport racketeering as a result of which over 600 Nigerian pilgrims were detained last week at King Abdulaziz airport, Jeddah for over ten hours.

The affected pilgrims **Mahmoud Atta dies at 74**

● **CNPP pays tribute**

By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political reporter

The death has occurred of elder statesman, politician and administrator, Alhaji Mahmood Atta. He died Sunday night in a London hospital at 74.

Until his death, the late Galadima of Ebiraland was the chairman of the Nigerian People's Congress (NPC) and treasurer of the Conference of Nigerian Political

Contd. on Pg 2

From Isa Sanusi, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

including top government officials could not secure pilgrims passports as a result of which they had to pay a royalty of 300 dollars before entering Saudi Arabia.

At a meeting yesterday in Jeddah with hajj officials the Amirul Hajj expressed displeasure over the malpractices and what he described as hoarding of pilgrims passports by the agency responsible, threatening that the act will not go unpunished.

"I want to express my displeasure over malpractices involving travelling documents and other issues that have to do with immigration formalities. This is a religious affair and we are all muslims and for some of us who were privileged to serve our fellow muslims, we then take this thing as a means of making money, I'm so disturbed and depressed. Passports were hoarded. We produced 60,000 pilgrims passport. We don't have more

Contd. on Pg 2



Justice Samson O. Uwaifo (ret) middle, flanked by Justice Katsina Alu (right) and Justice Niki Tobi (left), during the valedictory session held for the retired justice at the Supreme Court, Abuja...yesterday. Pic: Kennedy Egbomede.

## Justice Uwaifo criticizes appointment of Appeal Court Justices

Justice Samson Uwaifo who retired from the Supreme Court yesterday, has criticized the appointment of Court of Appeal Justices, describing it as a matter of good fortune or a chance.

The National Judicial Council (NJC) had last year appointed Justice Mary Odili, Justice M. O. Kekere-

By Kemi Ogedengbe, Judicial Editor

Ekun, Justice M. M. Garba from Zamfara, Justice Uwani Musa Abba Aji from Yobe State, Justice Abdullahi Tijani, Jigawa and Justice Jean Omokiri from Delta State to the Court of Appeal.

But Justice Uwaifo who delivered his valedictory

speech at the Supreme Court yesterday, said that it was not clear what verifiable criteria were used to ensure the suitability and capability of those appointed.

He said "but whenever any of those appointed prove indeed suitable and capable, it is rather a matter of good fortune or chance.

Even those about whom there is common knowledge of corruption pass through and those with skewed appreciation of legal principles and lazy ones may similarly benefit."

He added, "There are certain imperatives which must not be compromised or overlooked if a particular appoint-

Contd. on Pg 2

# NEWS

## BPE, NICON may clash over sale of properties

By Ahmed I. Shekaran,  
Group Business Editor

Another disagreement is currently brewing between the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) and insurance giant, NICON Insurance Corporation (NICON) over attempts by the insurance company to sell off many of its landed properties across the country.

Among the properties slated for sale are an imposing edifice on Lagos island, which generates about N17 million yearly as rent and another one which generates N11.3 million annually, also located on Lagos island.

There are also 23 other properties in various parts of Lagos which generate different amounts for the insurance firm, as well as 46 others spread across some major Nigerian cities such as Abuja, Kano, Port Harcourt,

arrangement of NICON and lamented that the management of NICON did not bring up the matter at the meeting.

The BPE boss reminded the management of NICON that it was against the rules of the federal government in its on-going privatization programme for any enterprise slated for sale to dispose its landed properties or any other asset(s).

Initial attempts to get the managing director of NICON, Ms. Prisca Soares, to confirm or deny the issue proved abortive as she was said to be attending a crucial meeting. However subsequent attempts yielded results as

Soares' personal assistant, Nikiru Ashara, confirmed that NICON has sent a list of old vehicles to be disposed to the ministry of finance.

On further promptings, Nikiru also confirmed that the properties to be sold were the ones already vacated by the insurance company but was quick to point out that the list of properties has been sent to the federal ministry of finance for vetting.

It was reliably gathered that the board of NICON, chaired by the permanent secretary of the federal ministry of finance, Ali Haruna Sanusi, will meet tomorrow in Abuja to deliberate the issue.

## FG attracts \$8b foreign investment

Another foreign investment worth about 8.15 billion dollars is expected this year as the federal government's effort to attract such investments continue to yield results.

Officials of the investing firms, Artis, UK and the Emerging Markets Partners (EMP), were at the state house yesterday to brief President Olusegun Obasanjo on their areas of interest, which included among others, the agro-allied sector and fixed telecommunication.

Communications minister, Cornelius Adebayo and the chief executive of Starcom

Network, a telecommunication company, Mr Dirk Smart, led the officials to the meeting with Obasanjo.

At the weekend in Abokuta, the president had announced that about 70 billion dollars will be spent in 10 years on the establishment of an LNG plant in Oloko, near the Ogun State capital.

Artis is interested in investing about 15 million dollars in the agro-allied sector, while the EMP, a Commonwealth Development Association funds manager will bring in a consortium of companies that will invest eight billion dollars.

## Mahmoud

Parties (CNPP).

Atta was also a retired police officer, public administrator, community leader, traditional title holder, diplomat, philanthropist and captain of industries.

He served as Senior Protocol Officer to late Premier Bello and was former Chancellor/Pro-chancellor and Chairman of Council, Kogi state university (2000-2003), former chairman of the Ajaokuta Steel Company (1987-1989), Nigerian Merchant Bank (1989-1993) and First Bank of Nigeria Plc (1994-1999).

Atta was also member of the president of the Nigerian Bar Association, Chief Bayo Ojo (SAN) used the occasion to warn legal practitioners rubbishing the reputation of justices of the Supreme Court and the court itself over unwarranted and unfounded allegations during the Ibori saga.

He said, "The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), will not fold its arms and allow disgruntled elements who rather than pursue the next stage of their case diligently, choose to malign the Supreme Court."

He noted, "A case in point is that of Mr Moses Oddiri and Andrew Oru who are making spurious allegations against some justices of the Supreme Court and the High Court. Instead of pursuing their cases in the law courts, these clandestine acts are not only embarrassing for the bar but are capable of eroding public confidence in the judiciary."

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## London

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The fourth issue the lead defence counsel raised was whether the powers conferred on the EFCC by section 6(d) and 24-33 of its enabling Act is not inconsistent with sections 35(1), 36(5) and 44 of the constitution. This section deals with the confiscation or forfeiture of property of persons arrested by the EFCC.

Finally, the defence counsel argued that whether the powers conferred on the EFCC by the EFCC Act in so far as they authorize investigation and other actions with respect to matters within the exclusive competence of a state government, are not inconsistent with the provisions of the constitution assigning certain matters exclusively to the state government.

Nwabueze therefore submitted that "the powers given to the EFCC with respect to investigation with compressive powers to detect, arrest, detain and confiscate property is unconstitutional, null and void."

The prosecution counsel, Mr Chike Okoronoma, in his response, argued that the executive and the legislature had the right to create the EFCC.

He said the powers to prosecute was not exclusive to the Attorney-General and the police adding that individuals and government agencies have the powers to prosecute and dismissed the argument over confiscation or seizure of property as irrelevant. He also pointed out that the provision in section 44 of the EFCC Act was not contrary to the constitution.

The presiding judge, Justice Abdullahi Liman, reserved ruling on the application to tomorrow and continuation of the trial.

The two prosecution witnesses from the Metropolitan Police in London could not testify yesterday but may have their turns when hearing resumes tomorrow.

Justice Uwaifo also lamented the gross abuse of office by high court judges and judicial officers, saying that personal experience and comments by the public has revealed a great concern about the lowering of standards in the judiciary.

He noted, "It was once thought to be only in the magistracy because of the disturbing way some of the personnel tended to abuse their office. It gradually crawled to the High Court and would appear to have a foothold among a noticeable number of judicial officers."

Uwaifo noted, "There is the aspect of their attitude and orientation to duty, late sitting, laziness, incompetence, doubtful integrity and impertinence towards counsel. Now there is real apprehension that the appellate courts may soon be infested, if not already contaminated by some of these vices."

He therefore suggested that anyone with negative public opinion or corruption allegations has no business on the bench or if already there, should not be appointed to a higher position, while lazy judges should not be appointed to the court of appeal while the seniority should not be a major factor for consideration.

Speaking at the occasion, Chief Kehinde Sofola (SAN), who spoke on behalf of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN), said that retiring Justice Uwaifo exhibited great authority in all the subjects on which he was opportuned to deliver a judgment or ruling, adding that only on rare occasions did his colleagues dissent with his judgments.

He said, "his lordship's simplicity of language and lucidity of expression. One does not need to strain one's imagination in order to follow his composition and review of the lengthy arguments and submissions of counsels."

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## Justice

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on the invitation of the federal government or the EFCC?

**Answer:** We are working in conjunction with the EFCC and we have nothing to do with the government at all.

**Question:** There are many Nigerians who have a lot of money in London. Why did you pick on this particular one?

**Answer:** It is just that we came across this case early and we pursued it to this particular end.

**Question:** Is it only one Nigerian you have arrested in connection with such crimes?

**Answer:** Several people have been arrested in the UK and are under investigation.

**Question:** How many people precisely?

**Answer:** Two people.

**Question:** Who are they?

**Answer:** No, I am sorry I cannot name them. There are other departments investigating some of the cases.

**Question:** Is there any case against the Plateau state governor in the UK?

**Answer:** No. There is none.

In a related development, one of Nigeria's foremost constitutional lawyers, Professor Ben Nwabueze (SAN), has challenged the competence of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to prosecute government officials and seven other bank employees at the federal high court, Kaduna.

Nwabueze who is lead counsel to Dariye and the others was raising a preliminary objection to the trial at the resumed hearing yesterday raising five issues in a 50-page application for reference to the Court of Appeal.

The first issue the constitutional lawyer and secretary of the *Ohansea Ndi Igbo* raised was, whether the federal government has any constitutional right over money accruing from the federation account under section 162 of the constitution to any of the 36 states as autonomous entities with a chief executive of the state.

Second was whether as an agency created by ordinary law, not the constitution, the EFCC can be insulated from political control or secured against abuse by the president as an instrument of personal power for the oppression, harassment and victimisation of critics and opponents, in the way the Nigeria Police and the Attorney-General of the federation are insulated by the constitution.

Third was whether the powers conferred on the EFCC by sections 6, 7 and 8 of the EFCC (establishment) Act 2004, is not inconsistent with section 35(1), 36(5) and 44 of the constitution.

Professor Nwabueze explained that the constitution vested in the Nigeria Police and the Attorney-General of the federation in sections 214, 215 and 174 the power to maintain public order, prevention and detection, control enforcement of the law and crime prevention and not any other agency and averred

## Passport

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He noted, "A case in point is that of Mr Moses Oddiri and Andrew Oru who are making spurious allegations against some justices of the Supreme Court and the High Court. Instead of pursuing their cases in the law courts, these clandestine acts are not only embarrassing for the bar but are capable of eroding public confidence in the judiciary."

He vowed that the NBA will not fold its arms and allow this senseless and mindless attack on the integrity of innocent judges to continue.

Justice Uwaifo also lamented the gross abuse of office by high court judges and judicial officers, saying that personal experience and comments by the public has revealed a great concern about the lowering of standards in the judiciary.

He noted, "It was once thought to be only in the magistracy because of the disturbing way some of the personnel tended to abuse their office. It gradually crawled to the High Court and would appear to have a foothold among a noticeable number of judicial officers."

Uwaifo noted, "There is the aspect of their attitude and orientation to duty, late sitting, laziness, incompetence, doubtful integrity and impertinence towards counsel. Now there is real apprehension that the appellate courts may soon be infested, if not already contaminated by some of these vices."

He therefore suggested that anyone with negative public opinion or corruption allegations has no business on the bench or if already there, should not be appointed to a higher position, while lazy judges should not be appointed to the court of appeal while the seniority should not be a major factor for consideration.

## EFCC

Contd. from Pg 1

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Speaking at the occasion, Chief Kehinde Sofola (SAN), who spoke on behalf of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN), said that retiring Justice Uwaifo exhibited great authority in all the subjects on which he was opportuned to deliver a judgment or ruling, adding that only on rare occasions did his colleagues dissent with his judgments.

# NEWS

## Robbery: Zamfara orders intensive checking of vehicles

**W**orried by the increased robbery cases in Gusau - the Zamfara State capital, the state government has ordered an intensive vehicle check in Gusau and its environs.

A statement signed by the state's acting governor, Alhaji Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi, said the patrol will commence from 12 pm yesterday and will be a continuous exercise until criminals are flushed out.

The statement added that the government was concerned by the increasing rate of robberies as well as burglaries particularly in the state capital, Gusau.

"I am therefore happy to use the medium to sympathise with the recent robbery attack victims which took place at the Tudun Wada area and to assure them of government's readiness to bring the situation under control," the statement emphasised.

The government, according to the statement, also urged the public to support the security men by assisting them with relevant information that can lead to the arrest of the criminals who for long have been terrorising the state.

*From Salisu Zakari Maradun, Correspondent (Gusau)*

## 700 TB patients get free medicare in Jigawa

**7**00 tuberculosis patients have benefited from a joint collaboration between the Jigawa state government and the United Kingdom (UK) government to eradicate tuberculosis under the partnership for transforming health systems (PATHS).

The programme being free of charge designed to provide technical support for the prevention of TB according to the project coordinator, Dr. Emmanuel Sokpo, has contributed to the eradication of the

*From Hassan A. Karofi, Correspondent (Jigawa)*

sickness in the state. He told *Daily Trust* that the intervention has become successful in the last one year that the support has assisted to mobilise the public to ensure the eradication of TB in the state.

Dr. Sokpo also said that some selected hospitals in the state have been approved to provide the services free of charge and soon other hospitals will be included due to the success of the programme.

The PATHS programme, according to the coordinator, will continue to support the state in the areas of setting up of a state health sector reform on priority health issues apart from conducting assessment line base of key health issues through desk reviews, field trips and provision of other health services.

While calling on patients to visit all the TB designated centres across the state for free medical services, the coordinator also assured patients of continuous support to eradicate the scourge.

*From Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)*

salaries of 7,000 workers rather than the 1,400. Altogether, about N3.9 billion is expected from the federal government to settle liabilities and severance benefits, shortfall in salaries and terminal benefits as well as final payment to KANAK Canada, the firm that undertook the NRC study for restructuring.

## NRC owes workers five months salary

**T**he Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), is owing its 1,400 workers five months salary even as the management is being forced to retain about 50 percent of the workforce due to non-release of terminal benefits by the federal government.

Managing Director of the NRC, Alhaji Abdulrahim Abubakar disclosed this over the weekend during an interactive session with newsmen which took place at the corporation's headquarters in Lagos.

He explained that there was a shortfall in salaries as only 50 percent of the salaries was released last year because of the federal government's believe that the staff rationalisation would have been carried by January, 2004.

To this end, he said that the 50 percent of the 2004 salaries that was released was only enough to pay the salaries of the 1,400 workers up to June, adding that the NRC, through its meagre income had to pay up the August 2004 salary in December.

It would be recalled that as part of the on-going reforms by the federal government, about 7,000 (50 percent) of the NRC workforce are to be retrenched.

Although both the management and the workers' union have agreed to the staff rationalisation, the unions have insisted that the terminal benefits of those to be affected must be in the NRC kitty before the rationalisation.

The NRC boss explained that the rationalisation ought to have been concluded in January 2004, hence the 2004 budget only provided for the

## Nigeria signs \$260m loan agreement with World Bank

**T**he federal government yesterday signed two loan agreements with the World Bank valued \$260 million (about N34,320,000,000) to finance economic reforms and develop the solid mineral sector of the economy.

The minister of finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who signed on behalf of the federal government said \$140 million will be set aside to create an effective and efficient civil service and public expenditure; while the other \$120 million will go to the solid mineral sector

*By Anas A. Galadima, Reporter (Business)*

to "improve governance and technical capability in solid mineral development as well as reduce dependence on petroleum resources."

The minister described the two agreements as very important IDA credits considering the fact that they came at no interest to the country but with 0.7% commitment charge, 10 years moratorium and 30 years repayment period.

She added that the overall objective of the World Bank assisted project is to check poverty, promote accountability and train and strengthen agencies involved in reform process.

In his address, the World Bank country director in Nigeria, Mr. Hafez Ghanem, described the occasion as "an important point between Nigeria and the World Bank which indicates a new way of working together."

He said the international community appreciates what the present government is doing to move the country forward.



*Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Finance Minister*

## Bulama: Court fixes Feb 3 for EFCC application

**A** court of appeal sitting in Lagos, has fixed February 3 for ruling on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), appeal challenging the bail of the lower court granted to the former managing director of the Bank of the North (BON), Alhaji Mohammed Shettima Bulama.

The ruling which was earlier set aside for last Thursday by the presiding judge, Justice Kumai Akkhas (JCA), was however, adjourned due to the Sallah holiday declared on Thursday and Friday by the federal government.

It would be recalled that the former managing director of BON has been detained by the EFCC since 2003 on charges of financial impropriety.

*From Mohammed Shosin, Correspondent (Lagos)*

He made several attempts to secure bail, one of which came to fruition on March 5, last year when a federal high court presided over by Justice Dan Abutu, admitted him to bail in the sum of N5 million and same conditionalities.

This development however, did not go down well with the crimes commission who took its case to the appellate court challenging

the ruling of the lower court and at the same time, seeking an interpretation of the bail granted to Alhaji Bulama.

According to Bulama's counsel, Joseph Daudu (SAN), the prayers of the EFCC before the appellate court is a needless exercise since Justice Abutu is within his constitutional province to grant him (Bulama) bail without being subjected to the whims and caprices of another judge (Mohammed Shuabu) who denied him bail.



*The Director-General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Dr. Mohammed el-Baradei (2nd left), during his visit to the Centre for Energy Research and Training, Zaria...recently.*

## Oil bunkering: FG addresses court tomorrow

**T**he federal government will tomorrow make a formal address before a federal high court in Ikoyi, Lagos, on the bail application sought by thirteen Russian nationals accused of oil theft.

The accused were arraigned on September 18, 2003 on charges of conspiracy and crude oil theft worth several billions of Naira on the MT African Pride vessel.

The legal counsel, Chief Emefor Etudor, made frantic efforts to get them bail, saying they were not guilty of the allegations as the offence was not even committed within the territorial waters of

*From Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondent (Lagos)*

Nigeria. Also, Etudor had sought the services of renowned constitutional lawyer, Professor Ben

Nwahuze, to help interpret whether the oil bunkers were arrested within the territorial waters of Nigeria.

## Cultists, residents clash in Makurdi, one killed

**C**onfusion at the weekend broke out in Makurdi, the Benue state capital, when residents of Wadata area rose up in arms against suspected cult members who had earlier engaged themselves in a clash which left one of them dead.

*Daily Trust* inquiries shows that the irate residents who rose against the suspected cultists did so when they discovered that the youth killed in the clash was an innocent resident who was not a cult member in the first place.

Sources said the victim was mistakenly matched severally before being taken to the hospital where he was said to have died.

Our sources said the attack angered residents of the area who rose in their hundreds with weapons and fished out suspected cultists from their homes on Saturday, a day after the

*Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)*

clash. The raid by residents saw more than 10 suspected cultists arrested and tortured, a development which, according to further investigations, has driven other cultists from their homes.

A resident who sought anonymity told *Daily Trust* that the process of weeding out cultists from Wadata area will continue until such a time when the area would completely be rid of them.

The cult clash and the attendant raid disrupted business in the area for the two days it lasted, without the police wading in.

*Daily Trust* could not reach the police public relations officer (PPRO), Mr. Adesanya Jinadu, at the time of going to press.



*President Obasanjo*

# News

## Water shortage forces villagers to migrate

The blocking of river Kafin-Hausa, a source of water for dry season farming, is currently forcing a growing number of people to migrate from Kajawa and Asarun villages in Bauchi State.

Community elders told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), at the weekend that the river has been progressively blocked by silt and aquatic weeds over the years.

"In fact, the blockage has been preventing sufficient water flow to the villages and other settlements along its banks," Malam Idi Usman, told visiting journalists touring the affected areas.

Usman said the blockage of the river, once the source

of lucrative dry season farming and fishing, has forced about half of the men in the villages "to move to urban areas for menial jobs or the Lake Chad area to fish for their livelihood."

For his part, Malam Alhasan Juji of Kajawa village, lamented that "the drying up of the river has led to an unprecedented rise in crime in the villages and its environs due to acute poverty."

Cases of cattle rustling has become so rampant that villagers had "to call for the deployment of police and soldiers to patrol the area," he said.

Malam Isa Sulaiman, a research officer with an NGO, Joint Wetlands Livelihood Projects, suggested that "a short-term solution will involve the excavation of the blocked river channels."

The problem extended beyond Bauchi State to parts of Jigawa and Yobe, he stated, noting that "it covers the entire Hadejia-Nguru wetland, entailing about 3,500 square kilometres."

Sulaiman described the wetlands as "one of the most productive areas in the sub-

region," providing six per cent of the nation's annual inland fish sales, as well as grains and other fodara produce.

"But it now faces devastation due to the lack of water in some areas and over-flooding in others," he said, charging the Bauchi, Jigawa and Yobe state governments "to act urgently to save the people."

## Police arrest councillor in Uyo

The councillor who allegedly sponsored the killing of one Mr. Idogesi Akpan, a principal witness before the local government election tribunal sitting in Uyo has been arrested by the police.

The councillor's Abasiubong Ephraim Udo from Ward 5 of Oruk Anam local government area of Akwa Ibom state. Others arrested include Mr. Udo Johnson and three other assassins.

The police public relations officer (PPRO), Mr. Suur Chafa said the councillor and his cohorts were arrested fol-

lowing the reaction of the son of the deceased who also assisted the police to the hide out of the assassins.

Mr. Chafa disclosed that further arrests will be carried out soon in order to fully establish the case of murder of the election officer in the area.

He said police has made necessary arrangements to beef up security at the tribunal in the state to avoid the killing of innocent people during and before the sittings.

Meanwhile, the Oruk Anam legislature has suspended the councillor, Mr. Ephraim Udo from the council for allegedly killing Mr. Akpan who refused to testify in his favour in the election tribunal.

The head of legislature, Mr. Emmanuel Essien, said the suspension will be lifted if the police report finds the accused innocent.

## FG sets up c'ttee on abandoned, accident/scrap vehicles

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

minister of works in his office, said they were visiting the ministry because they recognize the statutory responsibilities of the ministry to make the nation's highways good, safe and motorable.

Major General Enahoro (rtd), said that the task force was set up by President Olusegun Obasanjo (to, among other things, advise on how to rid the nation of abandoned and scrapped vehicles and the attendant danger of environmental pollution they cause, including road accidents and serving as hideout for criminals.

He disclosed that the task force now has a better knowledge on why metal scraps were usually left where they were, has taken inventory of all types of metal scraps over the country and will make recommendation on ways of overcoming the problem to Mr. President.

The chairman also said

that the task force would commence the process of actually evacuating these scraps soon and called for the support of all Nigerians, including public and private sector organizations to carry out the onerous national assignment, adding that all Nigerians stand to benefit from making the environment free of metal pollutants.

Responding, the minister of works, Senator Adegese Ogunlewe, welcomed members of the task force to the ministry and called on Nigerians to show concern and commitment to the clearing and ridding of Nigerian roads of abandoned and accident vehicles and other metal pollutants in the environment.

He said that the ministry is establishing a mechanism through the road support services centre, which would be equipped with highway, search and rescue capabilities, ambulance services, rest areas, fuel and service stations and other facilities.



Governor Adamu Mu'azu

## Odili wants pilgrimage operations decentralized

The governor of Rivers State, Dr Peter Odili, has stated that a review of the centralization arrangement for hajj operations in the country will make it more effective and less cumbersome.

Speaking against the backdrop of reported problems facing Nigerians pilgrims in the holy land, the governor who was speaking when the Muslim community in Rivers state paid him the traditional sallah visit at the Government House, said time was ripe for a review.

He noted with displeasure that although Muslims from the state were ready to perform the hajj, logistic problems caused by the distance between the intending pil-

grims, their states, and the centre made it impossible for them.

"We will have to appeal to the centre to review arrangements for hajj operations so that states can manage and make arrangements for their pilgrims," he said.

Dr Odili said such decentralization will reduce stress avoid botched trips and improve the quality of coordination of hajj operations in the country.

He frowned at reported cases of squabbles which were caused by pilgrims who could not perform the hajj in some states and commended those from the states who behaved maturely in the circumstance.

...has not misappropriated LG funds -LG chairmen

Rising from an emergency meeting following a newspaper report (not Daily Trust), alleging that Governor Odili had misappropriated N1.2 billion, local council funds, local government chairmen in Rivers State have absolved the governor describing the publication as frivolous.

In the communiqué signed by the chairmen of the state's chapter of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Chief Azubike Nmerukini and four others, the chairmen said the allegation was misleading, frivolous and malicious.

"No money or funds belonging to the local government councils in the state has ever been tampered with by the executive governor of Rivers State from May 1999 to 2000" Chief Nmerukini said.

He said Dr Odili, during the era of caretaker committees, saved funds for the democratically elected local government, stressing that the saved funds were approved and subsequently released to the 23 councils of the state after their inauguration.

In a recent development, the Rivers State government is to set up an agency dedicated to the rehabilitation of ex-militia youths and other repented cultists in the state.

Dr. Odili announced this while speaking at a formal reception for seven hundred youths drawn from former militia groups, universities and communities who went through leadership and rehabilitation training programmes in Jos.

From Ikenna Emeke Okpani, Bureau Chief, (Port Harcourt)

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## EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

**JOB VACANCY-Project Officer (Good Governance & Institutional Reform)**

The Delegation of the European Commission to Nigeria invites applications from motivated and qualified Nigerian nationals to assist in the implementation of the EC's bilateral cooperation programme with the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The successful candidate will support capacity-building programmes for selected state assemblies and the national assembly, further develop the European Commission's contribution to the elections in 2007, and contribute to the strengthening of institutions at the state and federal level.

She is a graduate (preferably with a social science, law or economics degree) with at least five years relevant professional experience. Experience in development or public administration is required. She is strongly committed to the struggle against poverty, has the proven capacity to interact effectively with different strata of Nigerian society and can flexibly adapt to the demands of a large international institution. A willingness to travel throughout Nigeria is essential, as is mastery of standard computer packages (Word, Excel, Outlook).

In return, the European Commission provides a challenging, multi-cultural work environment and an attractive salary package. Gross remuneration will be from NGN 262,539/month (incl allowances) and will be raised depending on years of relevant professional experience. The Delegation provides its employees with an attractive medical reimbursement and pension scheme. The successful candidate will initially be recruited until 30.06.2006. The contract would be renewable for 2 year periods after that date at the Commission initiative. The probationary period is six months. The European Commission is an equal opportunities employer. Further information about our work can be found on [www.dclniga.scc.eu.int](http://www.dclniga.scc.eu.int) and [http://europa.eu.int/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/index_en.htm)

The deadline for applications is 7 February 2005. The application should consist of a motivational letter (one page maximum) and a CV of not more than two pages. Submissions are by e-mail only to: [delegation-nigeria-recruitment2005@cec.eu.int](mailto:delegation-nigeria-recruitment2005@cec.eu.int)

This is a re-advertisement, previous candidates need not apply. Applications that do not meet all the above requirements will be discarded. Only candidates for interview will be contacted.

# MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY  
temphist@yahoo.com

## When Balogun's house caught fire...

I happen to be a regular worshipper at the *Anam-Ul-Din* mosque located within the Wuse II district of Abuja every Friday. Every week, before or after the weekly sermon, the Imam often requested for special prayers for notable citizens especially those who were able to make the congregation on the day. The first name often mentioned was that of Mustafa Adebayo Balogun, who retired last week as the Inspector General of Police. Each week as the names were read out, the edifice vibrated with deafening prayers as the faithful responded to the Imam's call. But last Friday and barely three days after IGP turned in his retirement letter, the prayers were barely audible. As the speakers again blared out his name and the Imam called for prayers on his behalf, there was palpable silence accompanied by the occasional murmur.

It wasn't without good reason. We know for sure that Nigeria had long been delivered to the dogs and is also rotten to the core; we know our politicians have no honour and that most members of the National Assembly are available for hire to the highest bidder. We are conscious that for a fee, our Niny can conjure the disappearance of a ship under its custody.

We are also aware that our police extort money from motorists openly and without shame much as we know that to collect their terminal benefits, retiring members of the force are constrained to forfeit nearly fifty percent of their entitlements in bribes to their colleagues. But never in our tainted history have we ever had an Inspector General of Police being forced to retire for allegedly stealing billions of Nigeria while the rank and file of the force barely survived on slave wages!

Expectedly, the headlines were replete with sordid tales and theories about how Balogun amassed his huge fortune. Most took the pedestrian view that he merely diverted funds meant for police welfare projects but I bet to differ. In my view, even Meyer Lansky who successfully coordinated the underworld businesses of New York's Mafia families could not have siphoned the huge sum from police coffers alone without causing a major upheaval in the rank and file of the force. Far from it, I see in the current travails of the IGP another God given clue into how the huge electoral funds of 2003 were conjured. After all, the PDP reportedly expended more than five hundred billion Naira for their presidential election campaign in 2003.

We know from the recent disclosures between the president and Audu Ogbeh along with the allegations against him by several members of the party's NEC that their accounts cannot withstand the minimum test of even a village Auditor. But beyond that, we also know that the party dissipated more energy in the selection of candidates to run for various offices other than actual campaigning for votes. The selection process indeed explains the fall of Mbadiji and current crisis in Anambra and also offers a clue into the controversy surrounding the emergence of the Senate President, Adolphus Wabara from his constituency. In Mbadiji's case, the president

would be elected they even arranged an ambassadorial posting for the inept governor as a soft landing?

Now, where do all these facts lead us? In matured democracies, campaign funds are utilized for the candidates and their policies but in our case and indeed in several African nations with weak democratic structures, we know that has never been the case. The situation is made worse if the presidential candidate happened to be an incumbent like we experienced to our cost in 2003. So, if the PDP spent so little on their campaigns where did all the billions set aside for the purpose end up? Quite simply, they ended up in the pockets of the police and INEC officials and PDP thugs nationwide. The truism explains why school dropouts you thought could not stand-up to you in the past suddenly emerged as new the Kingmakers in your community. It shows why the same people drive around in the costliest cars while your shoes are worn in search of a job in spite of your superior qualifications. The tragedy also gives credibility to the reports of local and international observers, which concluded that elections did not hold in most states in the South-South region. The fact also explains the presence of two certain gentlemen in prime positions in the senate and a third from Plateau state despite the controversy that trailed their elections. But more importantly, it explains Balogun's billions because the police were no better than foot soldiers of the PDP on that fateful and most infamous April in 2003.

In that respect therefore, to expect heavens to fall over the revelations would be wishful thinking in my opinion. A soft landing, in the form of a comfortable retirement for Balogun is as far as the matter will be allowed to degenerate even though we all know that what the bulky cop deserves is a hard landing on a concrete floor if possible. But that obviously will not happen. He may even end up as the hero or the victim if he so desires. This after all, is Nigeria and anything is possible. With his immense resources, he can now afford to make the Lagos based columnists and opinion Writers work extra harder in his favour. Already, there are pointers in that direction. The man also hired a lawyer to work on his brief. Mark my words, in the coming days and months despite all the noise and bravado from the EFCC, the matter will gradually be allowed to degenerate into a legal cat-and-dog until it fades completely from our memory. Next time he resurfaces, Balogun would probably be the kingmaker in Ogun State because he has already joined the ranks of the nouveau riche and would also be relevant to the system.

The tragedy is that in Nigeria, it has never mattered how that status was achieved. In a few months' time, never mind years, he would emerge the patron of some exclusive clubs and even be rewarded with a higher national honour. We had seen it all happen before.

But where does all this leave poor Atiku Abubakar? The president has already shown in the manner Ogbeh and Balogun were dealt with that to salvage what he remains of his political

integrity, he is no respecter of favours, not to even talk of those assumed to have slighted him in the recent past! On that score, if I were the VP I would not even be thinking of 2007 but how to avoid humiliation in the coming days and months. That much should be as clear as a lone noon sign in the desert night. Whether he got the message however, is another matter.

**The Bush Inauguration**  
The other notable event last week was of course the inauguration of President George W. Bush of the United States. Predictably, the man utilized the occasion to offer the world a glimpse into what to expect in the next four years. He has hinted that there will be no let off to his dubious war against terror in which sovereign nations were attacked without UN authorization. In the light of the recent revelations about the Pentagon's secret plans to attack Iran among other nations, this portends serious dangers for humanity. The Bush administration simply appears not to have learnt from their costly misadventure in Iraq. The sad thing is that although a sizeable population question the wisdom in their country's foreign policy especially in the Middle East, the great majority still support Bush as reflected during his re-election. If you are still wondering why that is so then an account of the following encounter between Gustave Gilbert and the Nazi strongman Hermann Goering during the Nuremberg Trials of World War II war criminals on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1946 offers a clue.

*"We got round to the subject of war again and I said that contrary to his attitude, I did not think that common people are very thankful for leaders who bring them war and destruction"* Goering replied: *"Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece. Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia nor in England nor in America, nor in that wretched Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a Parliament or a Communist dictatorship"* Gilbert responded: *"There is one difference. In a democracy the people have some say in the matter through their elected representatives, and in the United States only Congress can declare war."* Goering again laughed this off when he replied: *"Oh, that is well and good, but voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy: All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country"* Now, if these words were not uttered more than half a century ago, you would have thought it was George W. Bush addressing his inner cabinet!

*"Coercing and the Third Reich are now history!"* What is also beyond dispute is that the bell now tolls for the great American century if events in Iraq and the rocky hills of Terra-Bona, along with a resurgent Europe are anything to go by. Their military might and resources are becoming hopelessly overstretched while the Euro and not the Dollar is now the currency of choice. With the Bush administration seemingly unwilling to learn from history, we may not have too long to wait before they like the Roman's become mere



## Obasanjo: The gods have spoken

There is a proverb in my place that says: "Those that the gods want to destroy, they first make them mad." All their senses will be blocked, reasoning becomes impossible even when there is danger ahead.

But my prayers are that our case, will not be like that of the proverbial grasshoppers, whose ears were blocked, that they could not hear the noise of an on-coming train, until they were crushed to death. Not too long ago, our respected Professor Chinua Achebe, rejected the so-called national award on the basis that what is happening in his country, and in fact, his home state, was disheartening. He, in particular, mentioned Anambra state where a group of hoodlums were holding the government in power to bondage and always boasting of their connection to presidency. Immediately, the government, through their political jobbers went about trying to discredit Professor Achebe, but the facts remains that the point has been made.

However, within a period of less than a month, Anambra state was burning. The effect of that attack on the edifices of the state is so devastating that it will take time, energy and money to rebuild such infrastructures. Ever since then, many people have criticised the president and it seemed from all indications that the president is an accomplice, based on his utterances on the same matter.

The December 11<sup>th</sup> 2004 letter written by Chief Audu Ogbeh, the chairman of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), had warned of the impending Armageddon. He drew the attention of the president to 1983 and the fall of the then National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The then ruling party, and it's members, were arrogant and not ready to listen to the cries of the populace.

Things were fast degrading. Politicking took a different dimension that one of the strong men of the party boasted in Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Enugu, in the then old Anambra state, that whether the people vote for NPN or not, come 1983, the party will rule the state. Eventually after the election, there was problem. Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), under Chief Jim Nwobodo felt that they have been robbed of victory and went to court. All that, has since become history now, but didn't to

By Paul Chukwudi Nnaji

prove how arrogant the party and the members were. Then the government of NPN, under President Sheliu Aliyu Shagari, was accused of being corrupt. We all were aware of what befell Umaru Dikko, when the military government that over-threw President Shagari government wanted to bring him back to Nigeria at all costs. Based on this therefore, Chief Audu Ogbeh had cried out to Obasanjo, lest similar fate befalls this government. And if this government falls, our democracy has fallen, our energy will be dragged back and the quest for progress will suffer.

With this development, Ogbeh has demonstrated that he is a good learner. According to him, "Mr. President, I was part of the Second Republic and we fell. Memories of that are a miserable litany of woes." Experience they say is the best teacher. By this Audu Ogbeh must have been discouraged, frustrated and rejected by the powers that be in the country. Remember, General Theophilous Danjuma, who according to newspaper report, said that, the powers that be in the Aso Rock frustrated him out of government?

Perhaps, that same power that be, is still in play, and they must have frustrated all genuine efforts adduced by estranged chairman of PDP.

Interestingly, on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> of December, 2004, virtually all the national dailies, carried our president's version of his efforts to "resolve" the Anambra crisis. In his defense, more revelations began to emerge and that quickly, reminded me of a statement that, at the end, truth will always surface above the untruth. It is therefore, no secret that Chris Ngige did not win the public mandate of the people of Anambra state.

Obasanjo in response to these timely revelations, his told whole world the truth we all know, only that he has confirmed it. More so, Obasanjo likened Ngige and Uba to a case of two armed robbers that conspired to loot a house...

The truth was and still is, that PDP did not win Anambra election, as many people have testified. The whole thing becomes confusing judging from the fact that our president, right from the inception of his administration has been an anti-corruption crusader.

When you re-examine the whole scenario, it bothers on the credibility of our selection and election of candidates. I do not normally

know the calibres of people we vote for? Another question that easily disturbs my mind is why was it Chris Uba that PDP decided to work with in a place like Anambra? Does it mean that a state that could produce statesmen like late Honourable Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, (former colonial fighter and one time-president of Nigeria); and revered Dr. Alex Ekwueme, (former vice-president and founder of what is today called PDP), can not find another person to relate with, except Uba?

Instead putting your energy and the resources of Nigeria, to revive the ailing National Electric Power Authority, (which you had earlier promised that upon first six months of your assumption of power, there will be an un-interrupted power supply), like revive the economy, our roads/trail system and other facet of lives, better concentrate on bequeathing lasting electoral system that will guarantee right men are put in the right positions.

With about two years remaining out of your last tenure in office, do a thing that will live after you. Let there be a system that will empower the electorate. One good thing General Ibrahim Babangida, would have done for this nation was the reformed option A4 electoral system developed under Professor Humphrey Nwosu led Electoral commission. Unfortunately too, he missed the opportunity of engraving his name on the marble of history of our land. This you could do and the likes of the two "Chris", will be a thing of the past.

Just like your party Chairman has rightly suggested, "I call on you to act now. You and you alone, have the means. Do not hesitate. We do not have too much time to waste" Nigeria is too big and too great, to be toyed with. It is often said that the voice of people is the voice of God. The gods, therefore, should not be blamed in that they have spoken not only once, but many times and we refuse to act. Now is the time for more decisive action to make Nigeria great again. Many people have through writings, discussions and debates called upon you to sanitise the polity and you have no options than to heed to those noble calls. We must note that, solution to our problems does not lie in long and boring speeches, but in actions that will change and bring out the positive and desired changes that Nigerians are clamouring for.

Paul Chukwudi Nnaji writes from 18, Aina Street, Ojuda Lagos. 01-261-2611



**YOUR LETTERS**

**Arafat struggle: A Christian viewpoint**

Yasser Arafat, who was referred to as Abu Amar, left Jerusalem in 1937 to settle in Cairo. While there and still in his teens, he became acquainted and deeply associated himself with Arab revolutionary politics. It was reported that he took part in the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948, shortly after the declaration of the Israeli state by David Ben Gurion. In 1960, Arafat created Fatah movement in order to effectively check the excesses of Israel, which later became Palestinian Liberation Organisation (P.L.O.). He assumed the leadership of the P.L.O since its inception in 1967 till his death.

Arafat was the first and only person to address the U.N. general assembly in 1974 dressed in military uniform with a pistol attached to his waist belt. He also had the honour of doing the same at the O.A.U. summit in Addis-Ababa.

Palestine had an observer seat with the OAU and even now when it became A.U. He never missed the O.A.U. summits, he associated and identified with Africa and supported the struggle in South Africa. In addition to that he (Arafat) once declared, "I want to become the

Mandela of Palestine" i.e. leading his people to final freedom from occupation, suppression and oppression.

Arafat spent a great deal of time travelling around the world to canvass sympathy for the Palestinian cause. He was even referred to as Mr. Palestine in some quarters. He was a great leader, committed and determined struggler who fought tirelessly with all his might and life for the interest of his people.

Notwithstanding his popularity and commitment, Yasser Arafat was also a controversial figure who made a lot of enemies as well as friends. He fell out with several Arab leaders, most especially when he took two life threatening decisions in November, 1988 and February 1991 namely recognising the state of Israel in Algiers 1988 and the all out support he gave to the former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein during the first Gulf War. Almost all the Arab countries withheld their aids to the P.L.O. and boycotted any relationship with Arafat. This nearly bankrupted the P.L.O. and Arafat, but being a shrewd diplomat, he somehow

revived his intimacy with some of the Arab nations and even received the support of the US and Europe.

During the last year of Clinton's administration in the U.S. and the inception of Ariel Sharon as Israeli Prime Minister, Arafat was alleged to have been offered between 89%-90% of the whole of Gaza and West Bank, but he turned down the offer, because in it, there was a portion that rejected the return of Palestinian refugees. Arafat would never accept anything that has to do with denial of Palestinian refugees returning to their original homeland.

As a result of this the hard line Ariel Sharon branded Arafat a ruthless terrorist, irrelevant and one who could not be trusted. This put an abrupt end to the much talk about road map for peace agreement.

From then on the new phase of the "intifadah" resumed. Suicide bombings, unrest and violent reprisals remained to this date the order of the day. Arafat always condemned targeting of innocent Israeli civilians. He did all he could in his capacity to persuade

his people not to carryout suicide bombings. But one has to clearly understand the predicament of the Palestinians; almost all of them live in refugee camps under the most dehumanizing conditions.

Besides that, Sharon used Arafat's consistency in demand for freedom as a reason not to make peace. Likewise, Arab countries had tapped and continued to tap the Palestinian/Israeli conflict to their own advantage.

One thing that killed the road map for peace agreement was the policy of President George Bush. He doesn't seem to have a clear definition of the Palestinian/Israeli crisis; Bush vigorously encourages and supports Sharon to heavily clamp down on the innocent Palestinians. While the U.S. absolutely has the key to open a real and lasting peace it seems as if the president with enough charisma and strength to look at the issue squarely and dispassionately is yet to come for both the U.S. and Israeli states.

Arafat was magnanimous to the extent that he allowed for and recognised a state of Israel.

It behoves on the U.S. and Israeli governments to map out strategies by which the sufferings and the humiliation of the Palestinian people will end.

If the dignity of the Palestinian is restored, there won't be need for any walls in Israel, because they (Palestinians) will look at Israelis as equals arid even friends and not oppressors. As things are now, no amount of barricades can stop the venting of

frustrations on innocent Israeli people.

Sharon is seizing the "intifadah" as an advantage to cover his weaknesses and failings back at home. We are watching as things unfold in the immediate future, to see what concessions both sides will make for the sake of peaceful coexistence.

In spite of the trials and tribulations in the last years of his life, he was a leader with massive integrity who took great decisions in critical moments. I am sure that without somebody like Arafat, the Palestinian question would have been completely forgotten. He was a man of courage and commitment. The challenge has now been thrown to the new Palestinian leadership under Abu Muzen as to how they will handle and approach those boiling issues.

Francis A. Okeke  
Department of Mass Comm  
University of Maiduguri  
P.M.B 1069.

**The ghost of Nigerians**

It is becoming clear that it is the ghost of Nigerians that is befalling the ruling party, it's president and his subordinates.

Because if we observe the happenings around them this days, it is a clear testimony that things will soon fall apart with them. On behalf of Nigerians I wish them quick falling a part.

B a s h i r  
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# News

## FG reads riot act to road contractors

The federal Government has warned all contractors, consultants and design consultants handling projects in the ministry, that it would not hesitate to sanction any contractor who fails to perform after collecting mobilisation fees.

Minister of Works, Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe, who gave the warning when he met with contractors in office on Monday, advised them to endeavor to finish the road projects before the beginning of the rainy season this year.

The minister said his ministry has designed a new approach to the processing of contract papers in the ministry, and assured the contractors of meeting all financial obligation due to them as the Senate will pass this year's budget before the end of the month.

Senator Ogunlewe said that in the next two weeks, the ministry would assign engineers to supervise key projects, and that a schedule has been drawn whereby the minister would meet with contractors and consultants monthly to rub minds.

Also commenting, Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Dr. Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, also echoed the ministry warning and sought the co-operation of the contractors in handling road projects in the country.

By Nasir Imam, property & Env. Editor

Dr. Baba-Ahmed further advised the contractors to liaise with the communities where their projects are situated and said that State Governors have been directed to provide security for the staff equipment of contractors, in states where they operate.

He cited the example of the Bodo-Bonny road project

where restive residents have impounded the equipment of the contractor handling the road, in some cases killing workers, and described the situation as unacceptable and wrong.

The contractors therefore gave details of the jobs they're encountering to which the minister directed them to meet with the permanent secretary with a view to solving them.

## Unijos graduates 9,129, launches

### N1 billion endowment fund

The University of Jos will on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February graduate 9,129 students and launch a one billion naira endowment fund.

Vice-Chancellor of the institution, Professor Monday Manguwat, disclosed this while briefing the press on the forthcoming 20<sup>th</sup> combined convocation ceremony of the university.

He said of the total students to be graduated, 5,686 are undergraduates, with nine first class, 4,083 Masters Degrees, 58 Doctorate Degrees and 2,302 Diploma.

The award of First Degrees, Diplomas and Certificate will hold on 11<sup>th</sup> February while award of Postgraduate Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas will

From Rakya A. Muhammad correspondent (Jos)

hold 12<sup>th</sup> February. Professor Manguwat, who expressed joy that the Institution had been able to meet up with its tradition of holding convocation ceremony bi-annually, said it is an evidence of stabilisation of their academic calendar.

He decried the situation where students complete their education and do not get their certificates on time, noting that such is not good for the system and the image of any university.

Speaking on one of the main features of the ceremony, the endowment fund, the vice-Chancellor lamented that the institution lacked a convocation square, and deserved better Senate chambers.



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Signed:  
MR. B. Z. H. BUTSWAT  
Registrar

# Trust International

## Bush's renewed quest for freedom

Last Thursday, George W. Bush raised up his hand and swore to protect America and its Beau-ideal.

In his speech, he rhetorically swung from "bringing freedom to those who are enslaved to the survival of liberty," solemnly and gracefully depicting that America is

By Ekansh Chawal, Reporter (Foreign Desk)

land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all world...our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their

forces," he said.

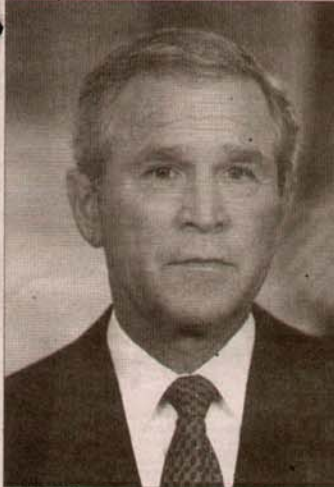
Bush Sr. couldn't be more correct about the speech but he only tried to ensemble the meaning after such revelation which is not surprise to many. Already, Asian countries have expressed concerns that the address pointed to a more aggressive foreign policy that could worsen global tension.

Under Senate heat, the incoming secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, bulged with her list of "outposts of tyranny" which the US will concentrate on after Iraq. In her opening address, she made it clear that she believed greater efforts should now be made to put US's case to the world and listen to the response -- "the

opposition and also rigging elections. The Belarus government in a swift reaction said that Rice assessment was "quite far from reality...false stereotypes and prejudice are poor basis for the formation of effective policy in the sphere of foreign relations." The alleged "fiend" of

would be by pulling all troops out of Iraq and bringing in national conscription.

Little wonder, the Bush administration made some pertinent changes in his cabinet, only to usher in his new wave of belligerent and self-destructive foreign policy pattern. The



President Bush

beholden to world in achieving global freedom.

May be to the Americans, his speech was that of a patriot, but to the world, his speech reeked of a miasma of violence, terror and the American fear factor. The speech must have revealed too much than intended. The words "freedom" and "liberty" assumed new meanings. These words which he mentioned more than 40 times became his new pseudo term in replacement for WMD and Nuclear threats which have been used as excuse for alienated intrusions and incursions.

Bush's speech was clearly an epitome of threat to nations which audaciously differ and who strive in indigenous values and governments. His war on terror metamorphosed to war of terror and their so-called designation of world police to world bullies.

His speech was bound to conjure impression with the way he assertively carried upon himself and his nation the survival of liberty in the world by any means possible. He said "the survival of liberty, in our

own way."

"The United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors," the 43rd US President said. He added that his country has accepted obligations that are difficult to fulfil and would be dishonourable to abandon. After looking hard for an excuse to invade Iraq, he settled on the freedom of the Iraqi people from the tyrannical rule of Saddam Hussein. If it is freedom that he has brought to Iraq, then the world is in for some wars and pain, compared to what is happening in Iraq. So much rhetoric about freedom and he didn't even mention the war in Iraq.

Even President W. Bush Sr. had impugned his son's inaugural speech with its emphasis on spreading democracy and baffling tyranny anywhere in the world.

He said that it was not meant to signal a new direction in US foreign policy. "People want to read a lot into it that this means new aggressions or newly asserted military



US Vice President, Dick Cheney

To Bush, his model of democracy must be spread round to ensure freedom regardless of extant and home-grown democracies and governance which must differ in values from his. In countries like Iran for example, the US have criticised the regime as that of tyranny and which lacked base of people aspirations. According to the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, Iranians "suffer under a regime that has been completely unwilling to deal with their aspirations and that has an appalling human rights records." But US doesn't intend to use the repression excuse alone but has added the nuclear power threat which it has classified Iran.

Even without the speech, pre-emptive comments and precursors had heralded the new improved aggressive US foreign policy. One of the most powerful American vice-presidents that is if he is not the only - Dick Cheney had disclose that Iran topped the lot of world trouble spots and that Israel could decide to bomb its nuclear facilities, hinting the country that will come next under the "freedom sledge hammer."

time of diplomacy is now."

She added that US's intention with the rest of the world must be a conversation not a monologue. But we all know better than that. US has shown that it is a mighty fan of uni-lateralism, shoving intermediaries like the United Nations to the side in such matters like diplomacy, besides, nobody has really deciphered US case aside from the fact that it wants to rule the world.

Interesting, she mentioned Cuba, Belarus, Zimbabwe, Iran, Burma and North Korea as "outposts of tyranny". She gave her best in elucidating why these countries should receive greater US concentration. She was so enthusiastic about it that one senator aggressively suggested that her loyally to Mr. Bush "overwhelmed her request for the truth".

In Cuba, the US has condemned Cuban regime's abuse of advocates of peaceful change and reform. In Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko has been impugned for crushing dissent, persecuting independent media and political



Incoming Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice

Africa, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe has been accused of manipulating elections through violence and intimidation to keep himself in power. In an irony, Mugabe said the country's problems including a collapsed economy and food shortages are caused by the interference from US.

Iran also responded swiftly to Rice's comments; "Echoing US President George Bush's 'axis of evil' comment, Rice merely reiterated the stance adopted by the American administration over the past three years" said the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran (VIRI). Iran also reacted to US senior officials about a US attack, saying that US attack on the country would be a strategic mistake and dismissed the US remarks as psychological warfare.

An analyst, Dr. Laleh Khalil, from University of London, while speaking to Aljazeera on the question of imminent attack, said the only way the US could contemplate a strike on Iran

outgoing secretary of state, Collin Powell, became the victim of the repositioning which expressed itself in Bush speech.

Collin Powell was on the side of diplomacy and multilateralism. There were many occasions where Powell, disagreed with Bush most especially on their foreign policy on the Middle-East. But Powell had to do public relations for his government on incongruent policies, most probably why he lost the effectiveness which he started out with.

It wasn't by chance that Dick Cheney was referred to as one of the most powerful vice president of America. It has been the Cheney-Rumsfeld axis which consumed Powell, roped Condoleezza Rice in and is responsible for the added aggression in America's foreign policy.

The question that persists now is who will come next under the 'force of human freedom'. Would America start with its list of outpost of tyranny or will it surprise us? The span of time will tell but their actions will not surprise the world, telling by Bush's inaugural speech.



## Guess What Their Mission Is?



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Sultan of Sokoto



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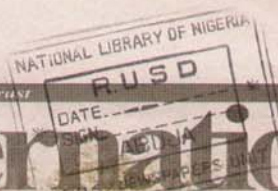
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# Trust International



## Rebels kill governor in Burundi

The governor of a province in the central African state of Burundi was killed in an ambush Sunday believed to have been carried out by the National Liberation Forces (FNL), the last rebel force still holding out

in the war-torn country. Governor Isaac Bigirimana of the western province of Bubanza was returning home from a visit to the Burundi capital Bujumbura when he and his bodyguard were killed. "He was ambushed by the

FNL at 3.15pm GMT near Gibanga," said the army spokesman, Major Adolphe Manirakiza. "He was killed on the spot together with the police officer acting as his bodyguard."

No FNL officials were immediately reachable to confirm that the organisation had in fact carried out the attack some 20 kilometres north of the capital.

"This act is a great dishonour to the group who committed it, especially as we have begun a peace process that is advancing little by little," said Interior Minister Simon Nyandwi.

Burundi, which is struggling to emerge from an 11 year-old civil war that claimed more than 300,000 lives, is currently in a transitional phase of government which is due to end with presidential elections later this year.

Sunday's killing was the first time in eight years that a senior administrative official at this level was assassinated in Burundi.

The last victim was Colonel Marcel Simariza, governor of Cibitoke province; he was killed in a 1997 ambush.

## Somali to hold security talks

Somalia's exiled government is meeting to discuss the security situation in the capital, Mogadishu, following the assassination of the police chief, General Yusuf Ahmed Sarile.

Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi said he was shocked by the killing of the man in charge of the government's security arrangements.

Mr. Gedi is due to return to Mogadishu from Kenya by 1 February but this could now be delayed, correspondents said.

Somalia has not had a functioning national government since 1991.

The cabinet is discussing a report prepared by a team of MPs who have just returned from Mogadishu.

None of the many rival militias operating in the Somali capital has claimed responsibility for the killing of General Sarile.

But the BBC's correspondent in Mogadishu said that he has backed the deployment of African peacekeepers to protect the transitional government, which is opposed by some of the key warlords, and this could be why he was killed.

He is the second senior police officer to be shot dead in the last two months.

Diplomats involved in the Somali peace process have suggested that a new police force could be formed using the basis of the previous force, supplemented by retrained militiamen.

Gen Sarile's relatives said four men armed with pistols and AK-47 guns forced entry into the police chief's flat in his home village of Hamarbile, south of Mogadishu, on

Sunday.

The general, who headed the police force under former President Abdulkassim Salat Hassan, was reportedly shot seven times in the chest and head.

Another reason for Gen Sarile's killing has been advanced: He was in charge of investigating the recent destruction of an Italian colonial cemetery by militiamen in Mogadishu.

Some 700 graves in the cemetery were destroyed and their human remains dumped elsewhere.

Mogadishu was under Italian colonial control until World War II and many of the graves belong to Italian soldiers and expatriates.

## US lawmakers meet Darfur rebels

US lawmakers who met with Darfur rebels in western Sudan and visited camps for Sudanese refugees in Chad over the weekend said they will be asking Washington to push for UN sanctions against the Sudanese government.

The lawmakers will also be asking for a larger African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur as well as expanding its mandate beyond being just a protection force to begin enforcing existing cease-fire agreements, a Congressional staff member with the delegation said on condition of anonymity.

Rep. Ed Royce, chairman of the House International Relations subcommittee on Africa, travelled to Chad and

a border town in neighbouring Sudan together with Reps. Barbara Lee, Jim McDermott, Diane Watson and Betty McCollum, the official said, speaking from Chad's capital, N'djamena.

Royce will demand the U.S. government push harder for UN sanctions against the Sudanese government for failing to stop the Darfur conflict, the official said.

Hardships including disease and malnutrition are believed to have killed more than 70,000 of the displaced within Darfur since last March. Many more have been killed in nearly two years of fighting, although no firm estimate of the direct toll of the war yet exists.

About 2 million people have been displaced by the conflict.

## Hundreds flee Kenya land clashes

Hundreds of Kenyans fled their homes Sunday after eight people were speared and stabbed to death northwest of Nairobi in tribal clashes over access to water, residents and officials said.

Four were killed when they were pulled from vehicles at impromptu checkpoints set up by rival Kikuyu and Maasai groups which attacked anyone from the "wrong" tribe on the main road from Nairobi to the Maasai Mara safari park.

Yesterday's violence was the latest in a series of clashes between members of various communities over land, an explosive issue. President Mwai Kibaki's government says it will address

Wilfred Ndolo, Rift Valley provincial commissioner, said the latest bloodshed killed eight mainly elderly people in the Mai Mahiu area in the shadow of Mount Longonot volcano.

The fighting between youths wielding machetes, bows and arrows and spears was over access to water in the area, traditionally roamed by Maasai but settled since the 1970s by small-scale farmers from the Kikuyu tribe.

Local councillor Kimujino Naisheki complained of inadequate policing after dusk when many attacks happen, saying the government had abandoned its people.

The Maasai, who are nomadic cattle herders, said

the land and use of its rivers were wrongfully taken by the government in the 1970s and given to the Kikuyus by then President Jomo Kenyatta, himself a Kikuyu.

Last week 2 000 people were made homeless in fighting between Maasais and Kipsigis tribesmen at Emarti on the edge of the Maasai Mara. Last August, Maasais invaded some farms in Laikipia district north of Nairobi to urge the return of land reserved for Europeans under early 20th century accords between Britain and Maasai elders. The land concerned is now mostly held by Kenyan small-scale farmers.

## Trust Classified

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A website for estate agents and hotels to advertise their products and services.

Contact: 08034006060, 08033031869

## MISSING DOCUMENTS

This is to inform the General Public, especially the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory of the loss of the originals of the Right of Occupancy Rent and Fees with Ref. No. FCT/ABU/AN.6336, measuring 3448.59 Sqm<sup>2</sup> in respect of Plot 163 situated in Katampe Abuja, issued to one Hon. Onyia Dubem of Plot 1251 Barada Close, Off Amazon Street Maitama District Abuja.

All efforts to locate the documents, which were discovered missing on 14/01/2005 proved unsuccessful. If found please return to Hon. Onyia Dubem or the nearest Police Station.

Signed:

Hon. Onyia Dubem

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## LOSS OF ORIGINAL LAND DOCUMENT.

This is to notify the general Public that I lost the original copy of my allocation letter bearing Emmanuel Terver Sugh of Plot No. 2692 at Kuruduma Layout measuring about 1,100.05 Sqm. If found, please return it to AMAC Zonal Land Office, nearest Police Station or call the undersigned.

## CHANGE OF NAMES

I, formerly ZAPHANIA GADO of Government Teachers Colleges Zuba, now IDRIS SARKI. Former Document remain valid. Kwali Area Council Service Commission and public to note this effect since 1991.

I, formerly known as MISS LAWAL HAOLAT OLAITAN OLAWUMI, now wish to be addressed as MRS KOLAWOLE HAOLAT OLAITAN. All former documents remain valid. MTEL and general public please note.

I, formerly known and addressed as BIDEMI TAIBAT OYINDAMOLA TAIWO-AYODELE, now wish to be known and addressed as BIDEMI TAIBAT OYINDAMOLA BOLARIN. All other documents remain valid. M-Tel and the gen-

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# Trust International

## Yushchenko set for Moscow talks

President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine has arrived in Moscow for talks - just a day after his inauguration.

The visit is seen as an attempt by the leaders of both countries to defuse tensions raised by Ukraine's election.

Russian President Vladimir Putin initially backed Mr Yushchenko's rival Viktor Yanukovich - whose victory was marred by fraud and later annulled.

Mr. Yushchenko has named Yulia Tymoshenko - a fierce critic of his foes - as acting prime minister.

Mr. Yushchenko on Sunday said Ukraine's future was in the EU. He will also tour Central and Western Europe this week. I really disliked the fact that Russia campaigned in favour of one candidate.

By making his first foreign visit to Moscow, Mr. Yushchenko keeps a promise given at the height of Ukraine's longest-ever presidential campaign.

"We need to talk without delay and honestly," he told reporters in Ukraine at the time.

His camp complained about what it perceived as meddling by Mr. Putin, who twice visited Ukraine during the campaign.

## Indonesian quake causes panic

A strong earthquake has hit the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, causing panic among thousands of people who fled their homes fearing a tsunami.

The earthquake, measuring 6.2, damaged several buildings in the town of Palu.

One person died after the tremor struck, but there were no reports of other casualties.

Witnesses said they feared the quake would trigger another tsunami, like the massive sea surge which hit regions around the Indian Ocean last month.

The epicentre of yesterday's tremor was reportedly about 20km south-west of Palu.

After the initial quake, there were a series of weaker aftershocks.

"We were afraid there will be a tsunami," Iqbal, a local hotel employee, was quoted as saying by the French news agency AFP.

Police later toured the city, telling residents via loudspeakers that there was no threat of a tsunami.

Sulawesi was untouched by the magnitude 9.0 tremor on 26 December, which triggered a huge tsunami that affected many countries around the Indian Ocean.

Indonesia's Sumatra island was the worst affected region. More than 160,000 people died in Sumatra alone.

the campaign to show support for Mr. Yanukovich.

"I really disliked the fact that Russia campaigned in favour of one candidate," Mr Yushchenko told the Russian daily *Izvestia* last month.

Mr. Putin also angered Mr Yushchenko's backers by congratulating Mr Yanukovich with the victory in the original run-off without waiting for the final results to be announced.

The Russian leader later retracted his congratulatory telegram, saying he was ready to work with whoever would be elected Ukraine's president.

Mr. Yushchenko's Moscow visit is also seen as an attempt to placate Ukraine's predominantly Russian speaking south-eastern regions, where Mr Yanukovich enjoys strong backing, analysts say.

Analyst says Mr. Yushchenko wants to demonstrate his pragmatism in emphasising the importance of having good relations with Ukraine's biggest trade partner.



Iraqi Prime Minister, Iyad Allawi

## Blast targets Allawi's office in Iraq

A car bomb has exploded in western Baghdad, near the party headquarters of the interim prime minister, killing at least five people, including four police officers, and injuring 15, officials said.

Smoke was seen rising on yesterday near the Green Zone compound where the interim Iraqi government of Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and the US embassy are.

Allawi was not in the area at the time of the blast, officials in the prime minister's office said.

US and Iraqi troops sealed off the area and helicopters buzzed overhead. Ambulances were also seen rushing to the site.

Iraqi journalist Ziyad al-Samarrai told *Aljazeera* that the car bomber attempted to enter the headquarters of the Iraqi National Accord (al-Wifaq) party headed by Allawi, but he was stopped at an Iraqi police checkpoint.

The bomber detonated his vehicle at the checkpoint as he could not pass through them, he added.

The journalist also said that all roads were closed and no one was allowed to approach the area after the attack.

He added that Iraqi security forces opened heavy gunfire after the explosion took place.

Al-Zarqawi-linked group, al-Qaida Group in Iraq, purportedly published a statement on the internet claiming responsibility for the attack. The statement could not be verified.

Another explosion on yesterday rocked an electoral centre at a school in the new Baghdad area in southern Baghdad city, destroying the outer fence of the centre and the front of the building, al-

Samarrai said.

Earlier this month, a car bomber targeted the same offices of Allawi's party. Four people were killed and 25 injured in that attack.

Fighters targeting US-led troops and Iraq's interim government have mounted frequent car bomb attacks and ambushes against Iraqi security forces in the run-up to the country's 30 January elections.

## Russia 'vows' not to sell missiles to Syria

Russian President Vladimir Putin has promised Israeli

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that he will not sign a contract to sell SA-18 surface-to-air missiles to Syria, according to an Israeli daily.

The reported promise, said to have been made in a phone call by Putin on Thursday, came on the day that Syrian President Bashar al-Asad begins a four-day official visit to Russia.

The *Haaretz* newspaper said Sharon had explained to the Russian leader that the weapons, also called Iglia missiles, risked falling into the hands of Hizb Allah, which is opposed to Israeli occupation. Hizb Allah was successful in driving Israeli

forces out of occupied southern Lebanon in May 2000.

Sharon's office had said on Thursday that the Putin-Sharon phone call centred on the situation in the Middle East, the unilateral Israeli plan of disengagement from the Gaza Strip, relations with Syria and Hizb Allah and their implications, and the recent election of Mahmud Abbas as Palestinian president.

The Syrian leader arrived in Moscow yesterday amid controversy over reports that Russia was ready to sell Syria, its long-time ally in the Middle East, state-of-the-art missiles capable of hitting any target within a radius that includes Israel.

## ODD WORLD

### Wife wakes from coma after husband commits suicide

An Italian pensioner committed suicide after his wife fell into a coma, but just hours after he killed himself the woman woke up, Italian media reported on Saturday.

Recalling the end of "Romeo and Juliet," the 70-year-old man, Ettore, who had sat by his wife's bedside for four months after she slipped into a coma following a heart attack, finally gave up hope and gassed himself in the garage of his family home.

Less than a day later, his wife, Rossana, woke up in her hospital bed in Padua and immediately asked for him.

The northern town of Padua lies just 40 miles from Verona, where star-crossed lover Romeo killed himself believing Juliet to have died. But minutes later Juliet woke up and seeing Romeo dead, stabbed herself.

### Too many text messages bad for fingers

Excessive text messaging may be bad for you, or at least for your fingers.

That's what some Italian doctors believe. They are telling people, particularly the young, that furious typing on mobile phones could lead to acute tendonitis.

Italian newspapers *La Repubblica* and *Il Messaggero* dedicated about half a page each to the problem yesterday.

A 13-year-old girl in the northern Italian city of Savona needed treatment from an orthopaedic specialist after typing at least 100 short message services (SMSs) a day.

She was prescribed anti-inflammatory medicine and ordered to rest her hands.

According to a recent study conducted for children's rights group Telefono Azzurro, some 37 percent of Italian children are "cell phone addicts". Irritability and mood swings were other symptoms linked to very frequent cell phone use among the young.

The message is clear: MayB U shd stop B4 its 2 L8.

### Tabloid fires reporter over fake Yahoo baby

A Romanian tabloid said it has fired a reporter for making up a story about a couple who named their son Yahoo as a sign of gratitude for meeting over the Internet.

Earlier this month, major Bucharest daily *Libertatea* published a story saying two Romanians had named their baby Yahoo and printed a picture of his birth certificate. The news was widely picked up on the Internet.

"It was the reporter's child's birth certificate, which he modified," said Simona Ionescu, *Libertatea's* deputy editor-in-chief on yesterday. "We fired him."

She said Ion Garnod, who had worked for the paper for several years, had admitted inventing the story to look good.

"If it were real, it would have been a good story indeed," Ionescu said.

Garnod was not available for comment.

### Finland regrets book on how to bribe Russians

The Finnish government said it regretted sponsoring a book giving detailed examples of how to bribe Russian officials and businessmen published by the Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce.

"We would say that the book really encourages bribing, and we are absolutely of the opinion that one must not allow instructions on bribing to be published in an instruction manual we are supporting financially," Bo Goeran Eriksson, head of the trade department of the Trade and Industry Ministry, told AFP.

His department contributes 430,000 euros (\$577,000 dollars) annually to the Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce, set up to foster trade relations between the two neighboring countries.

The book is doubly embarrassing as Finland is considered the least corrupt nation in the world, and both bribing and incitement to bribery are strictly illegal.

The content of the book, originally published two years ago, only became widely known Friday when the leading daily *Helsingin Sanomat* highlighted a chapter in which Finnish companies give examples of how they bribed Russian officials.

When contacted, the trade body denied any wrongdoing.

"These are examples, not instructions. I don't feel that we should feel remorse because companies have given examples of their experiences in Russia," Mirja Azecem, chief executive of the chamber, told AFP.

"The book is a description about how real life is in Russia," she concluded.

# Business Trust

Energy



## Today's flight schedule

<b>Albarka Air</b>	
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	
PHC - Abuja	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Yola	1:00p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00p.m.
<b>Chanchangi Airlines</b>	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.
<b>IRS Airlines</b>	
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.
<b>EAS Airlines</b>	
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.
<b>Dasab Airlines</b>	
Abuja - Lagos	8:30a.m.
Lagos - PHC	10:30a.m.
PHC - Lagos	12:30a.m.
Lagos - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	4:30p.m.
Lagos - Abuja	6:30p.m.
<b>ADC Airline</b>	
Lagos - Abuja	7:15a.m.
	12:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55a.m.
Lagos - Calabar	11:15a.m.
Calabar - Lagos	7:20a.m.
PH - Lagos	9:45a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

Iranian oil minister, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) believes the oil market is oversupplied but is unlikely to implement a cut in output when it meets in Vienna next week.

"Of course we have oversupplied, but it does not mean for certain that OPEC will make a supply cut decision at the end of January. The session will be a consultative one and there will be no decisions made," he told reporters.

## OPEC unlikely to decide on output cut - Minister

By Hamisu Muhammad, Reporter (Business) with Agency reports

The minister said a decision on output was therefore likely to be deferred to the following OPEC meeting due to take place in

the central Iranian city of Isfahan on March 16 and 17.

"We will decide for the second quarter in Isfahan," Zanganeh said. "We are not

merely looking at supply and demand. We also watch the market situation. There are different figures for oversupply," he said.

"The world economy is strong. OPEC is mostly worried about fluctuations, but it tolerates (a fluctuation of) two to three dollars a barrel. If we have a stable price OPEC will be more satisfied. OPEC's aim is to have less than 40 dollar a barrel for its basket."

## ...Crude futures rise amid cold spell

Crude futures rose yesterday after a snowstorm hit the northeast in the United States, boosting demand for heating oil.

Light sweet crude for March delivery rose 51 cents to \$49.04 a barrel in electronic trading midway in Asia. Heating oil rose by less than 0.5 cents to \$1.4 a gallon.

Weather forecaster Meteorlogix said, however, that the weather is expected to return to near-normal conditions by Tuesday.

A blizzard swept into America's northeast Jan. 21, shutting airports and dumping 15 inches (38 centimeters) of snow on New York.

The United States is the world's largest heating oil market, with 80 percent of it used by the northeast.

Supply fears have also driven oil prices higher. Oil workers in Port Harcourt, a key Nigerian petroleum center, have threatened to go ahead with a strike planned Monday unless two expatriate oil executives blamed for cutting worker benefits heed their call to leave the country.

The United States is the world's largest heating oil market, with 80 percent of it used by the northeast.

"Certainly, the cold weather in the US is a factor driving up prices to close to

OPEC cut production by 1 million barrels a day from this month to bring output closer to its self-imposed target of 27 million barrels a day. This has resulted in a 20 percent price gain in oil futures.

## Nigeria backs El-Baradei's re-election

Nigeria has expressed its support for the re-election of the director-general, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Dr Mohammed El-Baradei for a third term in office.

The director-general, Energy Commission of Nigeria, Professor A.S. Sambo announced this while

## Shell plans field study

From Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondent (Lagos)

Shell Exploration Company B.V has signed a letter of understanding (LOU) with the ministry of oil for the executive of an integrity reservoir study for its Kirkuk field.

Sambo commended the IAEA Boss for his efforts to promote world peace and the use of nuclear technology for the improvement of humanity.

He noted with delight that two out of the nine new technical cooperation projects for the 2005-2007 biennial would be based at the Zaria centre.

Sambo disclosed that the two projects to be implemented at the centre included the utilization of Nigerian research reactor (NRR -1) for NRR (phase 2) and the establishment of an isotope laboratory.

The company's technical assistance, it was gather will bring its experience with production from mature field developments and operations in the Middle East. The study will be conducted outside Iraq and is expected to take about one year.

According to Garin Granham, Director New Business Development for Shell Exploration and production in the Middle East, the company's participation in the Kirkuk study is party of a board programme of assistance to the Iraqi energy industry in areas in which its leaders have identified the industry's greatest needs.

## Gas prices up in US market

Gas prices at the pump rose for the first time in nearly three months, primarily from higher crude oil prices, an industry analyst said Sunday.

Between January 7 and last Friday, the combined average price for all grades of gasoline rose more than 5 cents a gallon, to \$1.87 compared to the prior two weeks, said analyst Tribby Lundberg, who publishes the semimonthly Lundberg Survey of 7,000 gas stations across the country.

"Shell's contribution to the study, which will improve the understanding and reservoir management of the Kirkuk field, is in line with our continued commitment to supporting the Iraqi oil industry and establishing a material and enduring presence in the country's best stressed.

The average national price for self-serve regular, the most popular, was \$1.85 a gallon. Mid-grade cost \$1.95 and premium was priced at \$2.04 a gallon for the period.

The surge in oil prices has been a consistent factor in the January downturn in the U.S. stock market. After peaking in the mid \$50-per-barrel range in October, crude oil futures fell into the low \$40 range by December, but spiked to nearly \$50 again last week.

The company also disclosed that besides the Kirkuk study, it is providing comprehensive training opportunities for Iraqi energy industry professionals to enhance skills and competencies and to increase exposure to modern practice and technology application.

The surge in oil prices has been a consistent factor in the January downturn in the U.S. stock market. After peaking in the mid \$50-per-barrel range in October, crude oil futures fell into the low \$40 range by December, but spiked to nearly \$50 again last week.

## PRINTERS OF REPUTE IN NIGERIA

We had earlier scheduled to publish our special supplement on the printers of repute in Nigeria on Monday, January 24, 2005, but due to certain development, the publication has been shifted to Monday, February 14, 2005.

The postponement is also to enable us accommodate all those who have indicated interest in the project but were unable to send their materials on time.

Interested companies/individuals can book their space with the Special Projects Department on any of these Nos: 080370838663, 08042145839, 08023762061, 08028494170 or 09-6720346

# Business Trust

## 1ST-TIER SECURITIES

## THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(S)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES	TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY
CUTIX PLC	7	1.36	134,739	192,677.77	<b>SYMBOL</b> <b>VOLUME</b> <b>VALUE</b> <b>TRADES</b>
NEWPAK PLC	1	1.05	600	630.00	DUNLOP 1,290,249.00 2,499,486.45 38
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>135,339</b>	<b>193,287.77</b>	NE 1,350,771.00 53,348,055.07 398
<b>AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED</b>					IMB 1,691,432.00 1,104,409.09 30
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	2	2.83	1,245	3,523.35	UBN 1,900,473.00 39,272,651.52 352
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	7	15.44	15,400	1,088,883.76	FIRSTBANK 2,125,690.00 51,378,158.13 451
PRISCO PLC	14	12.26	85,216	1,331,727.11	GUARANTY 2,906,937.00 39,301,148.24 157
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>104,961</b>	<b>2,828,019.89</b>	ICRSGTOURB 4,104,690.00 351,813,751.29 1
<b>AUTOMOBILE &amp; TYRE</b>					NAL 7,183,125.00 16,103,117.80 74
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC	38	1.92	1,299,249	2,499,486.45	FSB 7,900,000.00 10,960,111.25 35
R. T. BRISCOE PLC	6	7.22	3,952	28,533.44	UBA 8,325,369.00 83,253,690.00 173
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>44</b>		<b>1,303,201</b>	<b>2,528,019.89</b>	
<b>BANKING</b>					
ACCESS BANK PLC	3	3.42	61,866	211,581.72	
AFRI-BANK NIGERIA PLC	14	6.63	697,065	4,621,540.95	
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	2	3.41	16,000	54,560.00	
CHARTERED BANK PLC	2	3.90	42,750	166,725.00	
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC	44	1.78	715,250	1,246,720.00	
EBB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	1	2.26	2,000	4,520.00	
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	451	24.47	2,125,699	51,378,158.13	
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	35	1.33	7,900,707	10,960,111.25	
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC	157	13.52	2,906,937	39,301,148.24	
GULL BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	1	0.86	50,000	43,000.00	
HALLMARK BANK PLC	1	2.00	2,000	4,100.00	
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC	30	0.65	1,691,432	1,104,409.09	
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	19	1.12	851,527	928,133.89	
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	10	7.81	186,820	1,301,302.20	
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	1	0.90	2,000	1,800.00	
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC	23	1.04	812,500	850,500.00	
NAL BANK PLC	7	1.33	7,183,125	16,103,117.80	
OCEANIC BANK PLC	5	6.30	366,127	2,306,600.10	
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	7	1.33	125,500	167,245.00	
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	44	7.41	314,233	3,810,466.53	
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	6	1.70	429,499	740,773.40	
TRADE BANK PLC	1	1.35	500	675.00	
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	173	10.00	8,125,369	83,253,690.00	
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC	352	20.65	1,900,473	39,272,651.52	
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	16	1.06	1,035,006	1,096,436.36	
WEMA BANK PLC	5	3.95	192,640	757,075.20	
ZENITH BANK PLC	39	13.69	335,203	5,264,042.07	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>1,521</b>		<b>38,452,328</b>	<b>264,963,083.45</b>	
<b>BREWERIES</b>					
CHAMPION BREWERIES PLC	3	4.23	14,900	59,220.00	
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC	125	106.00	44,877,534.98	47,477,534.98	
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC	398	39.52	1,350,771	53,348,055.07	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>575</b>		<b>1,813,496</b>	<b>100,884,810.05</b>	
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS</b>					
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	92	23.99	342,854	8,179,132.11	
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	7	7.04	30,000	211,200.00	
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC	58	11.98	248,853	2,906,901.48	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>157</b>		<b>621,706</b>	<b>11,381,233.59</b>	
<b>CHEMICAL &amp; PAINTS</b>					
BERGER PAINTS PLC	21	5.44	109,703	597,106.43	
CAP PLC	17	6.70	173,633	1,163,341.10	
D. N. MEYER PLC	4	5.00	7,250	36,250.00	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>290,586</b>	<b>1,796,697.53</b>	
<b>COMPUTER &amp; OFFICE EQUIPMENT</b>					
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC	1	0.95	39,930	37,942.05	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>39,930</b>	<b>37,942.05</b>	
<b>CONGLOMERATES</b>					
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC	9	1.04	566,599	579,240.46	
C. F. A. D NIGERIA PLC	16	6.69	49,274	320,572.31	
CHELLARAMS PLC	2	1.71	1,948	1,531.08	
JOHN HOLT PLC	2	1.05	14,498.7	157,498.71	
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	192	17.64	748,297	13,295,489.35	
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC	85	13.20	408,043	5,335,823.93	
S. C. O. NIGERIA PLC	1	1.19	284,686	353,530.24	
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC	50	14.17	136,856	1,939,249.52	
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC	6	1.24	46,848	58,119.20	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>377</b>		<b>2,392,368</b>	<b>22,036,542.30</b>	
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>					
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	7	0.95	105,160	91,319.40	
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	6	14.44	3,258	48,381.60	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>108,418</b>	<b>141,701.00</b>	
<b>ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY</b>					
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC	2	0.82	2,850	2,337.00	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>2,850</b>	<b>2,337.00</b>	
<b>FOOD, BEVERAGES &amp; TOBACCO</b>					
F&P BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	27	24.10	31,728	775,319.65	
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	188	58.00	316,161	18,412,718.27	
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	11	16.41	14,410	237,410.10	
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	94	52.30	229,391	12,285,878.89	
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC	102	148.50	199,847	29,774,549.34	
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC	2	15.03	15,000	225,000.00	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>426</b>		<b>847,837</b>	<b>62,421,379.25</b>	
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>					
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	14	3.41	96,102	327,707.82	
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	7	6.10	31,200	192,588.00	
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC	5	2.98	31,362	92,117.90	
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	21	8.58	61,447	531,215.00	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>47</b>		<b>220,111</b>	<b>1,143,628.72</b>	
<b>HOTEL &amp; TOURISM</b>					
TOURIST COMPANY OF NIGERIA PLC	1	4.20	1,000	4,200.00	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1,000</b>	<b>4,200.00</b>	
<b>INDUSTRIAL DOMESTIC PRODUCTS</b>					
ALUMACO PLC	1	2.00	1,000	2,000.00	
NIGERIA ENAMELWARE COMPANY PLC	2	3.40	5,800	19,720.00	
B.O.C. GASES PLC	7	2.97	18,900	55,391.00	
TITARIAM NIGERIA PLC	26	4.21	197,290	831,853.90	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>32</b>		<b>215,290</b>	<b>885,964.90</b>	
<b>INSURANCE</b>					
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	2	0.60	50,000	30,000.00	
AICO INSURANCE PLC	10	2.15	130,200	280,630.00	
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC	18	1.34	366,506	497,836.16	
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC	2	0.29	23,756	18,767.24	
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC	2	1.47	50,000	73,500.00	
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	1	4.05	1,118	4,505.54	
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	3	1.97	201,785	397,516.45	
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC	5	3.03	43,974	131,841.22	
FIRST ASSURANCE PLC	3	0.84	1,252	1,029.00	
UNIC INSURANCE PLC	9	1.07	140,040	149,842.80	
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC	8	2.94	79,511	236,442.04	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>63</b>		<b>1,681,217</b>	<b>1,822,162.45</b>	
<b>MANAGED FUNDS</b>					
C & I LEASING PLC	4	1.60	69,500	111,200.00	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>69,500</b>	<b>111,200.00</b>	
<b>PACKAGING</b>					
AVON CROWN CAPS & CONTAINERS PLC	5	0.85	15,895	13,229.50	
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	1	1.17	7,607	8,900.19	
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC	4	4.71	36,000	169,560.00	
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC	2	0.63	15,418.40	9,741.85	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>74,942</b>	<b>201,108.09</b>	
<b>PETROLEUM (MARKETING)</b>					
AFROIL PLC	4	0.98	69,500	68,500.00	
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	110	67.00	224,796	17,131,237.14	
ETHEMA OIL & GAS PLC	12	7.11	164,290	1,144,290.31	
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC	51	179.02	28,557	5,113,320.65	
CONOIL PLC	83	179.00	57,138	1,000,509.57	
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC	39	169.61	20,491	3,445,141.50	
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	48	179.00	38,339	6,865,530.61	
QANDO PLC	166	162.00	28,783	4,672,997.53	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>494</b>		<b>839,442</b>	<b>58,657,917.13</b>	
<b>PRINTING &amp; PUBLISHING</b>					
ACADEMY PRESS PLC	1	1.00	100,000	190,000.00	
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	1	2.22	5,900	13,098.00	
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	1	1.89	2,000	3,780.00	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>107,900</b>	<b>206,878.00</b>	
<b>REAL ESTATE</b>					
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC	37	9.00	211,122	1,887,744.25	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>37</b>		<b>211,122</b>	<b>1,887,744.25</b>	
<b>TEXTILES</b>					
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC	1	0.51	1,680	856.80	
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC	17	2.90	109,744	315,353.80	
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>110,424</b>	<b>316,210.60</b>	
<b>Overall Totals</b>			<b>3,897</b>	<b>49,632,083</b>	<b>532,957,745.13</b>

### Debts: DMO collaborates with Argentines

In order to achieve a sustainable foreign debt portfolio for the country, the Debt Management Office (DMO) has commenced collaboration with Argentine Public Debt experts.

A team of the Argentine debt experts led by the Director of Public Debt Management of Mr. Jorge Amado and his predecessor, Mr. Marcelo Tricario commenced talks with top officials of DMO in Abuja, on possible areas of collaboration and strategies for ensuring that Nigeria's foreign debt stock is held down and not allowed to rise as a result of increasing interests and penalties.

The Acting Director-General of the DMO, Dr. Abraham Nwankwo, who represented the Chief Executive Dr. Mansur Muhtar, said that the forum will provide the DMO an opportunity to harmonize its position with states governments which owe between 24 to 27 per cent of the foreign debt, as well as learn from experts who have successfully managed their country's debt portfolio.

According to him, the DMO was "prepared to carry the state governments along in the efforts to resolve the debt problem in Nigeria, in order to free the huge funds which go into debt service, annually, and make it available for development purposes".

He expressed appreciation of the federal government to the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) for its assistance, particularly in the area of capacity building for the organisation.

At the end of the working visit, the Argentine delegation would have met and exchanged ideas, as well as, experiences with participating officials from 15 states of the federation, the Central Bank of Nigeria, and the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation (OAGF).

Mr. Amada said in his remarks that Argentina's debt overhang was a major problem to her economic development efforts until strategies were developed to make it sustainable and bring it down to the level of negative impact on the economy.

He urged the Nigerian government to seek debt relief from creditors, using the various avenues of negotiations with debt holders, either on bilateral basis or as a group, particularly the Paris Club.

### FG, States, LGs share N242bn

The Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC) has disbursed the sum of N242 billion from the Federation Accounts to the beneficiaries namely the Federal, State and Local Governments.

The N242 billion was shared at yesterday's FAAC meeting in Abuja, presided over by the Minister of State for Finance, Mrs. Nenadi Usman. The amount, however represents a decline of 0.4 per cent over the December 2004 allocations of N243 billion, made up of statutory allocations and Value Added Tax.

Sources at the meeting who confirmed this to reporters in Abuja yesterday, said that statutory allocation of N225 billion and VAT of N16 billion was distributed among the benefiting tiers government. In December 2004 the FAAC had disbursed statutory allocation of N228.83 billion and VAT of N15.16 billion to the Federal, State and Local Governments.

The breakdown of this month's distribution of the Statutory Allocation revealed that the Federal Government, 36 State Governments and the 774 Local Governments received N105.5 billion, N53.5 billion and N41.2 billion, respectively, compared to what they received in December 2004 which was N107.41 billion, N54.47 billion and N42 billion, respectively.

N25 billion of the total allocation for the month of January went into servicing the 13% derivation account for oil producing states.

For Value Added Tax disbursements, the FAAC allocated N2.4 billion to the Federal Government, while the State and Local Governments received VAT proceeds of N8.3 billion and N5.8 billion respectively.

In all, the Federal Government's allocations for the month of January tallied to N107.9 billion, while the State and Local Government received N61.8 billion and N47 billion, respectively.

# Business Trust

motoring

## Hybrid sales double in 2004

New models power growth in hybrid sales

Sales of hybrid cars and trucks nearly doubled in 2004, and industry analyst J.D. Power and Associates suggests that such growth will continue for a number of years.

Combined, seven gas-electric vehicles accounted for 85,699 sales in 2004, up 97.3 percent from the 43,435 sold in 2003. The numbers were reported by automakers.

Most of the growth, and most of the sales of high-mileage hybrids, came from Toyota's Prius sedan. At 53,991 units, it accounted for a whopping 63 percent of the hybrid market.

But new hybrid models — the Ford Escape sport-utility, the Honda Accord sedan and the Chevy Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups — all went on sale for the first time during 2004 — accounted for growth, too.

The Accord, which combines electric motors and battery power with a V-6 gas engine, accounted for 1,061 sales in December. Ford dealers have sold about 1,000 Escape hybrids a month since October 2004.

An eighth hybrid, the Dodge Ram Contractor's Special pickup, which will be available only to fleet customers, went into production in November but none reached customers before year's end, the company said.

Anthony Pratt, Power's senior manager for global powertrain issues, said hybrids coming into new

market segments will mean growth through the end of the decade.

"The fact that all vehicle manufacturers have a hybrid strategy is significant," Pratt said.

Power, the Westlake Village researcher, projects that U.S. hybrid sales will reach 222,000 this year and 500,000 by 2009. If that prediction comes true, hybrids would account for nearly 3 percent of the U.S. car and truck market in 2009. In 2004, hybrid sales represented about 0.5 percent of the 16.9 million vehicles sold.

Another Power affiliate, the Power Information Network that tracks dealer transactions, said Californians bought nearly 42 percent of all hybrids sold from Jan. 1 to Dec. 17, 2004.

This year, the Lexus RX 400h hybrid goes on sale in April and the Toyota Highlander hybrid

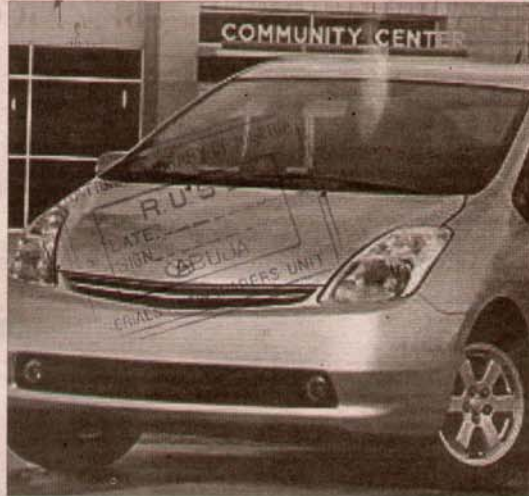
becomes available in June. Both are sport-utility vehicles. By 2008, Power said, more than 30 hybrid models will be available.

Shun Obinata, a Bay Area technical translator, bought a slightly used 2004 Prius late last year.

"I find it to be a classy car with great gas mileage," so far about 52 miles per gallon, he said. "It's the best of two worlds."

Pratt, the J.D. Power analyst, said hybrid buyers are still so-called early adopters. They're older than the average car buyer, have more education and greater incomes. He noted that 40 percent of all Prius buyers have an advanced college degree.

Five to seven years from now, as gasoline vehicles become more efficient, as diesel fuel gains in acceptance, and as hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles get closer to consumer readiness, hybrid sales might reach a plateau, he said.



TOYOTA PRIUS, one of the high mileage hybrids

## GAZ Buys Daimler Engines

Moscow January 24, 2005: Reuters reported that Russia's second-biggest automaker, GAZ, which suspended work after a local

engine producer hiked prices, plans to buy 1,000 engines per month from Daimler Chrysler, a GAZ official said.

Spokesman Oleg Gamov said the two sides had agreed to increase deliveries to 150,000 annually in two to three years.

Negotiations have already been completed but there is still no date for signing a contract, he said, adding GAZ was interested in signing on as quickly as possible.

"You can draw your own conclusions on the dates of contract signing," Gamov said by telephone from Nizhny Novgorod in central Russia, where GAZ is located. "Naturally, it will be in the nearest future."

The local engine producer, ZMZ, hiked prices

by 24 percent to about \$1,700 from the start of the year, forcing GAZ to suspend production until the end of January.

Gamov said Daimler Chrysler had offered engines for Volga cars at prices comparable with ZMZ's.

"There is worthy stuff in DaimlerChrysler's rich product line for \$1,700. There is then no point making Volgas with ZMZ engines," he said.

But GAZ does not intend to abandon ZMZ altogether as it still hoped for a price cut. "We would not like to behave like this toward our old partner, because a mass car is primarily a cheap engine," Gamov said.

GAZ produced 65,686 Volgas last year.

## Fiat GM auto deal now Feb.

Italian industrial group Fiat is to wait until at least February 2 to exercise its right to sell the troubled Fiat Auto division to US giant General Motors.

Fiat said mediation talks with GM that began on December 16 regarding their industrial partnership will end on February 1.

Consequently, Fiat said it postponed the right to exercise its put option which gives it the right to sell its 90

percent stake in the loss-making car business Fiat Auto to GM to February 2.

According to a previous agreement reached with GM when both groups enjoyed better fortunes, Fiat can sell its car business from now to July 24, 2010.

Fiat reiterated that the put option remains "valid and enforceable" despite GM's claims to the contrary after Fiat sold some assets and recapitalised Fiat Auto.

GM and Fiat "continue to work on the optimisation" of their current industrial alliance, Fiat said.

Fiat chief executive Sergio Marchionne added that the evolution of the relationship with GM "will not negatively impact the group's ability to reach its financial targets for 2005, 2006 and 2007."

He also said that Fiat Auto does not plan any plant closures in Italy.



FIAT PANDA



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# It's all about you.



# LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

## NLC asks AG to resign over Lagos funds

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has told the minister of justice and Attorney-General of the federation, Chief Akin Olujimi to resign from office if he can no longer demonstrate courage and professionalism to prevail upon president Olusegun Obasanjo to release the Lagos State government allocations in compliance with the ruling of the Supreme Court.

In a letter signed by the NLC President, Adams Oshimhole and addressed to the minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the federation, Chief Akin Olujimi said "the path of honour is to resign if the executive disposition makes the exercise of your functions impossible."

The letter read in part, "we in the NLC have resolved to call on you to resign the office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice if the nation can no longer count on

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi, *Stringer (Abuja)*

your ability to demonstrate courage and professionalism prevailing on the federal government and its chief executive to behave lawfully and respect the rule of law."

The congress said the essence and role of the Attorney-general as the chief law officer of the federation in the practice of presidential system of governance is to ensure that respect for the rule of law is mainstreamed into conduct of public officers, including Mr. President.

According to the congress, in the Nigeria context, the vision is that the Attorney general should be the chief custodian of respect for the rule of law and justice, not a personal counsel who merely provides technical rationalisation for executive whims and decisions, as is increasingly becoming the case.

"As far as the NLC is concerned, bring the conduct of the federal government into conformity with the rule of law on this matter is squarely within the province of your mandate as the Attorney-general and the immediate challenge before you is to summon the courage and professional propriety to prevail on Mr. President to release the said allocations in compliance with the ruling of the Supreme Court," the congress said.

The congress which urged

the Attorney-General to reflect some dangers posed by the federal government's disrespect for the rule of law and constitute an invitation to anarchy said when there is clear interpretation of the law on the contentious issues and an unequivocal order on the federal government to release the funds, "this administration prefers to invoke legal technicalities and join issues with the Supreme court, as if it were some area court," the congress said.

According to the con-

gress, it remains inexcusable that rather than comply, this administration continues to canvass the correctness of its decision to seize the allocations and insist on seeking the re-interpretation of a ruling that leads itself to so much clarity even for laypersons.

This delinquent posture, the congress said, has been at great social costs to workers, pensioners and beneficiaries of the services of the local government system in Lagos State and the entire economy of the state, adding that basic

services provided by the councils, especially education, primary healthcare, agricultural extension, sanitation and public works have been suspended.

The congress told the Attorney-general that the NLC had earlier prevailed on its affiliates in the local government system not to go on strike but to wait judicial outcome, since Mr. President had explained during the national May Day rally that the matters in contention were better left to judicial adjudication.

## Okada riders operate with reflective vests

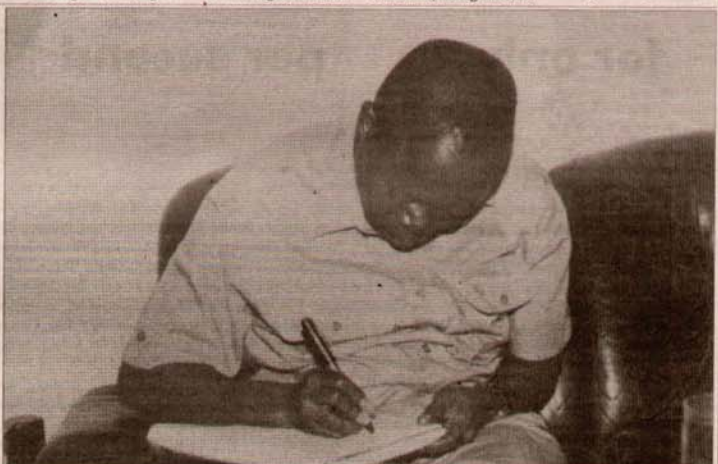
Some members of the Amalgamated Commercial Motorcycle Owners and Riders association of Nigeria (ACOMORAN) Abuja branch have begun to distinguish themselves from other Okada riders following the reflective vests they wear while riding.

Some of the members who told *Labour Trust* about ACOMORAN's uniform in Abuja said the executive governing council of the union permitted members at the grassroots to operate Okada business with reflective vests so that the passengers of Okada riders will be able to identify them pending when President Obasanjo will commission it across the nation next month.

They revealed that the union, during a visit to the FCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, presented him to wear as a sign of flag off for the members of ACOMORAN Abuja branch to operate with it while riding.

Speaking on the importance of the uniform, some branch chairmen who said that it has become necessary for the union to differentiate itself from other unions that manage Okada business said the union is aimed at bringing sanity and security to Okada business in the FCT.

They commended the law enforcement agents for their approval during the processing of the said reflective vests, saying that the executives will continue maintain good relationship with them.



NLC president, Comrade Adams Oshimhole signing the visitors' register during his courtesy visit to Media Trust headquarters in Abuja...recently. Pp. Kenneth Eghonmie

## MFCT urged to enlighten motorists on bus-stops

Some officials of the transport unions have called on the ministry of federal capital territory (MFCT) to notify the executives of transport unions and commuters on some designated bus-stops in the terri-

tory so as to avoid unjust arrest by the police. According to them, many drivers and commuters that are plying FCT streets do not have knowledge about bus-stops approved by the FCT administration, adding that

the public enlightenment has become necessary so that motorists will know designated bus-stops to park their vehicles to pick and discharge passengers. They said that most of the transport union officials espe-

cially town service units chairman could not enlighten their members on some areas in the FCT designated as bus-stops due to what they called "communication breakdown" between transport unions and FCT administration.

Speaking on the police that engage in evacuation exercise of some illegal parks in the FCT, they said the policemen that usually station themselves at various strategic places do not help the matter as they arrest those motorists where police described as illegal bus-stops instead of enlightening them.

The FCT administration, they said, need to address the problem facing motorists at various bus-stops in the territory.

One of the union officials, one Comrade Johnson who indicted men of the FCT police command for extorting drivers at the bus-stops said the FCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai should inform transport chairmen and commuters on the designated bus-stops in the FCT.

Comrade Johnson who revealed that the commuters inflicted pains when the police denied them from entering vehicles in the bus-stops said the police should counsel the motorists on the approved bus-stops instead of arresting them.

## NARTO to hold transport conference

The Director General on media and public affairs of Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) Comrade Ali Abdullahi has said that NARTO and foreign transport associations will organise a conference that will transform transport business not only in the continent of Africa but in the Europe and North America particularly the United State of America.

Comrade Abdullahi, who stated this at the NARTO secretariat, Abuja said the conference which will be held in Abuja was designed for transporters to converge and exchange ideas globally on new technology and operational system in the transport business.

Comrade Abdullahi who described NARTO as a private transport industry said "you will see NARTO transforming, by making bridges with other transport associations not only in the continent of Africa but in the Europe and North America particularly

United States of America where trucking business is a billion dollar enterprises."

He said that plans are in the pipeline to fashion out business relationship between

## NON IMPLEMENTATION OF MONETISATION POLICY Employees of federal parastatals threatens service withdrawal

The employees of federal radio, television, cultural, meteorological and other allied parastatals across the nation, may withdraw their services shortly if the federal government continues to postpone the implementation of the monetisation policy.

The Radio, Television and Theatre Workers Union (RATTAWU) of Nigeria, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and Amalgamated Union of Public Corporation, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) through a statement signed by unions executives said the unions have renewed their July 9,

NARTO, other associations and federal government so that the new skills, having acquired by the transporters during the conference, will be used to complement the gov-

## Employees of federal parastatals threatens service withdrawal

ernment's effort in solving transport problems in Nigeria. According to him, NARTO is a business organisation that makes money in

2004 protest to the Presidency, copied to the National Assembly, Secretary to the Federal Government, Head of Service, the Information Ministry, Directors-General of the Federal Radio Corporation, Nigerian Television Authority and all other Commissions, agencies and Parastatals over the matter. According to the statement, the organs plan to intimate the forthcoming Central Working Committee (CWC) of the Nigeria Labour Congress of their indicative action to embark on an indefinite industrial action to force the affected managements actualise the policy in their respective work places.

several ways, adding that "NARTO as a big employer of hundreds of thousands of workers with a capital base which does not need to be privatised but to diversify its resources and intensify its capital base by reaching out," Comrade Abdullahi said.

Speaking on the problems facing some NARTO members in the truck business, Comrade Abdullahi said that despite the fact that his members who are tanker drivers played a good role in transporting petroleum products from NNPC depots to various filling stations but some of the major oil marketing companies and government have not complied with labour regulations of these truck drivers.

The unions implore the federal government to extend the implementation of the new rates of the monetised policy to all parastatals employees effective October 1, 2003 as is the case in the core civil service.

The unions said that the disparity in monthly take home pay between core civil service employees and their parastatals counterparts in identical professions and cadres and or requiring the same academic qualifications are now in the range of between 50 and 75 per cent in favour of civil service employees in respect to officers employees in respect to offices in both sectors on GL 08 and above.

The unions implore the federal government to extend the implementation of the new rates of the monetised policy to all parastatals employees effective October 1, 2003 as is the case in the core civil service.

# LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

## LNG project to create 4,000 jobs

The Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Mr. Funsho Kupolokun has said that the \$6 billion Liquefied National Gas Plant project to be constructed at Olokola, Ondo state will provide 4,000 skill jobs to Nigerians.

The project will be constructed by NNPC, Chevron and the British Gas, West Africa Limited.

Kupolokun who stated his in Abeokuta, Ogun State during a courtesy visit on the Ogun state Governor, Oluoba Gbenga Daniel said that although movement of equipment to the site would start as soon as possible,

construction work would begin in January 2006.

Olokola is a border town between Ondo and Ogun states. The NNPC boss who was accompanied by top officials of the companies involved in the construction of the project said, "when completed, it would be the biggest single project in Nigeria."

The team also visited the Ondo state Governor, Dr. Olusegun Agagu to ask for similar cooperation.

Kupolokun said that on assumption of office in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo said everything should be done to ensure that Nigeria earned as much

income from gas as from oil.

According to him, the plant is aimed at supplying metric tonnes of gas per annum. It is to be executed in phases until it would be completed in 2009. It would meet the federal

government target of 70 metric tonnes by 2009.

The project, Kupolokun revealed would involve the production of between 1.5 and 1.8 cubic feet of gas per day. He said "the final decision for the plant would be taken in 2006, so as to

know the financial involvement of each of the companies.

In his response, Governor Daniel said that he was glad and assured that he would assist in any area that his cooperation was needed.



FLASH BACK: NLC president, Comrade Adams Oshiomole (m), NLC vice president, Onikolease Irabor (l) and deputy president, comrade Abdulwaheed Ibrahim Oma in solidarity song during the NLC NEC meeting on the recent fuel price increase held at the Labour headquarters in Abuja Monday Sept. 27, 2004. Pix: Felix Onigbide

## Directors urged to obey traffic regulations

Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), Abuja branch, has urged members to obey traffic regulations while driving.

The FCT chairman of NARTO, Alhaji Abubakar Sidiq who gave this advice during a maiden meeting held this year in Abuja heard from the police that member violates traffic regulations, urging members that they should maintain their traffic obedient records.

Alhaji Sidiq said that he does want members to abuse the opportunities and co-operations the law enforcement agents gave the union last year, adding that the union wants to continue such

relationship to ensure a crime free society.

He expressed the union's readiness to work hand in hand with the FCT police command, FRSC and VIO to hold a cautionary measure programme to enlighten members on the need to know traffic regulations and act on it to ensure safety.

He told members that although the union experienced minor accident victims despite organising several safety programmes for them last year, according to him, "we will not relent our effort to reduce the rate of accident to the barest minimum."

Alhaji Sidiq called the police that control traffic in the territory to join the union in the cautionary measure.

## MTUN to enrol members in insurance scheme

The FCT Chairman of Motorcycle Transport Union of Nigeria (MTUN), Abuja branch, Comrade Obi Nwaogwugwu said that the union has concluded plans to enrol members with Nobel and Lesley Insurance Limited at reasonable premium welfare to the members.

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi -Stringer (Abuja).

Comrade Nwaogwugwu who said that the union aimed at training members on the safety in the six area councils in the Federal

Capital Territory (FCT) said the insurance company will take care of training expenses and other logistics expended by the union.

According to him, the insurance company will work hand in hand with the union to ensure that members involved in accident are being compensated.



FLASH BACK: Minister of Labour and Productivity, Alh. Hassan Lawal Mohammed, ILO representative, Mr. Cornelius Dzakpasu and senior Labour Law Specialist, Mrs. Jane Hogdes during the public hearing on anti labour bill held at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja Wednesday August 25, 2004. Pix: Felix Onigbide

## Bauchi NUJ condemns police over brutality

The Bauchi Council of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has joined in condemning police attack on journalists at the venue of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) meeting in Abuja early this month.

In a press statement signed by the state chairman of the union, Alhaji Muktar Gidado said the state council of the NUJ described the January 4, 2005 incident "not only barbaric, uncivilized but undemocratic."

While acknowledging the apology tendered by the outgoing Inspector General of Police on behalf of the erring officers, the chairman however called on all Nigerians to condemn the action of the police in its entirety, "especially in a democratic setting like what we have in Nigeria because nobody knows whose turn it might be tomorrow."

According to him, "it is least expected that law enforcement agents who are supposed to be our partners in progress should continue to harass, intimidate and brutalize journalists who are carrying out their professional and constitutional duties."

## FRSC Marshals protest new postings

Marshals of Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) have called on the Corps Marshal of the Commission to look into the list of posting in the South-West Zone.

In a statement in Osoybo, Ogun state, eight marshals of the commission who criticised the recent postings by the commission's Abuja headquarters said the postings released last December were fraught with favouritism.

The statement also lamented that contrary to the policy of the commission, some marshals were transferred outside their "catchments areas."

However, two zonal commanders of the commission who pleaded anonymity said that the aggrieved marshals should have forwarded their grievances to the corps marshal, with their full names attached to the statement.

# YOUR HEALTH

## Health interactive

With Dr Aminu Magashi

### Beijing conference and women's reproductive rights

Professor Mahmoud F. Fathalla of Egypt who was once described as the citizen of the World, by the Nigeria's Director of the MacArthur Foundation, Dr. Kofe Shettima can best be described as an advocate of women's rights, specifically on issues relating to reproduction. He was not only the former Dean of the Medical School of Assiut University, Egypt, but currently the Chairman of the World Health Organization's Global Advisory Committee on Health Research. The advocate in him came out vividly when he delivered the International Lecture Series on Population issues convened by the MacArthur Foundation at Abuja, Nigeria on February 17, 2004. The lecture entitled 'Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Wrongs. The case for maternal mortality as a reproductive wrong.

In his own words, Maternity is not a disease; it is a means by which the human species is propagated. Society has more obligation to prevent maternal deaths than to prevent deaths from diseases. Women have a right, a basic human right, to be protected when they undertake the risky business of pregnancy and child birth. Society has an obligation to fulfill a woman's right to life.

Women are not dying during pregnancy and child birth because of conditions that are difficult to manage. They are dying because the societies in which they live do not see it fit to invest what is needed to save their lives. It is a question of how much the life of a woman is considered to be worth. Whether we like it or not societies, consciously or subconsciously put a price tag on the life of each one of us. What is the monetary value of a woman's life? In many societies it is, sadly not much.

I want to believe that respecting the rights of women globally and in Nigeria should start from observing reproductive rights which form the basis for survival and development, and without such, other rights like Education, Economic empowerment and the rest, will be meaningless. While many developed nations are working tirelessly to reduce their maternal mortality rate of the range of 7 to 20 per 100,000 live births, Nigeria is still dangling around 1000 per 100,000 of maternal mortality rate per live birth. In some states, the rate has reached up to 2000 per 100,000 live births, probably the worst figure in the world.

The irony of it all is that the interventions that make motherhood safe are known and the resources needed are obtainable and available, the necessary services are neither sophisticated nor very expensive and reducing maternal mortality is one of the most cost-effective strategies available in the area of public health. Above 90% of all causes of death attributed to Pregnancy, and Labour in Nigeria are preventable. Pregnancy Induced Hypertension (Pre and Eclampsia), Prolonged and Obstructed Labour, Hemorrhage (Ante and Post partum) and Infections during Pregnancy are possible causes of maternal death in the country. What is lacking to tame these preventable problems is the will to act by committed leaders and policy makers who are bereft of strategic ideas of effective collaboration among stakeholders and of course inept and donor driven and dependent civil society groups and non governmental organizations who are more interested in enriching their pockets at the expense of the vulnerable women and children and of course spending the available meager resources in financing workshops and seminars without clear and coherent plan for community intervention. On the part of the media as the fourth arm of government, it is docile, passive and awaits activities related to women to be covered, aired and published. It is not proactive to engage the populace on way forward and to task stakeholders to act in a manner that the maternal mortality rate will come down.

The Plight of Nigerian women was at the back of the mind of Government Officials and Non Governmental Organizations that represented the country in Beijing, China at a Fourth World Conference on Women which coincided with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nation.

It was argued and reported then that Nigerian has the highest number of contingents in that conference and of course using government resources. Among the declaration

in Beijing in September, 1995 was the determination to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women every where in the interest of humanity. Also acknowledging the voices of all women every where and taking note of the diversity of women and their roles and circumstances, honouring the women who paved the way and inspired by the hope of the present in the world's youth. Also the need to eradicate poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice which requires the involvement of women in economic and social development, equal opportunities and full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people centered sustainable development and above all respecting Reproductive Health Rights and the right to education amongst others were issues that were addressed at the conference.

It is in line with the declaration of the representatives from 179 governments and nearly 2,500 NGOs that the United Nation will organize a special session in February, 2005 to review and look at the status of woman and also another programme will be convened in New York where advocates of women around the world will meet in March, 2005 to commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of that historic agreement. One will not out rightly say, in the last ten years that there is no progress with respect to women development and emancipation and participation in politics. Whether that participation has impact on the reproductive rights positively and towards reduction of maternal mortality rate, is the question all of us has to answer.

On the part of the Nigeria's contingent that attended such conference, the most important question is not the colossal amount of money spent but when they came back, how were they able to work towards the realization of such declaration? Government officials see such conferences as an opportunity to be known in the international arena and go for window shopping, such people don't do anything, no matter how small towards the realization of such declaration. Their attendance lack passion, personal involvement and commitment. On the part of Non Governmental attendees, it is an opportunity to cross the border and be involved.

I was asked via E mail by the organizers of the March, 05 conference in New York, what does Beijing mean to me, my answer is simple, the Beijing Conference has provided an avenue for international partners to collaborate, exchange pleasantries, recite figures and statistics and adopt a declaration without implementation and such document like others has now become a decoration in various libraries across Africa and other impoverished nations.

### Hypertension and remedy

Complement of the season to you, my problem is that, I always have headache and dizziness. When I walk or climb stairs cases, I am always tired and feel as if my chest will fall. When I eat pepper my chest always pains me. At times I experience body sweat and hotness of the body and feel cold and nausea, especially in the night. I went to the hospital and the doctor told me that I have blood pressure. Am I having signs of stroke, typhoid fever or something else.

Expecting to hear your reply.  
Stephanie, Kano.

Headache and dizziness may not be associated with Stroke, but it shows that, the high blood pressure you are having (hypertension) could be severe and need to be brought under control. Also part of the complication of hypertension is Heart failure which could be mild or severe. Having a failed heart could be deduced from your history (feeling of tiredness and chest pain when climbing, that is Dysnoea on Exertion).

My advice are as follows, there are certain risks behaviors associated with hypertension, if you practice any, please try and either stop or reduce it to the barest minimum (drinking alcohol, smoking cigarette, excessive intake of fatty food, meat and cheese/butter). Also take salt with moderation and exercise your body regularly. Depending on the level of the blood pressure, you need

to be on medication and I believe your medical doctor will help you on that. With respect to feeling cold in the night and feeling of sweat, you can do MP and Vidal Test.

### Re: Premature ejaculation

I read with interest your response on Pre mature ejaculation published on 17th, January, 2005; please I will like to know if there is any good medicine for it, please help me.

Aliyu

If you read my response on that question carefully, you would have come across the medication for pre mature ejaculation. You don't need to take any drug for your problem to be resolved. On What is needed, is for you to prolong fore play which will alleviate anxiety during intercourse and at times one can use condom temporarily which will help in reducing sensation, movement and delay ejaculation

### Brain cancer and Infection

I will like to know the causative agents of infections and cancer of the brain and what are the early signs of brain cancer and does the brain cancer affects hearing sensitivity of affected person.?

Baba Ibrahim

Brain in a simple term is made up of the brain tissue (structure) and the layers that surround it, which provides protection, such layer is called meninges. Infection could be of the Brain tissue or of the Meninges. Among the causative agents are bacteria, which can lead to bacterial meningitis. It can affect the brain tissue to cause brain abscess, suppurative encephalitis. Viral Infections such as rabies through dog bite and viral encephalitis by herpes simplex infection. Protozoa Parasites such as Malarial Parasite which can cause cerebral malaria and Trypanosoma can cause sleeping sickness.

With respect to brain cancer, it is not every brain swelling (tumour) that is called a cancer. Among the lesions could be malignant ones (refer as cancers) and usually the cause of that is spread of cancerous cells from another source of the body reaching the brain through the blood, that scenario is called Metastasis. The cancerous cells could come from cancer of the breast, prostate gland (is a gland found in males which surrounds the urethra).

Other brain lesions could be embryonic (during developmental growth in the womb) and could be due to tuberculosis. Other cause of brain lesions could be due to exposure to radiation.

Early problems of brain cancer would be raised by intra cranial pressure which presents with headache, feeling of heaviness and early morning vomiting and at times patient can go into coma. If the part of the brain that is affected supplies and control the senses of hearing, then definitely the patient will suffer hearing defect.

### Ways to stop smoking

I have been smoking for good five years, but now it is no longer of interest to me. What are the possible ways to follow for a change?

### Well wisher.

The most important first step to take is to have the will and the commitment to stop smoking and of course to bear in mind that by smoking, it is a risk behavior of having hypertension, heart problem, lung diseases such as cancer of the lung and emphysema.

The next step is to try and reduce the quantity of sticks being taken per day and also to reduce the time spent during smoking. If you are in the habit of smoking 20 sticks per day, you start by reducing to five and only may be in the night or before going to walk. That way, you shall begin to control your urge to smoke. Other approach to take is to reduce the time you spend with those that smoke and increase the time you spend with those that do not smoke. Wishing you good luck.

Write in confidence to [healthinteractive@hotmail.com](mailto:healthinteractive@hotmail.com) or send text message to 08023810589 or P.O. Box 14807, Kano, Nigeria.



## Federal Ministry of Transport

### The Honourable Minister of Transport, Dr. Abiye Sekibo Announces a 2-day Workshop on **INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT AND REGULATION**

**Faculty:**



**Professor Jose Gomez-Ibanez**

Derec C Bok Professor of Public Policy and Urban Planning  
Co-chair: Infrastructure in a Market Economy  
John F. Kennedy School of Government  
Harvard University, Boston  
and



**Professor Akash Deep**

Associate Professor of Public Policy and Infrastructure  
Harvard University, Boston

**Audience:**

All Federal and State Ministries involved in any aspect of infrastructure development, regulation and management in the Transportation, Power, Telecoms sector, etc.  
Ministries, Parastatals such as, *Transport, Aviation, Works, Housing, Power and Steel, Water Resources, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Nigerian Railway Corporation, Nigerian Maritime Authority (NMA), Maritime Academy of Nigeria (MAN), National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), Nigeria Telecommunications (NITEL), National Communication Commission (NCC), Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Nigerian Airspace Management Authority (NAMA), Nigerian Custom Services, other port agencies, Terminal Operators/Prospective Concessionaires, Freight Forwarders Shipping Companies.*  
Organizations involved in any other aspect of infrastructure development, regulation and management especially the *Nigerian Custom Services.*

**Date:** Thursday January 27 - Friday January 28, 2005.

**Venue:** Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja.

**Time:** 9am - 5pm Daily

**Programme Sponsors:**



**Nigerian Ports Authority**

**Programme Facilitators:**



**Bureau of Public Enterprises**

**Programme Organizers:**



**Chief Host:**

**Dr. Abiye Sekibo**  
Minister of Transport

**Host:**

**Engr. Mohammed I. Musa**  
Minister of State for Transport

For further enquiries and participation e-mail a 2 page resume to [springfountainicg@yahoo.com](mailto:springfountainicg@yahoo.com) Fax/phone: 01-5552888 0802 325 1134 or 0803 395 5364

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DICK aspin 0160

# YOUR HEALTH

## Expert decries decay state of health sector

The project director of the Centre for the Right to Health (CRH) Mr. Bede Eziefula has decried the decay of the nation's health sector, saying that the resultant consequences

are the loss of lives and the migration of health care providers to outside countries for greener pastures.

Mr. Eziefula told *Daily Trust* in an exclusive interview in Abuja

that the poor working conditions for health care providers and the general decay in infrastructures are responsible for the present crisis in the nation's health sector which forced resident doctors

to stay on strike for several weeks.

He noted that the sector has suffered a lot of set back since the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo just as he pointed out that budget allocation to the sector is not in any way commensurate with the enormous responsibility which the sector owes Nigerian public.

"It is a bad situation for the government to leave civil society to do most of these works as far as health care provision is concerned," he pointed out, saying, that is why the civil society groups provide basic health facilities they can provide in the interest of Nigerians.

For instance, Mr. Eziefula queried the non-availability of health care facilities in Abuja that offer free voluntary counselling and testing for HIV. He noted that the government is not showing concern to the plights of the people by allowing doctors not only to go on strike but also allowed them stay on the strike for seven weeks.

The CRH project director suggested a reduction of anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs in the price so that HIV victims can conveniently make use of the drug with ease, adding that government need to place emphasis on people's health instead of embarking on overseas trips that have no bearing on Nigerian people.

Mr. Eziefula commended the efforts of development partners (international and national non-government organisations (NGOs) facilitating the provision of qualitative health care delivery in the country, especially in the area of HIV/AIDS, reproductive health (RH), polio and host of other diseases which he said are responsible for most deaths in Nigeria.

Kogo Community also pointed out that the gesture has saved the people in the area the three kilometre journey to Bwari town to get medical attention.

He noted that the council chairman has shown serious commitment to the welfare of the people in the area and pointed out that it is in that view that he accented by the building of the dispensary by the corps member immediately the proposal was brought to his table.

"We monitored the project and immediately it was completed, the chairman gave me an order to put up request for the purchase of hospital equipment needed at the dispensary," he explained, pointing out that contract has been awarded for the purchase of additional equipment for the dispensary.

Already, he noted that a temporary appointment have been given to some medical personnel to work in the dispensary. He said the council is poised to transform the council's health sector just as he disclosed that the Bwari area council has four clinics in different locations of the area.

The clinics have been completed, the equipments for them have been supplied and will soon be conveyed to them in no distant time," he said, noting that the benefiting communities are the, Gudupe, Jaga-Kuchi, D. Mpaie, Panmuke, and Yampc, and that of Kirrim-Dadae slated for commissioning by next month.



The Executive Director of the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency, Dr. Shehu Mahdi (1st from right) listening to a usual coordinator of the agency, Abaji Lawan Hadeja explaining a point during the commissioning of a healthcare centre in Bauchi.

## CRH launches HIV treatment education

The Centre for the Right to Health (CRH) has concluded arrangements to launch a one-year HIV treatment literacy programme in the country.

A statement from the Centre and made available to *Daily Trust* said, CRH is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to the full realisation of the right to health in Nigeria, especially people living with HIV/AIDS, women and children.

The HIV treatment literacy programme, which will be launched on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Monday of January 2005 in Iwo State, is aimed at building the capacities of health care providers and community care givers for optimal HIV treatment service delivery in the country.

According to the statement,

## Pay us our entitlements within 2 weeks or... doctors tell FG

The National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) which suspended its nation-wide strike action yesterday has given the government two weeks within which to ensure that all her members are paid their entitlements in full or be ready to face another industrial action.

NARD's national president, Dr. Jerry Ogunje stated this at the weekend while addressing a press conference in Abuja. He said the association proceeded on a strike action since December 6, 2004 following government's inability to address the association's demands for which a total of 81 days ultimatum was given and a two-day warning strike was observed in between.

Dr. Ogunje noted that it is not enough for government to release the sum of N7,994 billion to offset the entitlements owed doctors but is also very important that the money be released to the various units affected by the shortfall for immediate payment to its members.

He said the National Execu-

the programme will also train people living with HIV/AIDS on anti-retroviral therapy and will also address issues relating to how ARV work, benefits, side-effects, drug resistance, drug adherence, drug options, monitoring and host of others.

The project, the statement stated will build capacities on voluntary counselling and testing, treatment literacy education and ethics and human rights education.

## Corps members build dispensary for community

The chairman, Bwari Area Council, Hon. Isah Dara Bwari has promised to equip the dispensary built and donated by two out-going corps members Miss Alice Ameh and Ezechinyere Amadique with both human and material re-

sources as soon as possible. The corps members who are serving at the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Bwari in the Federal Capital Territory built and donated a 14 by 16 metre block of dispensary in the Kogo Community in the local government area.

According to the chairman, some health equipment earmarked for the dispensary are in the council's store and as soon as arrangements are concluded, they will be delivered to the dispensary for the provision of effective health care delivery to the people in the area.

Though, he declined to mention the amount earmarked for the dispensary equipment, he however noted that substantial equipment which will include drugs and medical personnel will be supplied the dispensary within the shortest possible time.

Hon. Isah Dara Bwari has also stated a number of corps members for automatic employment in the council for the meritorious service in the council during their service year just as he noted that the proposal is still awaiting the approval of their minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Mal. Nasir el-Rufai.

In the same vein, the supervisory councillor for health in the council, Hon. Obad David who applauded the gesture of the two out-going corps member by building a dispensary for the

the centre, the statement further noted will on Tuesday January 25 officially commission its eastern regional office in Iwo state.

The eastern office which will serve the eastern states will among other things provide services in voluntary counselling and testing, treatment literacy, ethics and human rights education, health rights education litigation and legal counselling, orphans and vulnerable children.

## Stories by Sunday Ejike Benjamin Health Reporter

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Huda Zaidan Sheriff writes from Zee's Herbal Pharmacy.

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## Nature's Pharmacy

STOMACH UPSETS OR DISORDERS

ANOREXIA (Reduced or Poor Appetite)

An eating disorder characterised by apathy to food. Various conditions are responsible for this, however, herbal digestive stimulants have been found to be effective. Some herbal stimulants include:

1. Bitters: eg bitter leaf helps to stimulate the liver and cleanse blood system.
2. Ginger tea: or drink taken as often as required, acts as stimulant.
3. Yarrow (Lady's mantle): Infusions taken twice daily stimulate appetite.
4. Horseradish: Leaves are appetite stimulants.
5. Mint: such as peppermint. Tea infusion of this stimulates the appetite when taken two to three times daily.
6. Other appetite stimulants are Cinnamon and Fenugreek.

## CONSTIPATION

Discomfort in the gastrointestinal tract especially in the stomach caused by accumulation of waste materials or slow movement of these waste materials through the large bowel results in constipation. Symptoms are bad breath, body odours, piles, obesity, headaches, varicose veins, etc. Poor diet, inadequate exercise, advanced age and muscle disorders are some of the many causes of constipation. Inactively, laxatives have been the mode of treatment for constipation but in the natural treatment of constipation, foods rich in fibres such as whole cereals, raw green leafy vegetables, cabbage, carrots, garlic, sweet potatoes, okro and fruits, as adjuvants to daily diet give relief from constipation. (Some herbal recipes for dyspepsia are applicable). Additionally, drinking plenty of water, eg 8 glasses daily keeps the bowel clean.

## DIARRHOEA

Diarrhoea diseases could be caused by infection, food poisoning, irritation and stress. It could be infective, caused by bacteria, or amoebic. Acute diarrhoea accompanied by fever and mucus or blood in the stool could be a sign of infection or presence of parasites. Herbal treatment of diarrhoea diseases have been found to be effective. Herbs used include:

1. Garlic: Two to three segments of garlic chewed 2-3 times daily or the infusion helps infective diarrhoea.
2. Thyme/horseradish: Thyme is administered as tea infusion 2-3 times daily to arrest poisoning for a period of 2-3 days. Similarly, the leaves of horseradish are administered as an infusion antidote in food poisoning.
3. Basil: *Hijirra* [Yoruba], *Dokoju* [Hausa] - a teaspoon juice extract from the leaves plus a pinch of salt is used to relieve diarrhoea after 30 minutes.
4. Guava: The infusion of guava leaves taken in reasonable quantities relieves diarrhoea.
5. Okro: Infusion of okro seeds taken 2-3 times a day acts as an antispasmodic thus helping to arrest cramps involved in diarrhoea.
6. Agrimony, oak bark or (black tea): Decoction of this bark taken as tea stops diarrhoea. 1 cupful taken morning and evening.
7. *Acacia nilotica* (*Bagorawa* [Hausa]): The bark of acacia is powdered, infused in water with a little salt and given in a teaspoon twice daily to stop diarrhoea.
8. Swallow wort (Giant milkweed) - (*Tunfafiya* [Hausa], *Bomubomu* [Yoruba]): The powdered bark is infused in water and taken three times daily.
9. Mixed herb: This is applied in severe infective diarrhoea. One teaspoonful of powdered garlic, 1 teaspoon of tomato juice, 1 teaspoon of honey, plus a pinch of salt are thoroughly mixed and taken daily for 3 days.
10. Orange bark: The infusion of sweet orange bark is taken as three cups daily for three days in treating diarrhoea.
11. Stinging nettle: Decoction of stinging nettle taken 2-3 times daily cures diarrhoea and dysentery.
12. Ginger tea: The tea is taken to relieve cramps and abdominal pains.
13. Rice plant: Rice water is taken three times daily. This is prepared by boiling half a cup in three cups of water for 45 minutes. Strain and drink the water, you may eat the rice as well. This helps to firm bulk stools limiting diarrhoea while supplying vitamin B.

On a general note, self-limiting diarrhoea should be allowed to take its course. It's the body's way of cleansing out toxins, bacteria and foreign substances.

Huda Zaidan Sheriff writes from Zee's Herbal Pharmacy, Suite 12, Angba Plaza, Garki II, Abuja.  
E-mail: zeeherb@zwaifot.com

# ABUJA TRUST

## Water scarcity in Wuse II worsens

Residents of Wuse II Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria have been groaning under a seemingly intractable severe shortage of water.

Abuja Trust investigations revealed that in some parts of Wuse II it is more than five years since they last saw water running from the public water system. They have been told various reasons why they have not been getting water. But those made no sense to them.

Abaji Karmo, a driver in a federal ministry says he spends a large chunk of his salary to buy water from "cart push" water hawkers every month. "And I have been buying water here for more than eight years of my stay in this quarters," but this should not be like that."

Hajiya Baba a food seller who constantly keeps on her guard for fear of "task force bulldozers" also complains bitterly about lack of water in her neighbourhood. She said this problems leaves a gaping hole in the profit she expects

By Aminu Yusuf Ibrahim, (Intern)

to gain to keep body and soul together and the business burning.

But one man's loss is another's gain as the cart pushing water vendors make a lot of gain from the plight of the residents of this area. They sale each jerrican of water at twenty naira. But a borehole tap attendant told me he receives only fifty naira for each trip from a vendor who fills not less than seven jerrycons in his cart.

Most important persons resident in Wuse II quarters had boreholes dug in their houses. It is only when there was faults with the water pumping machines that they buy from the water vendors.

Abaji Fa'za a director in

a federal ministry spends not less than six hundred naira everyday to buy water. This is every when most of his family members and dependants have home home for the sallah festivities.

Same thing goes for the two important hotels around the neighbourhood of Wuse II. The Dilic and Rock view hotels. They rely on boreholes they dug and maintain for their water supply. An employee of Dilic hotel informed me that, only buy water outside the when their boreholes pumping machine was faulty, before it gets repaired.

All the residents I spoke to were unanimous in their appeal to the authorities concerned to promptly do something about the problem whatever caused it.

## AEPB demolish structures along Airport road

Residents of Lugbe, Kuchigoro and Gosa suburbs along the Airport road, Abuja, woke up on Sunday to find bulldozers of the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB), clearing illegal structures and shanties at the Lugbe market, Gosa and Kuchigoro markets.

Situated some few meters away from the Airport expressway, the Lugbe market has attracted the attention of the authorities as this is the fourth time illegal shanties have been destroyed at the market in the last two years.

The market which provides a hedge or front to the Lugbe Housing Estate, is a haven for not only residents of the estate and Lugbe village, but also Fulani people who troop into the market from their various settlements scattered along the Airport road.

Jarmio, a Fulani man who sells provisions at the market, said he came to the market on Sunday only to find his stall demolished, but admitted that they've been given several notices ahead of the demolition.

"I have lost all my goods worth over N80,000 at my stall, how can you destroy such a market when there is no single official market in the whole of Lugbe federal housing estate?" queried Jarmio.

Another trader, lady Osakwe, said that the authority several months ago came to barricade the frontage of the market with steel chain and that if they operate behind the chain, she wondered why they should come and demolish

on a Sunday for that matter."

AEPB however, when Abuja Trust at the demolition venue of the officials who simply gave his name as Joseph, said that they were just clearing debris and refuse in the area and loading same in tipper for eventual evacuation to dumpsite.

He said their job may not be unconnected with orders from above to clear all illegal structures that constitute eyesore along the Airport road, which might not be connected with some heads of state expected to arrive Abuja week.

Similarly, structures in markets at Kuchigoro and Gosa were also affected by the exercise.

## Truck driver barricades highways over shot tyre

By Benjamin Auta, Crime Reporter

Traffic came to a stand still along Gwagwalada - Abaji road last Saturday when a truck conveying goods had one of its tyres shot by men of the Nigeria Custom Services (NCS) on suspicion of carrying contraband.

The incident which took over four hours to resolve occurred at about 11am when the truck driver was driving along the Abuja - Lokoja road.

Sources on ground told Abuja Trust that when customs officials tried to stop the vehicle (truck) during a stop and search operation along the Gwagwalada - Abaji road, the truck driver refused to stop which prompted the shooting of one of the tyres of the truck which swerved and blocked the highway.

The action however resulted to the blocking of the highway which is the only entry point to/from the southern axis of the country in the FCT for four hours.

This made the truck driver who could not remove his vehicle on the road to insist on the payment of his tyre or he will not remove his vehicle on the highway.

When the situation worsened after some hours, reports got to the minister of the FCT Malam Nasir el-Rufai who arrived to the scene with the police Area Commander and DPO Gwagwalada in company of some elders in Gwagwalada to prevail on the truck owner but he refused until money sourced from motorist and other people on the scene and a new tyre was bought before the vehicle was finally removed.

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# KANO TRUST

## Badawa residents send SOS to

### Shekarau over road

Residents of Badawa new layout in Nassarawa local council in Kano State have called on Governor Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau to come to their aid by reconstructing of their road at Sarduana Crescent. The spokesman of the residents, Alhaji Garba Muhammad Birniwa, told

By Ynsaha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent (Kano)

Kano Trust that the road constructed during military regime was in deplorable condition, a situation which he said seriously affects the activities of residents of the area.

Alhaji Garba, who added that currently the local council is carrying out a drainage work on the road, said that state government should intervene by collaborating with the local council to rehabilitate the road.

He noted that even if the drainages were constructed and the main road was not rehabilitated, the problems of the residents were not solved as, according to him, when rain falls, the drainages will be destroyed by water.

Another resident, Mallam Musa A. Shehu, explained to Kano Trust that since the local government abandoned the project, the road had become death trap, a situation which he said was not encouraging.

"We are aware of the contract of reconstruction of some roads awarded by the state government, therefore, we hope Shekarau will assist us in that respect," he said.

## Tarauni LG scribe urged to build more classrooms

Abubakar Ahmed Correspondent (Kano)

A plea has been made to the Tarauni local government area chairman to build additional classrooms to join ones at Unguwa Uku Girls' Secondary School and a secondary school at Darmanawa ward in order to boost educational development in the area. The plea was made during an executive meeting of the Parent-Teacher Association at Tarauni by the PTA Chairman, Alhaji Isa Abba Gyadi-Gyadi.

Alhaji Isa lamented over the ways classes in schools are congested due to inadequate blocks of classrooms and furniture with which pupils use in studying. He commended the present administration in ensuring adequate and even distribution of both western education and Islamic knowledge in schools, but however said this could not be achieved without adequate structures in place.

He also commended the efforts made by the Chairman of Tarauni local government area, Alhaji Na-Maihuwo, for the construction of a secondary school at Hatoro and an Arabic secondary school at Daura wards respectively.

Gyadi-Gyadi reiterated the need for additional blocks of classrooms at Unguwa Uku Girls' Secondary School due to hardship experienced by students in finding a conducive atmosphere for learning. He then called on the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) to safeguard their wards and recoup government's efforts by sending their wards to both western and Islamic schools.



Problem of erosion in Jigawa State. Jahau-Gujungu road under erosion threat.

PHOTO COURTESY

## Shekarau receives commission of inquiry's report

From Aliyu Saleh Machika, Correspondent (Kano)

The Kano State government has reiterated its commitment to continue to uphold the principle of justice and fairness in the

of the Nigerian constitution.

He added, "Whoever is accused of any wrong doing, what is requested of us is to verify the accusations and claims without fear or favour." He commended the commission for its dedication and commitment in handling their assignment, adding that the media have shown in their reports that all the parties

involved were given a fair hearing by the commission.

Earlier in his response, the Chairman of the commission, Alhaji Justice Muhammed Sidi Mato, said all the parties involved were given equal opportunity to express themselves on the various grievances before the commission so as to do them justice and fairness.

He expressed hope that the government would look into the report in order to take necessary actions.

## We are ready for 2005 census

### -Garko LG chairman

The Garko local government council said it is committed towards the success of the forthcoming headcount in the country. The council's Chairman, Alhaji Yahaya Adamu Garin-Ali, stated this while inaugurating the local census committees on technical and publicity at the council secretariat.

According to him, the two committees were inaugurated to assist the federal government in achieving the desired goals during the forthcoming census.

He said the Technical Committee of the council would be headed by the Acting Director of Personal Management, Alhaji Ado Garba, while Alhaji Ibrahim

Lawal will serve as the committee's secretary.

The Publicity Committee is to be headed by the council's Chairman, Alhaji Yahaya Adamu, while the Comptroller of Prisons in the area, Alhaji Hamsu Garko, will serve as the secretary.

Alhaji Yahaya said necessary materials had been provided to enhance the exercise, and urged the committee of traditional rulers to put in their best towards its success.

In his remarks, the District Head of Garko, Dallatan Kano Alhaji Mohd Aliyu, gave assurance that traditional rulers in the area will give all the necessary cooperation for the success of the exercise.

## Jigawa buys 300 tractors

Jigawa Government has bought 300 tractors for farmers to raise agricultural output, says Maham Lawan Kaugama, secretary to the local council directorate.

The move was in support of government's drive to ensure food security and to promote agricultural experts, he told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Dutsin.

Some 270 tractors were ready for distribution to farmers' cooperatives, Kaugama announced, adding that each of the 27 councils would get 10 tractors through a soft loan scheme to be repaid in 10 years.

According to the secretary, "arrangements have been completed for the training of 20 youths from each council, for proper maintenance of the machinery."

Apart from farming tools, he said, the Jigawa Government had introduced

efficient farming techniques, improved seedlings and insecticides to boost output.

"Efficient strategies have been evolved for effective utilisation of agricultural resources, through enhanced irrigation and cash crop production," Kaugama explained.

"The diversification of the economy is geared towards income generation, economic empowerment and poverty reduction for sustainable growth."

Jigawa provided N1.266 billion for agriculture in the 2005 budget, focusing on research, fertilisers, irrigation, livestock and fisheries.

The secretary advised beneficiaries to make wise use of the tractors so that other youths from the council could also benefit while reiterating government concern and support for farmers in the local government.



Gov. Ibrahim Shekarau

# EKO TRUST



Sympathisers at the scene of a multiple accident that roared 32 people to death on Wednesday at Maryland, Lagos. *Photo: Olujoju Odunwo*

## Fire guts 200 impounded vehicles in Customs dump yard

Impounded vehicles worth over N6 billion was last Friday gutted by fire at the Nigeria Customs Service dump yard along Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, Ikeja, with over 200 vehicles destroyed.

The fire was said to have started at about 3pm from a refuse dump behind the police barracks also located along the same route.

Although no life was lost, but the fire destroyed cars, trucks as well as buses, which were impounded by men of the customs last year.

Speaking shortly after the incident, the Assistant Comptroller General of Customs (Enforcement and Drugs), Ade Francis Fadahusi said that a derailed panel of enquiry would be set up to look into the fire incident.

Fadahusi who said he heard of the fire incident, few minutes after it started explained that upon hearing of it, he had to look for men of the fire service "and I am happy to let you know that we had very prompt response from them and enough water from Julius Berger."

Though men of the fire service were prompt to the distress call, but their promptness could not stop the inferno razing over 200 vehicles which was heavily aided by the haramtan.

"At the moment we just want to ensure that the fire does not spread further but we will eventually set up a panel to look at the cause of the outbreak," Fadahusi disclosed.

In the same vein the customs Public Relations Officer, Mr. Chike Ngige, who was running around the dump ground to ensure that accurate information reach the people at the dump ground.

Investigations by Eko Trust revealed that the first

people that learnt about the Fire incident were two scavengers who were around the refuse dump at the time.

The police barracks and the customs dump ground share a common fence but incidentally, no damage was recorded at the police barracks.

The governor, while reacting to report that the federal government was at the verge of releasing the money said he has not been informed of any such plan either by the federal authorities or his finance commissioner.

Governor stressed that he would rather wait and get the cheque for the payment before believing the report or the rumour.

His words, "I have not seen the cheque neither have I been briefed by anybody. My commissioner for finance has not inform of such plan neither has anybody from the federal government hinted me of such. I would rather wait until I have the cheque in my hand before I could believe such story," Timubu said.

In the same vein, Oba of Lagos, Rilawan Akiolu while speaking with news men, said many muslims in the state were not able to slaughter ram during the Sallah celebration as a result of the seized allocation.

Oba Akiolu regretted that the action of the federal government, even after the Supreme Court judgment is affecting many Muslims in the state.

## Ex-NANS boss blames area boys menace on politicians

Former National President of the National Association of Nigerian Students and coordinator of Lagos State Liberation Congress, Mr. Wole Badmus has accused the politicians of contributing more to the problems of street urchins popularly known as Area Boys in the state.

Badmus told our correspondent in an interview on Wednesday that the politicians empowered the hoodlums during their campaigns with dangerous weapons and refused to disarm them after they had been voted into office.

## World bank assists Badagry farmers with N100m

The World Bank has earmarked N100 million for the development of FADAMA in Badagry Local Government of Lagos State.

The Chairman, Mr Tunde Alabi-Hundeyin told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Badagry that the programme had reached an advanced stage for the disbursement of the funds.

He said that Badagry was among the 10 councils selected for the project nationwide.

Hundeyin advised farmers in the area to form themselves into FADAMA user groups and cooperative associations to benefit from the programme.

He disclosed that the council had paid its counterpart funding of one million naira toward the project, noting that it offered great opportunities for farmers in the area.

The chairman also said that farmers involved in poultry, livestock and food crops would benefit from the assistance.

## Assembly men turn down N30,000 Sallah gift

The good relationship that had hitherto existed between the Lagos State Executive and the Legislators may have gone sour as some of the members of the state House of Assembly turned down the Sallah gift of N30,000 from the governor, Bola Tinubu.

Investigations by Eko Trust revealed that 10 out of the legislators rejected the gift, which they described as demeaning and unbecoming of their status in the hierarchy.

It was further gathered that that was not the first time the lawmakers would be complaining about the shabby treatment given to them during festive period by the Committee on House Service, which is in charge of buying and distributing such largesse in the House.

Sources close to the round house seat of power, informed Eko Trust that the state government had released the sum of N9million to the House for Sallah celebration, out of which N3million was allegedly given to the civil servants who make up the bulk of the work force of the legislative arm.

The grouse of the aggrieved lawmakers was the paltry N30,000 given to them on the eve of the Eid-el-Kabir by the Chairman of the House Service Committee.

## Dep Gov flays private sector over youth negligence

Lagos State Deputy Governor, Mr. Olufemi Pedro has chided the Organized Private Sector for negligence in rehabilitating youths in the society.

Pedro who spoke during the launch of a four-month intensive vocational training programme for unemployed youths in Magodo last week said it was mincing words to believe that social miscreants were a threat to the government alone.

"Private Sector Participation is very important, if the youths become vagabonds; it is not only government that will be affected. I urge the OPS to partner with the state government to rid the state of miscreants and unemployed youths", he said.

Pedro said the Tinubu administration has sought ways to rid the state of unemployment and the scourge of poverty but could not fight the battle alone without cooperation from the private sector.

According to him, the state government had trained over 2000 youths in the last quarter of last year in computer installation, building construction, bricklaying and concreting, electric installation, fish farming, shirt making among others.

The youths earmarked for this four-month vocational training, he said would un-



Gov. Tinubu

Stories by Oluamide Bajulsiye  
Correspondent (Lagos)

He however said that his group, made up of young progress seeking Lagosians within the age of 18 and 40, was formed to redress the anomaly through dialogue and negotiations with political office holders.

Badmus said most of the street urchins are well educated but found themselves in the act as a result of unemployment. He therefore urged government to address the issue before it would assume a more dangerous criminal situation that would be difficult to curb.

By Hassan Idris Senior  
Reporter (Agriculture) with Agency Reports

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# News

## Kazure Emirate distributes grains to the needy

As part of the religious obligations for the reduction of poverty amongst the needy, the Kazure Emirate has distributed food items to the needy. Distributing the grains to hundreds of destitutes in the area, the Emir of Kazure, Alhaji Najib Hassani, said as one of the pillars of Islam, *Zakat* not only purifies one's wealth but also establishes justice, fairness and brotherhood in the society. He therefore called on all well-to-do in the society to pay *zakat* dues so as to safeguard their wealth.

He equally commended the *Amaryawa* district head and *Wakilin Jakaradan* Kazure for his untiring efforts towards the collection of *zakat* proceeds, even as he recommended three ward heads in the area for their efforts.

Over 3540 bundles of grains, six bags of rice and two bags of groundnuts were distributed to the needy in the area as proceeds of *zakat* for the year.

The emir used the occasion to call on the people to participate in the forthcoming national census

**From Hassan Karofi**  
*Correspondent (Dutse)*

as it is not only significant to national development but also important for the enhancement of their well-

## NGO to assist less privileged in Jigawa

The Children of the World Foundation (CWF), a non-governmental organisation, has commenced operations in Jigawa State as part of the ongoing efforts to improve the living condition of the less privileged children in the state.

According to the President of the organisation, Barrister Peter Omenka, the CWF will intervene in all aspects that would see to the uplift of the living condition of the helpless children in the state.

*Daily Trust* gathered that Jigawa State has one of the highest numbers of destitute and orphaned children in the northern region. Henceforth, this led to the establishment of education law to enforce child education and reduce street begging and girl-child hawking in the state.

Barrister Omenka

being. He said all communities must present their wards to be counted and called on ward and district heads to ensure that their people participated in the exercise diligently.

He explained that the organisation will therefore bridge the gap existing between privileged and less privileged children in the state with a view to providing a level playing field for all of them.

He said arrangements are underway to providing educational opportunities to the teeming youths in the state so as to enable them to have access to a decent, independent and self-supporting livelihood in the state.

"As the major factor of achieving long term sustainable development, especially in a society like ours, we will concentrate on giving these children a sense of belonging," he added.

The president revealed that CWF will in the initial stage provide transportation facilities to students to enhance their journey.

The "unusual vibrations" on the Niger Bridge at Onitsha has been attributed to the activities of some unidentified persons who removed major bolts on the bridge.

Speaking to newsmen today in Abuja, the Minister of Works, Sen. Adeseye Ogunlewe, said that following the report of the vibrations, engineers were dispatched to the area to investigate the problem.

According to him, the age of the bridge was also identified as a contributory factor for the vibration. He assured travellers to the South-East that "the federal government would do all possible to

## FG explains vibrations on Niger bridge

secure the bridge through a thorough maintenance work."

Ogunlewe however said that on the long run, a new bridge needed to be constructed to ease the burden on the current one, built over 40 years ago.

He said that the ministry would have embarked on the immediate construction of a second bridge across the Niger but was hamstrung by financial constraints. "It would cost us a whopping N50 billion for the construction of a new bridge, but we do not have that kind of money for now," he said.

He called on the National Assembly to urgently pass the bill for the establishment of a National Concessionary Agency. When passed, it is to be charged with the involvement of private companies investing in the construction of roads and bridges, operate on them and transfer same to the federal government after a specified period.

"I can reliably tell you that we already have a company willing to invest that kind of money on the construction of that bridge and within two to three years it would be completed, once the bill is passed," he said.

## Kwara condolences Lagos accident victims

A four-man delegation raised by the Kwara State government has paid a condolence visit to the families of those who died in the multiple accidents in Lagos last week.

The delegation, led by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Security Matters, Engr. Idris Gana, delivered the governor's condolence and financial assistance to the families on behalf of the state government and the people of the state over the sad-

**From Abdulrazaq Adebayo**  
*Correspondent (Ilorin)*

incidents.

Speaking at the family house of one of the victims, the Special Assistant, Non-Governmental Affairs, Alhaji Sulymun Yusuf, prayed for the repose of the souls of the deceased and for the families to bear the loss with fortitude.

A spokesperson of the family, Alhaji Afusat Yusuf, expressed appreciation to the governor for the financial assistance which, she said, would go a long way in

alleviating the burdens of those left behind.

The delegation also paid a similar sympathy visit to the family of the driver of one of the vehicles involved in the accident, Alhaji Abdul-Jelili Jamiu, at Budo-Egba, Ote, in Asa local government area of the state.

It would be recalled that early last week, fatal accidents involving some buses occurred in Lagos in which some indigenes of the state who were on their way home for *Sallah* celebration were burnt to death.

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# News

## States urged to adopt science, technology policy

The Minister of Science and Technology, Professor Tournier T. Isoun, says the federal government will soon come up with special package to states that have adopted science and technology concepts and policy for the development of Nigerian society.

Professor Isoun, who made this promise on Friday at the commissioning of the Victor Attah Digital Opportunities Centre at the Ministry of Science and Technology premises in Uyo, assured Akwa Ibom State of his ministry's resolve to give prime attention for its efforts to lead in the information communication.

The minister, who expressed satisfaction over facilities installed for the pro-

**From Edet Ekanem, Freelancer (Uyo)**

motion of ICT in the state, called on other governors, especially in the southern parts of the country, to emulate the visionary leadership of Obong Victor Attah.

In his address, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Victor Attah, said the state has taken bold initiative to ensure that the future of the state is one in which ICT becomes key drivers of economic growth for the future development of the Akwa Ibom people.

Obong Victor Attah said he envisioned the state changing from an oil dependent state to a science and technology oriented state, and that prompted him to create the Bureau of Science and Technology in July 20, 2000, which metamorphosed to a full-fledged Ministry of Science and Technology in August

2003, leading to the conception of Akwa Ibom State University of Science and Technology which will commence in 2006.

The governor further added "on July 3, 2001, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP) with a view to commercialising the inventions and innovation already assessed and also use these projects as impetus to spur the inventiveness and the innovative capability of Akwa Ibom State indigenes".

He said with the development of Science and Technology Park with ICT component, the Victor Attah Digital Opportunities Centre (VAD-OC) will serve as the veritable ICT manpower prerequisite for the sustainability of the digital revolution in the state.

He said Science and Technology Park will be the envelope from which many of other initiatives are drawn from.

## Cleric doubts 2005 census

**Aminu Yusuf Ibrahim (Iberra)**

The Muslim *Ummah* in the north are sceptical about the intentions of the federal government over the forthcoming 2005 national census.

This was expressed in a press statement by a renowned Islamic Scholar, Sheikh Tahir Usman, which was issued in Bauchi.

He said Muslims are very concerned about the rumours that the government intends to reduce their number with a view to making them a minority in the country.

Sheikh said though this was a rumour, but it had become a tradition in the country for rumour to ultimately translate into reality to everybody's astonishment.

## We cannot be intimidated by FG-NANS

**From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent (Kaduna)**

The zonal Coordinator of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) zone A, comrade Abubakar Murtala, has declared that his associations would not succumb to federal government intimidation and unwarranted expulsions of fellow comrades from the nations higher institution of learning.

Speaking to newsmen shortly after their swearing-in ceremony at Arewa House in Kaduna, Comrade Abubakar said that NANS would only take it easy if there is a mutual consultation and understanding over the plight of members, pointing

that failure of government would only make them to take the hard way.

Earlier in his remarks, the Chairman of the occasion, Engineer Magaji Abdullahi, expressed dismay over the inability of some leaders in the country to lead people by good example.

Engr. Magaji Abdullahi, who is also the Deputy Governor of Kano State suggested that for Nigeria to move ahead, leaders at various levels of governance should cultivate the spirit of leading their people by good examples.

He advised the students generally to shun cultism and exam-malpractices, urging the new executives to lead their members by good examples so that the association could progress.

He implored them to take their studies serious and not to relent in their efforts of being custodian of the society.

## Kwara releases N22m for poly rehabilitation

**From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)**

The Kwara State government has released N22 million for the rehabilitation of twenty-eight blocks of hostels at the state polytechnic, Ilorin. Similarly, two 250KVA generating sets have been provided to improve power supply to the area, according to the school's Director of Works, Mr. O. Bolade.

He said the hostels would be ready for use at the beginning of the 2004/2005 academic session as part of the efforts to alleviate students' accommodation problem and ensure conducive learning environment.

The works director said three boreholes have also been provided in the campus for adequate water supply to the students, while the security outfit has been re-positioned to give adequate security to both the students and the facilities in the institution.

Mr. Bolade, who disclosed that 150 students have so far been arrested for cultism and

prosecuted by the police, commended the passage of the law on cultism by the government and the state's House of Assembly, saying it was a right step towards eradicating the menace.

## NAPTIP arrest woman for human trafficking

**By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter**

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) has arrested a middle-aged woman for allegedly involving in trafficking of Nigerian girls for sexual slavery in Spain.

The agency's acting Chief Executive and Executive Secretary, Alh. Mohammed Babandede, told newsmen yesterday in Abuja that the woman, Mrs. Esther Eboresmen, was arrested shortly after receiving a parcel from Spain.

The parcel, he said, contained 49 pornographic photographs and other photographs, virginal discharge,

pubic hairs, menstrual discharge pads, agreement of debt bondage, payment record and immigration record. He said the NAPTIP detectives moved into action on the discovery of those things, leading to the extraction of useful statements and information from the woman.

Alh. Babandede said detectives' interrogation with the woman who claimed to be a resident of satellite town in Lagos indicates that the suspect and her collaborators in Spain may be keeping about 20 Nigerian girls in sexual slavery in Spain.



L-R: Governors Jolly Nyame (Taraba), Obong Victor Attah of Akwa Ibom, Joshua Dariye (Plateau), Ibrahim Idris of (Kogi), Achike Udenwa of Imo and Chris Ngige walking into the State House Abuja for a meeting with President Obasanjo...recently. pic: Joe Orye

## Ogun to construct \$500m power project

**From Kayode Ajibola, Sringer (Abeokuta)**

The Ogun State government is to construct a \$500 million dollar independent power project in Ibafo in Obafemi Owode, local government area of the state, even as Governor Gbenga Daniel is to declare open the 2nd Ogun State Economic Summit on Tuesday.

Engr. Folasuge Somolu, who was in charge of the project, disclosed this during a press conference in Abeokuta, saying the independent power project will generate 600 mega watts.

He said the last phase of the power project will be completed within 18 months, adding that the independent power project will be handled by General Electric Limited (GEL).

Engr. Somolu, who said the power project will be tagged 'Ibafo Power Project', disclosed that at the completion of the independent power plant, it will be supplying power to the ongoing Gate-

way city and all the communities around Ibafo.

While highlighting some of the important things to be deliberated on at this year's economic summit, the Chairman, planning committee, Mr. Tayo Adermokin, said this year's summit will mainly focus on developmental projects that could shape the economy of the state.

According to him, the first

economic summit held last year was to showcase the economic potentials of the state to investors, adding that 'this time around, we are trying to sustain the tempo by wooing more investors to invest in the state'.

Mr. Adermokin, who is also the Managing Director of the Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB), informed that the last year's economic summit held in the state had really attracted a lot of investors into Ogun State.

## Cocoa producers urged to provide data to NCDC

**From Femi Oladipo, Sringer (Ekiti)**

As part of the efforts to boost the production of cocoa which has been on great decline for several years, the Ekiti State Deputy Governor, Mr. Abiodun Aluko, has called on the fourteen cocoa producing states in the country to provide adequate information regarding the production of the commodity to the National Cocoa Developing Committee (NCDC). Mr.

Aluko, who is the Chairman of the mobilisation sub-committee of NCDC, said at a meeting of the body in Ado-Ekiti, "to view production of cocoa in the country, the cocoa producing states are expected to provide the Data Bank that will avail the NCDC enough information to plan for the future of cocoa production in the country."

The deputy governor disclosed that the forms for the registration of cocoa farmers and cocoa farmers association in Nigeria would soon be made available in all cocoa producing states, with several designs to gather the needed facts and information that will form the NCDC Data Bank. He reminded the members of the sub-committee on mobilisation that cocoa production in the country had suffered great decline in the recent past and enjoined them to work assiduously to return cocoa production to its past glory when it was one of the three major foreign exchange earners for the nation's economy, alongside with the ground-nut pyramids of the then northern part of the country.

Aluko explained further that cocoa production was capital intensive and that both commercial banks and the Nigeria Agriculture Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) cannot guarantee adequate long term loans for cocoa farmers at low interest rates.

## British minister visits Nigeria tomorrow

**From Zakariya Adaramola, Freelancer (Lagos)**

The Britain's Minister for Africa, Chris Mullin MP, will arrive in Nigeria tomorrow on an eight-day official visit to the country.

Central to Mr. Mullin's visit, according to Victoria Ibi of the Press and Public Affairs section of the British High Commission, will be his attendance at the African Union (AU) summit in the Federal Capital Territory (FT), Abuja, from 30th to 31st January.

"His presence at the summit will underline Britain's commitment to Africa and the intention to strengthen that partnership during Britain's current G8 presidency," said Ibi.

She said Mr. Mullin would also thank the Nigerian government for its support for the UK-sponsored commission for Africa.

"Mr. Mullin's visit will also include calls on key Nigeria government officials and civil society," said Victoria Ibi.

The Wednesday January

26 visit of the British MP would add to the lists of African presidents and dignitaries already penciled down to participate in the forthcoming AU summit in the FCT.

Meanwhile, the British Deputy High Commission in association with the UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) are organising a one day seminar on branding in banking.

"With the new requirement enforced by Central Bank on the specific funding level to be adopted by all banks in Nigeria, most banks are currently considering mergers or take-overs with other like-minded organisation. The seminar will assist chief executive officers and their management teams to formulate their corporate strategy in the face of this major change," said the British Commission.

# Inside Politics

## Obasanjo/Ogbeh rift not our headache - Chief Gemade

**F**ormer Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) National Chairman, Chief Barnabas Gemade has dismissed the fears that the rift between his successor, Chief Audu Ogbeh and President Olusegun Obasanjo would destroy the party saying the rancour between the two does not constitute any threat to the survival of the ruling party.

Chief Gemade, who spoke with newsmen in his Makurdi residence at the weekend, also expressed his support for President Obasanjo's reform agenda, asserting that the country needs the reforms to be able to stand as Africa's giant.

Chief Gemade disclosed that, although he had vowed

### 2007: Niger PDP chieftain wants Gwari as governor

**A**chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and former gubernatorial candidate in 2003 elections in Niger State, Alhaji Sani Musa has called upon the people of the state to support Gwari candidate in 2007 for the gubernatorial election in the state.

Speaking at a Sallah Dinner held for journalists in the state capital, the top politician declared that since the creation of Niger State by late General Murtala Muhamad, the Gwari had not been fortunate to produce the state's number one citizen despite the fact that the state capital is located in Gwari heart land.

He said that his plea on behalf of Gwari was informed by the fact that other tribes like Hausa, Nupe and even one of the smallest tribes, kamuku, have all produced governors and it is therefore only fair and equitable if a Gwari person is elected in 2007.

Alhaji Sani Musa further stated that the Gwari had been peaceful with other ethnic tribes in Niger which is referred as the most peaceful state in the federation noting that without peace the achievements recorded so far by the present administration would not have been possible.

The politician, who said he was still in the PDP, lauded the achievements of the party in the state particularly in rural road network and water projects in the state which he described as second to none in the country.

**From Hir Joseph Correspondent (Makurdi)**

not to comment on the crisis facing his successor, it is nonetheless imperative to point out that the widespread feeling that Ogbeh's ousters would destroy the PDP is totally misplaced.

He said the face-off between his successor and the president should not be viewed as headache for a party with 28 states and majority of the seats at the National Assembly.

The former party boss, whose ouster was also instigated from the presidency, therefore said the duo's problem was theirs and not the headache of the PDP stating that "inspite of that PDP is still intact."

## NGO urges electorate to remain steadfast

**T**he Association for Qualitative Leadership and Good Governance has called on the Nigerian electorate not to be discouraged by the unsavory conduct of some elected office holders who only have time for the people when they need their vote.

The association said in a statement signed by its National President, Honorable Danlami Umar Zuru, that Nigerians should not allow the antics of rogue politicians and the manipulation and violation of their sovereignty to discourage them from exercising their franchise during elections.

According to the association, it is the responsibility of all lovers of democracy to ensure that Nigeria does not regress into a civilian dictatorship with only the political elite as the sole beneficiary of the dividend of the democratic project asserting that the only way to ensure that the democratic process is not limited to the political elite is by mass participation of the Nigerian eligible voters.

Hon. Umar Zuru then called on those seeking political office "not to play politics



L-R: Chairman Committee on Women Affairs of Kaduna State House of Assembly, Mrs. Maria Dago, Alhaji Mohammed Bello Hajji and Alhaji Abdul-Rahaman Saleiman, during the 3-day conferece on tackling the problems of Girl-child Street Hawking and Begging at the local government level, organized by the Kaduna State Local Government Service Board in Kaduna...recently

with bitterness or with a do-or-die spirit" reminding them that power is transient.

The group also canvassed support for the emergence of a president with a civilian and not military background in 2007 saying that the military must not be allowed to continue to monopolise power in and out of uniform if our democracy is to survive.

The Association commended President Obasanjo for constituting the National Dialogue Committee believing that the exercise will go along way in solving some of the nation's pressing problems.

The Association for Qualitative Leadership and Good Governance also commended Governor Adamu Aliero of Kebbi State for his "excellent work in de-

livering the dividend of democracy to the people of the state," calling on other state governors to emulate their Kebbi state counterpart by fulfilling their covenant with the people, of their respective states



Hon. Danlami Umar Zuru

## LG boss counsels PDP stalwarts over census exercise

**T**he chairman of Munya local government council area in Niger State, Mr. Denis Bardo has urged all Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) stalwarts in the council to ensure the success of the forthcoming national census exercise.

According to a press statement signed by the secretary of the Kakau Ward chapter of the PDP, Mr Zakariah Abashe, the local government chairman made the call during a series of meeting with politicians in the area to ensure that everybody in the area takes part in the exercise.

He disclosed that the 2005 population census was aimed at righting the wrongs

of the past with a view to moving the nation forward politically, socially and economically. The Kakau ward PDP secretary also lauded the efforts of Mr Munya for personally sponsoring 15 pilgrims to Jerusalem this year, disclosing that the local government on its part has sponsored fifteen pilgrims while the state government sponsored over 35 pilgrims to hajj this year.

The PDP scribe, who disclosed the local government chairman as a man of peace, said "since assumption to office as local government chairman of Munya, there has never been any crisis because of his open door policy and hard work."

## Presidency not after Okorie, says APGA faction

**By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter (Senate)**

**T**he Victor Umeh-led faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) has disputed claims by the party's national chairman, Chekwes Okorie that the presidency was behind the APGA crisis, saying the embattled chairman was merely seeking public sympathy.

A statement in Abuja yesterday signed by the faction's organizing secretary, Innocent Ekwu, said problems started in the party when Okorie started personalizing its funds.

The statement therefore urged the chairman to address the allegations of fraud leveled against him, instead of engaging in "propaganda."

It said "Chief Chekwes Okorie should be told in clear terms to stop chasing shadows, glossing over issues, double speaking and making unfounded wild allegations that the presidency is after him, to whip up public sentiment, but should better address the various serious allegations of frauds, embezzlement and gross anti-party misconduct leveled against him by the twelve members of the National Working Committee (NWC)."

The statement also denied claims by Okorie that trouble started in the party when it decided to zone its 2007 presidential ticket to the southeast.

Such claims, the statement said, were "media propaganda and cheap political ploy to seek relevance, attract public sympathy and garner hoi polloi support, in his present political travails which self-centeredness, annoyance and greed have caused him."

He said all segments of the council area are well taken care of in terms of distribution of social amenities.



Denis Bardo, Chairman Munya LGA

# Sports

AHEAD OF 2005 SOCCER SEASON

## Three clubs pick registration forms

Barely 19 days away from the kick-off of the 2005 season, only two premier and one pre-league teams have collected registration documentation forms.

Insurance FC, one of the country's four continental cups campaigners, NEPA of Lagos and Crown FC of Osofbo

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Reporter (Sports)

collected their registration forms so far.

The three clubs in their respective registration fees, a pre-condition for obtaining registration forms, even as the Nigeria Football League Board met yesterday to deliberate on

sundry issues including setting deadline for the completion of registration exercise.

Meanwhile, officials of the Premier League teams that have begun the registration process have boasted that they would clinch the coveted diadem at stake this season.

Chief Oyiki Obaseki, the chairman of Insurance FC

boasted that the club would not only dethrone Dolphins of Port Harcourt, last year's double champion, but would capture the CAF Confederation Cup.

Obaseki said Insurance have already paid registered players 60 percent sign-on fees, noting that all hands were on deck to ensure that the club wins all trophies at stake in the forthcoming season. He revealed that Insurance have shown the stuff they were made

of in the series of pre-season warm-up matches and would play another warm-up match against a Togolese club on January 29.

Similarly, Mike Idoko of NPA FC has equally laid claim to the prestigious league title, stressing that after camping for weeks at kilometre 50, along Badagry Expressway, Lagos, and at a church ground, he was confident the team, which struggled to escape relegation, would win the

league this season. Idoko revealed that the former coach of Gabros and Lobi Stars, Morris Coolman and Henry Nwosu had been interviewed for the coaching job.

"Already we have placed 15 players on the transfer market, retained 16 from last season and have added another 15 for the task ahead this season."

"We have also paid the balance of 40 percent for last season's sign-on fees even as the allowances and last season remains," Idoko said.

The management of the Seaside paid N10,000 for every home win and away draw while N20,000 was paid to each player for an away win.



On the prowl: RFC Mons Nigerian striker Aliyu Datti Mohammed seems unstoppable as he scored twice to help his troubled Belgian club to a 4-1 away victory at SV Beveren at the weekend.

## 'New league kick-off date sacrosanct'

The 2005 Nigerian League slated to commence February 12, will kick off as scheduled.

The Nigeria Football League Board spokesperson, Aisha Falode told reporters yesterday that the February 12 league commencement date remains unchanged and

By Abdul-Rahman Aodu, Sports Reporter

sacrosanct. "The 2005 football league will commence as scheduled. February 12 is sacrosanct. There will be no postponement this time around," she stated.

She also cleared the air about the Premier League play-offs, which has been slated for this weekend in Benin and Kaduna.

The play-offs will hold between January 28 and January 30.

Group A which comprises of Wikki Tourists of Bauchi, Mighty Jets of Jos and Adamawa United will play their round robin matches at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium, Kaduna.

Ogbe Stadium in Benin will play host to Group B comprising Kwara United, Plateau United and Ebonyi Angels.

**Play Off Fixtures:**  
January 28 - Friday  
Wikki Tourists versus Mighty Jets - Kaduna  
Kwara United versus Plateau United - Benin

January 29 - Saturday  
Mighty Jets versus Adamawa United - Kaduna  
Plateau United versus Ebonyi Angels - Benin

January 30 - Sunday  
Wikki Tourists versus Adamawa United - Kaduna  
Kwara United versus Ebonyi Angels - Benin.

## Confident Ikhana predicts victory

Kwara United will be staying in the Premier League at the end of this weekend's play-offs, according to coach Kadiri Ikhana.

"With all due respect to Plateau United and Ebonyi Angels, I have no doubts in my mind that we shall remain in the Premier

League," Ikhana told Kick Off from Akure. "At the moment we are in Akure preparing for the play-offs, but I am confident that we will not go down."

His optimism aside, Ikhana

remains wary of his opponents.

"Plateau United and Ebonyi are very good and I am not underestimating them. They have young, energetic and ambitious players and it is going to be a difficult weekend, but I am certain that we shall remain in the premier league."

Kwara are among four teams relegated from the Premier Last season who have been given a lifeline by the NFA's expansion of the league to 20 clubs.

## New League statute ready - NFL

The Nigeria Football League (NFL) says the new guidelines for the operation of the league is ready for ratification by the NFA.

The chairman of the NFL Media and Publicity committee, Aisha Falode disclosed yesterday after the Interim Management Committee ended its meeting aimed at deliberating on Sundry matters for the forthcoming season.

The CAF media committee woman further said that the

statute, which would be presented to the NFA today for ratification contains operational guidelines for the semi-autonomous league on interim basis.

Falode said the initial effort would guide operations for the season pending when the elected body of the NFL would make a more permanent guidelines.

"The statute made by the IMC is only for this season. It is an interim thing to guide activities for now until a more permanent statute is

produced by the league board to be elected later."

She equally said the decision to pretend the new statute for ratification by the NFA was to demonstrate the NFL subordination to the NFA.

"We cannot operate in a vacuum and the NFA remains the body entrusted the responsibility of running football. We, therefore, want to show that we are working in unison not at cross purposes, even though we enjoy a measure of autonomy."



### PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT (FMENV)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) OF THE PROPOSED QUARRY PROJECT FOR THE OBAJANA 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.

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

- 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

**DURATION OF DISPLAY**  
Date: 12<sup>th</sup> January - 10<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2005.

SIGNED  
PERMANENT SECRETARY  
FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER.

# Sports

## AUSTRALIAN OPEN

### Federer squares off against Agassi

Roger Federer faces his first serious test of his Australian Open defence when he locks horns with Andre Agassi in a mouth-watering quarter-final on Tuesday.

The world number one is a hot favourite to win the tournament and has not dropped a single set all week but Agassi, a four-times champion at Melbourne Park, promises to test him.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge and the opportunity of playing Roger," Agassi said. "He's been playing the best tennis in the world for a while now but somebody has to beat him sooner or later, right? I hope it's Tuesday night."

Agassi won his first three matches against Federer but the Swiss master has won the last four, including an epic five-setter in the semi-finals of last year's U.S. Open and says he is confident of making it five in a row.

"I know I can beat him. He's not as good as he was when he was at the top of the ranking, otherwise he would be there," Federer said.

"Fortunately, I'm there. I think he has to raise his game, not me."

The build-up to Tuesday's match has got everyone talking and Andy Roddick, the world number two, said he wouldn't miss it for the world.

"I'm as excited as the next person," Roddick said. "I'm still a big tennis fan so I'm excited to watch it, that's for sure."

Awaiting the winner is a semi-final against either Marat Safin or Dominik Hrbaty, who meet in the first of Tuesday's two men's quarters. The pair have met 12 times for six wins apiece.

Hrbaty beat 2002 Australian Open champion Thomas Johansson to book his place in the last eight while Safin won three tiebreaks to beat Olivier Rochus in four sets.

Safin made the final last year after surviving a series of gruelling matches but was too exhausted to mount any real challenge to Federer so is trying to conserve his energy this time.

"This week has been a little bit easier. I'm playing a little bit smarter and I'm just trying to save my time on the court," the

Russian fourth seed said. "It's a long tournament and there is no need to waste the energy on something that you don't have to."

A fascinating confrontation looms in the women's quarter-finals with Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova meeting U.S. Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova in an all-Russian affair.

Russian women have won the last three grand slam titles and looked to be in with a great chance of completing a sweep of the four majors when seven made it through to the last 16.

But Sharapova and Kuznetsova were the only two to survive and the winner of their match will be left flying the flag. Adding spice to their meeting is that the pair have never been the closest of friends though Kuznetsova was keen to hose down any talk of a rift.

"I think she's all right. She's a bit different, like each of us, we are all different," Kuznetsova said.

"Nobody does anything against her I don't mind as long as we defend the colours of our country."

The winner of the all-Russian match will play either Serena Williams, the 2003 Australian Open winner, or French world number two Amelie Mauresmo after they meet in Tuesday's second women's quarter-final.

Williams has won eight of her previous nine matches with Mauresmo but says she's expecting a tough match.

"I actually really like playing her. We've had some great matches and she definitely brings out some great shots," Williams said.

"She hits some great shots and plays some great tennis. I definitely think I bring out the best in her as well."



World number one Roger Federer will face a tough challenge when he squares off against Andre Agassi today

### 'I'm still the best,' says Venus

I have been nearly four years since Venus Williams won a grand slam tournament but the former world number one has lost none of her confidence.

The 24-year-old American, knocked out of the Australian Open 7-5 7-6 in the fourth round by Alicia Molik on Monday, still believes she is the best

player in the world. "I can still play so there's no doubt about that," she told reporters. "I would say players are playing better, but I would definitely also say that when I'm playing well, I feel like I'm the best. Today was not my best, absolutely not my best."

Williams won the Wimbledon and U.S. Open titles in 2000 and 2001 but has not won a grand slam since, reaching four consecutive finals from 2002-03 but losing all of them to her younger sister Serena.

Neither sibling has won a grand slam for two years after

the emergence of a new crop of players but Williams thinks it is just a matter of time before they return to the top.

"I go into each match feeling like that I should be able to win each match," she said. "But the best part about tennis is that it's not just once every four years. I'll play next week."

Williams won her first three matches at Melbourne Park in straight sets but struggled to cope with the booming serve of Molik, bidding to become the first Australian woman to win the Open title since Chris O'Neil in 1978.

"I definitely didn't produce my best tennis today, that's for sure. It was definitely a match I definitely should have won," Williams said.

"Obviously she's playing better but I just didn't play that well. If I was playing five percent better, this match is going to be mine."

Williams did not play a warm-up tournament but refused to blame her lack of match practice.

"This is definitely one of the tougher tournaments to win because you don't have the opportunity to get out there and play tons of matches," she said.

"I feel like I had the best preparation that I could have given myself. I feel like I was playing well, but tonight I was just off a bit and you can't afford to do that."

### Hewitt fights back to down Spaniard Nadal

Third seed Lleyton Hewitt was at his tenacious best as he fought back to beat Spanish teenager Rafael Nadal 7-5 3-6 1-6 7-6 6-2 in the Australian Open on Monday and reach his first quarter-final at his home grand slam.

Hewitt had been in deep trouble when tricky left-hander Nadal strung together nine straight games in a crucial period to set up a two-sets-to-one lead.

Despite suffering from a hip flexor muscle strain which flared at the end of the third set, 23-year-old Hewitt clawed his way back to force a tiebreak in the fourth set, which he won 7-3.

Both players scrambled madly around the court before Nadal, 18, appeared to run out of gas from the start of the fifth set as he in turn suffered cramps in his legs.

Hewitt raced to a 3-0 lead and closed it out on his third match point when the exhausted Span-

iard pushed a backhand long.

"It's up there for having to forget everything about my body out there and just tough it out more than anything, refuse to give in again," Hewitt said of his latest fightback.

"It's amazing how many matches I've been able to win throughout my career by giving a hundred percent out there, that never-say-die attitude. Yet again today, it gets me through another big match," the former Wimbledon and U.S. Open champion said.

Hewitt, who beat Nadal in the third round last year, will play one of two Argentines in the quarter-finals — sixth seed Guillermo Coria or ninth seed David Nalbandian.

Hewitt suffered the hip muscle problem on the way to winning the Sydney International and needed court-side treatment at the end of a surprisingly topside third set but never con-

templated pulling out of the battle with Nadal.

"Even if my leg would have fallen off, I would have kept playing," he said.

Davis Cup hero Nadal also needed treatment when he started suffering from cramps in the deciding set, where he dropped serve twice in the first three games to hand Hewitt a 3-0 lead.

But he still managed to give Hewitt a few nervous moments in the fifth. Hewitt double faulted on his first match point and foot faulted on his second before he finally closed out the match after three hours and 53 minutes at Rod Laver Arena centre court.

"I am happy because he is number three in the world and I played the same as him today," Nadal said. "If I play in this level I can do important things this year."

Hewitt expected a tough

### Inspired Molik upsets Venus

Australian Alicia Molik drew inspiration from compatriot Lleyton Hewitt to upset former world number one Venus Williams 7-5 7-6 and reach the Australian Open quarter-finals on Monday.

The 10th seed secured the biggest win of her career to reach the last eight of a grand slam for the first time and keep alive her hopes of becoming the first home women's champion since Chris O'Neil in 1978.

Molik and Williams were kept waiting as Hewitt recovered from two sets to one down to beat Spanish teenager Rafael Nadal.

"I definitely drew inspiration from that, the way Lleyton fought back," she told reporters.

"I guess Lleyton's been in that situation so many times now, I had no doubt he was going to get through. It was a fantastic win. It was amazing the way he came through that match."

In front of a packed crowd at Rod Laver Arena, Molik outslugged, out-thought and outplayed the eighth-seeded Williams, breaking late in the first set and playing a superb tiebreak to seal victory.

"I'm extremely happy with the way I performed out there today," said Molik, who plays top seed and world number one Lindsay Davenport for a place in the semi-finals.

"More than reaching the quarter-finals, I think it's a huge feat that I beat Venus and beat her the way that I did. I beat her playing my tennis. I didn't wait for her to make mistakes. That's something I can be pretty proud of."

Molik's victory will move her into the world's top 10 for the first time when the rankings are announced on Monday, but the 23-year-old is more concerned with beating Davenport, whom she has not taken a set off in three matches.

"I haven't beaten Lindsay before, like I hadn't beaten Venus before today," she said.

"It's going to be a good match-up. I'm on song like I was today, I feel like I create a few chances then I feel like I can definitely put myself in a position to win."

"Every opportunity that I had (against Venus) I really made something of it, or tried to make something of it. I went for my shots, stayed aggressive. And things fell my way. I am not going to die wondering."

# Sports

## AFRICAN YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP

### Eagles face Morocco

Defending champions Egypt and Morocco are through to the semi-finals of the African Youth Championship in Benin.

Morocco edged out Angola 1-0 at the Rene Pleven Stadium while on the other side of Cotonou, Egypt easily beat Lesotho 4-1 at the Friendship Stadium.

The Egyptians raced into a two goal lead in the opening 12 minutes of their Group B match.

Abdallah Abdou opened the scoring in the seventh

minute and Ahmed Farag doubled the lead just five minutes later.

The other three goals of the match all came in the final fifteen minutes of the second-half.

Abdallah Mohammed extended Egypt's lead to 3-0 in the 75th minute before Mahmoud Alla Fadl put the

game beyond doubt with an 82nd minute strike.

Lesotho got a late consolation through a penalty converted by Lintho Koric.

Morocco secured their semi-final place with their narrow win over Angola as Mouhssine Iajour grabbed the only goal of the game in the 39th minute.

The results mean that Egypt win Group B thanks to a better goal difference over Morocco with both sides on seven points from their three matches.

Lesotho, who were playing in their first ever continental finals, finished third in the group with three points while the Angolans return home

without so-caring a single point.

In Wednesday's semi-finals Egypt face Group A runners-up Benin while Morocco face Group A winners Nigeria, who have won all their matches in the tournament so far.

All four semi-finalists automatically qualify for Fifa's World Youth Championships in Holland in June.

### Another tragedy hits Benin

Two lives were lost and 16 persons injured as the Beninois hit the street at the aftermath of the historic qualification of the Squirrels to the World Youth Championship in the Netherlands.

The two lives were lost as a result of reckless driving of motorbikes which in some cases the riders carried more than the legal one passenger with some of the passengers standing with the country's flag on the speeding motorbikes popularly known as 'Keké'.

The 16 injured persons are currently hospitalised at the Centre National Hospitalier Universitaire (CNHU), Cotonou.

There were many other unrecorded cases of motorbike accidents in the capital city, Cotonou and the other regions of the country.

This will bring to three the number of lives so far lost since the inception of the competition with the goalkeeper, Campos being the first.

Meanwhile, despite the lives lost, most Beninois believed that the World Cup ticket remains the best thing to have happened to the country in its football history.



The Flying Eagles defeated Cote d'Ivoire by a lone goal to send them packing out of the tournament

### Maghrebs bag semi-final tickets

Egypt and Morocco on Sunday joined the Flying Eagles in qualifying for the semi-final of the ongoing African Youth Soccer Championship in Cotonou.

In securing the position, the Egyptians who are defending champions, hammered debutantes Lesotho by 4-1 while Morocco pipped Angola 1-0.

Both Angola and Lesotho have joined two others, Cote d'Ivoire and Mali in crashing out of the championship which began with eight teams in two groups.

Nigeria's Flying Eagles can now wait for Morocco on Wednesday to decide the first semi-final match while defending champions Egypt will file out against hosts, Benin Republic in the second crucial match.

Meanwhile, Lesotho's chief coach, Sephephe Matete, has blamed inexperience by his boys for their 4-0 loss to Egypt at the Stade de L'Amitié stadium.

Matete told newsmen at the end of the decider, that his boys were jittery at the kick-off time because they

were aware that Egypt were defending champions.

Besides, he explained that the team came to gather some experience at the championship since it was their first appearance, adding that the boys were now well equipped to play in the COSAFA championship in southern Africa.

"The boys will stay together and we have learnt a lot especially about their finishings in vital areas," he said.

The squad is expected to leave Cotonou on Wednesday.

### Eagles cannot stop us

- Egyptian coach

Exuding confidence after their 4-1 bashing of Lesotho, Egypt's coach Mohammed Radwan says his boys are not afraid of confronting any team including the Eagles at the AFC finals.

Radwan said at a post-match news conference on Sunday in Cotonou that the team had, however, achieved one of its objectives by qualifying for the FIFA U-20

world Cup in Holland later in the year.

He said the second target of retaining their title at the championship would not be threatened by either the Flying Eagles or Benin Republic.

"We respect Nigeria and Benin but we are not afraid or trying to avoid them because our best is yet to come," he said.

Radwan said the defending champions would plan effectively against the expected massive support from home fans for Benin during their semi-final clash on Wednesday.

"If we play against Nigeria or Benin, you will see a different approach because we will move faster than we did today," the tactician boasted.

Both teams are expected to clash in the second semi-final match in Cotonou.

Exuding confidence after their 4-1 bashing of Lesotho, Egypt's coach Mohammed Radwan says his boys are not afraid of confronting any team including the Eagles at the AFC finals.

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Samion

### Players hit 36 goals in first stage

As the first stage of the ongoing AFC was concluded on Sunday in Cotonou, 36 goals have so far been scored by players at the competition.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the stage ended with two matches in group B where two teams advanced to the semi-final stage billed to kick off on Wednesday.

The Flying Eagles, along with hosts Benin Republic, Egypt and Morocco scored the highest number of seven goals each in their group matches, followed by Mali with four goals in its kitty.

Lesotho and Cote d'Ivoire which already crashed out of the competition netted three and two goals respectively, while the whipping boys Angola secured just one goal from three matches.

However, Mali, Benin and Lesotho conceded the

highest number of seven goals each, trailed by Cote d'Ivoire and Angola with five and four goals against them respectively.

Defending champions

Egypt conceded three goals, Morocco, two and the Flying Eagles who showed their stuff in the competition conceded the minimum of one goal.

### Baptist College wins Shell Cup

Baptist College of Abeokuta on Sunday at the Port Harcourt Liberation stadium emerged winners of the Shell Cup for Secondary Schools in Nigeria following a 1-0 win over St Lumumba of Jos.

In a very interesting final match, Baptist College beat St Mulumba College.

Chief Coach of St. Mulumba, a former Captain of JIB Rocks Strikers of Jos told nigeriasports.com that his boys lost to the politics of the game.

"The referee was harsh on my players, issuing a red card that was not deserved as early as twenty minutes into the game and the general officiating was bad. We have learnt from our mistakes and we can only do better next year."

Event Consultant, Segun Odeghami told Nigeria sports.com that the competition had been an interesting one and was looking forward to the number of players discovered to make it to the big time in Nigerian football.

"The Shell Cup has produced a player like Opubanmi who played at the last World Cup, and as I speak to you now we have a couple of them in Benin with the Flying Eagles and also with the golden Eagles."

Suleiman Mohammed was voted best defender of the tournament.

Bright Silas of St Mulumba College in Jos was voted best midfielder of the tournament, while Nuru Musa of St Mulumba was voted Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

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Stasia

### STATISTICS

Fixtures, results and tables for the African Youth Championship in Benin.

#### GROUP A:

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Nigeria	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
Benin	3	1	1	1	7	7	4
T Coast	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
Mali	3	0	1	2	4	7	1

15/01/05: Ivory Coast 1-0 Mali  
15/01/05: Benin 0-3 Nigeria  
18/01/05: Nigeria 3-1 Mali  
18/01/05: Ivory Coast 1-4 Benin

22/01/05: Nigeria 1-0 Ivory Coast  
22/01/05: Benin 3-3 Mali

#### GROUP B:

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Egypt	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Morocco	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Lesotho	3	1	0	2	3	7	3
Angola	3	0	0	3	1	4	0

16/01/05: Egypt 1-0 Angola  
16/01/05: Morocco 2-0 Lesotho

19/01/05: Angola 1-2 Lesotho  
19/01/05: Morocco 2-2 Egypt

23/01/05: Angola 0-1 Morocco  
23/01/05: Egypt 4-1 Lesotho

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# DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, January 25, 2005

## Tsunami and politics of relief

The 26th December, 2004 Tsunami, yielded by an earthquake in the eastern sector of the Indian Ocean, has provoked several international events, notably a confrontation between Colin Powell, America's outgoing Secretary of State and Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary General; both of whom owed their status in world affairs in the transition from the Twentieth to the Twenty First century to President George Bush and his conception of the role of the black man in world affairs. Both men ended up deviating from having brains cloned from the wishes of the master. Powell, a man who had killed and pledged to get killed in defense of America, had developed less of a bully-Cowboy view of, and more respect for, other peoples who fight for their national freedoms and visions of history. Iraq as a scene of profit for corporations like Bechtel and Halliburton (both from potential contracts for its reconstruction after it had been battered to ruins in order to seize control of its vast oil deposits), pitched Vice President Dick Cheney and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, against Colin Powell's politics rooted in sentimental memories for American soldiers who had died in other wars for similar economic interests elsewhere. Some observers claim that President Bush was anticipating "to award a \$900million construction contracts to rebuild Iraq" to American companies.

Kofi Annan too suffered from Colin Powell's sneeze over Iraq. Both black men had come into power with empty hands and pockets, the one rich in military medals but no corporate wealth, and the other rich in a diplomatic bureaucrat's vocabulary. Having forced Powell out of office, Bush is now growling at Annan, hoping that the dog win either run away while keeping his cheek; or wine and wag his tail in obsequious apology.

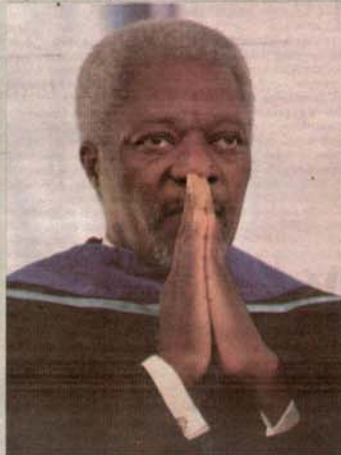
The Tsunami tragedy has created a grand scene from which to put Annan on a wild bull for him to ride without being thrown off the saddle and gored to death; just as they do in rodeo games back home in Texas where George Bush grew up seeing cowboys test their masculinity. Short of that the American imperial guard will show off their fleet of helicopters, troops and equipment-hauling trains that fly across skies over vast distances; military troops who eat hamburgers as their tribal food and arrive on the scene with the sound of a whistle, and not the usual quilt the United Nations puts together from diverse contingents supplied by willing member states; assembled with the lightning speed of a pregnant tropical stall, and fuelled by low budget paraffin and not expensive petrol.

The attack on Annan's global mandate and jaic, however, developed a puncture on its front tyres probably due to delays occasioned by a wish to dramatize the Santa Claus image of the United States to Moslem worshippers everywhere in the run up to their annual pilgrimage and congregation in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. With the red stripes on her national flag beginning to sag and run; with what looks increasingly like uncloning Iraqi blood as 2004 came to an end, a more caring and genetous image of the United States as "Big Bird" in Sesame Street, was likely to become compelling to image makers. The delay might have even enhanced this image if it hadn't been for another inconvenience: the mad waters have murdered several thousands of citizens of Scandinavian and other European countries whose governments and kith and kin responded with spontaneous outpourings of grief, anxiety for the fate of loved ones out on holiday in the region, and collections of donations of relief material and funds from publics aroused by their own independent global media which operated outside the boundaries of censorship by America officials and reporters. In the United States itself, congressmen representing constituencies where tourists known to be in that part of Asia came from, were under pressure to demand and denounce seeming indifference by President Bush and his top officials.

The Europeans were going to insist on asserting independent initiatives even as the post Cold War lone giant

pretended not to hear screams of victims on the peripheries of the empire. To these European voices and initiatives, the United Nations was the preferred and traditional Santa Claus within which their individual sovereignties had dignity and voices, even if anchored on populations less than the size of New York City. Sweden, with the most human losses, has a total population of nine million, probably twice that of its neighbour, Norway, also bereaved.

By Okello Oculi



Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General

The United States, in an apparent move to camouflage her desire to overshadow the United Nations, and its head prefect, Kofi Annan, put together a relief club made up of India and Australia as junior partners. Japan was excluded presumably because her brutal treatment of peoples in this area during World War 2 is still remembered with revulsion and anger; but more likely as a credible competitor for relief and reconstruction contracts. India, to assert her national pride, and also justify her participation in the relief-supply club, rejected relief for victims in Tamil Nadu and its northern border areas reached by the earthquake and angry waters. India was probably also mindful of relief partners targeting its nuclear plants located in the region. As a precaution, those living in the vicinity of a plant were evacuating, accompanied by loud assurances by officials that there were no fears of leakages of harmful radiation. While joining the American craft of relief gives, India was also probably wary of too eager an embrace by a rampaging giant who had always supported her arch enemy, Pakistan, all through the Cold War; and silently welcomed high visibility for Kofi Annan's relief professionals in the region. The United States is after all, once a colonial colossus over the Philippines; in the mid-1960s sponsored the massacre of hundreds of thousands of members of the Communist Party in Indonesia; bombed Vietnamese nationalism with all the violent and explosive chemistry it could export, and tamed Japan's imperial ambitions over the region. She is not a Santa Claus without hidden claws even at a mass funeral and on a Red Cross mission.

The Tsunami has brought a peculiar message to Indonesia. With the largest number of Muslims in the world in one country, Indonesia had refrained from being a vigorous exporter of the faith. It had also achieved a creative fusion between Islam and her traditional culture. In her struggle for independence against Dutch colonial exploitation and dictatorship, and Japanese wartime occupation, she had

borrowed ideological weapons from the Communist nationalists in China, and liberal democratic calls for freedom from India and the United States. The Soviet Union and China favoured her communist siblings while the West favoured her liberal democratic nationalists as expressed in the rhetoric of Sukarno. Her communists, and not her Muslim worshippers, alarmed the West. American scholars writing on her politics, praised what they called a culture of consensus, not polarized by conflict especially after the communists had been conveniently massacred and silenced in their hundred of thousands by the Indonesian military, with encouragement from the American government.

The horrendous decimation by the Tsunami and the high drama it allows for relief international relations, as well as the shared tears from death and injuries can only be a welcome opportunity to regain lost moments of playing the desired; and even superiorly endowed foreigner. Colonial hangovers die only slowly, if ever. Kofi Annan's shadow comes in useful here as an anti-acid; a digestive chemical which even the Americans would grudgingly welcome.

Perhaps the best allies of Kofi Annan, the African from ancient cultures of Ghana and West Africa, are the people of Thailand. A January 5, 2005 CNN programme "Larry King Live", showed two American couples from Seattle in Washington State in the far northwest, who had both escaped unhurt, physically at least, because they had managed to get to high ground before hungry waves got at them. They had fled from sleep and scrambled out without clothes and shoes. To the husband, a Thai nurse gave him her shoes, others gave them clothes. Another man who had grabbed a child as the waters tossed him past him and clung on to the boy desperately till Thai rescuers pulled them out and, like several BBC correspondents did repeatedly, praised the generosity, the humanness of the Thais; "the opening of the heart" (as a resident European tried to translate) the Thai national moral resource. The Thais have shown that there is a moral capital mightier than money. The American couple chose to become volunteers and carry dead bodies and coffins, and perform other needed tasks because as they put it: "to whom much is given, much is expected".

The Thais had given them a rare gift of human hood they would, therefore, not walk away from their early moment of grief. In the face of American officialdom waving scores of helicopters, troops, food and high technology, Kofi Annan's moral currency from the historical record of the United Nations has a vital ally in the gift of light from open windows in Thai hearts, a shine which may well send forth illumination so powerful that it may well blind the arrogant wielders of America's machines. Kofi Annan would do well to put on his agenda the export of those Thai cultural diamonds of humane light from hearts to other economies as new infrastructures for carrying and anchoring the humanitarian work of the United Nations.

In this regard, it is most regrettable that journalists from most Asia, African, Latin American and Caribbean countries are not represented among those covering this transcontinental tragedy. The media in these countries do not have the huge resources major networks deploy even at very short notice. Yet the absence of a capacity for responding to such calamities; of becoming active participants in a cauldron of what should be a global human instinctual struggle for survival, of volunteering to bleed and cry a little with victims in distant lands, is a major component of underdevelopment. It too must be crossed as a gap between the North and the South. Journalists from these regions would serve to build this capacity in the consciousness of officialdom and the mass public alike. As a lesson from this Tsunami, Kofi Annan should de-bureaucratize the work of the UN's major humanitarian agencies: UNICEF, UNHCR, and WHO, and take them to the active participation of the mass publics everywhere. This is what the volunteers in Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India have demonstrated. Their heroic legacy should not go away with receding ocean waves. That is certainly one initiative which American officials would recognize as coming directly from the bowels of their own fight for freedom against British colonial exploitation and dictatorship.

Oculi is member of Trust editorial board