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NEWS
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over N5bn water proejct**

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Reps want Balogun probed

● **Query BPE, CBN, NUC, others
over extra-budgetary spending**

The House of Representatives reconvened yesterday from a one-week sallah break to order investigations into the circumstances leading to the retirement of the Inspector General of Police, Mr Tafa Balogun.

It also instituted the process of getting to the root of the charges of alleged corrupt practices and diversion of public funds levelled against the IGP to enable it take a decisive action on the matter.

The IGP has been sent on forced retirement following allegations of financial misco-

duct and is currently being investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The matter came up for the first time yesterday on the floor of the House and after debates, the House mandated three of its committees on police, anti-corruption and financial crimes to jointly investigate the matter and report back to it.

According to the motion moved by Hon. Halims Ago-

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President Obasanjo discussing with Mr Tony Elumelu, chief executive of Standard Trust Bank, during the inauguration ceremony of core group of Nigerians held at the State House, Abuja. Pix: Joe Oroyo.

Obasanjo seeks N900m for national confab

● **Coomassie, Barda, Ja Abdulkadir lead Katsina reps**

● **Yoruba agenda out Feb 11**

President Olusegun Obasanjo has tabled a N911,721,615.28 budget proposal before the Senate, to finance the proposed national political reform conference.

In a letter to the president of the Senate, Adolphus

Wabara, dated January 18 and presented on the floor yesterday, Obasanjo said the conference is scheduled to commence mid-next month and will last three months.

"As there was no provision for it in the budget already forwarded to the National Assembly, I am forwarding the budget for inclusion under the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation in the 2005 Appropriation Bill," he said.

The conference, according to him, would address eight elements which are central to the government's reforms agenda, namely constitutional, political party, electoral, judicial/legal, civil society and police/prison system reforms; consultations and consensus building; and reforms of the structure of government/governance.

Tracing the events that

which was mandated to identify the requisite steps for enriching Nigeria's political process so as to widen, deepen and entrench democratic principles and practice, with the overall objective of facilitating good governance, meaningful development and ensuring social justice for the people of Nigeria."

The national dialogue committee has eight members with Governor Ahmed Makarf of Kaduna state as chairman.

The Senate also yesterday received from the pres-

Contd. on Pg 2

CAN, Ulama disagree over Bauchi killing

Bauchi state could once again erupt in religious riots if urgent steps are not taken to arrest the current feud between Christians and Muslims in the state over the closure of two federal institutions in December last year.

The two institutions, The Federal Polytechnic and the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University of Technology,

Contd. on Pg 2

From Tashkalmah Hallah, Reporter, Bauchi

Labaran Ibrahim and the recall of all students expelled in the two institutions as a result of the religious crisis.

Also, the Christian body called for an investigation

Contd. on Pg 2

Court orders ICPC to probe Akwa Ibom CJ

A federal high court sitting in Abuja, yesterday said that the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC), has powers to prosecute the Chief Judge of Akwa Ibom State, Justice Efiogun Idiong over alleged corruption.

Ruling on the objection filed by the ICPC to a suit filed by Justice Idiong seeking to stop ICPC from prosecuting him because the National Judicial Council (NJC), had exonerated him on the allegations of corruption, Justice Steven Jonah Adah said that the powers of ICPC

to prosecute suspects including a chief judge for corrupt charges was not in doubt.

Contd. on Pg 2

IBB, Waziri, others at Mahmoud Atta's burial

The remains of the deceased national chairman of the Nigeria Peoples Congress (NPC), Alhaji Mahmoud Ibrahim Atta, was laid to rest at the Isa Kaita road cemetery in Kaduna yesterday.

At the funeral prayers at

his Force road Marafa Estate residence before the burial, were thousands of Nigerians among them former military president, retired General Ibrahim Babangida, the Atta family patriarch, Dr Abdul-

umini Atta, Alhaji Ahmed Joda, retired General Muhammad Wushishi and General Garba Duba.

Others were retired Senator Mahmud Waziri, former IG, Alhaji Atta retired, General Saliyu Ibrahim, Colonel

Contd. on Pg 2



Governor Adamu Mu'azu

News

Ehindero scraps Operation-Fire-for-Fire

By Benjamin Anta, Crime Reporter

The acting Inspector General of Police, Mr Sunday G. Ehindero yesterday scrapped operation "Fire-for-Fire" and replaced it with operation "policing with integrity."

He made this revelation at a maiden conference with senior police officers (CP's and above) in Abuja as he announced his ten point agenda to revamp the police.

Mr Ehindero said that, "the authoritarian and symbolic justice after the acts epitomised by operation 'Fire-for-Fire' may have to be fine tuned with effective, accountable and responsible policing. Operation-Fire-for-Fire has achieved its purpose

and five others, the suspicious early resignation of Balogun brings to question his integrity as the suspect of the Nigeria Police Force."

"Concerned that if the nation's parliament fails to ascertain the veracity of the very serious financial allegations made against him in the press, the parliament would unknowingly be failing in its duty to hold public officials both serving and retired accountable to the Nigerian people.

"Conscious of the aforementioned fact, it is therefore imperative that under the hazy circumstances of the exit of Mr Balogun as IGP and the image of Nigeria and the nation's police system itself, the House of Representatives must not gloss over the seeming sudden exit of the topmost police officer," the motion said.

In view of the concern raised, the motion prayed the House to mandate its Police Affairs and Anti-Corruption committees to collaborate with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and any other relevant agencies to ascertain if other staggering sums of money exist in the name of Balogun and to verify whether or not the sum allegedly found in Fountain Trust Bank were legitimate earnings.

"In the event of proof of culpability, the former IGP should be appropriately dismissed rather than retired and all illegal funds and property confiscated by the state", the motion also said.

The House of Representatives established also yesterday that some parastatals under the executive arm of government have been violating the constitution by unilaterally spending surplus revenue accruing to them without due process.

Some of the organisations fingered include the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control (NAFDAC), and the National Communications Commission (NCC) among others.

The House took the decision yesterday following a motion moved by Hon

Leonard Ogor, deputy chairman of the committee on communications, who along with 24 others, prayed the House to set up an ad-hoc committee to investigate the financial activities of the parastatals, commissions and other statutory corporations complained about.

The essence of the investigation, the motion said, is to ensure strict compliance with constitutional provisions.

The movers of the motion referred to sections 80(1) and (3) as source of the provisions of the law breached by the commissions and parastatals.

Section 80(1) states that "all revenues or other money raised or received by the federation (not being revenues or other money payable under any Act of the National Assembly) by the federal government; the prosecution of those found wanting in the crisis; payment of compensation to the family of the late Sunday N Achi; repatriation to the NIPES federal Polytechnic for burnt secretariat and bus, and that "neither the university nor the polytechnic must re-open until all the demands are fully met."

However, the Bauchi State Muslim Parliament, a Coalition of Islamic Clerics in the state, while taking exception to the CAN's demands could be a smokescreen for religious riots.

Alhaji Muhammad Dan Madami, a retired deputy inspector general of police, while leading other Islamic clerics under the auspices of the Bauchi State Muslim Parliament, explained that the state has witnessed sectarian religious crises in 1991, 1993, 1995 and 2001 and does not wish to have one again.

The former DIG, while conceding to the demands by CAN that an investigation panel be set up, and the prosecution of those found wanting before a court of law, however, strongly criticised CAN of having a hidden agenda in their demand for the removal of the ATBU VC, the registrar of Federal Polytechnic and the recall of

erating with the ministry of police affairs and the police service commission.

He also said police entails more than law enforcement but the management of the force will strike a balance between security and freedom.

Also speaking at the event, the minister of police

affairs, Chief Broderick Bozimo urged the acting IGP to use police lawyers in the force to reduce the backlog of cases pending in courts.

He said as soon as judgement is given in a matter involving the police, appropriate steps should be taken as the ministry has a list of cases of default judgement.

APGA files contempt charge against Oyinlola panel

By Kemi Ogedengbe, Judicial Editor

The All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), yesterday initiated proceedings to commit to prison, members of the Olagunsoye Oyinlola led

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), committee on the Anambra crisis for disobeying court orders.

The court yesterday gave APGA the go-ahead to serve the notice of consequences of disobedience of court order by depositing the court's papers at the PDP secretariat in Abuja.

APGA's counsel, Chief Chris Uche (SAN), told the court that it was very difficult to serve the papers on members of the panel personally. The court had last week stopped the panel from investigating the crisis.

According to Hon. Leo Ogor who presented the motion before the House, it was worrisome that revenue generated as income by statutory corporations, parastatals, commissions and some federal government establishments were not remitted as stipulated by Section 80 (1) of the 1999 constitution.

embly into any other public fund of the federation established for specific purposes) shall be paid into and form the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation."

And section 80(3) states that "No money shall be withdrawn from any public fund of the federation, other than the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation, unless the issue of those monies has been authorised by an Act of the National Assembly."

According to Hon. Leo Ogor who presented the motion before the House, it was worrisome that revenue generated as income by statutory corporations, parastatals, commissions and some federal government establishments were not remitted as stipulated by Section 80 (1) of the 1999 constitution.

Gov Olagunsoye Oyinlola

Muhammad (SAW) at all times."

CAN Contd. from Pg 1

the expelled students. Said he: "from all indications, it is not true to say the VC mismanaged the crisis in the university. He immediately set up a peace committee and interacted with security agents in order to restore normalcy. This, indeed cannot be the action of a person who deserves to lose his job, instead he deserves commendation.

"To demand the recall of the expelled students after they have wrecked the harmony existing within the university and the polytechnic communities, to say the least is to incite a full scale religious conflict."

Alhaji Dan Madami, while calling for the immediate reopening of the two institutions, also warned the Christian body that "the Christian community should know that a Muslim is always ready to defend his religion and the person and the good name of the prophet of Islam,

Meanwhile the Bauchi state government in its bid to nip the looming crisis from degenerating into a full scale conflict, has held a security council meeting, in which the representatives of the two religions and the sectional heads of the security agencies in the state were represented, but ended in deadlock.

The meeting which was presided over by Alhaji Abdulmalik Mahmood, the acting governor, according to a source, failed to produce any result following the rejection by CAN to retract its demands and to apologise to the state government.

According to the source, Alhaji Mahmood told the religious leaders that both Islam and Christianity are religion of peace and they should stop issuing press statements that could cause more tensions and probable conflicts in the state.

IBB Contd. from Pg 1

Lawan Gwadabe, Alhaji Adamu Fika, former water resources minister, Bello Kallie, Alhaji Hassan Hadejia, retired General Jemibewon and NUB chairman, Alhaji Yahaya Inam.

The funeral prayers were held at about 12 noon and soon after, his remains moved

in a procession to the Isa Kaita road cemetery.

The late *Galadima of Ehiraland* died in the early hours of Monday in a London hospital after a protracted illness. He was also the treasurer of the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP).

He was 74.

Obasanjo Contd. from Pg 1

ident the public procurement Bill, which seeks to set standards of contracts.

In a separate letter dated January 4, also presented on the floor yesterday, Obasanjo said the Bill among others, provides for the "establishment of the National Council on Government Commence, establishment of the Bureau for Public Procurement as the regulatory authority responsible for the monitoring and oversight of public procurement; harmonisation of the existing government policies and practices by regulating, setting standards and developing the legal framework and professional capacity for public procurement in Nigeria and other related purposes."

Meanwhile, former Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Ibrahim Coomassie is among the six-man delegation appointed by the Katsina State government to represent it at the proposed national conference.

The selected individuals who were drawn from the three senatorial districts of Katsina, Daura and Funtua, was as a result of an extensive meeting of stakeholders in the state held at the presidential lodge, Katsina Government House.

Others selected include former environment minister, Alhaji Kabir Saidu from Daura Senatorial district, former Katsina state governor, Alhaji Saadu Bada and Barrister Ibrahim Siema from Katsina central.

Also included are; Alhaji Tukur Mani from Funtua senatorial district and Alhaji Garba Ja Abdulkadir, who serves as the chairman of the delegation.

Court Contd. from Pg 1

He said that Idiong's case showed no reasonable cause and was therefore struck out.

ICPC had last year questioned the chief judge and officers who were members of the Akwa Ibom State Election Tribunal over allegations that they collected a bribe of N10 million to influence the tribunal's decision.

According to the ICPC, the said money was traced to the house of Idiong while the driver who carried the money in Ghana must-go bags also made a statement to the commission.

ICPC said some of the suspects interviewed in connection with the bribery allegation for which the Akwa Ibom CJ was arrested linked him to the allegation.

The chief judge who also made a statement with the ICPC investigators, however filed a suit before a federal high court in Abuja, asking for an order to stop ICPC from further investigating him.

But the ICPC in its objection, said the NJC has no powers to clear any judge of criminal allegations.

A counter affidavit which was sworn to by Umar Baba Auda, a superintendent of police attached to the ICPC stated that "NJC, not being a court of law, has no powers

The representatives were mandated to convene a meeting at their various constituencies to aggregate views that will be forwarded for consideration to the national confab.

The committee was also set at the meeting under the chairmanship of Maradin Katsina, District Head of Kurfi, Alhaji Amadu Kurfi to embark on a vigorous mobilisation campaign for the upcoming national census in the state.

In another development, the Yoruba Agenda in respect of the national dialogue being midwived by president Olusgun Obasanjo will be made public in Ibadan on Friday, February 11, it was announced on Tuesday.

This was one of the agreements reached in the Oyo state capital at the end of a harmonisation meeting held by prominent members of the two factional leaders of the pan Yoruba socio-political group, *Afenifere*.

The proposed February 11 meeting which is expected to be broad based, is expected to among other things, review the agreement reached on their agitation for convocation of a sovereign national conference during the Abacha regime in 1994.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the harmonisation meeting, read by one of the conveners, Chief Tunde Odanye, the *Afenifere* leaders from the two rival groups declared that the Pan Yoruba group will come out with a position on how best the various interest groups in the country can sit together to determine how they should be governed in a true democratic dispensation.

or authority to try criminal cases or exonerate a suspect from any criminal allegation of corruption, corrupt practices or the giving and taking of bribes." This argument was upheld by the court.

ICPC also stated that it effected the arrest of Idiong which he had earlier denied through newspaper reports.

A counter affidavit by ICPC stated thus: That at the end of the ICPC interview, the applicant (CJ) was arrested. He made a statement under caution. That the cautionary words which clearly stated that he was under arrest were read to him and duly signed by him before he voluntarily made the statement."

Idiong was arrested for allegedly facilitating the offer of bribes to members of the state's election tribunal.

Other principal actors in the bribery saga, according to the commission, were Mrs Matilda Adamu, a high court judge in Plateau state who has been dismissed from service; Anthony Macaulay Elekegwu, a Customary Court of Appeal judge in Delta State who is currently on suspension; Justice O. J. Isede, a Chief Magistrate in Edo State who has been retired and Khadi Tanimi Mahanoud of the Sharia Court of Appeal, Taraba State.

News

Senate summons Shagari, Awoterebo over N5bn water projects

The senate yesterday summoned the minister of water resources, Alhaji Mukhtari Shagari and the minister of state, Alhaji Bashir Awoterebo, to explain recent statements credited to the ministry that N45 million has been released to each of the 109 senators to drill boreholes in their constituencies.

By **Hasheeb I. Fiodiga**, (Political Reporter)

In what appeared to be an angry response to what was apparently a reference to the N4.9 billion provided in the 2005 budget for senatorial constituency projects, the upper chamber resolved that

the two ministers must appear to put a stop to insinuations that the senators have collected these funds. The 2005 budget is still to be approved.

The decision was reached following information brought to the attention of the senate by minority leader, Senator Lawal Shu'aibu. He drew attention to a report in Monday's edition of the Daily Trust that each of the senators has received N45 million for water projects in their respective constituencies.

Shu'aibu said there was need to make clarifications on this.

Amosun, who released the story said he was misquoted, as senators neither approve nor execute contracts.

Senator Kila Ogunwale told the senate that he heard the minister of state on air with the same assertion and had personally made attempts to clarify the matter through the media.

Reps urge FG to set up pilgrims commission

The House of Representatives has urged the federal government to set up a National Pilgrims Commission (NPC), to oversee the Hajj and Christian pilgrimages operations, just as it mandated its committee on foreign affairs to investigate the problems which bedevilled this year's hajj operations.

The House also directed the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs (DPA), to make adequate arrangements to bring back Nigerian Muslims safely and on time.

This followed a motion moved by Hon. (Dr.) Haruna Yerima, who said that it was disturbing that despite government's input in hajj preparations in the country, operations have never been smooth.

He said for an event which occurs every year, it was worrisome that many problems which have been encountered in the past still persist year after year.

Although Hon. Yerima moved a motion for a national hajj commission to oversee hajj operations, the House however amended the motion to include overseeing both the Muslim hajj and Christians pilgrimage.

Addressing newsmen after the plenary session, Dr. Yerima said that establishing the national pilgrims commission implies that the federal government will hands-off anything concerning pilgrimages especially hajj operations in the country.

Okorie accuses Ojukwu of betrayal

The embattled national chairman of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Chief Chekwes Okorie has accused the party's presidential candidate, Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, of betrayal by aligning with President Olusegun Obasanjo and the breakaway faction of the party.

Reeling out a string of

allegations against the ex-Biafran warlord in response to Odumegwu-Ojukwu's recognition to the APGA splinter group, Okorie told journalists yesterday in Abuja that the action was a "coup de grace in this unforgettable and unmitigated act of betrayal."

Odumegwu-Ojukwu has recently written to the Umeh group, accepting his appointment into the faction's board of trustees.

Okorie, who said his reaction was a limited response, pleaded with newsmen not to ask any questions after the briefing, saying that he was taken aback by the ex-warlord's action, having considered

Nigeria to develop nuclear energy for electricity generation

The minister of science and technology, Professor Turner T. Isoun, has reiterated federal government's confidence to develop nuclear energy for electricity generation.

Speaking yesterday while receiving the Japanese ambassador to Nigeria, Akio Tanaka, in his office, Isoun said Nigeria is very much interested in exploiting nuclear energy resources for peaceful purposes especially in electricity generation.

"Our plan is to have two 1,000 megawatts electricity generation to complement the current 4,000 megawatts electricity generation in Nigeria."

"I believe the Japanese government can very much assist in this area" he said.

It would be recalled that last week, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Dr. Mohammed El-Baradei, while on a three-day visit to Nigeria, has warned

the federal government on the proper management of nuclear reactors in the country.

Nwabueze accuses Obasanjo of perverting constitution

Foremost Nigerian constitutional lawyer, Professor Ben Nwabueze (SAN), has accused President Olusegun Obasanjo of "monstrous perversion" of the constitution in the name of fighting corruption.

He told newsmen in Kaduna, Monday, that though he was uncompromisingly against corruption but the fight against it should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

"There are rampant cases of the perversion of the constitution and the most monstrous of all are the declaration of the state of emergency in Plateau State and the Anambra saga."

"I will fight against

From **Sani Babadoko**, Bureau Chief, Kaduna

corruption but I will oppose any perversion of the constitution in the name of fighting corruption," Professor Nwabueze declared.

FG set to fund SEC

From **Bright Ewulo**, Deputy Business Editor, Lagos

Indications emerged yesterday that the federal government may soon start funding the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), in order to support it to adequately supervise the capital market.

It should be recalled that the federal government led by President Olusegun Obasanjo since it inception in 1999, refused to heed the campaign of SEC's immediate past director-general, Malam Suleiman Ndanusa on the matter.



The Resource Person, (Dr.) Emmanuel Anteyi (medical consultant, National Hospital, ARV project, Abuja) (middle) flanked by the director, Internews (Cece Modupe Fadope) and senior programme officer HIV/AIDS+TB, Enhance/USAID, Mr. Godwin Asuquo (left) during January 2005 journalists roundtable which focuses on HIV/AIDS treatment access in Nigeria held in Abuja...yesterday. Pic: Kennedy Eghooodje.

OPC/Muslims clash: "Our members went beyond bounds"

Apparently reacting to public outcry that trailed the clash between its members and Ipakodo Muslim community in Lagos last week, the Oodua Peoples Congress

From **Zakariyya Adaramola**, Reporter (Lagos)

(OPC), has openly admitted that many of its "members are thugs who go beyond bounds" whenever they disagree with non-members.

Speaking yesterday on a radio Lagos vernacular programme "Gbageda Oro," one of the founding member of the group, Alhaji Isah Lawal. Akintolu, said the clash between OPC and Ipakodo Muslims was an unfortunate incident which would not repeat itself.

He said most clashes the group involved itself in should not have taken place if new comers to the group had been properly screened. The OPC leader admitted

that "most members of the OPC are unemployed thugs who see OPC as a group to employ them."

While admitting that the group is overstepping its bounds, Alhaji Akintolu said founding members of the deadly ethnic group are currently restructuring the group to expel "bad eggs among us."

"There is no doubt that we have derailed from our main objectives. Most of our members think we established this group to foment troubles. That is why we are currently restructuring the group. We are flushing out the bad eggs. We don't want riff-raffs again. We do not want to be known as trouble makers again," said the OPC leader.

Reps debate coast law

Members of the House of Representatives

By **Zainab Alimi**, (Political Reporter)

yesterday debated the proposed Nigerian National Coast Guard Bill, 2004 which seeks to establish an agency that will protect the country's civil maritime operations.

The Bill, which passed the second reading yesterday,

area and certain other maritime zones and coast of Nigeria, for the purpose of protecting the national interests in all such areas.

When passed into law, duties of the coast guard will include among others, prevention of illegal fishing in the maritime areas of Nigeria, illegal entering or leaving of the country through maritime zones in the country, detection of activities causing pollution to the environment and taking measures to stop them.

Others include dissemination of information including warning by radio or any other means in times of national disasters, rendering assistance the navy in times of war, suppression of destructive and terrorist activities, prevention of handing over and smuggling of drugs and patrolling the maritime zones of Nigeria.

The Bill is sponsored by Hon. Jerry Gokwe who argued that the Nigerian Navy lacks the training to relate with cargo ships as well as address civil cases associated with the protection of Nigeria's coastal waters.

He warned that operators who flout the law will not be spared during his tenure, maintaining that his relationship with the exchange and operators will not influence his policy direction.

Al-Faki, who was flanked by his director and other executives, posited that SEC will not be dabbling into the unclaimed dividends matter since it is now before the National Assembly.

However, SEC's new director-general, Malam Musa Al-Faki, in his maiden quarterly press briefing in Lagos, gave indication, that government has finally bought the idea, saying that the development is in the averred interest of the economy.

According to him, the support will enable SEC accomplish more in the area of effectively policing that

News

Bauchi Speaker rejects National confab

The Speaker of the Bauchi state House of Assembly has rejected the proposed national dialogue by the federal government to fashion out a new constitution for the country, saying the dialogue is "unconstitutional, waste of our lean resources, and its an under cover to President Olusegun Obasanjo's third bid".

Alhaji Tanko Ibrahim Jallam, Speaker of the House in an interview with *Daily Trust* also called on the leadership of the National Assembly not to give any legitimacy to the proposed dialogue saying by doing so they have conceded their mandate and they should vacate their seats

From Tashikalmah Hallah, Correspondent (Bauchi) and return to their constituencies.

According to the Speaker, President Obasanjo was sceptical about the convocation of national conference at the beginning of the fourth Republic believing that such a conference was untenable since the National Assembly has the constitutional mandate to discuss any problem that has been bedeviling the country.

He said that the National Dialogue will compound the nation's problem rather than finding solution, as the president may pick only those that would act his script.

However, he said that he

was surprised at the sudden turn in the President's position, adding that the constitution of the Governor Mohammed Ahmed Makarfi's committee, which has fashioned out the blue print for the dialogue was dubious.

Alhaji Jallam explained that the National Assembly has been vested with the authority to amend the constitution or discuss any problem that is bedeviling the country, and "not the president or any

body to wake up one day and say lets have a national dialogue".

"What type of dialogue are we going to have while the national assembly has constitutional responsibility, to amend and discuss the problem of Nigeria?"

"The whole idea of this national dialogue is to give the president his much desired five year single term, which, I want to call on all Nigerians to resist it with all their

might".

The speaker pointed out that "picking people to Abuja to go and spend three months is a misplaced priority."

Already there is poverty in the land; there is the National Assembly which is the true representatives of the people, were are not going to be party to this and the National Assembly should not give any legitimacy by approving any amount for the said dialogue"

World Bank to increase agric aid for Africa

From Hassan Idris, Senior Reporter with Agency Reports

The World Bank has called for a new global trade agreement to enable Africa to benefit from trade at the global level.

World Bank regional vice president Gobin Nankani made this call, at the end of a two-day Africa partnership meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, attended by African government officials and the international donor community.

Mr Nankani, said that rich nations spend \$1 bn a day in agricultural subsidies, tariffs on Africa's processed exports need to fall.

"For example, the tariff on roasted coffee is nine times the tariff on raw coffee beans, with that kind of bias, it is very difficult to help Africa trade," adding that more than 315 million Africans live on less than \$1 a day.

Further more, financial help to Africa has remained flat, despite pledges by donors to increase it, pointing out that aid flow to Africa reached 16b euros (\$20.7bn; #11.1bn) in 2002, but dropped to 15bn euros in 2003, he said.

He stressed that 2005 is an opportunity to reverse this trend in international aid, adding that financial assistance should match the progress African countries had made in recent years in terms of governance.

"We have done an analysis in the World Bank which suggests that an immediate increase of 60% on current levels will be easily absorbed and productivity used by the better-performing countries of Africa."

Senate asks EFCC, ICPC to screen NDDC nominees

The senate has asked the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and other security agencies to screen President Olusegun Obasanjo's 17 nominees into the Niger-Delta Development

Niger NPC gets materials

From Kashim Sule, Stringer (Minna)

Working materials worth millions of naira have been presented to the National Population Commission in Niger state for a successful conduct of the 2005 census exercise.

Presenting the materials to the Commission, the Secretary to the state government, Comrade Adamu Erena, said the state government did not take the issue of census light in view of its importance in formulating political and economic policies.

He said since the campaign began early last year, the state government has directed all local governments to cooperate with the commission in every way to make the exercise successful.

Comrade Adams Erena further said that besides the involvement of the local governments, traditional rulers have been directed to mobilise all and sundry, warning that it is a disservice to the father-land for anybody to exclude himself from the exercise.

The working materials which comprised 78 motorcycles, 327 mattresses and 77 camp-beds will be distributed to the super-visors and enumerators posted to work in the rural areas.

Receiving the materials, the state Director, Mr. Jonah Kumbir assured the SSG that the materials will not fall into wrong hands.

He said the forthcoming census exercise will be a successful one as the staff were poised to produce reliable and acceptable figure that will excite Nigerians.

From Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter

Commission (NDDC) to pave way for their clearance by the upper chamber.

Also, president of the senate, Chief Adolphus Wabara has warned senators not to witchhunt the nominees in the course of screening them.

Following the presentation of the list of nominees by deputy senate leader, Senator Jonathan Zwingina, during yesterday's plenary, Wabara referred the list to the senate committee NDDC, saying that information on the nominees would be sought from EFCC, ICPC, State Security Services (SSS) and the police before they are cleared for appointment.

The senate president said there were flurry of petitions against a number of the nominees and this they had to be thoroughly vetted to ensure that only the most fitting scale through.

"That should not include any measure of witch hunting", he, however, warned. Zwingina's motion seeking to refer the list to the NDDC committee had generated heated debate, with some senators urging that re-appointees needed not be screened because they had gone through the same process before their first appointments.

Senators David Brigidi, John Azuta-Mbata, Patric Osakwe contended that those who are presented for re-appointment had been confirmed clean and should not be allowed to waste the lawmakers' time.

Returning pilgrims expected Friday in Ilorin

The first batch of returning pilgrims from the Holy Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is expected to land at the Ilorin International Airport, Friday, according to the Airport Manager, Alhaji Garba Ringim.

Fielding questions from newsmen in Ilorin yesterday, Alhaji Ringim said arrangements have been concluded to ensure a smooth in-bound exercise of the returning pilgrims.

He said already, the stake-



Alhaji Aliko Dangote Chairman Dangote Group of Companies and Mrs. Cecilia Ibru chief executive of Oceanic Bank discussing during the inauguration ceremony of core group of Nigerians held at the State House Abuja, yesterday

Benue youths to hold peace, devt. summit

Worried by the widening gap between various groups in the state, Benue youths have come up with plans to hold what they called "Peace and Development Summit" aimed at better equipping them towards contributing meaningfully to the development of the state.

Leader of the Benue Youth Forum (BYF) and National Secretary of Middle Belt Youth League (MBYL), Comrade Joseph Aondona Mtom, disclosed this when he led about 200 youths representing various organisation across the three senatorial zones of the state, on a courtesy call to the Special Duties Special Assistance to Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Hon. Shima Ayati, in Makurdi.

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

Comrade Mtom, said the visit was to avail the youths the opportunity to benefit from the wealth of experience of Hon. Ayati who, before his present appointment, led the peace and conflict resolution and refugee management during the Taraba-Benue crisis.

He said the essence of the summit is to change the attitude of Benue youths towards development, while identifying unemployment as one of the major problems facing youth development in the state.

Hon. Shima Ayati, while receiving the youths, praised them for taking the initiative and said if properly implemented the planned summit

would go a long way in aiding government efforts at better equipping the youths for development.

Hon. Ayati, said the forum would avail him the opportunity of educating the youth to be more viable, just as he urged the youth representatives to be politically tolerant and morally upright to shun politicians who often use them to achieve selfish ends.

He also urged them to emulate the virtues J.S Tarka and J.C Obande whose activities were channelled towards political tolerance.

Kano ready for 2005 census

From Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent (Kano)

Kano state is not lagging behind in the expected 2005 National Census as earlier announced by the president of the Federal Republic, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

The Head of Public Affairs, National Population Commission Kano, Mallam Bala Sulaiman, said so far, the exercise is going according with the policy of the president's proclamation that the year 2005 will be for census.

The census which is tagged, population and housing census was initially stipulated for the six geo-political zones of the country in which Kano was selected while Kano in Doguwa local

government area was use in the tasting to see the difficult areas he said.

Mallam Bala Sulaiman also said Kano state has already trained personnel on damacation work and are presently working in Tudun Wada, Bebeji, Kawanya Kuru, Kabo and Rimin Gado to the whole areas in line with the census exercise.

He said the exercise is scheduled to hold in the spate of six months and the exercise has begun in earnest.

Responding to whether there is any problem being encountered, he said all the 3 tiers of government are involved in ensuring a hitch-free census exercise.

Soliloquy

WITH
A. B. Ahmed
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Opinion

OBJ: Still his own foreign minister

One thing you must give our beloved and hard-travelling leader full credit for: he must be the globe's most recognized and most frequent jet-hopper. Once

crude to a global endowment fund to be set up for that specific purpose.

Our unfortunate Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Whatshisname [I swear most solemnly that I

former army general who has now become one of the leading lights of Black African democracy, Mr. Obasanjo combines three portfolios in his current ruling cabinet, namely those of Petroleum, Foreign

"Mr. Obasanjo combines three portfolios in his current ruling cabinet, namely those of Petroleum, Foreign Affairs [including de facto permanent representation of the country at the United Nations in New York] as well as Defence, where one of his pets (name not available) is nominally in charge"

you guarantee him the chance to jump into an airliner or a presidential jet, forget about the rigours of gadding about for a man of his mature years and heavy workload as leader of Nigeria, the African Union, NEPAD and other such ponderous offices. "Have plane, must go" is the ever-irresistible call to duty of our dear president. I honestly doubt whether there is any member-nation of ECOWAS, ECOMOG, AU, Commonwealth, SADC and the entire United Nations, [including all its trusteeship territories and areas of activity in all dimensions] upon which Obasanjo has not inflicted his person in the last five years, at least twice.

We should immediately enter him as our own special contestant for next year's Guinness Book of World Records as the most peripatetic national leader in history, as well as lobby seriously for him to be considered for the next Nobel Prize in Gadding-About-Doing-Nothing.

If Oslo has no such category of prizes, we should donate five billion barrels of

cannot readily remember his name and titles any more, which places me comfortably in the 99.99 percent of members of the national population who can also no longer remember the man, since OBJ has rendered him completely redundant and technically dead) does not exist any more in the archives of the UN General Assembly.

In its most up-to-date documents these days, what you are likely to find as the entry for Nigeria is something like this: Country: Nigeria; Flag: Three vertical bars of green, white and green, the latter being officially of turquoise hue but nowadays, of any hue available (since no one really cares), including horse-vomit-green.

Form of Government: A unique brand of democratic federalism with an all-dominant executive president, a very cooperative, spineless and greedy legislature, and a de facto single party structure thriving healthily under a nominal multi-party constitution. Current leader: Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, a

Affairs [including de facto permanent representation of the country at the United Nations in New York] as well as Defence, where one of his pets (name not available) is nominally in charge.

Mr. Obasanjo, unquestionably the leading light of African democracy at this moment, is widely recognized as the world's most itchy-footed national leader [whose august presence in any country on the globe is easily guaranteed if the three-year-old daughter of that country's chief of protocol smiles a fond farewell to him on his current visit and says "Come back soon, Uncle Shege!"]

Come hell or high waters, Mr. Obasanjo will be back there within 30 days, according to most reliable sources, to sign a bilateral trade and technical cooperation or cultural agreement with them on behalf of Nigeria or NEPAD or the African Union or ECOWAS. End of imaginary UN entry on Nigeria.

What more is there to add for this single piece? Let me go and rest and pray fervently for the possible resurrection of our incumbent Foreign Affairs Minister. At least, we all know that it costs much less for him to perform his duties than for OBJ to continue to do them so clumsily but enthusiastically on his wretched behalf. Or how cheap do you imagine that presidential entourage come, compared with plain ministerial ones?

For a more interesting and possibly funnier take on this obsession of our president with usurping the jobs of his own ministers, especially that of Foreign Affairs, see my "All hail, foreign minister OBJ!" on page six of the *Daily Trust* of September 16, 2002. See you next week!

Agenda for Goje's Gombe

By Usman M. Jinguo

This State, unlike most other Northern states with so called minorities, is a fully integrated entity. Hardly do you distinguish between a Fulani and a Tera or a Bolewa, Tera or a Waja or any other. They are interwoven by either marriage or long historical association. They have been living harmoniously for centuries. No wonder therefore you do not hear of the many religious or tribal crises that have become order of the day in other states occurring in Gombe state.

Gombe people have for a long time yearn for a state of their own hoping that would afford them the single opportunity to exert their expertise and cooperation to chart a course for themselves towards social and economic survival. Thanks for the Abacha administration, which saw to the culmination of this wish.

Social and economic development in any society demands for certain ingredients to germinate. These include among others entrepreneurial capacity, infrastructural availability and above all visionary leadership to shoulder and fashion a systemic implementation of the objectives of development. For long, the state has been having the entrepreneurs. However, what it lacked was the infrastructure and the leader until the emergence of Goje in 2003 as Governor.

In the beginning, in all honesty, most Gombe people did not care nor attach much value to the person they elected. They simply were protesting from the bad governance of the past. However, little did they know that the foundation of the greatness of the Gombe would be laid by non other than Goje himself.

He believed Government money should not be shared among party faithful to the detriment of the masses. He also believed what Gombe needed is a foundation in terms of infrastructure - roads, electricity, water etc. This is where his problems started with his detractors.

Gombe town was for years battling with erosion, which had eaten up the aging and archaic roads that were built only God knows when. Gullies have taken over the town. It was like an archeological site. Despite federally granted ecological funds, it remained as it was. The people were simply victims of their environment and the plunder by bad leaders. For years they also religiously drank water from the unprotected ponds at kwadan. Many were diseased from typhoid and other water borne diseases those who survived were lucky. The people had simply resigned to fate as all hopes of having good

life vanished by the day. They were just lost.

Today, the picture has changed drastically to the amazement of doubting Thomases. The people are amazed in total bewilderment that they can ever contemplate in the next few months to open taps to have a drink of hygienic water. This is simply incredible, but it is real.

The Gombe State University, which critics believed was a squander of Gombe riches, is becoming a reality. A State with no higher institution of its own should not be seen to be wasting funds in building a Polytechnic when NDs and HNDs are becoming less competitive. The people simply need qualitative university education for capacity building and to face the challenges facing indigenes of the State. The establishment of the State University is perhaps the greatest thing that Governor Goje can be remembered for. It is really not surprising therefore that General Muhammadu Buhari of the ANPP a highly disciplined and nationalist by all standards on a visit recently to Gombe thumbed up for Governor Goje describing him as one of the most outstanding minds in terms of service to his people in an era where leaders at all levels have become a burden on the ruled.

However, there a few more things to do to enhance the positive strides already in place. The Dadin Kowam dam project is one of the foremost in the country.

In a way, the project can be tied closely to the poverty alleviation programmes of the government towards a lasting solution to the precarious unemployment problems and capacity building in the agricultural sector Gombe is no doubt a food basket for the nation. This potential should be X harness to the latest especially now when the nation is fast eyeing agriculture as the best alternative to over a dependence on oil resources which are being threatened by arms carrying Niger Delta separatist.

Secondary and primary education should get a newer focus despite the already good steps on ground. Providing the right caliber of in-takes can be the first step towards supporting the State University. Ensuring qualitative teaching and materials in both primary and secondary schools is the starting point. The inspectorate arm of the State Ministry of Education should be more empowered and strengthened to face this challenge. The current practice where teachers don't pay attention to their work must stop. Summer lessons could be introduced which could be subsidized or even funded by government under a special unit in the ministry of education. This will ensure adequate

coverage of the syllabus and capable of enhancing quality of performances in WAEC and NECCO.

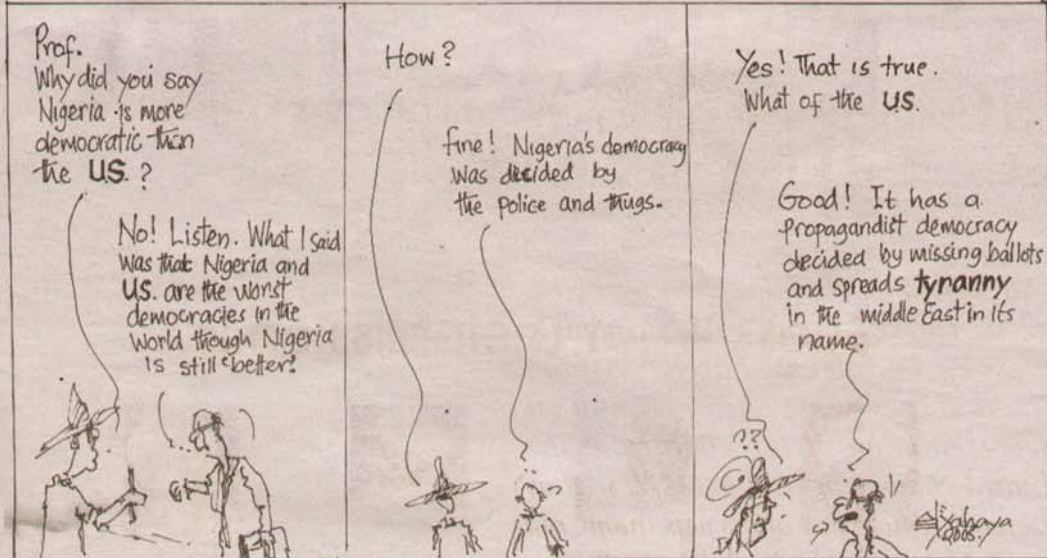
The State government should also reform and reinforce higher education. Gombe needs PhDs to manage the State University into the future and also provide competitive age for Gombe indigenes nationally. Gombe indigenes should be encouraged to come forward for sponsorship. The State government should collaborate with Federal Ministry of Education and other donor organizations globally. The Scholarship board should be expanded and transferred to directly be under the office of the governor to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the system. This will also ensure only deserving and capable minds are selected.

Land matters in Gombe are thorny. The current administration of land matters by the Ministry of Lands is highly commendable as the waiting period for allocations and issuance of certificates has been drastically put under check. However, more parcels of land should be opened. The land ministry needs immediate support to open up the city of Gombe and other major towns. Funds should be made available for a sound site and services programme that would put all necessary facilities on ground. Other private entrepreneurs in this field should be encouraged to come forward to partake in this important area. There is no going-saying that this can help in attracting newer settlers to the city thus opening new opportunities for greater economic development.

The Gombe Investment Company should wake up to its responsibilities. In fact, it needs to be reinvigorated with more competent fresh hands and ideas that the new investment world requires. Government needs funds, in fact cheaper funds to execute long-term projects. The investment Company should bring ideas to government on how to raise cheap funds on the capital market Investment Company should also get involved in educating the people in issues relating to purchase of shares. The people should be sensitized as this is now lacking.

For now Gombe is moving in the right direction. The hue and cry of dissenting voices may be as a result of their failure to reach and plunder government treasury. Thank God, Goje has now put in place infrastructures and other facilities that Gombe people were only hoping for a few years back. The foundation has now been laid in all spheres of life. It is now the responsibility of the people to ensure support for the continuation of this great effort into the future. Gombe and its great people have now learnt the realities of history. It is now for them to reflect into the greatness of their tomorrow.

Jinguo writes from Abuja.



YOUR LETTERS

Re: Northern Piece Conference

Your back page columns have always made interesting reading, with contributors therein expressing their views in a robust manner characteristic of the newspaper itself. Although views expressed on this page are only the opinion of the writers concerned in contrast to the editorial, which espouses the stand of the newspapers itself on any particular issue, they nevertheless, are to be taken seriously. Your Friday columnist, Adamu Adamu like your other back page columnists, is an engaging and fine writer.

However, I am afraid that in the December, 17, edition he strayed off, shooting from the hip with his unwarranted criticism of the analytical paper Governor Abdullahi Adamu presented at the Northern Peace Conference convened by the Northern Governors Forum.

The writer was miffed that Governor Adamu attacked the ACF. Nothing can be further from the truth. The governor only pointed out as the writer correctly quoted, that the ACF's decision to become fully political one year after its formation and to define a political agenda for the north, including who its candidate for national leadership should be, created a crisis of focus for it. And then he added: "However, we must admit that the founding fathers all of whom are men of timbre and caliber were motivated by a genuine desire to unite the north and strengthen its voice in national affairs. The forum has created a counter weight to Afenifere and Obanewa. I congratulate the forum and its leaders".

Adamu the writer said that Dr. Adamu attempted to "heap gratuitous insult on the north with his defence of Obasanjo. Far be it from Governor Adamu a gentleman to insult anyone no matter his/her standing in life, not least his own people, northerners whom he holds in high esteem. The Northern Peace Conference was not a platform for Alhaji Adamu to undertake a full assessment of the Obasanjo administration and he did not do that. What he did was to review a small part of the current democratic dispensation vis a vis our political history and where the nation is coming from.

Dr. Adamu is not under any illusion that the north is having a rosy time under the present dispensation. He believes that the north is still marginalized and although he maintains that everybody and every zone has a constitutional right to aspire to the presidency of our great nation in 2007, he nevertheless, believes that the north should produce the next president in the interest of even development of the country's human resources and even development of the nation itself. However, Governor Adamu explained that "power shift is not an end in itself." The north has to strategise and bargain and ensure that it gets its fair share from its political support for whoever seeks to lead the country".

Dr. Adamu is zealously devoted and committed to his "stewardship of Nasarawa State" more than any other thing. It is a job to which he has thrown in his entire weight, working round the clock, contrary to the writer's insinuations. As for proffering solutions, Alhaji Adamu's treatise contained a list of core areas the north should tackle for rapid progress.

Victoria N. Akano
Government House, Lafia.

Nigeria's version of tsunami

Just as the Pacific and Indian oceans are noted for tsunami tragedies at fifty years intervals, so are the Nigerian democracies at different times, noted for autocratic tidal waves, that wash away democratic values, particularly under militarily mid-wived democracies, as witnessed during the aborted 3rd Republic under General Ibrahim Babangida and presently being witnessed, even in amazing proportions, under the presidency of a retired but apparently not tired Army General, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

Prophetically, the Late Sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, lamented in 1983 after the landslide rigging of that year's election by the then ruling party, National Party* of Nigeria (NPN), that "the present generation of Nigerians and generations yet unborn may not witness democracy again", arguably in its true sense.

Nearly Twenty-two (22) years after, have Nigerians witnessed democracy in the true sense as it is, in some other countries of the world like United States of America (USA), Canada, Britain etc, where democratic values and principles, like constitutional due process rule of law, party discipline and supremacy are sacrosanct? Or in the Lincolnian connotation, where the government installed, is actually of the people, for the people and by the people through purity and sanctity of electoral process? S.

Nigerians have indeed not witnessed democracy in its true sense, from Babangida's regimented democracy that culminated in an annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election, to Abacha's five fingers of a leprous hand democracy in 1997/98, and down to Obasanjo's messianic

democracy, where a supposedly elected governor of a state was abducted for several hours in year 2003 by political renegades in connivance with the police High Command, and even where the national Chairman of the ruling Party (Adu Ogbah), was railroaded into writing and signing a post dated resignation letter in response to the seemingly irresistible tidal waves of the tsunami democracy.

Infact, apart from landslide to earthquake election riggines, Nigeria's "tsunami" democracy has advanced from level of party politics, to a level of cabalistic politics, where party discipline and supremacy as demonstrated, during the first and second republics, are now relegated to the background while dictatorial antics of a powerful cabal within the party are elevated to high heavens.

The current crisis ravaging the much trumpeted largest political party in Africa (PDP), as typical example of dynamics of politics with no regard for party supremacy. Imagine a president supposedly elected on the platform of a political party, rising above the supremacy of the party in matters that are not governmental but exclusively within the ambit of party affairs?

Under normal circumstances and infact in an ideal democracy, Adu Ogbah's resignation as PDP National Chairman was supposed to have taken place at the National working Committee (NWC) or National Executive Committee (NEC) level of the party, not at the instance and perhaps, at the presence of a powerful cabal within the party. Aside the relegation of

party discipline and supremacy to the background in clearly and exclusively party related matters, Nigeria's tsunami democracies have made nonsense of sanctity of electoral process and negated the sacrosanct principles of true federalism as practised in other federations in many ways.

For example and particularly in the present dispensation, electoral tidal waves, triggered by parlous electoral systems swept away opposition parties from the democratic landscape, even in their strongholds during the 2003 general elections. Whereas democracy without credible opposition is no democracy as it is, presently in Nigeria.

The tidal waves of our tsunami democracy, have also washed off some of the sacrosanct principles of true federalism, particularly the principle of fiscal federalism that has been seriously negated over the years, and which invariably makes the centre (Federal governments), an octopus, while the co-ordinate units (states governments), are reduced to mere appendages in the federation.

Imagine the centre taking a whopping 52 per cents of revenue allocation from the federation account on monthly basis, leaving the 36 States and 774 local governments to grapple with the remaining 48 per cents? What type of democratic federation is ours, where enormous resources are concentrated at the centre,

leaving the federating units to wallow in pathetic underdevelopment and chronic poverty?

Diagnostically, democracy or no democracy, Nigeria's problem is systemic. Hence, she needs Systemic Surgical Operation (SSO) that can be performed in a credible and not a rubber-stamped parliament.

Anyway, the federal government has put machinery in motion for a political Reforms conference, where 400 delegates are expected to converge in few months time, and critically dissect the nation's political system with a view to making the necessary reforms.

However, the National dialogue or political reforms conference or whatever name it is called, has a burden of sincerity to battle with, as a result of policy shortcomings of Mr. President, who was hitherto known to be a strong antagonist of convocation of a National conference in whatever guise, before he suddenly changed to a protagonist of a national confab.

Perhaps, like the Biblical Saul the Chief persecutor who, later transformed to Paul, the chief defender, president Olusegun Obasanjo after benefiting immensely from the 4th republic tsunami democracy, brought about by system dysfunction, may in all honesty, without engage in reforms.

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



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Trust International

Malaysia to hold Islamic summit

Malaysia, responding to a call by Saudi Arabia, has agreed to organise a summit for Muslim leaders. Malaysian local press reported yesterday that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, chairman of the 57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said he would despatch his foreign minister to Riyadh to discuss the plan.

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz urged Kuala Lumpur on Friday to organise a summit "so that we can overcome, with our faith in God... the state of dismemberment and fragmentation" among Muslims.

The leaders' conference should be preceded by meetings among "the [Islamic] nation's thinkers and scholars... to outline visions of the nation's future and thus assist the gathering of the leaders, which I hope will be held here, in this pure land", he said.

The leaders would "search for common ground and strengthen the bonds" among Muslims, the Saudi prince said.

Malaysia's prime minister, who was in Paris for a conference on biodiversity, said the preliminary meeting would be held soon to identify the scope and topics for discussion at the summit.

"We do not want the summit to be without focus and engage in discussions aimlessly without any fruitful conclusion. We want to see implementation of resolutions adopted," he said.

Asked whether the summit was being called following US President George Bush's refusal to rule out the possibility of an attack on Iran, Abdullah said: "Let us talk about our concerns first. Otherwise, we will be confused. If we are weak, others will threaten us."

He said the summit would touch on political issues and Islamic ideology among other matters. Malaysia's official Bernama news agency reported.



Saudi crown prince Abdullah

'No deadline for troop withdrawal in Iraq'

Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said yesterday it was "futile" to set a timetable now for the withdrawal of U.S. and other foreign troops from Iraq and that the country must first build up its security forces to confront the insurgents.

"Others spoke about the immediate withdrawal or setting a timetable for the withdrawal of multinational forces," Allawi told reporters. "I will not deal with the security matter under political pretexts and exaggerations that do not serve Iraq and its

people."

Allawi, who is running for the National Assembly in Sunday's national elections, promised to "build a strong Iraqi security force" that will be able to take responsibility for protecting the people.

"I will not set final dates" for the withdrawal of international forces "because setting final dates will be futile and dangerous," Allawi said.

There has been speculation that the new Iraqi government to be chosen after the weekend elections might ask the Americans to begin negotiations for their departure from the country — as demanded by Sunni Arab insurgents as well as members of the Sunni clergy.

Allawi said the weekend elections would be the first step toward building an Iraq capable of functioning without the presence of foreign troops.

"Large parts of our country have good security and many of our forces are taking more responsibilities in the provinces," he said. "They are getting ready to take responsibility from multinational forces soon" in those areas.

He said that the Iraqis would be capable of taking control of Baghdad and major cities "when we reach a decisive point of a well-trained force."

"By reaching this point we will be able to start an essential decrease of multinational forces presence," he said. "At this point Iraqi forces will command security around the country."

He said the final step would be achieved when "we become confident of the effectiveness of Iraqi security forces and their capability to destroy terrorists' bases in the country."

But he gave no indication when that point could be reached.

Meanwhile, gunmen assassinated an Iraqi judge and killed his bodyguard yesterday as he was heading to work in eastern Baghdad, a police official said.

The judge was identified as Qais Hashim Shameri. His driver was also wounded in the shooting. The judge's car was riddled with bullets and blood stained the pavement.

Insurgents routinely target Iraqi government and police officials. Earlier this month, gunmen killed the governor of Baghdad province and the capital's deputy police chief.

In other developments, an American hostage pleaded for his life with a rifle pointed at his head in a video released Tuesday while 11 Iraqi police died in fierce clashes on a day that the U.S. military said six American soldiers had died.

Palestine forces to complete deployment

Palestinian forces will take up positions in the southern Gaza Strip by midweek, completing their deployment across the coastal territory in another step toward ending more than four years of conflict with Israel, a Palestinian Cabinet minister said yesterday.

Israeli and Palestinian generals were to meet later yesterday to complete the deployment plan, said the minister, Saeb Erekat. Once the plan is approved, officers will take up positions in southern Gaza within 24 hours, he said.

The deployment is accompanied by a promise by militants to Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to halt attacks on Israel, provided the Israeli military suspends operations, including arrest raids and targeted killings of wanted men. Israel has refused to give such a guarantee, but has said it will respond to calm with calm.

Leaders of the Islamic militant group Hamas were to hold a news conference in Gaza City later Tuesday. A senior Hamas leader in the West Bank has said the group has agreed to suspend attacks for 30 days, to test Israel's response, while other Hamas members emphasized that a truce deal is not yet complete.

Over the weekend, some 3,000 Palestinian police deployed in the northern half of Gaza, mainly along the border fence with Israel, to prevent rocket attacks by Palestinian militants on Israeli communities. No rockets or mortars have hit Israeli communities since last week.

Erekat said he has been in

touch by phone with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's aides to prepare for a future summit between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders. He said contacts with Israel are going well, but that the two sides have not yet begun to discuss the content of a summit.

The Palestinians want to reach agreement before the summit on key issues, such as the release of prisoners and Israeli troop redeployment in the West Bank.

In other developments, Israel's vice premier, Shimon Peres, is pushing to get a cargo train running from Gaza to Israel's Ashdod port after Israel withdraws from the coastal strip this summer, a Peres aide said yesterday.

The 12 1/2-mile train line would provide a lifeline for the isolated coastal strip, said the aide, Yoram Dori. Some 1.3 million Palestinians live in Gaza, which is plagued by poverty and high unemployment. Construction of a Gaza City port was suspended during more than four years of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

Groups clash in Lebanon refugee camp

At least two people, including a child, have been wounded in clashes between rival groups in Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp.

According to witnesses and Palestinian security sources, fighters from late Palestinian President Yasir Arafat's Fatah faction traded fire with supporters of an Islamist group that has often feuded with Fatah in the camp and relatives of a member of that group.

A Palestinian child and a man in a part of the camp away from the scene of the fighting were injured by stray fire, Palestinian security and medical sources said on Sunday.

The fighting was the most recent in a long history of skirmishes between Islamist factions and mainstream Palestinian groups led by Fatah that have effective control of the camp, which Lebanese forces do not enter.

The Ain al-Hiwa camp near the southern port city of Sidon is the largest of a dozen in Lebanon where about 350,000 Palestinians are registered among the refugees displaced after the creation of Israel in 1948.

The camp is a sensitive issue in Lebanon where the authorities fear that the Palestinian refugees could threaten the delicate sectarian balance of power in the country.

Group slams Iraqis for jail abuse

Interim Iraqi authorities routinely torture prisoners, a leading human rights group that has cited dozens of abuse cases said.

The US-based group Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Monday that prisoners have been beaten with cables and hose pipes, and suffered electric shocks to their earlobes and genitals.

Some have been starved of food and water and crammed into standing-room only cells, HRW said.

"The people of Iraq were promised something better than this after the government of Saddam Hussein fell," said Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of the group's Middle East and North Africa division.

"The Iraqi interim government is not keeping its promises to honour and respect basic human rights. Sadly, the Iraqi people continue to suffer from a government that acts with impunity in its treatment of detainees."

HRW said it interviewed 90 Iraqi prisoners between July and October last year, just after the government of interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi assumed power from the US-led forces which ousted Saddam Hussein.

Seventy-two of the 90 said they had been tortured or mistreated.

"Detainees report kicking, slapping and punching, prolonged suspension from the wrists with the hands tied behind the back, electric shocks to sensitive parts of the body... and being kept blindfolded and/or handcuffed continuously for several days," the group said in a report.

"In several cases, the detainees suffered what may be permanent physical disability."

The report also said Iraq's intelligence service had violated the rights of political opponents.

While the HRW report looked solely at Iraqi institutions and did not address torture of prisoners by US soldiers, it said international police advisers, mostly Americans, had turned a blind eye to Iraqi abuse.

Pakistan hands over 'bombing suspect' to US

Pakistan has handed over to the United States a key suspect in the bombings of two US embassies in East Africa in 1998, Pakistani officials said.

Tanzanian Ahmed Khalifan Ghailani, an alleged al-Qaeda militant who had a \$5m American bounty on his head, was arrested last July.

It is not clear when he was handed over to the US or where he is now held.

Pakistan has arrested hundreds of al-Qaeda suspects since joining the US-led war on terror.

Pakistani intelligence officials speaking on condition of anonymity have given different accounts of exactly when Mr. Ghailani was handed over to the US.

"Ghailani has been handed over to US custody because he wasn't wanted in any crime over here," one official told the AFP news agency.

When asked where Ghailani was now being held another official told the Associated

Press agency: "We have no idea, and as a matter of fact we don't ask such questions."

Mr. Ghailani has been indicted in the US over the 1998 bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

More than 200 people were killed in the two explosions, including 12 American citizens. Most of the victims were Kenyans and Tanzanians.

Mr. Ghailani is still on the FBI's list of 22 "most wanted terrorists".

He was held in July in the central Pakistani town of Gujrat. Several other people were arrested, including his Uzbek wife and two South African nationals, according to Pakistani officials at the time.

His arrest was hailed as the most significant strike against al-Qaeda in Pakistan after the arrest of the alleged mastermind of the 11 September 2001 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, in 2002.

Trust International

Swazis begin anti-monarch strike

Swaziland's main trade union has begun a two-day general strike to press for democratic reforms. Union leader Jan Sithole told the BBC that roadblocks mounted by the security forces had stopped people from joining the protests in the capital, Mbabane.

The unions said a draft constitution being debated by parliament entrenches the power of the monarchy.

Swaziland is Africa's last remaining absolute monarchy and political parties are banned.

King Mswati III, 36, is often criticised for having 11 wives and his lavish spending, while most Swazis live in poverty and more than 30% are HIV positive.

The police have given permission for the demonstrations but they fear an outbreak of looting.

According to the BBC's correspondent in Mbabane, the capital resembled a military zone with water tankers and armed vehicles patrolling the city.

Buses carrying workers into the city centre are being thoroughly searched and the drivers must have permits before being allowed to proceed.

Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions leader Jan Sithole told the BBC he expected not less than 20,000 workers to attend the protest, but BBC reporter said it is not

likely to be more than 5,000, as teachers and civil servants are not participating.

Although most Swazi support the strike's sentiments, they feel striking is no longer an effective way of mounting pressure on the government, favouring blocking the border with neighbouring South Africa instead, he said.

The government said that most Swazis prefer a tradi-

tional form of government. But Mr Sithole said the new constitution should guarantee the separation of powers between various branches of government.

"We would ensure that we entrench the institution of the monarch into the constitution so that we have a constitutional monarch," he told the BBC's Network Africa programme.

The union was also fighting for women's rights and more respect for human rights in general, he said.

He hoped the king would now not give the new constitution his ascent and would remember his vow to be ruled by his subjects.

"He will be put to the test to listen to his people because we are saying this constitutional process has been flawed."

Sudan rebel leaders endorse peace deal

An agreement to end Africa's longest-running civil war won unanimous endorsement Monday from the leaders of Sudan's main southern rebel movement, paving the way for a new constitution and a power-sharing government.

The approval by the 224-seat National Liberation Council, the legislative body of the Sudan People's Liberation Army, came after a two-day meeting to discuss the accord signed by rebel leader John Garang and Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha on Jan. 9 in neighboring Kenya.

Members asked questions about security arrangements, the division of wealth between Sudan's government-

dominated north and rebel strongholds in the south, and the structure of the planned new government, but proposed no amendments.

Sudan's national Parliament also must sign off on the deal. Deliberations in the capital, Khartoum, begin Saturday.

Once ratified, the accord calls for the drafting of a new constitution and formation of a government in which insurgents will receive 30 percent of seats. In six years, southern states will have an opportunity to vote on secession.

UN and US officials hope the deal will help end Sudan's other conflicts—a 23-month rebellion in the western Darfur region and a low-intensity insurgency in the eastern Red Sea Hills.

Algerians protest fuel price hike

A new wave of demonstrations against the government's plan to increase fuel prices turned violent over the weekend in several Algerian regions, according to Algerian newspapers.

Demonstrators blocked roads, sacked public buildings and overturned vehicles in the Bouira region, south-east of the capital, Algiers, the reports said.

In the western Tiaret region and in Sidi Annamar in the east, hundreds of people blocked highways to protest against higher transport

prices caused by the increase in fuel costs.

The protest movements began on Saturday and continued into Sunday, causing security forces to intervene, newspapers said. Dozens of people were questioned.

Riots also broke out in the western Maghnia region near the Moroccan border, as demonstrators built and set fire to roadblocks to protest at deteriorating economic conditions.

Butane gas and fuel oil are the only available sources of energy in Algeria's remote mountain regions and high

plateaus.

The government's decision to raise the price of a litre from 170 to 200 dinars (1.7 to 2.0 euros) in the middle of winter goes against a recommendation from the national parliament.

This is the second wave of major protests against the fuel increase. Last week protesters took to the streets in the southern regions of Jifra and Kabylie.

In 2001 hostility to the government erupted into bloody unrest in Kabylie, claiming at least 100 lives.

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Kaduna	4, Yakubu Gowon Way, Kaduna
Abuja	Plot 785, Ademole Adetokunbo Crescent, White 11, Abuja
Kano	2, Yalawa Road, Opp. Mallam Kato Sq, Kano
P/Harcourt	26/28 Oona Rd, GRA Phase II P/Harcourt
Ibadan	National Bank Building, Agodi Secretariat, Ibadan
Enugu	Plot 6, Ebeano Housing Estate, Independence Layout, Enugu

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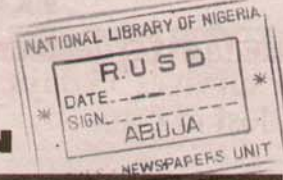
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APPRECIATION



40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS GRADUATION OF STUDENT PILOTS COURSE 22 AND LAUNCHING OF NCAT AT FORTY

The Board of Governors, the Rector/Chief Executive, Management, Staff and Students of the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology, Zaria, wish to express their sincere appreciation to His Excellency, the President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR, His Excellency, the Governor of Kaduna State, Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi, all other State Governors and their representatives, Distinguished Senators and Honourable members of the House of Representatives for honouring our invitation.

Our sincere thanks also go to His Excellency, Dr. Gen. Yakubu Gowon GCFR, former Head of State, for honouring us with his presence as chairman of the occasion.

His Royal Highness, the Emir of Zazzau, Alhaji (Dr) Shehu Idris LLD, also deserves our sincere appreciation. Your Royal presence at the occasion further confirmed the keen interest you have always had in the progress and development of our great institution.

Many thanks to His Royal Highness, the Mai of Kaltungo, Gombe State for his royal presence and moral support and proving that he is a dedicated alumnus of NCAT.

We are particularly appreciative of the leadership of the Hon. Minister of Aviation, Mallam Isa Yuguda for his unflinching support for the College, and without whose assistance the occasion would not have been possible.

Our appreciation also goes to the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Aviation, Heads and Directors of sister parastatals, other Directors in the Federal Ministry of Aviation, Airline Operators, Our Insurers, Stakeholders, Alumni of the College, Contractors and Consultants to the College for their moral and financial support.

Chief Gabriel Igbinedion, Chief Launcher of our Book, NCAT at 40, Capt Idris Wada, AVM Faloyin, Chief Executives of Companies, VC Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Director General NITT, other Chief Executives of institutions in Zaria and others too numerous to mention.

We wish to also register our unreserved appreciation to Gentlemen of the press and Security Agencies.

As we move to consolidate on our achievements, we still count on your support.

Once more we thank you all.

Mongaring Y. Musa, PhD
Registrar

Trust International

Odd World

Man survives 35 days lost in Cave

A Frenchman lost in a labyrinth of disused mushroom caves said he had survived 35 days by eating rotten wood and clay, after being rescued only thanks to a teachers' strike.

Jean-Luc Josuat-Verges, 48, told French newspapers he had gone to the deserted caves at Madiran in the Pyrenees in December seeking isolation during a spell of depression which had left him considering suicide.

While wandering through the cave network his flashlight stopped working, and he was unable to find his way out.

His abandoned car was found 35 days later by three children who were not at school because their teachers were on strike. The children alerted police who rescued Josuat-Verges from the caves. French media said he had lost 40 pounds and was "weak."

Dumb robber calls victim for date

Police said a man involved in the recent robbery of a Domino's Pizza delivery woman would be a good candidate for "World's Dumbest Criminal."

Police said that after two men robbed the woman, one of them called the victim on his cell phone to apologise — and to ask her out on a date.

The victim, 18, declined the request, instead giving the cell phone number to police, who arrested Brent Brown, 25, on Thursday.

Police also arrested Andre Moore, 18, and were looking for a 16-year-old linked to the crime.

Officers searched a residence and found the pizza boxes in the trash can with the original receipt still attached.

Brown and Moore were charged with second-degree robbery.

Policemen undress to battle prostitution

Some suspects in prostitution investigations are confronting naked justice. A prosecutor said police are now allowed to undress in an effort to persuade suspected prostitutes to negotiate sex acts.

During a four-month sting operation that ended with 56 arrests in November, some undercover vice officers dropped their covers altogether.

"Someone had to do something to shut these places down," said Harris County Assistant District Attorney Ted Wilson. "It was just so widespread. It had almost gotten in your face."

Wilson said Police Chief Harold Hurtt has changed a longstanding, unwritten department policy to allow undercover vice officers to disrobe in such cases.

But Hurtt and other Houston police officials declined to discuss the new policy.

"I'm not going to comment about the strategies and tactics that we use," said Hurtt last week.

The Houston Police Department has stepped up efforts to crack down on the local "spa scene." Besides the new policy, authorities are using organized-crime charges to prosecute owners and operators of prostitution businesses.

Man fakes chest pains to avoid taxi fare

A 54-year-old homeless man who routinely complained of fake chest pains to avoid paying the tab for restaurant meals may have gotten his just desserts.

A judge sentenced Elias I. Elias on Friday to 90 days in jail after he pleaded guilty to theft of services.

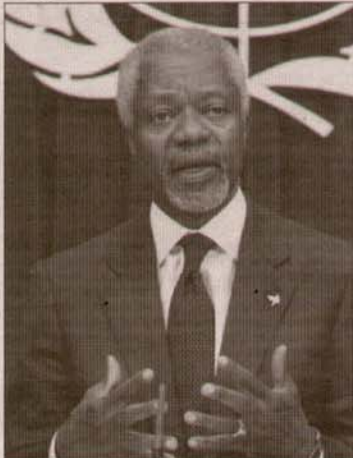
The sentence followed the recommendation of District Attorney Paul Cavanaugh, who said the Aug. 5 incident at the Townhouse Restaurant marked the 13th time that Elias tried to skip out on the check by pretending he had trouble breathing and was having a heart attack.

"He has 18 convictions just since 2003," the year Elias moved to Maine from California, and has been jailed numerous times, Cavanaugh said.

Authorities said Elias would order dinner and drinks, eat and enjoy, then fake his need for medical assistance when the check arrived. He would be taken to a local hospital but usually left before police arrived.

Elias' court-appointed attorney, Jeffrey Davidson, told the judge that the homeless and unemployed man just wanted to eat a restaurant meal "like anybody else."

"Even if he didn't have dignity, he wanted to feel like he did," Davidson said.



Kofi Annan

World must learn from Holocaust, says Annan

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has urged the world to make sure evils such as those perpetrated in the Holocaust are never repeated.

"We rightly say, 'Never again'. But action is much harder," he told the UN.

The General Assembly gathered to mark the approaching 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in a special session.

Mr. Annan said the United Nations, which was founded shortly after the end of World War II, must do everything in its power to prevent the scale of the slaughter undertaken by Nazi Germany.

"Two thirds of all Europe's Jews, including 1.5 million children, were murdered. An entire civilisation, which had contributed far beyond its numbers to the cultural and intellectual riches of Europe and the world, was uprooted,

destroyed, laid waste," Mr. Annan said.

"Truly it has been said: 'all that is needed for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing.'"

He noted that Roma (Gypsies), Poles and other Slavs, Soviet prisoners of war, and mentally and physically disabled people "were likewise massacred in cold blood."

"Groups as disparate as Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals, as well as political opponents and many writers and artists, were treated with appalling brutality," he said.

But Mr. Annan admitted that taking action against genocide was much more difficult than repeating rhetoric.

"The world has, to its shame, failed more than once to prevent or halt genocide — for instance in Cambodia, in Rwanda, and in the former Yugoslavia," he said.

'US committed to Iran diplomacy'

President George W. Bush is committed to a diplomatic approach to Iran, UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has said after talks in the US.

Speculation the US is planning to attack Iran has grown amid concerns the Iranians are building nuclear weapons.

But speaking after talks with Condoleezza Rice — Mr Bush's nominee as new US secretary of state — Mr Straw sought to allay fears of an attack.

He said the issue of the "military option" in Iran had not been raised.

Vice President Dick Cheney has said Iran tops the US list of "trouble spots".

But at Monday's talks, he backed the diplomatic approach to Iran, Mr Straw said.

Indonesia quake toll rises again

Indonesia has again raised its estimate of the number of people killed by December's earthquake and tsunami.

Health Minister Fadilah Supari said more than 220,000 people died or are missing, bringing the total killed throughout the region to 280,000.

A month after the disaster, relief workers in Aceh province are still pulling corpses from the wreckage.

But daily life is slowly returning, and the province's schools were reportedly set to reopen today.

"One of the best things you can do for children is to establish a sense of normalcy and routine," Save The Children spokeswoman Eileen Burke told Reuters news agency.

Dr. Supari told the BBC that between 95,000 and 100,000 bodies had now

been found and buried in Aceh and northern Sumatra.

But she added that another 133,000 people were still missing, presumed dead.

The new Indonesian figures represent a rise of more than 50,000 from previous estimates of the number of people who perished in the disaster.

The BBC's correspondent in Jakarta, said that many bodies will never be found and that calculating the number of dead has become a matter of bureaucracy rather than recovery.

Collecting bodies is likely to take another four weeks, according to officials.

Indonesia's government has said it wants to dispel concerns about corrupt officials taking advantage of the aid effort, by regularly announcing the amount of money it receives in foreign donations, and where the funds are being spent.

"We will announce every month, on the 26th, the money we receive," Co-ordinating Minister for Welfare Alwi Shihab told the Associated Press news agency.

Indonesia is known as one of the world's most corrupt countries, and small-scale cases of soldiers and government officials "charging" to escort aid convoys have already been reported in Aceh.

Stampede at Hindu procession claims 300

Thousands of Hindus panicked during a religious procession in western India yesterday, triggering a stampede that killed at least 300 people, a local official said. Many more people were injured.

Accounts differed as to what caused the stampede, which happened near the village of Wai, some 150 miles south of Bombay, in Satara district.

Sharad Jadhav, Satara's second-highest official, said the stampede was caused by overcrowding, but police said it was triggered by a fire.

"A fire caused by a short circuit in a makeshift shop near the temple created panic among the pilgrims. Some tried to flee the area, starting the stampede," said K.K. Pathak, the inspector-general of police in the region. The situation grew worse when a narrow path leading to the temple became jammed with pilgrims.

Jadhav said he'd been told by officials at the scene that 300 people were killed.

More than 300,000 people are reported to have gathered for the Hindu festival, said A.D. Ingle, deputy superintendent of police in the area.

Hindus congregate every year at the hilltop temple of the Hindu goddess Mandira Devi on a full moon night, which fell on Tuesday this year. The devotees had started arriving in the area Monday.

Business Trust

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air

Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja	06:50
Abuja - Maid.	17:00

Lagos - Yola

Abuja - Yola	1:00 p.m.
Yola - Abuja	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.

Chanchari Airlines

Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.

Kaduna - Lagos

P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.

Abuja - Kaduna

Kaduna - Abuja	2:30p.m.
	12:30p.m.

IRS Airlines

CBQ - Abuja	8:00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.

MM - Abuja

	3:45p.m.
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Abuja - CBQ

	5:15p.m.
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Kano - Abuja

	1:15p.m.
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Abuja - Kano

	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.

EAS Airlines

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

Abuja - Lagos

	10:15a.m.
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Lagos - Jos

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

Dasab Airlines

Auja - Lagos	8:30 a.m.
Lagos - PHC	10:30 a.m.
PHC - Lagos	12:30 a.m.
Lagos - Kano	2:30 p.m.
Kano - Lagos	4:30 p.m.
Lagos - Abuja	6:30p.m.

ADC Airline

Lagos - Abuja	7:15 a.m.
	12:45 p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55 a.m.
Lagos - Calabar	11:15 a.m.
Calabar - Lagos	7:20 a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:45 a.m.
Lagos - Sokoto	8:55 a.m.
Sokoto - Lagos	11:55 a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.



Gov Donald Duke

STB boosts Tinapa with N5bn

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Mordi stated that the bank's involvement in the project is demonstration of belief and interest in the growth of country.

"STB as a virile financial institution will continue to support developmental initiatives geared towards overall growth of the economy" he said.

STB Plc currently into merger plans with United Bank for Africa (UBA) is a leading new generation bank.

The Tinapa Project is expected to transform the industrial and leisure platforms in Cross River state in particular, and the country at large. It is also expected to become a trade hub that will provide international standard wholesale emporiums, integrated shopping complexes.

The total value of the project funded through the Public Private Partnership initiative is estimated to be in excess of N26 billion. Project Tinapa is the brainchild of the Cross River State and conceived as a bridge connecting business and leisure.

It is located within the Calabar Free Trade Zone, allowing the development to capitalize on the manufacturing wholesale, retail and import/export opportunities present at the CFTZ.

It is located within the Calabar Free Trade Zone, allowing the development to capitalize on the manufacturing wholesale, retail and import/export opportunities present at the CFTZ.

BATN wins Customs award

British American Tobacco Nigeria (BATN) has been conferred with the Comptroller General of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) award of excellence. The Award was presented to the company at the annual Comptroller General of Customs Conference which was held recently in Calabar, Cross River state.

A statement signed by Aliyu Iliyasu Ma'aji, press relations and events manager said the award was in recognition of BATN's co-operation and support to the NCS, stressing that in the citation read at the presentation ceremony, the Customs Service acknowledged that since BATNigeria commenced operations in 2001, the company "has recorded commendable progress in the areas of prompt Excise Duty payment and compliance with various Head-

quarters directives on Excise Factory Operations."

The Customs further stressed that "BAT's core values of Vision, Partnership and Responsibility is partly manifested through close collaboration with Government Regulatory Agencies to enforce implementation of fiscal policies, the statement added."

Flora Okereke, Legal Director, BAT Nigeria, received the award on behalf of the company. In her reaction, she said it was delightful that the Nigerian Customs accorded such recognition to BATN.

"I recall three years ago, when we first broached the idea of collaborating with the Nigerian Customs for the enforcement of legal penalties against perpetrators of illegal import, sceptics said we will never make it. But just look at the story now, it has turned out to be a fruitful partnership for both parties", she said.

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...hosts journalists, pledges closer collaboration

More than 50 senior-media executives, including editors-in-Chief, publishers, and representatives of media related organisations attended the 2005 breakfast session hosted by British American Tobacco Nigeria at the Lagos Sheraton Hotel & Towers.

A statement signed by Aliyu Ma'aji said present at the occasion were editors and senior executives from major national newspapers like *The Guardian, ThisDay, The Punch, Nigerian Tribune, New Nigerian, DBN TV and Africa Independent Television*, among several other media houses. The guests were received at the venue by the company's top team led by its managing director, Richard Hodgson.

Market Indicators

Nigerian Inter-Bank Foreign Exchange (NIFEX) Rates Quoted as of: 24/01/2005

Bid (\$-N=)			
Offer (\$-N=)			
Spot Fixing	132.825 133.125		
Tenor (Days)	Swap Points	Forward	Fixing 30
1.37581	3789134.2008	134.503960	2.7459272521
135.57909	135.877190	4.11034.1196	
136.9353	137.2446180		
8.18998	1883140.9949141	3133	

Nigerian Inter-Bank Offered Rate (NIBOR)

Other Rates	24/01/2005
Quoted as of:	24/01/2005
7 Days	12.4167
30 Days	14.9583
60 Days	15.5000
90 Days	15.7500
180 Days	15.6250
270 Days	0.0000
365 Days	15.5667

Open Market Operations (OMO Auction) held on 19/01/2005

Rates	
Security NTB	
Tenor: 35 DAYS	
Maturity Date	23/02/2005
Total Amount of Bids received	N 13000 Million
Total Amount Sold	N 9600 Million
Range of bid Rates	13.8000% - 14.2500%
Stop Rate	13.95 %
True Yield	14.1386 %
Weighted Average Rate	Nil

Naira official exchange rates as of: 17/01/2005

Currency	Buying	Selling	Central
US DOLLAR	246.4969	248.366	247.43145
POUND STERLING	131.88	132.88	132.38
EURO	172.8156	174.126	173.4708
SWISS FRANC	0	0	0
JAPANESE YEN	1.2932	1.303	1.2981
CFA FRANC	0.2551	0.2651	0.2601
WALIA	200.2045	201.7226	200.96355
SAUDI RIYAL	35.1624	35.429	35.2957

Dutch Auction held on 17/01/2005

Rates	
Total Amount Offered	US\$ 100000000
Total Amount Demanded	US\$ 119280516.19
Total Amount Sold	US\$ 100302661.08
Lowest Successful Bid Rate	N 132.88 / 1 US\$
Highest Successful Bid Rate	N 133.2 / 1 US\$
No. of Successful Applicants	519
No. of Unsuccessful Applicants	111

GTB refutes alleged merger with FBN

In the light of a recent newspaper report about Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB) Plc's purported merger with First Bank of Nigeria (FBN) Plc, GTB said in a statement, on Monday, it has become pertinent to emphasise its focus vis a vis its medium to long term strategic initiatives.

The front-page article published in a national daily on Sunday, reports that both banks held discussions with a view to challenging the purported dominance of the banking industry that may evolve out of the reported merger of two other banks, namely United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc and Standard Trust Bank (STB).

With return on shareholders investment of about 500 per cent over the last four years, the GTB franchise is a solid and reputable one. The bank currently has a balance-sheet size of about N200 billion and its recent activities within the financial services industry have not in any way affected its resolve to continue on its chosen path of becoming a leading light out of Nigeria.

The bank said its currently has over 50 branches with 30 more scheduled to open by December 2005. Another offshore GTB subsidiary is also expected to open before the end of its 2005/2006 financial period.

With N34 billion shareholders funds and a solid institutional reputation that goes beyond our national borders, GTB stressed that it is fit to explore all avenues and options open to it towards the attainment of its core and broad strategic goals.

The bank said further that it continues to parley with several industry players and these interactions are also not in any way limited to the current spate of consolidations.

GTB's recent decision to suspend merger talks with Inland Bank Plc is perhaps the latest issue, which highlight GTB's constant quest to continually seek value for its numerous stakeholders, especially Nigerian investors who have continued to support the phenomenal growth of the 14-year old bank.

The bank said it remains focused on being a responsive corporate citizen alive to its corporate social responsibility agenda, expanding its presence across all geographic locations of the country, supporting its numerous retail, corporate and public sector relationships; growing its pan-African network and pursuing its core strategic intent to further consolidate its leading role in the sector within the next couple of years.

The bank said further that it continues to parley with several industry players and these interactions are also not in any way limited to the current spate of consolidations.

GTB's recent decision to suspend merger talks with Inland Bank Plc is perhaps the latest issue, which highlight GTB's constant quest to continually seek value for its numerous stakeholders, especially Nigerian investors who have continued to support the phenomenal growth of the 14-year old bank.

The bank said it remains focused on being a responsive corporate citizen alive to its corporate social responsibility agenda, expanding its presence across all geographic locations of the country, supporting its numerous retail, corporate and public sector relationships; growing its pan-African network and pursuing its core strategic intent to further consolidate its leading role in the sector within the next couple of years.

Source: MFM4v



FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA

FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE RESTRUCTURING/MODIFICATION OF A SECTION OF THE MURTALA MUHAMMED INT'L. AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING, IKEJA, LAGOS

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria hereby invites tenders for the restructuring of a section of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport Terminal Building, Ikeja, Lagos.

The broad scope of works includes the following:

- ▶ Demolition of non-structural block wall partition including temporary glass/plywood partition
- ▶ Construction of new wall partitions using aluminium profile/glass, aluminum profile/HACO Hard wood.
- ▶ Cleaning, scrubbing of existing terrazzo floor including polishing, shining and making good where necessary
- ▶ Installation of high quality suspended ceiling in the newly refurbished areas and offices
- ▶ Provision of high quality furniture
- ▶ Provision and installation of special airport equipment
- ▶ Refurbishment of indoor bar/coffee shop
- ▶ Refurbishment of a number of electronic weighing scales including their side belts.

Tender documents are to be collected and submitted to the office of **The Secretary, Tenders Board, FAAN Headquarters, Ikeja, Lagos**, from Monday, 24th January, 2005 at 10.00am upon the payment of a non-refundable tender fee of N200,000.00 (Two hundred thousand naira only).

All tenders must be accompanied by the following:

- Evidence of payment of the non-refundable tender fee
- Evidence of company registration with FMW&H Category D and FAAN in Category F
- Company profile and evidence of previous experience on similar construction projects.
- Evidence of company income tax payment in the last three (3) years

The completed tender must be submitted in two (2) sealed envelopes, and marked at the bottom right corner **TENDER RESTRUCTURING OF A SECTION OF MMIA TERMINAL BUILDING, IKEJA, LAGOS** not later than two(2) weeks (7th February 2005) from the date of collection of the tender Document.

The opening shall be made public and all tenderers are invited to attend the opening at 12 noon on the 8th February, 2005 at the FAAN Board room.

Please note that the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria is not bound to accept the lowest tender and shall not give an explanation for the rejection of any tender.

Signed:
Management



FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA

FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE TECHNICAL AUDIT OF PLANT, MACHINERY, EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE MURTALA MUHAMMED INT'L AIRPORT (MMIA), IKEJA, LAGOS.

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria hereby invites proposals from competent registered engineers for consultancy services for the technical audit of plant, machinery, equipment and infrastructure at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) Ikeja, Lagos.

The scope of work includes:

- ▶ Preparation of an Operational/Maintenance Manual for all key engineering facilities and infrastructure of Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Ikeja, Lagos., which will focus on specification; design and documentation of infrastructure maintenance.
- ▶ Technical audit of all plants, machinery and Equipment, showing current status, performance evaluation and operational deficiency and
- ▶ Preparation of packaged customised training programme.

Additional information on the proposal can be obtained from the office of the Director of Engineering Services, FAAN Headquarters, Ikeja, Lagos, from the date of this publication, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of N15,000 (Fifteen thousand naira only).

All completed proposals should be submitted in a sealed envelopes marked: **CONFIDENTIAL, PROPOSAL FOR TECHNICAL AUDIT OF PLANT, MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT AT MMIA, IKEJA, LAGOS** to the same office not later than two weeks from the date of this publication.

All tenders must be accompanied by the following:

- Evidence of payment of non-refundable fee
- Evidence of company registration with the Federal Ministry of Works, Category C and FAAN.

Signed:
Management

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2005

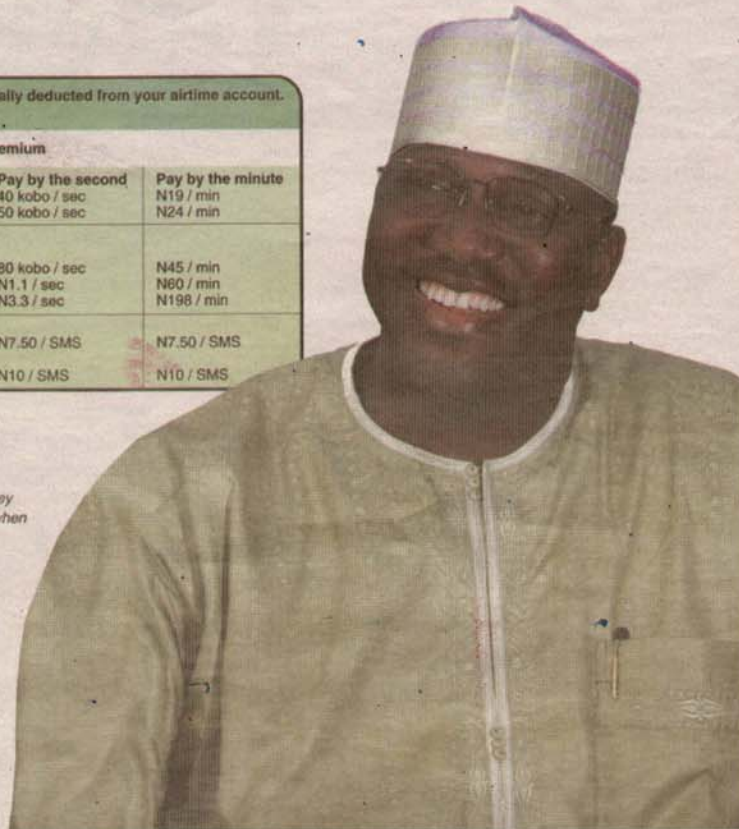
COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(S)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES	TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY			
CITIC PLC	1	1.30	10,188	13,140.40	SYMBOL	VALUE	VALUE	TRADES
Sector Totals					OKTIPUPA	1,602,100.00	1,201,575.00	4
AGRI-FELTER/AGRO-ALLIED					LEVERBROS	1,758,524.00	30,844,568.05	243
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	1	2.83	349	987.67	UIA	1,787,260.00	17,872,600.00	65
OKTIPUPA OIL PALM PLC	4	0.75	1,602,100	1,201,575.00	NB	1,800,974.00	70,140,516.15	456
THE OKOJAI OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	17	16.26	131,766	2,128,811.00	FIRSTBANK	1,834,597.00	44,256,403.73	568
PRESCO PLC	18	11.99	97,530	1,183,028.94	IMB	2,628,176.00	1,721,219.20	45
Sector Totals					URB	2,609,729.00	54,622,253.72	405
COFFINBERE & TYRE					COOPHANK	2,813,141.00	5,129,455.90	36
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC	33	1.96	866,514	1,709,091.02	GUARANTY	8,979,267.00	116,340,765.25	542
R. T. BISCOE PLC	9	7.22	30,800	222,376.00	NAL	11,784,263.00	28,038,759.77	135
Sector Totals								
BANKING								
ACCESS BANK PLC	10	3.42	116,000	396,720.00				
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	12	6.63	191,214	1,267,748.82				
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	1	3.41	28,200	96,162.00				
CHARTERED BANK PLC	2	3.90	4,094	15,966.60				
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC	16	1.86	2,413,141	5,129,455.90				
FIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	1	2.26	18,590	76,776.00				
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	568	24.09	1,834,597	44,256,403.73				
FIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	2	1.30	704,062	907,204.63				
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC	542	12.93	8,979,267	116,340,765.25				
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	1	0.82	4,300	3,690.00				
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC	1	0.63	2,628,176	1,721,219.20				
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	21	1.17	969,290	1,099,109.19				
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	12	7.81	107,820	842,074.20				
LEON BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	1	0.86	79,000	79,000.00				
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC	10	0.99	86,100	85,700.00				
NAL BANK PLC	135	2.43	11,784,263	28,038,759.77				
OCEANIC BANK PLC	5	6.30	25,500	148,050.00				
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	13	1.27	88,992	114,519.84				
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	30	7.41	1,137,437	8,428,400.77				
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	16	1.75	404,683	696,681.10				
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	15	10.00	1,787,260	17,872,600.00				
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC	405	20.40	2,669,729	54,622,253.72				
UNIVERSAL BANK PLC	9	1.01	204,480	211,130.57				
WELLS BANK PLC	3	3.93	268,929	1,060,000.00				
ZENITH BANK PLC	66	15.69	834,496	13,093,242.24				
Sector Totals								
BREWERS								
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC	167	105.00	434,633	45,837,197.68				
NIGERIAN BREWERS PLC	456	37.60	1,879,914	70,658,914.83				
Sector Totals								
BUILDING MATERIALS								
ASHLEA CEMENT PLC	80	23.89	280,332	6,644,336.22				
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC	1	4.30	312	1,341.60				
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	1	8.97	80,600	720,536.00				
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC	32	12.00	535,877	6,450,980.00				
Sector Totals								
CHEMICAL & PAINTS								
BERGER PAINTS PLC	29	5.30	103,774	549,371.93				
CAP PLC	14	6.70	40,500	270,150.00				
D. N. MEYER PLC	4	5.00	4,000	20,000.00				
IPWA PLC	1	0.50	2,000	1,000.00				
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC	2	3.61	180,300	660,990.43				
Sector Totals								
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT								
THOMAS WYAT NIGERIA PLC	1	0.38	1,450	551.00				
Sector Totals								
CONGLOMERATES								
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC	11	1.04	163,718	167,831.80				
C.F. & O NIGERIA PLC	14	6.30	44,368	295,425.35				
CHILLERANS PLC	7	7.71	12,114	93,474.42				
JOHN IROJI PLC	23	1.10	261,358	275,525.90				
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	743	17.64	1,758,524	30,844,568.05				
F. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC	109	13.30	2,066,696	15,902,035.05				
S.C.O.A NIGERIA PLC	6	1.19	2,094	2,485.61				
I.L.C. NIGERIA PLC	27	14.17	65,819	942,290.95				
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC	7	1.18	65,819	78,366.42				
Sector Totals								
CONSTRUCTION								
COSTAIN (N.A.) PLC	1	0.95	10,000	9,500.00				
BELUS BERBER NIGERIA PLC	1	14.44	16,875	243,875.00				
Sector Totals								
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY								
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC	1	0.82	1,000	820.00				
Sector Totals								
FOOD BEVERAGES & TOBACCO								
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	30	25.29	103,348	2,572,051.13				
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	204	58.00	506,271	29,366,467.83				
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	16	16.61	36,800	610,296.00				
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	99	52.30	265,985	14,109,753.95				
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC	112	144.00	349,371	36,652,661.11				
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC	3	15.93	5,599	79,223.45				
Sector Totals								
HEALTH CARE								
CHRISTIEB PLC	1	0.50	1,447,912	723,956.00				
EKOJORDI PLC	1	1.19	1,190	1,426.50				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	21	3.46	267,894	927,377.54				
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	11	6.00	20,840	126,243.20				
NEUMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM PLC	1	1.00	9,345	9,345.00				
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	16	8.96	131,783	1,178,491.07				
Sector Totals								
HOTEL & TOURISM								
TOURIST COMPANY OF NIGERIA PLC	1	4.20	2,500	10,500.00				
Sector Totals								
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS								
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC	7	1.06	223,800	235,828.00				
I.L.C. GASES PLC	12	2.52	15,808	39,919.57				
VITAFORM NIGERIA PLC	16	4.00	95,852	239,408.00				
VONO PRODUCTS PLC	1	1.90	3,068	5,829.20				
Sector Totals								
INSURANCE								
ACTIN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	2	0.60	25,000	15,000.00				
ABO INSURANCE PLC	14	2.15	74,104	155,148.10				
COMMERCE INSURANCE CO. PLC	2	1.29	678,175	941,129.01				
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC	2	0.82	15,677	12,955.14				
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	13	1.95	182,830	347,065.70				
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.93	40,000	46,500.00				
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG) PLC	2	0.82	14,000	11,360.00				
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	1	1.97	10,000	40,145.77				
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	3	1.11	19,700	21,882.10				
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC	6	3.18	48,244	153,415.92				
FIRST ASSURANCE PLC	2	0.84	475	399.00				
LINK INSURANCE PLC	2	1.07	25,000	26,750.00				
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC	2	2.80	30,512	144,014.36				
Sector Totals								
MACHINERY(MARKETING)								
BLACKWOOD HODGE (NIGERIA) PLC	65	1.00	1,000	1,000.00				
Sector Totals								
MANAGED FUNDS								
F & I LEASING PLC	10	1.52	223,000	349,723.37				
Sector Totals								
PACKAGING								
AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC	2	0.89	16,170	14,391.30				
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	2	1.22	18,318	22,591.96				
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC	1	0.60	474,460	284,676.00				
STUDIO PRESS (NIGERIA) PLC	1	1.62	1,016	1,645.92				
Sector Totals								
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)								
AFZELI PLC	16	0.94	811,939	765,779.66				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	15	66.45	1,468,127	97,136,516.58				
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC	7	1.14	35,038	34,575.18				
MORRI OIL NIGERIA PLC	58	177.00	30,309	5,423,950.14				
UNOIL PLC	120	130.00	1,300,000	25,376,200.00				
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC	26	165.60	37,124	6,242,709.01				
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	58	178.51	1,300,000	25,376,200.00				
OANDO PLC	186	98.00	2,000,000	22,800,892.81				
Sector Totals								
PRINTING & PUBLISHING								
DAILY TIMES PLC	1	0.63	36	22.68				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	8	2.22	11,454	25,427.88				
Sector Totals								
REAL ESTATE								
SACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC	23	9.18	298,249	2,721,600.17				
Sector Totals								
TEXTILES								
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC	10	3.04	131,158	397,171.30				
Sector Totals				</				

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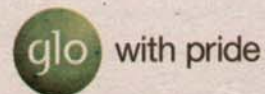


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THE ARTS

Craft committees wanted in states

The Akwa Ibom State Director of Council for Arts and Culture, Elder Obot Akpabio, has advised the National Council for Arts and Culture to establish craft committees in all the 36 states of the federation to facilitate the genuine promotion of the diverse cultures of the Nigerian society.

Along with the committees, he also wants the councils to establish craft centres in all the local government areas as instruments of support for the cultural activities and

**From Edet Ekanem
Correspondent (Uyo)**

programme in their respective states. Elder Akpabio maintained in a chat with *Daily Trust* in his office in Uyo recently that such committees and centres had become necessary to save Nigeria's cultures from extinction or pollution by western norms and values.

The director also expressed the need for all stakeholders in the preservation and promotion of culture to encourage the youth already talented, skilled and genuinely

inclined to culture to sustain the recognition and admiration of the country's culture by foreigners.

He said because of the importance attached to arts and culture Akwa Ibom State had established Millennium Band to encourage musicians for effective performance and for recording purpose which had, according to him, earned the state commendations from the neighbouring countries.

The director rebuked the present generation of Nigerians for adopting foreign style of speech, dress and dance instead of African values and culture.

"I don't like people speaking with me and end the conversation with shaa and shee, I detest girls putting on trousers on our streets. I don't like children watching western films instead of sitting around our elders for folk tales etc, he noted.

Elder Akpabio disclosed that Akwa Ibom State Council of Arts and Culture would come into agreement with state ministry of education and other relevant agencies to encourage the practice of Nigerian culture in public schools.

Elder Akpabio, who is also the special assistance to the state governor on arts and culture, said his council had from time to time offered assistance to various groups which were

inclined to promoting Akwa Ibom culture abroad and promised to work tirelessly towards discovering more talents and skills in the state.

He said the council was planning to encourage art and culture in the

hinterlands by opening up liaison offices in the 31 local government areas of the state.

The director also disclosed that because of the state councils excellence performances in recent times it had won the

award of excellence by the national council of arts and culture.

He called on Nigerians and Akwa Ibom people in particular to eschew habits capable of undermining and destroying indigenous cultures.

Former NFC, NFVCB bosses exchange fire

The former managing director (MD) of Nigeria Film Corporation (NFC) Mr Brenda Shehu has berated the immediate past chief executive of the Nigeria Film and Videos Censors Board Mr. Ademola James for allegedly condemning the NFC and its leadership since inception published recently in a national daily (not *Daily Trust*).

Shehu described the alleged condemnation as not only malicious, but provocative. Mr Brenda alleged that the statement by Mr James at a press-briefing in Kaduna recently contained so many distortions and outright falsification of known facts, which, he said, necessitated him to reply so as to at least set the records straight particularly to the public who, he believed were misinformed.

Mr Brenda, who also addressed a press conference in Kaduna recently, alleged that Mr James policy position on the matters relating to film constituted calculated effort at influencing the direction of the film industry and to undermined the efforts of those who laboured tirelessly at ensuring that the nation got a viable film industry.

Mr Brenda also alleged that Mr James mobilised film makers to boycott the new colour film processing laboratory of the corporation by spreading falsehood about its capabilities, adding that he further undermined efforts at organising film makers into one single body so that

**From Aliyu Haruna
Correspondent (Kaduna)**

they could effectively influence government policies. The former NFC boss said that the corporation never sought to merger with the National Film and Video Censors Board, nor convinced government to merge the boards, pointing out that both NFC and NFVCB had distinct and clear cut functions in the industry.

He also said that the present management of the corporation neither canvassed support for nor consulted any body or organisation about the nationalisation exercise of parastatals in the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation.



Information and National Orientation Minister, Chief Chukwuemeka Chiketa



Governor Victor Attah of Akwa Ibom State.

Group urges Nigerians to read

Attitude Book Club (ABC) has urged Nigerians to cultivate the habit of reading, discussing and reviewing books and write-ups as these could impact positively on the nation's

**From Zakariyya Adaramola
Stringer (Lagos)**

economy.

Speaking in Lagos yesterday, the president of the club, Mr Andy Akhigbe, said everything that might ever affect Nigeria or its citizenry had been dealt with in written form, especially as a work of literature, lamenting however, that Nigerians did not read to find solutions to their problems.

"Issues dealt with in most great books relate to life and to that extent you can enjoy the reading of any book. We urge all well meaning individuals and corporate organisations have present to team up with ABC in unleashing a revolution of unprecedented reading, writing and creative thinking upon this nation," said Akhigbe.

Akhigbe, who was speaking at a dialogue session organised to celebrate Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple

Hibiscus, expressed the need for a conscious effort by Nigerians to relate with books on a more personal note.

"Most people would relate more with books when they are presented from a personal view point than from an informational or purely academic view point. Information communicational about books serves a limited audience and it is the bulk of what we find in literary scholarship and literary criticism," said ABC president.

He revealed that the vision of ABC was to read, discuss and review great books, celebrate life and living through books and engineer a passion for reading.

ABC is a community of professionals from all walks of life committed to the reading and the intellectual conversation of great books in order to foster mutual affection/interaction among its members and other stakeholders.

THE ARTS THE ARTS THE ARTS

Defining art

It is not too difficult to recognize art. Indeed, art is always around us. Our very existence seems pervaded by expressions of art. Oftentimes, our clothes are plainly works of art in themselves. Even cars may be so stylized that there is no mistaking the element of art in them. Furniture and other household items often clearly exhibit their artistic skills of their makers. In essence, we're all familiar with art. However, it is another thing entirely to say precisely what art is.

Aristotle, the renowned Greek philosopher, saw art as imitation of life. While this may loosely hold true for artistic forms such as drama and film, it is not so applicable to abstract art rendered in paintings, sculptures and the like are truly imitations of life. In seeking an understanding of art that would encompass the varying expressions of this very broad discipline of life, it is not only essential to begin at the lowest level, we should also factor in salient elements of art criticism. For this also helps illuminate what art is as against what it is not.

The Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary defines art as "the use of the imagination to express ideas or feelings, particularly in painting, drawing or sculpture." While this is broadly acceptable, it should be compared with the definition offered by California State University, Los Angeles USA, at their website. Cal State sees art as "manufactured forms that primarily involve us in aesthetic aspects of experience." Clearly, defining art is not a one-size-fits-all affair.

Other definitions of art include, "the products of human creativity," and "the creation of beautiful or significant things." The latter, as observed by the eggheads of Cal State, poses a problem of sorts. According to them, "We often use the word 'beautiful' in relation to art. Does something have to be beautiful to be called art? A good question, for as we shall

By Crispin Oduobuk,
Group Literary Editor

see in the next definition offered by Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), Saginaw, Michigan, USA, art doesn't necessarily always have to be beautiful. SVSU defines art as, "Objects or ideas created by humans which tell/slow what we are thinking or feeling. Art may or may not be beautiful. Art may or may not look like something we know (recognize). Art includes painting, sculpture, architecture, music, performance, dance, and acting (drama)."

As the foregoing shows, while certain elements of what constitutes art may be generally agreed upon, art will never be like mathematics where fixed formulae ensure that all parties arrive at the same conclusion.

"One source says art is "a superior skill that you can learn by study and practice and observation." Another defines art as, "The integration and manifestation into a state of being which allows a free flowing creative process using personally unique techniques evolved from the technical processes of a discipline. And yet another: "[Art can be defined as] a selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments. Art is the stylization of the essential or significant aspects of a subject/concept."

The following, garnered from sources far and near, are some definitions of art deemed significantly from what we've already reviewed.

One source says art is "a superior skill that you can learn by study and practice and observation." Another defines art as, "The integration and manifestation into a state of being which allows a free flowing creative process using personally unique techniques evolved from the technical processes of a discipline." Quite a mouthful, not so? Here's another take: Art is "a human endeavor thought to be aesthetic and having meaning beyond simple description. Includes music, dance, sculpture, painting, drawing, stichery, weaving, poetry, writing, wood-working, etc. A medium of expression where the individual

and culture come together."

And yet another: Art can be defined as, "A selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments. Art is the stylization of the essential or significant aspects of a subject/concept. Art requires a theme (or at least a problem to be dealt with in action films)—a unifying idea—to integrate the material elements into a single entity." And another: "Art is the creative process and production applied to expression of culture." And finally (but certainly not the last word on this matter), art is "human expression in sensuous form, often "for its own sake". The word "expression" is very important, in that it implies that the motivation comes from within the artist rather than somewhere else."

Next week, hopefully, we shall venture into definitions of art criticism. Meanwhile, reactions to these definitions are welcome.



A work of art titled 'African Inspirations' by children of Kebball School, Cheshire, UK

What not to say to a writer

As a writer, always have a sideline job you can mention at cocktail parties. At these parties inevitably someone comes up to you and asks what you do for a living. If you say you are a writer, their very next question will be: "What have you published?" If you say, nothing, the person will sniff as if you have developed a bad odor and avoid you for the rest of the party. If you name a book, they will look you up and down and say, "I've never heard of it," and avoid you for the rest of the party.

The friendly guy comes over, puts you on the back and tells you he just heard you are a writer. You know from whom! The friendly guy will tell you he has been thinking of writing a book. You perk up. A potential ally in the isolation of your writing career? You ask how long? The friendly guy laughs. "Oh, I haven't written a word. I figure I could push out a book over the weekend. Writing can't be that

By Jo Ann Yolanda Hernandez

hard to do. The friendly guy leaves and you are blindsided by a young lady dressed in black with blood purple lipstick. She stares at you. You stare back. She stares back. You smile. She stares some more. "I heard you're a writer." Guess from whom? You nod. She squints she is staring so hard. "What about?" You tell her "Life." She closes her eyes, takes a deep breath and whispers, "Awesome."

You slide away while she has her eyes closed and join a group. A loud fellow points at you. "You're the writer." You nod. "What about?" The loud fellow looks at everyone in the group, winks and asks you, "Can you tell me the theme of your book in one sentence?" You open your mouth and he interrupts, "Because if you can't tell me the theme of your 400-page book then you're not really a writer. A Real Writer will be able to shoot out one sentence

that tells what the whole book is about."

The woman next to the loud fellow says, "Like a sound bite." The redheaded woman says, "In the movies they call that the trailer." The loud fellow snaps his fingers, "Just like that," and everyone nods their head. You leave to refresh your drink. The bartender asks if you are having a good time. Always on the lookout for a good plot you say, "I bet you see a lot here." The bartender hums a yes. "Must have tons of stories about things that have happened in places like this." He nods. "Care to share one with me?" He asks, "Why? You a writer?" You beam. "Yes. Does it show?" "Nah. It's always the writers that ask weird questions like that."

Then he leans closer to you, "Man, how do you think up all those plots?" You wave your hand at the crowd. "There's a thousand stories in the naked city." He looks blank. "Look around. All of these people have

something going on in their lives." The bartender snorts, "You're telling me. I get a careful all night. One sob story after the other. Jeze. You'd think they'd have enough of that with their therapists." You leave your drink and the party.

You stop off at home to check on your sainted mother. "Hi, mom." "Where have you been? I smell booze on you." You laugh. "What have you been up to?" You open your mouth. "You still with that computer thing? Writing stories? When are you going to get serious and get a real job? Don't you want to have a real job?" You kiss her on the cheek and tell her you love her.

You head home. Your keyboard waits for you. The hardest and best job in the world and you love it. Well, maybe except for being a parent and a bartender.

Hernandez is a teacher at a local community college in Arizona, USA

THE ARTS THE ARTS THE ARTS

Call for submissions

The Trust papers invite original submissions from all interested individuals in the following art fields: Short fiction, short non-fiction, short plays, poetry, 'texting', wordplay, song lyrics, rap lyrics, essays, reviews, commentaries, fine arts, photography and mixed media.

General rules
Submissions required in this regard are works that fall within a fairly clear designation of 'art' and suitable for a mass circulating newspaper. We're more interested in quality than quantity. If it doesn't sparkle, if it doesn't resonate, if it doesn't breathe, if it's not thought-provoking, it's unlikely we'll use it.

As general interest newspapers, our titles will only publish material that is deemed suitable for the entire family. In essence, this means while we encourage as much creativity and diversity as possible in materials submitted for publication, we will not publish anything that might be considered detrimental to the public good or unfair to any person(s) or ideal(s). Also, we have no interest in publishing indecent work, or aiding 'attack' causes of any sort, regardless of their merits or the lack thereof.

For reasons of copyright violations, we cannot publish fan fiction or indeed any artwork derived from materials that are copyrighted. Though we may accept ingenious derivative work based on works that are in the public domain, what we ideally prefer is to have your all-new original work.

Guidelines for short fiction, short non-fiction and short plays: Whatever you're writing, it's your story—let it be original. Literary? Absurd? Indescribable? Well, it's your brew; serve it while it's hot. Or is it better cold? That's your call. Our angle is: if it's engaging, flows rationally, is self-contained and has minimal errors of lexis and structure, we're interested. Give us characters with life and—where necessary—exhibiting growth and you're in. But keep it under 1,000 words. You may submit accompanying artwork or photographs if available.

Guidelines for poetry, 'texting', wordplay, song lyrics and rap lyrics: It can't all be about love or even Cupid will get sick of it. And it's got to be decent else we'll hit 'Delete'. For poetry, please submit a maximum of 3 at a time, with none exceeding 40 lines. For 'texting' wordplay, send a maximum of 4 with a 160 word limit each. For song and rap lyrics, send a maximum of 2 of no more than 48 lines each. In all cases, the emphasis should be on freshness, uniqueness, striking imagery and 'showing' rather than 'telling'. Freestyle? Rhyming? Haiku, limerick or oral traditional? Whatever you choose is cool so long as you don't recycle Shakespeare or hit us on the head with 'nave' even a professor would not know the meaning of. Again, you may submit accompanying artwork or photographs if available.

Guidelines for essays, reviews and commentaries: The essays we seek are supposed to invite resources for artists, artists and enthusiasts of the arts. Please, bear in mind you're submitting to a newspaper not a university journal meant for exactly twenty seven eggheads—including the editorial team. We'll let you run up to a convenient 1,500 words to be sure to have a very good reason for

going over that figure. Accompanying artwork or photographs are welcome.

Reviews of works of art should begin with a brief description or synopsis of the work being reviewed. In all cases, please illuminate how the work succeeds or fails primarily from the angle of its rationality or lack thereof. Also, evaluate the coherent actualisation of the major character(s), if available or necessary. Finally, your critique should appraise the creative and functional interaction of the structure(s) of the genre used to present the work of art. This means, in written works for instance, explore originality in use of words and the efficacy of same. Please, reviews should not go beyond 1,500 words. As usual, accompanying artwork or photographs are welcome.

Guidelines for fine arts and photography: We seek pictures or scanned images of full-sized art (paintings, sculptures, etc), sketches, cartoons, digital art, photographs and any other artwork that can be visually presented on the pages of a newspaper. Pictures submitted should be imaginative, insightful and should capture some exciting feature like passion, surprise, a display of skill, etc. Please name the work and attach a brief citation.

Guidelines for mixed media: Kindly follow the individual requirements for any two or more art forms you wish to combine. The catch is to avoid tackiness and keep the result viable in newspaper terms.

Mechanics
We prefer typed or computer-generated text. Please, do not send your original copy. We do not return submitted materials. Text should be typed or printed on one side of the paper only with a generous all-round margin. If submitting through electronic means (disks, email, etc), please send text files in .rtf format only. You may send your materials as attachments, but please, only in the required format. Electronic pictures should be in JPEG format only, saved at no less than 300 DPI.

Kindly send along some biographic info or simply send your CV. Tell us something about you, maybe your city, work, pet or any other interesting aspect of your life. You may send along a recent picture of yourself, if you want it published.

The fine print
This is not a competition. There are no prizes whatsoever to be won. Contributors submit their materials purely of their own free will. Copyright of all works of art remain with their individual owners. Submission of material to the Trust papers does not guarantee publication in any of our titles, nor are we required to enter into any correspondence with anyone to explain our decisions. Furthermore, publication does not enjoin the Trust papers or any of our employees to make pecuniary or material recompense to writers thereafter. Again, submitted materials, whether used or not, cannot be returned.

Addresses
Please address all mail submissions to: Attn: Group Literary Editor, Daily Trust, No. 22, Lusaka Street, Off Bisanu Street, Wuse Zone 6, P.O. Box 6873, Wuse, Abuja. Send email submissions (with the word SUBMISSION as a subject line) to crispinoduobuk@yahoo.com.

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

Ogun State floats N400m Olumo rock dev project

In its determined effort to attract the world to the ancient city of Abeokuta, Ogun State Government under the leadership of Otunba Gbenga Daniel has floated the re-development project of the long neglected Olumo Rock. With a package of facilities worth N400million is near completion, which is a harvest of recreational infrastructure.

The idea is to make climbing of the 300 feet historical site a lot easier as well as attract more tourists both within and outside the shores of the country.

Olumo Rock is very significant to the people of Abeokuta, which derived its name from the rock. The rock was said to have served as an abode for those who first settled in the city after wandering about seeking for escape from the internecine war that ravaged Yoruba land in the 19th century.

After several years of neglect by successive administration in the state, Otunba Gbenga Daniel aware of the immense potentials of tourism as a major revenue earner started the re-development of major tourists destination in the state. Olumo rock falls within the first phase of this ambitious project.

Already things are changing for the better at the ancient rock site with massive rehabilitation and developmental projects going on.

The re-development includes the construction of a central activities area, a museum and amusement park for children, exhibition hall, workshop and most importantly elevator to make climbing of the rock easier for any visitor that visit the center. Designed by the architectural firm of Messrs Darch Workshop and other consultants the proposed elevator would be made of glass. The elevator according to some of the government officials is to be called lift station, and would afford tourists the opportunity of being lifted to the top of the rock instead of the traditional staircase.

Currently the rock is being accessed through staircase put in place about 10 years ago. Before then, visitors to the facility had to climb it on their own, which was very dangerous, or through the help of some climbers who ferried tourists at fee.

According to the Special Duties Commissioner, Mr. Kola Onadipe, there three levels of the lift, the first station

By **Olumide Bajulaiye**
Correspondent (Ogun State)

is on the ground floor, the second station is at the height of about 50 metres, while the third is at the very top of the rock and it would have two link bridges. The bridges are to

final journey to the top.

As the elevator ascends, tourists have the advantage of viewing their surroundings, as it is made of glass," Onadipe explained.

Onadipe also disclosed that there is a plan to erect a giant telescope with which

national Airport, Ibeja with information centre among other facilities.

The museum is to keep all sorts of artifacts that the state arts council and the tourism board have declared relics of the past. According to the Commissioner the main hall

December this year.

Onadipe however, described the project particularly the elevator as a serious engineering work because of the complexity involved in planning how the lift would stand, "all these were part of the concept and imitation of

top and at the same time enjoy the leisure of seeing the beauty of Abeokuta that is quite interesting when you get to the top, and to actually turn the place into a money spinning venture for the state. The total package of it is to improve the cultural relevance of Olumo Rock, and also to improve the cultural attraction. As you are aware, even as it is now, a lot of visitors troop in every day to the facility. On a daily basis about 100 expatriates visit the facility."

In his own view the state commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Nizar Malaolu disclosed that there are many Egba indigenes who despite the historical relevance of the rock have never climbed it for fear of been fall.

According to Malaolu the state government decided to develop it into a world-class attraction because of its historical importance, "that is why governor Daniel decided that with the elevator, you can get people on top. It is going to be a glass elevator where you can view any where that you want to view," he said.

Speaking further, the commissioner said, "it is of tremendous political and historical importance to the Egba because that was where they hid during the internecine war and then they survived and of course, it has become a symbol of their existence. Infact, I was told that the rock actually means Oluwafimisi (God used this to end all our sufferings). If you go there you would see that there caves. They actually hid in side the caves.

Inside the caves, they had places where they grinde pepper, pounded yam and so on. I am of the view that you are to do that in a rock you know, chisel the rock to do that without all these modern equipment that we have now that must have taken lot of time.

And that shows that the stayed in the place for a long time," Malaolu stressed the other tourist centres in the state such Bilikisu Osungb Shrine, located at Oke Eri near Ijebu - Ode; Yemoji natural swimming pool at Yemo along Epe road; Ogere traditional regatta; Oronna Shrine in Ilaro; Orisagamu Ewa in Sagamu; Madam Tinubu Tomb in Abeokuta among others are to be redeveloped by the state.



Otunba Gbenga Daniel Ogun State governor

serve as link between the elevator and the rock.

"For those who may want to descend from the elevator half way to start the exploration of the rock in the middle, they will trace the first bridge and if they are interested in seeing the totality of the rock, they will either climb manually or go back to the elevator through the link bridge for the

tourists can view places of interest within the city of Abeokuta and far beyond as well as the stars.

The central activity area has the design of an Olympic ring size, it is first of its kind in the country.

The complex is designed along side that of the arrival and departure facilities at the Murtala Mohammed Inter-



The glass elevator nearing completion at Olumo Rock Ogun State.

has the capacity of about 200 guests. There is also the exhibition hall that will hoist local artifacts and fabrics.

The redevelopment according to Onadipe is to be completed in May this year to commemorate second year in office of the present administration and also to host the presidential Commission on Tourism meeting slated for

the state governor. These ideas were mooted and conceived during his visit to all the nooks and crannies of the state when he was campaigning. We met an edifice whereby when you go to the top, a little slip can be very fatal.

"Therefore the governor reasoned that there must be a better way to get people to the

"Olumo Rock is very significant to the people of Abeokuta, which derived its name from the rock. The rock was said to have served as an abode for those who first settled in the city after wandering about seeking for escape from the internecine war that ravaged Yoruba land in the 19th century. After several years of neglect by successive administration in the state, Otunba Gbenga Daniel aware of the immense potentials of tourism as a major revenue earner started the re-development of major tourists destination in the state. Olumo rock falls within the first phase of this ambitious project. Already things are changing for the better at the ancient rock site with massive rehabilitation and developmental projects going on."



THE IMPERATIVES OF COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

As the Assembly of the African Union holds in Abuja, Nigeria and with the President and Commander in Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR as the current chairman, it has become necessary to examine the imperatives of cooperation and integration in Africa. Africa has 54 countries and all but Ethiopia share the history of colonialism. Among the present day reminders of the colonial past is the use of such foreign language as English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic as the official language in various countries of Africa. There are also the arbitrarily drawn national boundaries. Apart from the colonial past, African countries have very many things in common. They share certain macro economic indices that characterize them as underdeveloped. Majority of the inhabitants live on incomes of less than \$1 per day. Literacy rate and life expectancy are low. Most of the countries have small economies, which generally depend on import of intermediate and capital goods and on export of primary agricultural products. The continent is currently ravaged by such diseases as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, among others. The debt burden is heavy while industrialization and capital investments are very low. Many African countries have experienced military dictatorship with resultant instability in the polity. There are prevalent intra and inter state crises in the continent. Some of these are political in nature while some are economic or ethnic. Sometimes, they result into armed conflicts with devastating effects on life, property and infrastructure. Such flashpoints of armed conflict have in the recent past occurred in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote D'Ivoire and Sudan. In some of these countries, hostility is still in force. The symptoms of colonialism, widespread poverty, disease, as well as general under development are great challenges for cooperation and integration on the continent.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE AFRICAN UNION

The African Union is not finality. It is a stage in the search that dates back to many decades. The fore fathers were some Africans in the diaspora whose writings on Pan Africanism were inspiring. These were the likes of Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, and Dr W.E. Dubeo etc. They were a great influence on some young Africans in the United States of America in search of the Golden Fleece. Some of these impressionable minds later went back to Africa to champion the struggle against colonialism and to preach the unity of Africa. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sir William Tubman of Liberia were amongst this lot. There developed a crop of nationalists whose force resulted in the overthrow of colonialism. With the emergence of political independence, the stage was set for the struggle for African independence. The nationalist spirit ran high. Some radicals wanted immediate and complete unity through an African government. The moderates canvassed a gradual approach of co-operation and integration within national sovereignty. No matter the fundamental difference in modality, the Casablanca and the Monrovia blocs as they were tagged were inspired by the same spirit of Pan Africanism and quest for African Unity. It is to this credit of their co-operation that on 25th May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Organisation of African Unity was born by a declaration of 32 independent African countries. The birth of the OAU was a good omen for cooperation and integration in Africa. The objectives were to promote the unity and solidarity of African states; defend their integrity; eradicate all forms of colonialism and coordinate their efforts to achieve better life for the peoples of Africa. Today, colonialism is no longer an issue in the African continent. The other objectives of the OAU are, however, very much relevant and make cooperation and integration an imperative. As the African Union holds its Assembly, it is necessary to pay respect to the memories of the founding fathers of African unity and the pioneers of the cooperation and integration project. Some of them have already been mentioned. Others deserving of mention within the available space are Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Dr Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea, Dr Sedar Senghor of Senegal, Dr Houphouet Boigny of Ivory Coast, Abdel Gamel Nasar of Egypt, Dr Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and a host of others.

The three easily recognizable milestones in the evolution of the African Union are:

- (i) The Abuja Treaty of 1991;
- (ii) The Sirte declaration of 9th September 1999; and
- (iii) The Constitutive Act of 26th May, 2001

The Abuja Treaty was declared on 3rd June 1991 by 51 Heads of State and Government of the member states of the OAU. It was indeed a step forward in the efforts toward economic integration of Africa. It sought to develop and utilize the human and natural resources of Africa for the general well being of its people in all fields of human endeavor. The Treaty established the African Economic Community to promote a balanced economic development in all parts of the continent and to foster the economic, social and cultural development and integration of Africa. The main objectives of the African Economic Community were to promote integration, establish the framework for development, mobilization and utilization of human and material resources; promote cooperation in all fields of human endeavor all to achieve self reliant development, economic integration and rising standard of living of the African people. In pursuit of these objectives, the Treaty set up the following organs:

- ◆ The Assembly of Heads of State and Government
- ◆ The Council of Ministers
- ◆ The Pan African Parliament
- ◆ The Economic and Social Commission
- ◆ The Court of Justice
- ◆ The General Secretariat
- ◆ The Specialized Technical Committees.

The Treaty further made provisions for the strengthening of regional economic communities; the establishment of Customs Union; elimination of customs duty among member states of the regional communities and the establishment of common external tariff. Further more it provided for progressive free movement of persons, right of residence and establishment and for various protocols to cover industry, agriculture, science and technology, energy, natural resources, environment, transport, communication, tourism, etc.

The Sirte Declaration was a quest for stronger unity, solidarity and cohesion in Africa. It was made at the 4th Extra Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU in Sirte, Libya on 9th September 1999. The aim was to accelerate the process of implementing the establishment of the African Union, in conformity with the objectives of OAU charter and the Lagos Treaty of 1991. Consequently, the Council of Ministers was mandated to prepare the Constitutive Legal Act of the African Union.

The Constitutive Act of the African Union was passed in Lome, Togo, on 11th July 2000 by 53 Heads of State and Government of the OAU. The Act was inspired by the Charter of the OAU and the treaty establishing the African Economic Community as well as by the need to confront the challenges of globalization. The objectives were to achieve greater unity; defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of member states; accelerate political and socio democratic principles; popular participation and good governance; promote and protect human rights; promote cooperation in all fields among others. Article 5 of the Constitutive Act spell out the organs of the African Union. They are in consonance with those prescribed in the Lagos Treaty for the African Economic Community and there is no further need for repetition. There are however, some variations of nomenclature in a few areas such as the Council of Ministers/the Executive Council, the General Secretariat/the Commission, the Economic

and Social Commission/the Economic, Social and Cultural Council. There is also the addition of the permanent Representative Committee as an Organ of the Union. The Act further provides for the African Bank, the African Monetary Fund and the African Investment Bank.

THE IMPERATIVES OF COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION

There is no doubt that one major challenge of the African Union is that of cooperation and integration. They open the way for growth and development in Africa. As strategies for pursuit of regional growth and development, they seek to collectively harness the vast potential of the continent in agriculture, mining, industry, sports, commerce, transport, energy, telecommunications, etc for the African people. Integration has political, social and economic perspectives. The evolution of the African Union is a catalogue of efforts at achieving cooperation and integration. All the instruments in the milestone of the evolutionary process have provision for cooperation and integration. Africa is not alone in this wise for it cannot afford to leave development and growth in the continent to the individual countries with all the constraints and limitations. Even the developed world in spite of their attainments is still working towards greater regional integration. Some good examples are the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), and the Association of the East Asian Nation (ASEAN), the Asian Pacific Forum, etc.

The role of regional institutions in fostering cooperation and integration is widely acknowledged. This is well recognized in the Abuja Treaty, the Sirte Declaration and the Constitutive Act, which see regional economic communities as pillars for achievement of objectives. Africa has a good number of these institutions. As agents of cooperation and integration, they develop valuable infrastructures in trade, communication, transport, industry and link up the economies of member states. They widen the markets for goods and services and help in the exploitation of resources for the common benefit of members. The tendency to encourage free flow of people, goods, capital, and services across national borders brings the economies of member states towards cooperation and integration. Effective integration requires the individual countries to develop capacities in areas of comparative advantage. This will enable them enjoy the benefits of integration into larger economies. The sub regional institutions, which will serve as pillars for the African Union to build upon, include the following:

- ◆ The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)
- ◆ The East African Cooperation (EAC)
- ◆ The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- ◆ The Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- ◆ The Union of Maghreb Arab States (UMA)/The South African Development Community (SADC)

Another imperative of cooperation and integration in Africa is globalization. Current trends portray the world as a global village. In a sense, globalization can be seen as economic integration at the highest level. It is characterized by flow of trade, capital and by movement of people, goods and services across the globe. Globalization is information driven and only those at vantage can partake successfully. It has been made possible by the advanced production capacities of the developed world, the revolution in science and technology especially in the areas of transport, communication and flow of information. This trend that is also marked by liberalization of trade is expected to open up countries and their economies to the inflow of capital and investment provided there is the enabling environment. Things move at so fast a rate that they cannot wait for the unprepared players. Some people harbour misgivings about globalization arguing that African economies are too weak to be meaningful partakers in the trend. Herein lies the challenge posed to cooperation and integration by globalization. Since Africa cannot afford to be left out of the trend, it has to brace up to the situation and tap the benefits that it can derive. With peace and political stability, sound macro economic policies, good governance and involvement of the private sector as partners, an enabling environment will be created for growth and development.

THE ROLE OF NIGERIA IN COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION

Nigeria has no doubt paid its due in the quest for peace, unity and development in Africa. Its government and people have over the time shown unwavering support and commitment to the course of Africa. The preamble to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that the people of Nigeria 'ave amongst other things, resolved to be dedicated to the promotion of inter African solidarity and international cooperation. From the time of Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, Africa has remained the centerpiece of Nigeria's foreign policy. This implies that Nigeria has been part of all the efforts to achieve cooperation and integration in the continent. Nigeria gave a good account of herself in the struggle to rid Africa of colonialism. It made invaluable contributions to the liberation struggle and helped immensely to bring freedom to Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. Nigeria's contribution in terms of finance and the moral input of its diplomats in the formation of regional and sub regional institutions cannot be under estimated. The Lagos Charter signed in January 1962 gave rise to the OAU Charter just as the Abuja Treaty of 1991 laid the framework for the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The role of Nigeria in the formation and sustenance of ECOWAS and her involvement in peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and Liberia speak for themselves.

The establishment of the Ministry of Integration and Cooperation in Africa in July 1999 underlines the importance that Nigeria, as a country, attaches to cooperation and integration in the continent. The mandate of the Ministry is to serve as focal point for the implementation of regional integration policies and programmes of government. It also serves as a link with bilateral and multi lateral institutions for economic cooperation and integration. The Ministry has four operations departments to handle this responsibility. They are:

- ◆ Cooperation and Development
- ◆ Regional Economic Integration
- ◆ Political Affairs
- ◆ Collective Defense and Security

These outfits are totally devoted to matters of cooperation and integration in Africa. The two parastatals of the Ministry viz the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution and the Directorate for Technical Cooperation in Africa are doing marvellous work in their various areas. The commitment of Nigeria to cooperation and integration in Africa is not just on paper but is indeed practical.

There is no doubt that considerable ground-work had been done for the success of cooperation and integration in Africa. All the factors that worked against the success of this objective during the regime of the OAU should be tackled headlong so that they do not constitute a constraint under the African Union. The Political will of Africa's leaders is needed to enable Africa move on the fast track that has been laid. Peace, political stability, good governance and involvement of the civil society and the private sector will help in creating the enabling environment for cooperation and integration to thrive.

This Article will be incomplete without a mention of the invaluable contribution of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the course of African unity, peace, solidarity, cooperation and integration. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo has been in the service of Africa for decades right from his involvement in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Congo as a 2nd Lt military officer. In his first disposition as Head of State (1976-1979) he positioned Nigeria to play a front line position in the struggle for the independence of Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. As an elder statesman, his initiative in the African Leadership Forum won him international acclaim. His activities in the evolution of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Conference on Security Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) stand him out as an illustrious son of Africa. Currently Chairman of the African Union, the hosting of mid-term Assembly of the African Union is part of the dynamism and commitment, which he has brought to bear on this position. The immense benefits of these efforts to Africa will remain for a long time.

By Augustine Nduka Osa-Afiana

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

Dignifying Lagos Judiciary with a new edifice

When recently, the Governor of Lagos State, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu appointed some new judges in the state, many queried, wondered aloud where the Governor would keep them for easy dispensation of their duties.

The questions on the lips of these 'wonders' are understandable and tenable anyway. The conditions of High Court in the state left very little to be desired of Lagos state which is the economic nerve centre of Nigeria and the facilities therein cannot march the increasing needs of the judges in the state.

But the Governor surely had his State, which is manifested in the completion of the new Lagos High Court Complete in Igbobere, (Lagos Island) and Ikeja divisions of the Lagos judiciary.

The building is one of Tinubu's pipedreams he started during his first tenure to bolster the activities of judiciary in Lagos state.

The contract for the construction of the new court complexes was awarded to Messer's Rebart International Limited, while the construction work was undertaken by Stablini

From Muhammad Shosanya, Judicial Correspondent, Lagos

Vision Nigeria Limited, a Civil and Building Engineering outfit with projects across the country owned by a seasoned lawyers, Dr. Wale Buhalakin (SAN).

The Igbosere Complex is a two floors structure comprising 10 courtrooms well spaced with cross ventilation and ably supported by split Air conditioners. While the Ikeja Complex is also on two floors and has 12 courtrooms with the same facilities as the first complex.

The complexes which are covered with corrugated iron roofs, also has compact layout, wooden floor, well arranged furniture and facilities and laced with moderate paints which marked them out distinctly from the old High Court.

It also has a uniquely packed judges chambers in terms of size and congenial study room suitable for judges comfort.

Created an enabling environment for judges to adjudicate on matters/cases before them.

Further, the multimillion naira complex has a large veranda for visitors to hang information units, well spaced parking space and bouquets of ornamental flower which not only makes the High Court a site to behold also create an imposing serenity typical of most courts in developed countries.

Speaking on the new complex, the Chief judge of Lagos State, Justice Augustine Adekulu Alabi in a chat with journalists penultimate week said movement into the 22 new courtrooms has commenced fully adding that the judiciary in the state is awaiting appropriate time for Governor Bola Tinubu to commission the new complex.

On how to maintain the modern facilities in the complex, the Chief Justice buttressed that there is a standing agreement between the judiciary and the contractors for five years technical help in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

According to him, further to the movement into the new complex, the state is expecting the delivery of 10 more automatic delivery machines in addition to the 40 outstanding ones to take care of judges in the state explaining that the state government has approved the retirement of qualified

personnel to operate the machine.

He disclosed that the ongoing computerisation of courts in the state will positively affect the new complexes adding that before the close of this month 10,000 case files would be fed into the system.

Alabi further said he is

stepping up efforts aimed at reducing activities of courts, and putting in the new High Court premises.

Meanwhile a number of lawyers who spoke with our correspondent on the multimillion naira edifices expressed satisfaction saying that it is a promising thing to happen to the judiciary in the

state.

According Mr. Tunde Oshilaga a Lagos based legal practitioner the new complex represent befitting gift to the judiciary that has done much in promoting rule of law and other democratic ideals in the society while commending Governor Bola Tinubu for the bold initiative.

Keffi LG chairman denies abandoning contractors

Contrary to media reports that contractors had recently besieged Keffi local government secretariat to demand for payment for jobs executed, the council chairman, Engr. Idris Mohammed Idris has sharply denied the report.

Engr. Idris Mohammed, who spoke to journalist in Abuja described the whole story as a bunch of contradiction perceived to have been fabricated to satisfy the selfish interest of whoever may have sponsored such a mischievous report.

The Keffi LG chairman said that the same report which claimed that he abandoned his office when the army of contractors thronged into his council

secretariat makes the entire report to lack credibility.

Engr. Idris actually admitted that a number of contractors who have actually completed their jobs are yet to be paid but promised that as soon as funds are made available, such contractors will be paid whatever they are owed.

He explained that government is a collective and continuous process involving the governed and the government and not a personnel estate that would warrant whoever is at the helm of affairs to have a sleepless night over public issue as such.

Engr. Idris said Keffi LG council under his administration is one of the local government councils in the country which strictly adhere to the due process and

stated that he will transform the lives of the people in the community before the end of his tenure.

He however said that his administration operates an open door policy which allowed for constructive criticism but however advised detractors to desist from such campaign of coloumy.

The chairman attributed the traffic of people at the council secretariat as an inevitable exercise stressing that the local government council is the most accessible tier of government on the people of the grassroots.

He however called on the state governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu to release more funds to the council towards more development prospects in the state.

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CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA TENDER NOTICE

NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that 91-day Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills amounting to N45,000,000,000 will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 03/02/2005.

Interested Authorized Dealers (Commercial/Merchant Banks, Designated Discount Houses and Brokers) are invited to submit tenders to reach the Issues Office, Central Bank of Nigeria, Lagos, not later than 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 01/02/2005.

Each tender must be in multiple of N1,000 subject to a minimum of N1 0,000 per tender. Authorized Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A tender may be for own account of Authorized Dealers or made on behalf of interested members of the public, who are advised to apply to their banks or Brokers for the Bills.

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked "TENDER FOR BILLS". The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Wednesday, 02/02/2005 The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Thursday, 03/02/2005. Payment in full for the amount of the accepted tenders must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30 p.m. on the issue date 03/02/2005. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

**ISSUES OFFICE
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBU SQUARE
LAGOS**

ABUJA TRUST

Wuse market container/attachment owners dismantle shops

As the three weeks ultimatum given Wuse container attachment owners in the federal capital territory Abuja, expired yesterday the whole market was yesterday thrown in confusion with people trying to remove their property.

This ultimatum notice given by the federal capital development authorities was

From Benjamin Auta, Crime Reporter

in line with the Abuja master plan for them to relocate to Utako.

Abuja Trust was at the market last Sunday to witness the activities and the general reaction of traders and their customers as they prepare for 21st Monday year 2005.

LG Chairman's wife donates N2m items to clinics

The wife of the chairman of Abaji Area Council in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Hajija Hadiza Mohammed Loko, has donated goods items worth N2million naira to patients in health clinics in the area.

The chairperson, while presenting items to the patients at St. Peters Catholic Hospital recently, she said that the purpose of her visit to all the health centers. In the area was only to console with the sick people and give them a helping hand so that they would feel the impact of democracy dividends going on in the area council.

The items presented to the patients which include, cartons of Omo, Sugar cubs, Canoe soap, Bounvita and other items.

Hajija Loko explained that the present administration under Honourable Mohammed Angulu Loko is intensifying effort to provide adequate drugs and hospital equipments to all health care centers in the area and rural centers, so that it would facilitate the indigent one's items in care of any emergency.

The chairperson however appealed to the medical doctors especially "private clinics" to endeavor and subsidize medical bill so that the less privileged and indigent could be able to patronize their clinics when ever emergency arises.

"As you can see, not all every body that can be able to pay a hospital bill, because of hardship we are facing, therefore, I am appealing to you, to always consider any patients for emergency".

She added that the present administration had set a committee to look in to problems initiating against health centres in the area, so that provision of necessary materials would be given proper attention.

The matron of St. Peter's Catholic Hospital Sister Uju Ejiuchi, who commended the chairperson effort for her concern and effort in visiting the hospital to see the situation of patients at her hospital.

In fact I don't know how to express my appreciation, because I am over excited for your concern you have and your husband. I can tell you since we came here we have never seen any administra-

According to Mr. Festus Chidi a container attachment owner who trade in ladies shoes and wears at the gate that he termed the news to be a rumour but he will remove all his property and lock up his shop and wait to see what will happen on Monday, but if nothing happen that then he will open.

Also Master Abdulkareem Mohammed a tailor in a container attachment who worked very confused and frustrated said he was called on the phone by his colleges at the market, while he was celebrating Eid el-Kabir at his home town, describing the situation as very bad saying "my problem is how to contact my customers whose cloths have been in my shop since with this now how do I relocate".

However, the market was so congested and crowded with people busy removing their property, many cars, pick-up vans were seen up trying

to get entrance in to the market while others were moving out filled up.

Also people had seen rushing to locate their customers before they lock up their shops this also give opportunity to the wheel barrow

boys where many of them came to the market and have increased their services from 20 naira to 50 naira per load.

For the customers, many have exposed disappointments and worry over this development which according to

Madam Annah Sam, when considering the effect it will have on many of them who live outside Abuja saying "how do we locate our customers on time, how many of them can afford the shops at Utako".



An Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) truck removing items from the old Wuse market recently. pic: Felix Onighinde

Abaji LG boss tasks staff on computer literacy

Stories by Maimuna Yusuf, Reporter (Abuja Trust)

stated this while declaring a two weeks computer appreciation training for staff of the training workshop was aimed at creating awareness and making staff of the council literate.

"Let me recall that during my inauguration speech at the inception of this administration, we pledged that staff training and retraining would be our priority".

Alhaji Loko, observed that his administration had since realised that in the spirit of service delivery and service charter, staff of the council required to be computer literate. The chairman implored the council staff to continue to take advantage of shorter training skills in order to enhance the staff to perform their jobs.

He urged the participation at the computer to utilize the opportunity of the training to

provide and benefit immensely, so that they could acquire skills for the betterment of the council.

Speaking earlier, the Heads of Personnel Management, Mr. Dan Ayuba, however urged the participants at the training workshop to put more effort so that they would know how to manipulate the computer and stand the beat of time in view of modernity in technology.

Mr. Ayuba, therefore, used the opportunity to thank the council chairman for his tremendous achievement in the area of cooperation with the council staff and developmental sector.

"In the last eight months since the chairman assumed duty in Abaji, we have witnessed a tremendous changes, I am sure people who are here in the last ten months and have not been here in the last months would have realized that significant changes are

taking place. "May I urge all guests to give the chairman a resounding applauds".

The council heads of personnel management further thanked the council chairman on behalf of staff of the council for the cooperation they have received since the administration came in place.

He added that, the issue affecting welfare had always been addressed without delay. HE further urged the chairman and councilors to continue to address issues affecting staff, obtaining that the council staff are number one problem, adding that whatever success that would be achieved in any administration would have to be done in liaison with the council staff.

Mr. Ayuba, therefore, urged the council staff to always give cooperation to the present administration, so that the council would achieve it desired goals.

Community Life Project workshop opens in FCT

The Executive Secretary, Social Development Secretariat.

Ms Bolanle Onagoruwa, has enjoined participants at the ongoing Community Life Project (CLP) to be up and doing so as to harness the benefits therein. Ms Onagoruwa made the appeal at Bwari area council secretariat during the opening of a three-day training workshop for the replication of Community Life Project, disclosing that "...the project is designed to encourage and sustain maintenance culture in our various communities". She reiterated the secretariat's attachment of importance to capacity building of communities, adding that the secretariat's Commu-

nity Driven Development would be immensely enhanced through the workshop.

Speaking earlier, the Head, Community Development Division, Social Development Secretariat, Mrs Rachael Wamineje, revealed that the aim of the workshop was to 'equip various interest groups and stakeholders in communities with necessary societal requirements through attitudinal change and positive societal consciousness'. She used the occasion to assure the participants that technical partners are available to confront every hitch that may impede their smooth execution of the laudable projects.

The Community Life Pro-

ject (CLP) Director, Mrs Ngozi Iwere, on her part, acknowledged communal efforts aimed at improving the welfare of people in communities, such as provision of social amenities, but highlighted that the apex of this lies in harmonisation of group attitudes among themselves, especially the family setting. She said with CLP, people in communities will peacefully co-exist irrespective of prevailing odds, giving fundamental specimen of husband and wife bond as the root to national growth.

The Chairman of Bwari area council, Hon. Isah Dara Bwari, used the ceremony to congratulate the organisers on choosing Bwari as the pilot centre, assuring them of adequate security and support.

KANO TRUST

Bayero urges KNSG to implement 2005 budget

Kano State government has been implored to expedite action towards implementing this year's budget, the Emir of Kano Alhaji Ado Bayero made the call when he paid a Sallah homage to governor Ibrahim Shekarau.

He observed that government should strive assiduously towards hundred percent implementation of the budget because it contains timely tools for the general overhaul of peoples'

From Mastapha Isah Kwara, Correspondent (Kano)

wellbeing. The royal father admitted that government resolution to prioritise social security as well as curbs possible predicaments militating against conducive environment of the people was a welcome development adding however that its speedy execution is the panacea to total eradication of their problem.

Alhaji Bayero reminded

the government of its mandate of bringing a lasting solution to the lingering water scarcity that befell the state, saying the situation is worrisome as it deteriorate the livelihood of the people.

The Emir enjoined the general public to join hands with government for the actualisation of its good policies, even as he cautioned them to desist act capable of crippling the existing cordial relationship between various ethnic and religious groups. In his remark, governor

Shekarau acknowledged the incessant shortage of water that ravaged the state explaining that it has facilitated untold hardships to the people.

He told the Emir that in a swift relation to the menace, government has so far

commenced giant water project expressing optimism that, when completed the problem will become a history.

Commenting on the inadequate classrooms in the secondary schools, as a result of which hundreds pupils were enrolled, stated that N500m

had so far been voted for the construction of new schools, classrooms as well as teaching materials.

The state chief executive called on the people to exercise patience over the issue, stating that all will be well.

Community berates representatives

Sabuwani Madina (Kudu) Community Development Association (SAMCODA) has described the lacklustre attitudes of its elected representatives in both state and federal governments as insensitive and impertinent towards developmental programmes in Jaen, Gwale local government area of Kano State.

The Chairman of SAMCODA, Alhaji Nura Ibrahim, revealed to *Kano Trust* that the association has, in its executive meeting resolved to check the excesses of the councillor representing Dorayi ward; the state House of Assembly representative, Aminu Jingga; the Gwale Chairman, Alhaji Sani Jibrin Kofar Nai's as well as Jazuli Inam, a member representing Gwale federal constituency for their ineffective impact on the area in terms of development.

Alhaji Nura Ibrahim described the decision as a last resort after several futile attempts to reaching the authorities concerned on the need to tackle the lingering problems of electrification, pipe-borne water, roads and security, among others. He also said the community members had to resort to embarking on self-developmental projects in order to rescue the community from imminent danger of hardship, adding that they had so far made some efforts in electrifying part of the Sabuwani Maina (Kudu) community.

The *Kano Trust* reporter, who was on site seeing of the ward, observed that virtually all roads linking to various parts of the community are in utmost deplorable state of disrepair, while some makeshift electric pole wires were seen scattered.

The Chairman, Jaen Youth Organisation, Alhaji Nura Danladi, said that they are calling on the Governor of Kano State, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, to cede Sabuwani Madina of Jaen from Gwale local government area to either Kumbotso or Kano municipal because that is where developmental projects

are given attention by their scribes.

Alhaji Nura also said that the deplorable state of roads and non-existence of drainages have always caused untold hardship to the people of the area, especially during the rainy season where virtually every nook and cranny of the earth surface is submerged.

He added that, 'one of the unpleasant situations of the area is the non-existence of any accessible school within two kilometres, while the closest health centre is several kilometres away'.

Alhaji Nura Ibrahim criticised their wards' representatives for not paying attention to their plights, saying that 'none of either state or federal representatives cares to visit us here and see what we are going through. "The electorate who came out to vote for them deserve a better treatment."

Meanwhile, when *Kano Trust* contacted the Gwale local government Chairman, Alhaji Sani Jibrin Kofar Naisa, he debunked the allegations, describing those propagating them as mischief makers.

Alhaji Sani Jibrin said his administration is only

eighteen months old and has so far achieved a lot of developmental projects across the local government, saying, "It is not good justification for one to totally condemn our government because our developmental projects have not reached them."

The chairman said: "Katangan Jallaba drainage construction in Jaen gulped about 1.5 million naira."

He re-assured that by the end of February, people of Sabuwani Madina will start enjoying pipe-borne water while a transformer already allocated to the area will be come functional before the end of February.

On the issue of inadequate schools, the chairman of the council said about 21.7million naira is being deducted out of the local government grants by the state's Primary School Management Board for the paying of teachers' salaries in the area, adding that the construction of schools is primarily the responsibility of the state. He called on all members of the community to continue to exercise patience as every part of the country will experience some form of developmental projects.



Drug peddlers pause momentarily to rest after hawking their wares, wants buyers of such drugs to beware.

NAFDAC warns against fake drug dealers

Natural Agency for Food Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has warned of existing quacks who parade the streets with drugs as pharmacists in dispensing of the drugs in Kano State.

The chairman and managing director of PAL pharmaceuticals Industries Limited, Dr. Onyido Alex Uzo who announced this said, it is now a common feature to see people hawking all sorts of drugs along Kano streets without fear and dispensing same to those who patronize them.

Dr. Onyido Alex Uzo said

By Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent (Kano)

NAFDAC should braze up to its responsibility in checking the excesses of these quacks that are ridiculing the pharmaceutical profession.

Dr. Uzo said its impertinent to say that despite stringent measures used by government on culprits recently by closing down several shops and confiscating hundred of thousand worth of fake drugs, the habit still continue.

While wondering why such hawkers dare the wrath of the law, Dr. Uzo called on NAFDAC to continue to fight dealers of such counterfeit

drugs and trace its origin so as to clamp it down, and also warned the people against patronising these people as they sell very dangerous drugs that are hazardous to health.

He called on government to create means of awareness to the people against such illicit acts and also to empower the youth in the society with certain.



Gov Shekarau

Minjibir LG to assist Islammiyyah schools

Minjibir local government council has reiterated its commitments to assist the Islammiyyah school in the area whenever the need arise.

Health councillor in the council, Alhaji Muhammadu Ibrahim Kunya who represented the council chairman at a recent workshop on Islammiyyah school head teachers made the statement.

He said the intention of giving out such assistance to the Islammiyyah school is to boost the high level of morality among the children and young people in the area through adequate provision of the Islamic knowledge and the trainings on the Islamic norms, values and cultures.

Also at the workshop, the

From Aliyu Saleh Machika, Correspondent (Kano)

education councillor of the area council, Alhaji Usman Koya called on all the participants at the workshop to adequately use what they have learnt during their various discussions at the workshop to promote peace and good understanding of Islam.

In his address, the chairman of the association of Islammiyyah schools in the area, Alhaji Nasuru Usman has commended the area council for its foresight and readiness to assist the Islammiyyah school and Islamic knowledge in the area.

He added that through such kind assistance the area council can overcome the issues of misbehaving, drug

abuse, prostitution, among others which he described as mainly affecting children and young people. And that by the time they are acquainted with the teachings of Islam they will drop them.

He however advised parents to make sure that they send the children to Islammiyyah schools, adding that they should always look after the welfare of their children.

The royal father, who gave the assurance in a Sallah message to the people of the area, added that all traditional institutions in the area were directed to expedite action in the enlightening and educating their subjects on the positive impacts of the exercise.

Alhaji Ila frowned at the insinuation making the

rounds that the census was initiated under the guise of birth control especially in the Muslim dominated countries, saying it was just a mere rumour without solid evidence.

He exonerated western countries of any blame over the census exercise explaining that, the initiative was solely a federal government agenda brought into existence aiming at identifying the population of the citizens for onward consideration in execution developmental programmes.

The district head, noted that government will not

effectively overhaul the welfare of the citizen when it is hand capped by their total population.

The council chairman, Alhaji Audu Ma'aji in his message, called on the people to pray for the sustenance of peace, harmony and unity among various ethnic and religion groups in the country.

Alhaji Ma'aji, solicited the unanimous support and cooperation of the people, in order to move the area forward, just as he said the mandate is a collective responsibility.

EKO TRUST

Police arrest suspected murderer

A jealous Lagos housewife who allegedly stabbed a suspected rival to death in Surulere area of Lagos last weekend have been arrested by the police.

The suspect simply identified as Aisha was said to have attacked Ladidi at their resident in Game Village that fateful Wednesday morning during a visit.

Sources told *Eko Trust* that the late Ladidi had come to the couple's home

Group wants magistrates to minimise visitors in chamber

By Mohammed Shosanya

In order to avoid bias and compromise in the adjudication of cases, a group, the Public Complaints and Training Committee (PCTC) of Lagos State Judiciary had advised magistrates to henceforth desist from receiving visitors in their chambers.

The group who made this known in a statement signed by its Media Representative, Abu Saminlah also enjoined magistrates to be wary of warrants signed by them as well as to be cautious of due process.

The public complaints and training committee was primarily constituted in early 2003 to receive and investigate petitions from lawyers and litigants complaining against corrupt practices among others, against the judiciary officers and to make recommendations to the chief judge as part of the efforts to restore public confidence in the judicial processes.

It further noted that the basis behind the advise on magistrates in the state was sequenced to a number of complaints deliberated upon during the last meeting of PCTC, where some people were seeking transfer of cases on ground of bias, misapplication of rules on the part of presiding magistrates.

According to the group, although complaints of corrupt practices against judicial officers and staff of the Lagos state judiciary has drastically reduced, it enjoined complainants to always backup their petition with satisfactory and documentary evidence to enable it investigate properly issues of gratification among other fraudulent practices.

From Bola Ojuala, *Stringer*

demanding to see Ahmed Aisha's husband pretending to be one of his customers.

But Aisha was said to have lost her temper due to alleged uncomplimentary attitude of the victim.

During an exchange of words and physical combat that followed, the suspect now in police detention was said to have stabbed the victim with a knife. She later died in a private hospital before medical treatment could reach her.

In a related development, the corps of a middle-aged man suspected to have ... was found hanging in an uncompleted building at gospel village in

The Lagos state police spokes, Mr Emmanuel Igbodalo who confirmed the report, told *Eko Trust* that the identity of the deceased person was not known.

According to him, policemen from Ishasi police station went to the ... building following information and removed the corpse to the public mortuary for autopsy.

He said the case was already being investigated to unravel the mystery surrounding the matter.



His Royal Highness Oba Rilwan Akiolu, Oba of Lagos (right) discussing with Head of Service, Lagos State, Mr. Sunny Ajose Adesanya during the laying of wreath ceremony at the Remembrance arcade, Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos...recently. Pic: Oladipupo Odunrewu.

Fire razes properties in Lagos

Properties worth million of naira were destroyed in different location of Lagos during the Sallah break, including that of Open University of Nigeria guest house, custom service unit of Fedex Redstar Express, SVACO Company, Ikeja and Custom Federal Operation office, Ikeja.

Eko Trust learnt that the guest room of National Open University of Nigeria located on plot 10, Millverton road, Ikoyi was razed by fire last

week Wednesday. The cause of the fire which was noticed at about 5:00 p.m. that fateful day is unknown.

The combined efforts of fire fighting and policemen attached to a nearby five star hotel helped to put out the fire.

On Friday two block of four bedroom flats located on plot 17/19 Ogegbengbe street Apapa was also razed by the fire.

In Oshodi area there was fire outbreak in customer service unit of Fedex Redstar Express located on plot 41/42, old Ewu road, Aviation Estate properties worth millions was later put out by fire fighters from the Lagos state government house, Alausa.

In Jigbobe area, there was fire outbreak at LSDPC, Jakande estate the children apartment of house 17, flat 5 was destroyed, and cause of the fire is still unknown.

Also in Ikeja area, same Friday there was fire outbreak of SVACO company situated on plot 5, Ayodele Diyan road Ikeja.

The warehouse housing polyether material and other highly inflammable chemicals went up in flames.

The fire could be traced to black oil spillage at the factor was said to have burnt throughout the night. It took the combined efforts of fire fighters from Ikorodu, Isolo, Alausa and Julius Berger team to put off the fire.

Also in same area same day fire gutted customs federal fire operation office along Mobolaji Bank Anthony way where over 165 assorted vehicles worth millions of naira were destroyed.

The Lagos state police public relations officer, Mr. Emmanuel Egbodalo confirmed the stories.

Health officials battle to save accident victims

By Oluamide Rajulaye, Correspondent, (Lagos)

Medical personnel in three government hospitals continued at the weekend the battle to save the lives of 19 patients who survived various degrees of burns in Wednesday's multiple accident, which occurred in Maryland, Ikeja. Forty of the victims were said to have died on the spot while 13 survivors were evacuated by the Lagos State Government to General Hospitals in Ikeja, Lagos Island and Orile Agege.

State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Leke Pitan gave an update on government efforts to ensure the survival of the patients during a visit to some of the patients at the Critical Intensive Unit (CIU) in Ikeja by the State Governor, Bola Tinubu.

According to him, of the 15 patients admitted at the General Hospital, Ikeja, five have been discharged, four discharged from the nine victims at Lagos Island Hospital and two from the six admitted at the General Hospital, Orile, Agege.

Out of the ten patients now recuperating at the Ikeja centre, five belong to the same family - Kareem family including a woman whose burns was put at 80 degree and the worst case and her second child who survived 50 degree burns.

The four patients at the male section of the CIU survived burns ranging from 32 degree to 69 degree while the women survived burns ranging between 40 and 80 degrees.

The only kid victim survived the least degree of burns which was put at 25. Speaking after commiserating with the victims on their sick beds, Tinubu described as alarming media reports, which claimed that about 50 lives were lost.

He said available statistics has put the death rate at 13 and the injured at 30 even as he commended the various agencies that responded to the distress call immediately after the accident occurred.

Specifically, Tinubu singled out officials of the State Traffic Management Authority (LAMATA), LASAMBUS, Police and the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) for their efforts.

His words: "The patients are in the Critical Intensive Unit of the hospital. Not many health centres have such units. They (patients) are being given the specialist treatment that is critical to their survival."

The cost of the treatment, according to Tinubu was being borne by the state government.

Whishing the victims' speedy recovery, Tinubu berated motorist over their disrespect for traffic regulations alleging that lack

of maintenance of vehicles was accountable for 90 per cent of road accidents.

The governor assured that law enforcement agencies would henceforth be strict in ensuring that motorists adhere to traffic regulations.

Tinubu to commission new Lagos High court

The new Lagos High court in complex Igbosere Lagos Judiciary will soon be commissioned by the governor of Lagos State, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Though movement into these complexes have since commenced but sources at state house Alausa disclosed to our correspondent that the governor has been very busy recently hence his inability to commissioned the project till now.

The contract for the construction of the Lagos High Court complex, it was gathered, was awarded to Messers Resort International Limited, while the construction work was undertaken by Stablini Visiononi Nigeria Limited.

The Igbosere complex is a two floors structure comprising 10 court rooms, well spaced with cross ventilation and support by split air conditions. The Ikeja complex is also on two floors and his 12 court rooms with

same facilities as the first complex.

A number of lawyers who spoke with our

correspondent expressed satisfaction that the edifice is a befitting one for the judiciary in the state.



The Igbosere of the Union Bank, Apogon, Lagos State that got burnt recently.

News

Late comers locked out of Abia

Assembly

Abia workers at the House of Assembly were Monday locked out for lateness to duty, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

The Speaker of the House, Chief Stanley Ohajuruka, gave the directive to security personnel not to allow late comers into the complex.

The speaker, who arrived

NYSC organises lecture on self employment

NYSC FCT Coordinator Ayodele Ajsafe has called on corps members in the territory not to run after white collar jobs.

In his opening remarks yesterday in Abuja at a two-day lecture on Job Creation Awareness organised for corps members, Ajsafe said that white collar jobs were no longer readily available.

Ajsafe, who said that the lecture was going on all over the federation, said that it was organised to prepare corps members on the realities of life.

He urged corps members to make use of the opportunity given them to bring a change in their community.

On self-employment, he advised corps members to go into dressmaking, poultry, flower growing and seed multiplication so that people could buy from them.

Giving an instance, he said that Turkey made its largest income from flower growing and asked corps members to see what they could do with their hands to become employers of labour.

Ajsafe said that in the next 20 years, the country could not meet its poultry feed requirement and marvelled at the fact that those who studied agriculture were in the ministries instead of in the farm.

He said that the banning of importation of some food items and textiles was also a means of encouraging self employment and urged corps members to use the opportunity to start a business.

He praised corps members for turning up in great numbers and advised them to continue to be disciplined and law abiding.

Godwin Akpong of the International Educational Consultancy gave a lecture entitled "Strategies and Techniques for Passing Aptitude Tests and Interviews" while Yakubu Damago lecture was entitled "Network Management as a Strategy for self Employment".

at the complex, at about 8.45 a.m., said: "I do not want to see anybody except the governor, Mr President and elected legislators."

Ohajuruka told NAN that civil servants had been warned severally and penalised, saying: "I have met the head of service to redeploy all the staff who came late today."

"We will no longer condone lateness in 2005," he added, pointing out that the legislators, who would be reconvening on Tuesday, would approach their duties with renewed vigour.

Ohajuruka wondered why out of over 2005 staff, only about 30 of them were on duty as at 9 a.m., stressing: "We are taking the redeployment serious to make others sit up."

Those locked out include the chief of staff to the

speaker, the three heads of departments, deputy clerk and the deputy sergeant-at-arms.

Some staff, who asked not to be named, however, urged the legislators to lead by example.

NGO targets N324.3m to save wetlands

An NGO, Joint Wetlands Livelihoods (JWL), has said N324.3 million is required "to dredge the Rivers Kafin-Hausa and Hadejia to save the Hadejia-Nguru Wetlands from extinction".

JWL told newsmen touring the wetlands that "the health of the two rivers was endangered by siltation and Typha grass, depleting the natural fortunes of the affected wetlands." Malam Isa Sulaiman, JWL research officer, said the affected states of Jigawa,

In a bid to encourage private participation in the country's image project, President Olusegun Obasanjo is to inaugurate the core group of the Heart of Africa project.

The Nigeria image project is now called the Heart of Africa project.

Yobe and Bauchi, were expected to contribute financially to the proposed dredging project.

"Of course, the third and final step, which is an intervention at basin level, is expected to be financed with the support of the federal government," he said.

"The JWL advisory committee has commenced contacts with affected states and the federal government for the immediate take-off of the project," he said.

Obasanjo set to inaugurate the Heart of Africa project

Africa project.

A statement made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja by the Ministry of Information and National Orientation noted that the core group would be made up mainly of private sector players.

It stated that the core group would oversee the implementation of the project, which, it noted, was aimed at highlighting the positive attributes of the country.

The group, would among other functions, play a crucial role in fund generation and management, and serve as a link between government and the private sector, the statement added.

In a related development, Information Minister Chukwuemeka Chikelu said that the composition of the core group represented a positive step which would enhance credibility for the project.


Chikelu added that the group would provide a veritable platform for a successful effort of the public and private sectors toward achieving set national objectives.

Membership of the group is drawn from all sectors of the economy, including banking, manufacturing, tourism, telecommunications among others.

NAN reports that the Heart of Africa project was unveiled in July 2004.

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130% Growth

Nov 2003: ₦1,348B
April 2004: ₦3,052B

EARNINGS

577% Growth

Nov 2003: ₦1,968B
April 2004: ₦12,200B

PROFIT BEFORE TAX

Nov 2003: ₦294M
April 2004: ₦1,418B

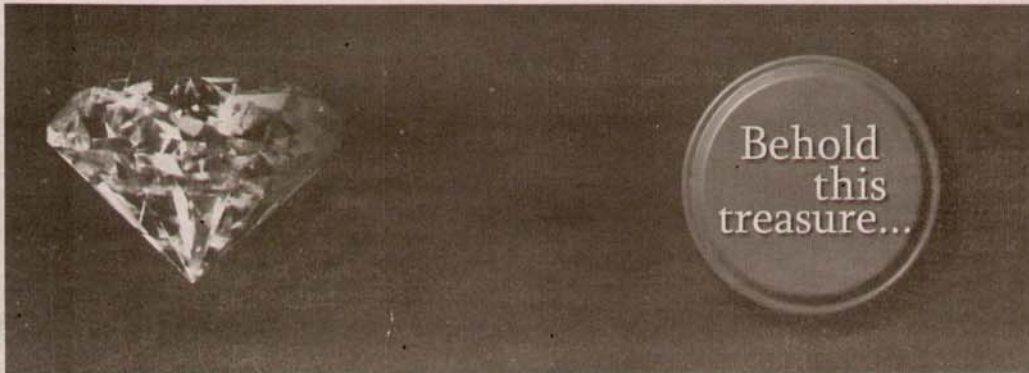
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Inside Politics

Issues in National Dialogue

Since Wednesday, January 12, when the Council of State ratified the convening of a national political reforms conference, opposition has been mounting against the idea. Instead of the federal government eliciting accolades for eventually conceding that a forum is needed to discuss the nation's problems, it is receiving yet another series of bashing from different fronts. And these flaks are coming largely from advocates of a conference that will thrash out the piling up problems the nation is facing.

The proposed national dialogue, which to many people is a quasi-national conference, should have been a forum for the advocates of the confab to push forward their demands.

But they have rejected it on several counts. Part of the issues raised against the gathering include lack of legal backing, mode of selection (rather than election) of participants, the haste with which it's being convened, and non-provision of referendum to consider its recommendations.

Antagonists of the conference argue that without a law setting up the confab, it may end up being one of those numerous talk shops that only end up inside the waste paper basket. Anybody who feels that its outcome will not be favourable to him may easily rush to the courts and challenge the legality of the confab. Government itself may procrastinate in implementing the confab's recommendations if they turn out to be unfavourable.

There are also contentions that the delegates to the conference should have been elected so that the forum would have the mandate of the people. The proposed arrangement, which will see the 36 state governors, 28 of them from the People's Democratic Party (PDP), handpicking six delegates each, makes it to appear as if it were a gathering of the ruling party. Also that the president is to nominate 50 persons makes it, in the words of Prof. Wole Soyinka, a "presidential retreat."

Besides this, there are arguments that adequate time should be given to participants to prepare by holding pre-confab meetings with the people they are to represent. The confab according to them should also be subjected to a plebiscite to feel the pulse of majority of Nigerians.

Indeed a number of quarters read ulterior motives in the whole idea. According to the Citizens Forum for Constitutional Reforms (CFCR), the confab "is not only a div-

By Habeeb Idris Pindiga,
Political reporter

ersion from fundamental national issues, but also appears to be a grand design by the executive to succeed itself and subvert the democratic yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians....

"The proposed conference faces the problems of legitimacy and legality because it is largely a product of the initiative of the president and governors using the platform of the Council of State, an advisory body, rather than emanating from the legislature following the normal legislative process of passing a bill."

One of the main hurdles for this conference is coming from the federal legislators, who feel that their powers are being encroached upon. In fact they have been shut out from the confab, because they won't be allowed to participate or nominate delegates. Their role is only to legislate on the outcome of the conference.

Leader of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) caucus in the senate, Senator Lawal Shuibabu summed it up thus: "The whole idea of constituting a conference when we have a constitution in place, I think, is illegal. We have a National Assembly in place and then you want to set up a committee that will discuss the problems of Nigeria."

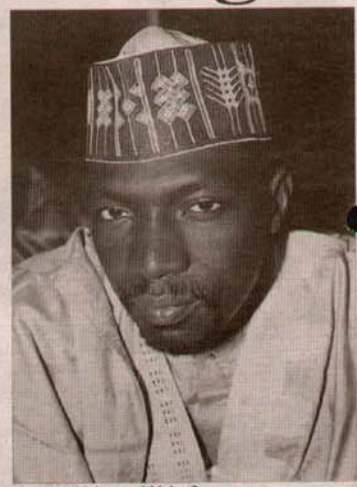
In the words of a member of the House of Representatives, Ahmed Aliyu Wadada, the idea is "ridiculing our constitutional responsibility. Is the president saying he does not have confidence in the National Assembly? If that is the case we should all pack our things and go home. We do not have any business being here and collecting allowances on behalf of the citizens if the polity does not need our input as elected representatives of the people."

"So the position of my colleagues and myself is that we reject this national dialogue and will let the public know our principled

Antagonists of the conference argue that without a law setting up the confab, it may end up being one of those numerous talk shops that only end up inside the waste paper basket. Anybody who feels that its outcome will not be favourable to him may easily rush to the courts and challenge the legality of the confab. Government itself may procrastinate in implementing the confab's recommendations if they turn out to be unfavourable.



President Olusegun Obasanjo



Governor Mohammed Makarfi

position on the matter. We cannot sit by and allow anybody to usurp our responsibilities."

The academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) also dismissed the dialogue and vowed not to be part of it. ASUU said its first grouse against the proposed dialogue was that government was handpicking majority of the members. President of the union, Abdullahi Sule-Kano said, "It is not a dialogue. It is a monologue. We cannot be part of it. We want the survival of our country in a democratic environment not in a dictatorial way. We don't want to just go and listen to what Obasanjo wants to hear."

The Igbos have also vociferously kicked against the conference. They opted rather for an SNC. Immediate past Secretary-General of *Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo*, Prof Ben Nwabueze, asked the Igbo to shun the national conference. He argued that the proposed conference would not address the fundamental issues affecting the component parts of the country. What

Nigerians wants, according to him, is a "People's Conference" that would determine the course that the various interest groups in the federation would like to steer in the future. He insisted that should Obasanjo fail to yield to the demand of Nigerians to revert to the original idea of a Sovereign National Conference, the Igbo would be left with no choice but to participate in the parallel conference being organised by "the people".

"We must not associate ourselves with the type of conference he (Obasanjo) is trying to foist on the country. We must join the protest against Obasanjo's plan to change or subvert the character of the conference (sovereign). Nothing short of a people's conference is acceptable, and we must be part of the pressure to get him to convene it. There is no doubt that legal obstacles are on the way of a conference not backed by a law, especially a law authorising a referendum to approve and adopt the results of the conference. However, such

obstacles are not insurmountable." He said.

But while opposition continued to mount against the conference, Obasanjo on Sunday took his advocacy for the dialogue to his kinsmen. He met with the six state governors and 12 traditional rulers in the Southwest on the modalities for selecting the zone's representatives to the proposed confab.

The Ota meeting, which was held at the instance of the president, was to ensure that the best materials were picked from the zone for the conference. Obasanjo's position was that the quality of the 36 representatives to be picked by the six states in the zone help in determining how well the position of the Yoruba would be presented at the forum. According to reports, it was agreed at the meeting that the governors and traditional rulers should prevail on some of the prominent citizens of the zone that have persistently kicked against the conference to have a rethink.

Special Assistant to Obasanjo on Media, Mrs. Remi Oyo, confirmed in a statement that the meeting was to work out the modalities for the selection of the zone's representatives to the national conference and ensure that the best materials were chosen. She said the president had also encouraged political leaders from other zones of the country to organise similar meetings with their people.

While this goes on, a new dimension has been added to the controversy surrounding the proposed dialogue. A meeting behind closed doors in Kaduna between some South south governors and

the chairman of the confab committee, Governor Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna state has prompted speculations that the dialogue would decide Obasanjo's successor in 2007. Reports say that the president may have given the nod for a Southsouth or the Southeast presidency in 2007 and is set to use the proposed national conference to achieve that objective. Governors Donald Duke of Cross River and Lucky Igbinedion of Edo were in Kaduna during the *sallah* celebrations last week, ostensibly to attend the *durbar* at the Emir of Zazzau's palace. But reports say that the governors had nocturnal meetings with their Kaduna State counterpart on the 2007 agenda. Makarfi is being tipped as a vice presidential candidate. Last year the Kaduna governor spearheaded the call for a return of the presidency to the north after Obasanjo's second term in 2007. But his appointment to chair the national conference committee might have softened his stance which is why the Southeast and the Southsouth politicians are trying to woo him.

With such controversies and scepticisms heralding the proposed national dialogue, it's obvious that its outcome will also be a subject of discord. Since the government appears not ready to buckle, the boycott option may not turn up to favour the antagonists as they would have lost an opportunity to push forward their demands. If, however, the dialogue holds without the lead advocates of a sovereign national conference, is almost certain that the agitation will not die down in the foreseeable future.

Sports

Serena rolls, Sharapova rallies into Aussie Open semis

In women's action Tuesday, Serena Williams continued her domination of Amelie Mauresmo.

The seventh seed from the U.S., Williams dashed Mauresmo's hopes of a Grand Slam breakthrough, crushing the second-seeded Frenchwoman, 6-2, 6-2, Tuesday to set to the semifinals of the Australian Open.

It was Williams' ninth victory in 10 career matches with Mauresmo and could hardly have been more

dominant.

The American converted 4-of-8 break points against the Frenchwoman and saved all five of Mauresmo's break chances. Williams - who won here in 2003 but missed this event last season due to injury - recorded 23 winners against 15 unforced errors, while Mauresmo had just 10 winners and 27 miscues.

Mauresmo played with her upper left thigh taped due to tightness in her adductors.

"It was the adductors,"

Mauresmo said. "I mean, tennis is already tough when you're 100 percent. When you're moving not so well on both sides, it's getting tougher and tougher to win."

"I couldn't tell (she was injured). I was just really looking at the ball and I was trying to be focused on the ball, more or less," Mauresmo said. "She did make a lot more errors than normal. I don't remember even running her that much. I know

she made a ton of errors. She usually doesn't hit that many errors within two sets like that. Usually it's over three sets."

Williams' semifinal opponent will be Maria Sharapova, who handled the heat better than fellow Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova in Tuesday's first quarterfinal.

With temperatures exceeding 90 degrees, Sharapova, the reigning Wimbledon champion and fourth seed, rallied to defeat Kuznetsova, the current U.S. Open titlist

and fifth seed, 4-6, 6-2, 6-2, to advance to the semifinals at the year's first Grand Slam.

"In the second and third set, I just went off," Kuznetsova said. "It's not just because of fitness conditions. It's all in the mind. I have the game. I have everything. If I don't do the right things, I don't win. I had the match in my hands, I had everything. I just switched off."

The players were allowed to take a 10-minute break after the second set due to the heat.

"(The break was) very helpful because I thought both of us were - you know, that's when we were starting to get a little tired and we wanted the points to go shorter, so we were going for our shots," Sharapova. "And I think the quality of the tennis started to pick up once we took the break. Well, I felt like it did. I felt like after I got the break, my body cooled down a little bit."

Sharapova, who did not earn a break point against Kuznetsova in the first set, converted 4-of-5 break opportunities in the second set and 4-of-8 in the third. She broke to win the match, ending it with a running

crosscourt forehand winner past Kuznetsova at the net.

Kuznetsova, who had not dropped a set through four rounds and had been 2-1 lifetime against Sharapova, committed 53 unforced errors - 16 more than Sharapova.

A record seven Russian women reached the round of 16 but only Sharapova will play in the semifinals.

Last year in the Wimbledon final, the 17-year-old Sharapova shocked Williams, the two-time defending champion, 6-1, 6-4, to win her first career Grand Slam, then beat her again in the final of the year-end WTA Championships.

"To be honest, I feel like I don't have anything to lose," Williams said. "I think I was way too nervous at Wimbledon. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't breathe. Sometimes you want it too bad that you just freak yourself out. So now I feel fine. I feel like I'm really proud of myself, doing pretty well with my preparation here."

Also, 48-year-old Martina Navratilova and Daniela Hantuchova lost their doubles quarterfinal to sixth seeds Kuznetsova and Alicia Molik, 6-3, 6-0.

Federer ousts Agassi at Australian Open

In a matchup worthy of a final, defending champion Roger Federer was graceful and at his relentless best in beating four-time winner Andre Agassi 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 on Tuesday to advance to the semifinals of the Australian Open.

The top-ranked Federer extended his winning streak to 26 matches with a dazzling array of stinging winners from the baseline, crisp volleys and 22 aces that often left the quick Agassi flat-footed and the selfout crowd

applauding.

The 24-year-old Agassi, who came into the season-opening Grand Slam in perhaps the best shape of his life to be ready for matches like this, survived a record 51 aces in his fourth-round victory over Joachim Johansson by exploiting the few chances he got.

But one of the game's best counter-punchers never could find a real weakness to exploit against Federer's all-around game.

With both players painting the lines and punishing ordinary shots, Federer broke for a 4-2 lead in the first set when Agassi, trying to put a little extra on a second serve, double-faulted.

Then, as he did again and again while winning three Grand Slam events last year, Federer found an extra gear when he needed it. The Swiss star saved four break points - two with aces - while serving for the set in a game that went to deuce six times. A third ace gave Federer his third set

point, and he turned a good service return from Agassi into a backhand winner down the line.

Federer then broke Agassi in the first game of each of the next two sets and fended off the charismatic American's only other break point, in the fourth game of the second set, with a pair of service winners sandwiched around an ace.

With the crowd urging Agassi to extend the match, Federer finished it off with a serve that Agassi lunged for but could only dump into the net.

rousing standing ovations when introduced - the loudest for McNabb - and chants of "E-A-G-L-E-S!" filled the arena. The Eagles were the reason the game was moved to Monday night - it was originally scheduled for Sunday but was pushed back so it would not conflict with the NFC championship game.

Iverson came over at halftime and hugged McNabb, while Owens said he could return from his ankle injury to play in the Super Bowl against New England.

"Spiritually I've been healed and I believe that I'll be out there on that field Sunday, regardless of what anyone says," Owens said.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 24 points and Dwyane Wade had 17 points and 11 assists for the Heat, who were coming off a 29-point win the night before against New Orleans.

A Super Bowl appearance is about the only thing that could overshadow a matchup of Shaq vs. AJ.

With the score tied at 83 midway through the fourth quarter, highlights of the Eagles season were shown on the videoboard and the fans got up again for another thunderous ovation.

"I kind of got goose bumps with the whole thing," Iverson said. "I know it's a great feeling to be a part of that team and just to know you've got fans like that."

Perhaps feeding off the energy from the unusually lively crowd, the Sixers went ahead on Dalembert's dunk and Kyle Korver's 3-pointer.

Iverson outshines Shaq as 76ers top Heat

On an impromptu Philadelphia Eagles appreciation night, Allen Iverson hoped some of that championship magic rubbed off on the 76ers.

"It was something you always want to be a part of," Iverson said. "That's the same thing with me. Just being able to try to get to the Finals and win it. That's the ultimate goal."

Iverson had 45 points and 11 assists, leading the Philadelphia 76ers to a 106-98 victory over the Miami Heat on Monday night.

Samuel Dalembert added 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Sixers, who took over down the stretch in a matchup of Eastern Conference division leaders.

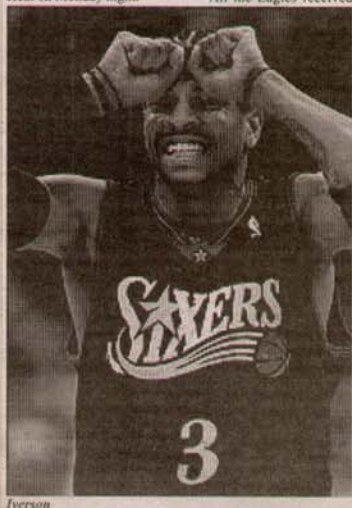
With Donovan McNabb, Terrell Owens and Brian Westbrook highlighting a group of Eagles watching court-side, the game was practically an afterthought for fans still in a frenzy over the Super Bowl.

All the Eagles received

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Iverson

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

VENUES OF DISPLAY

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

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

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.

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

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FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER.

ADVERTORIAL

“SENATOR SALEH DANBOYI’S INTERVIEW”

Our attention has been drawn to a blistering interview on page 36 of the INSIDER WEEKLY, JANUARY 17, 2005, granted by Saleh Usman Danboyi, former Deputy Governor to Rev. Jolly T. Nyame, 1999 to 2003 and now a Senator representing Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.

As representatives of our people at the Local Government council levels of Wukari, Takum, Donga, Ibi and Ussa representing Southern Taraba Senatorial Zone, where the Senator comes from and member of the PDP family, we were not only astonished, but also astounded, that a man of Senator Danboyi’s standing who has an uncircumscribed access to our amiable Governor, could not summon enough courage to visit the state chief Executive physically, or, avail himself the advantage of modern information communication technology, to ventilate his assessment of the direction and speed of governance; but instead chose the cowardly and hypocritical path of venting his spleen on the pages of a news magazine.

It is therefore with utmost candour, we dare say, that the interview in question, contrary to the claim that he has nothing personal against the Governor was meant, among other things, to upbraid, harangue, denigrate, vilify and, above all, bite the finger that fed him!

Please join us, as we take you down paved memory lane. To start with, the embittered and embattled Senator is a man whose true state of origin is mired in controversy. But as it is the characteristic of the people and politics of southern part of Taraba state in particular and the state in general, the issue of doubtful origin was thus swept under the carpet on the urging of Governor Nyame, who subsequently catapulted him from obscurity to prominence with the exalted position of the number two citizen of the state in the capacity of a Deputy Governor from 1999-2003.

Secondly, it should by no means, whatsoever, escape our memory that Southern Taraba is blessed with more than enough number of persons who are head and shoulder above the Senator from the prism of educational attainment, exposure and experience; and from whom the prospects of a more vibrant and proactive representation and better legislation would have been more guaranteed. But instead, with the intervention of the Governor, Saleh Danboyi was cleared and allowed to coast to victory, hence his membership of the upper legislative chamber.

Now to the crux of the matter. Hear him:

“When you take stock of Nyame’s five years of administration you will discover that he has failed obviously in managing the state. He is inconsistent that is why I am challenging him to wake-up and face his responsibility. His government is characterized with inconsistency, financial mismanagement and recklessness, he has no focus, his programmes are not aimed at empowering citizens of the state.”

Deducing from the above, one could see a classic case of hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Or have we forgotten so soon that of the five years he mentioned, he held sway as the second in command for four years? So how does he exculpate himself from the shortcomings he alluded to? And on what moral high ground does he stand? Or wait a minute, is it a case of the pot calling the kettle black? Or was he so attracted to the perks and perquisites of office that he could not throw in the towel by way of resignation, as a sign of dissatisfaction with the way the state was being administered when he was the number two? Surely, he must pass for a man of straw with no fire in his stomach.

Not done with the above, our dear Senator went further to harp on the need for “principle of good governance and agitation for accountability” It is on the basis of this that we ask the question: since when has Senator Danboyi become an unrepentant apostle of the above-quoted virtue? Can one give out what one does not have? The Senator ought to have known that principles are not in the air; they are in the people who profess them; and history is replete with

men and women, who made the supreme sacrifice for not recanting their principles.

A case in point was *Socrates the philosopher*, who drank the hemlock on pains of death to prove a point. His name has remained a reference point to this day. In Nigeria, men such as Gani Fawehinmi, Aminu Kano (of blessed memory,) Wole Soyinka, etc, have gone to prison at various times on account of their unassailable principles. So what could have stopped our distinguished Senator from giving a concrete expression to his avowed principles? Or is he a stranger to the saying that “examples are better than precepts”. Indeed he is not in any way different from the capricious and fickle-minded Roman Plebeians graphically captured in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* who had no mind of their own other than bending in what ever direction expediency dictated. What a pity!

But at this juncture, we make bold to say that we are not in the least surprised at the Senator’s antics. Of course, what do you expect from a man who felt shortchanged by the Governor when he wanted to stage a come-back to the State House as a Deputy Governor when the position became vacant last year? This amply explains why we regard the interview as the vituperations of an ingrate. But the Senator should understand that the pages of history are littered with the corpses of persons who having climbed to the top decided to neglect or throwaway the ladder that made their ascendancy possible in the first place, believing that they might not have a need for it in their quest for greater heights in future. But will that not amount to outright folly?

Furthermore, we would like the Senator to give answers to the following: To what extent has he added value to constituency representation through:

1. Regular consultation with the people
2. Attracting Development to the Constituency
3. Bringing the people of Southern Taraba to the main stream of Taraba politics.

Please it should be worthy of note that if the answers to the above posers run fowl of the yearnings and aspirations of our people, then you do not need the services of a clairvoyant to tell you where you now stand as far as the intricate power equation of our state is concerned.

In conclusion, as the cloud gathers in the direction of 2007, the worth of *who is who* in the political calculus of Taraba State shall be put on the scale; a sort of day of reckoning, it is then that men shall be separated from the boys, and the grains winnowed from the chaff. Until then enough of empty platitudes and Sanctimonious posturing, to score a cheap political point.


 Rep. Emmanuel Bwacha,
 (Takum, Donga & Ussa
 Fed. Constituency).

On behalf of

1. **Hon. Mark B. Useni**
Chairman, Takum Local Government
2. **Hon. Josiah John Aji**
Chairman, Wukari, Local Government
3. **Hon. Lawal Adbulkarim**
Chairman, Ibi Local Government.
4. **Hon. Dr. Abdulazeez Abwage**
Chairman, Donga Local Government.
5. **Hon. Elisha Rikwentishe**
Chairman, Ussa Local Government

Sports

NFL seeks review of Globacom sponsorship

The Nigeria Football League Board has expressed dissatisfaction with the Globacom sponsorship fee for the league, even as it insisted on being paid N36 million by the NFA. The N36 million is the proceeds for last season's sponsorship.

By Patrick Andrews, Senior Reporter (Sports)

Obaseki, said they would seek a review of the contract for the mutual benefit of both clubs and Globacom. Though the chairman said the NFL was not in the know of the details of the sponsorship, he insisted that

the deal as it stands now was not adequate and beneficial to the clubs.

"We will ask for a review of the contract because as it stands now it is not quite beneficial to clubs. We intend to meet with Globacom to renegotiate the sponsorship," he said adding though that the details of the contract would

become known to the NFL when the NFA submits hand over notes to it.

The NFL hopes to become acquainted with specific details of various contracts entered into by the NFA in respect of the league and until the contract papers are handed over, the NFL may not take any decision on them.

Globacom had signed a four-year sponsorship deal worth N1.7 billion with the NFA. The deal has only been consummated for one year.

"We are sure Globacom did maximise the clout generated by the league for it and should correspondently review the sponsorship upward to the benefit of clubs this season."

The board at its maiden press conference also announced that it has increased and taken over the payment of indemnity of match commissioners to forestall their inducement by clubs.

Similar arrangement, he said, is being worked out for the referees, adding that mileage would be used to calculate the transport fares due each official.

He disclosed that each match commissioner would be paid N20,000, centre referees N15,000 as against N6,000, referees assistants

N12,000 while the reserve referees would earn N10,000 up from N5,000, N2,000 respectively.

On the issue of broadcast right, Chief Obaseki said discussions were being generated by Super Sports, NTA, AIT even as he said the League would be televised live from February 12, when it is scheduled to kick-off.

Meanwhile, only 50 referees are to handle the whistle in the premier League while 80 are to be given that responsibility in the proleague.

Chief Obaseki, who confirmed that 22 clubs out of the 52 expected to feature in the League have collected registration forms, said stern punitive measures are to be adopted against erring referees, this season.

He said, it was the resolve of the club owners to ensure a hitch-free season adding that the NFL would not shift the goal post no matter which club is found wanting.



Alain Dault, Mohammed of EFC Moss, right, wants to impress Super Eagles coach Christian Chukwu about his fitness as he continues with his goal scoring form in the Belgium top flight.

WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Chukwu worries over players' fitness

Chukwu worries over players' fitness should be a happy man, and he is for now. But the Super Eagles coach sleeps with one eye open, worrying about his players staying injury-free ahead of World Cup qualifier against Gabon in March.

"I am happy with the form of most of our players this period," Chukwu told KickOffNigeria.com on Tuesday. "If they keep this up, we will not have too much problems against Gabon," he said.

"But I am worried about injuries. I am praying for the players to stay injury free throughout the year. I don't want what happened to us when we went to Angola to happen again, where key players pulled out because of injury and we had to go with a makeshift team."

"Although we did well, and could have got a draw, it was a match that we should have won if we had all our top players fit."

He explained that injuries cannot be planned for until they happen.

"You don't expect a player to walk into the field and play to avoid injury. They have to give hundred percent to the people who pay them. At the same time, they have to do the same when they play for the national team. All we can do is pray that nothing happens."

"One bad tackle can damage a player for a long time and we hope that all our players, including those who are not yet in the national team, stay injury-free," Chukwu said.

Nigeria trail group leaders Angola by a point and Chukwu is optimistic that the deficit will be taken care of in the next two games.

"Angola are a good side and they have done well to be where they are. But we will overtake them in the next two games and hold on to win the ticket to Germany," Chukwu said.

AFRICAN YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP

Taye Taiwo suspended

Flying Eagles left full back Ismaila Taiwo Taye will miss Wednesday's semi final against Morocco at the ongoing African Youth Championship after he was handed a one-match ban for receiving two bookings in the group games.

The head coach of the Nigerian team, Samson Siasia, has already received the letter notifying him of the player's suspension Monday from CAF and the letter informed that "for having received two cautions in two different matches of the competition, the player Ismaila Taiwo Taye is suspended for the forthcoming match in the semi-final category against Morocco".

CAF, it was gathered, invoked Article 34 (1) of its regulations of the 14th African Youth Championship to suspend Taiwo. The regulations stipulate "for the

preliminary tournament, a player who receives two cautions shall be automatically suspended from playing the following match".

Taiwo received the first caution in his team's first match against Benin Republic while he got the second one from Referee Dianta Badran from Senegal in the last group match against Cote d'Ivoire for removing his jersey during celebration of his match winner.

Coach Siasia, however, told KICK OFF: "Though it is very painful to miss a first team player at this stage of the competition, we still

remain focused in our ambition to win this tournament.

"We have capable replacement for Taye. It is only that he received unwarranted yellow card which could have been prevented if not for this wild celebration." The tale is very clear on this matter. Taye should not have done this", Siasia explained.

Still on the suspension, the leader of Nigerian delegation to the competition, Dura Orduen said: "There is no cause for alarm. The coach of the team has assured me of a good replacement for Taiwo and by

God's grace we will achieve victory against Morocco on Wednesday."

Also on Monday, the Flying Eagles was turned back from training at their Hotel Marina training pitch by the hotel officials who requested for 30 000 CFA, equivalent of 8 250 Naira before they can be allowed to train on the pitch.

Coach Siasia had ordered his boys back to their hotel camp before Solomon Okoronkwo's manager, Marcelo Houseman offered to pay the money.

The hotel officials later allowed the Nigerian team to train.

Benin coach dedicates ticket to Samiou

Benin Republic coach, Serge Devege has dedicated the World Youth Championship ticket they got after achieving a hard earned 3-3 draw against desperate Mali to their late goalkeeper Yessoufou Samiou.

Speaking to KICK OFF after the match, the elated French coach who slumped during the tension soaked match disclosed "The qualification ticket became so important to us after our goalkeeper Samiou died and we all vowed to win the ticket for him and we are now happy that we achieved that objective."

and good team as you can see from the way they played against us today, but we are happy that we won the World Cup ticket," Devege said.

"This championship is so interesting and good for the youth teams in Africa and especially our team," he

confessed to KICK OFF on Saturday.

The coach, who slumped when Ladi Koniba Sogodogo 65th minute equalizer for Mali equalized took the scores to 3-3, was treated at the Stadium clinic.

Facts:

- *Nigeria is the only country to secure nine points in the group stage having won all its matches.
- *Nigeria, Benin and Egypt have the most potent attack in the group stage with seven goals each.
- *Nigeria has the meanest defence in the group stage conceding only one goal in three matches.
- *The highest victory margin in the group stage is 4-1. Benin beat Cote D'Ivoire 4-1 and Egypt did the same against Lesotho
- *The highest aggregate score was recorded in Benin, Mali game. It ended 3-3.
- *Benin and Egypt scored the highest number of goal in a single game. They both scored four.
- *Angola is the only team without a point in the championship and also had the poorest scoring record of just one goal.



Taiwo

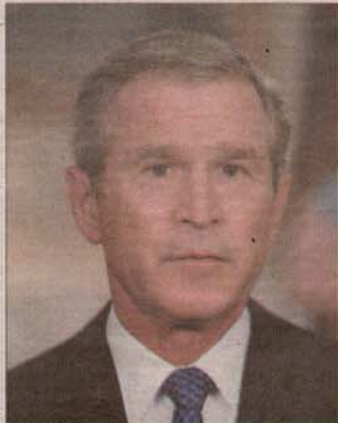
AYC Goal Scorers

Ismaila Taye-Taiwo	Nigeria	2
Abwou David Solomon	Nigeria	2
Maiga Gariga	Benin	2
Dembe Khalifa	Mali	2
Bendemou Tarik	Morocco	2
Fadi Mohamed	Egypt	2
Diaby Abdaramane	Cote D' Ivoire	1
Nsofor Obinna	Nigeria	1
Nasr Hossam	Egypt	1
Tibcrkanine Rachid	Morocco	1
Okoronkwo Solomon	Nigeria	1
Adelfema Ouhayou	Nigeria	1
Zhuri Yedi	Cote D' Ivoire	1
Agbesti Coffi	Benin	1
Adeniyi Mathieu	Benin	1
Zundo Manuel	Angola	1
Monaphati Diomo	Lesotho	1
Mothoana Bokang	Lesotho	1
Iajour Moushine	Morocco	1
Abdou Abdallah	Egypt	1
Siam Islam	Egypt	1
Farag Ahmed	Egypt	1
Mohamed Abdallah	Egypt	1
Kebe Boubacar	Mali	1
Ladji Sogodogo	Mali	1
Roco Romuald	Benin	1
Oseni Bachirou	Benin	1
Omotoyossi Rassaq	Benin	1

This Space is for Sale

President Obasegun Obasanjo seems on a roll. Within a month he has fired the chairman of his party, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbu, fired his top cop, Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun, and, if newspaper speculations are anything to go by, he may soon be having – metaphorically speaking of course – Anambra State governor, Chris Ngige, for breakfast, Plateau State governor, Joshua Dariye for lunch, and his own deputy, Atiku Abubakar, for dinner. What all five have in common is that they have, in one form or the other, provoked great anger in the president. Such is his anger that the president has not been too concerned with due process in his determination to remove them.

The question is can anyone stop the president? Last week there was widespread media speculation that the moribund G-34, the pan-national political group chaired by former Vice-President, Alex Ekwueme, that strongly challenged General Sani Abacha's self-succession plan back in 1998, and which later metamorphosed into the PDP, would give it a try. As the speculations went, Ekwueme and Company, including G-34 chieftains like Chief S. B. Awoniyi, Chairman of Arwa Consultative Forum, and retired Col. Dangiwa Umar, one of Abacha's most consistent and persistent critics, had decided



President Bush

to move against the president to wrest the PDP from his deadening grip.

However even before the ink had dried on the speculating newspapers, the G-34 move, if it was ever planned, seemed to have collapsed. First, Ekwueme himself dismissed the speculations as just that – speculations. Second, Awoniyi told the media he was never invited to any G-34 revival meeting to start with. Third, Col. Umar acknowledged that he had indeed been invited but declined because he believed the generality of the group was opportunistic. Many of the members, he said, were angry with the president only because he did not invite them "to come and chop" or because they didn't think they had "chopped" enough before the president showed them out of the dining room door.

With the collapse of the G-34 talk even before it had started it seems no one can stop Obasanjo from running a one-man dictatorship for the rest of his second term.

Back in 1998 when Abacha seemed unstoppable, many leading Nigerians looked up to the country's foreign partners, notably the United States, Britain and Canada, for salvation. Conspiracy buffs and these include his wife, Mariam – believe that his sudden and mysterious death on that day in June 1998, was not through some divine intervention, but was the work of a joint conspiracy of foreign and local intelligence organizations.

Any one looking up to either form of salvation in Obasanjo's case may yet be disappointed. God, the man himself believes and has repeatedly said so, is on his side.

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WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Bush, Obasanjo, Musharraf, three of a kind

By Mohammed Haruna

This may be a delusion, but so far, to use a local Pentecostal expression, no weapon fashioned against the man has prospered, whether it is impeachment or moves to stop him from getting a second term or litigation against his re-election.

We seem then left with outsiders for our salvation from outside our shores. This, I am afraid, is even far less likely than divine intervention. This is simply because the outside forces are more than happy with the direction, if not the speed, of his policies and programmes, especially the economic ones and his quiet commitment to fight so-called Islamic fundamentalism.

In this latter objective, he is in the excellent company of Pakistani's President, General Pervez Musharraf, who has since become United State's principal partner in fighting so-called international terror especially in Asia.

As dictators, one in khaki, the other in mufti, Musharraf and Obasanjo should be strange-bed fellows with the George W. Bush, president of United States, the land of freedom. In

(3) given the intelligence outfits the powers of unrestricted searches of records of individuals, (4) allowed for unrestricted wiretapping of phones and internet monitoring and (5) allowed for searching of premises of suspects without warrants. Etc, Etc.

Only the other day, the administration of the same president who says he wants to spread freedom around the world, deported Yusuf Islam from America on the untenable ground that the former pop idol, once known as Cat Stevens, has suspicious ties with potential terrorists. This was on September 21, 2004. Yusuf Islam, without notification, had been put on a "no-fly" list because of these suspicions. It did not make any difference that he had always denounced terrorist acts like those of 9/11 and the Beslan massacre in Russia and that he is a highly respected British citizen. And not even the protest by Jack Straw, the British foreign secretary, over this tyrannous act elicited any apology from the US authorities.

If Yusuf Islam's high-handed treatment is understandable



President Obasanjo

his recent inauguration speech for his second term, Bush for the umpteenth time, trumpeted his administration's commitment to freedom for all the people of the world. "America in this young century" he said, among other things, it proclaims liberty throughout the world and to all its inhabitants."

According to the editors of World Socialist Web Site (WSWS), Bush in his 20 minute inauguration speech, uttered the word "freedom" 34 times and "liberty" a dozen times. Yet far from being a strange bedfellow with Musharraf and Obasanjo, Bush could not have been in more comfortable company. For, stripped of all his rhetorics about freedom and liberty, Bush has conducted the most repressive regime at home and abroad of all the United States' presidents.

The Hausas have a proverb, which says when a man promises to give you a gown, you should look at the one he is wearing. In his inauguration speech, Bush says his foreign policy priority is now to free the world of tyrants. The same president, however, initiated the USA Patriot Act of 2001 which spells out ominously as Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act.

By the act, the US attorney general has since been given the unprecedented powers to detain non-US citizens indefinitely on mere suspicion that they aid or abet terrorism. The act, among other things, has (1) broadened the definition of terrorism to include any offensive criticisms of government, (2) put the CIA back into the business of domestic spying,



President Musharraf

because of his religion, there simply can be no explanation other than fascism for the extension of similar treatment to US citizens. But this has been the case with US citizens who have been critical of Bush's policies of home and abroad.

Among the most glaring cases was the revelation by Edward Kennedy, the second most senior US senator, that over a period of five weeks, he was blocked from boarding flights because his name was on the "no-fly" list. Kennedy has been a persistent critic of Bush.

One of the greater ironies of Bush's promise to free the world of tyrants in his inauguration speech was that on the very inauguration day, 100-block area around the inauguration venue was cordoned off to normal traffic and was blanketed by massive security in the air, on roof tops and on the ground.

The sum of all these alone – and there are far worse infractions of other peoples freedoms by the Bush administration – is that when you look at the gown Bush is wearing as he promises to clothe the world in freedom and liberty, his promises sound worse than hollow.

Anyone therefore who imagines that the salvation of Nigerians from Obasanjo's determination to tyrannize them will come from the United States, or from Britain, its poolie, or from any of the other "democracies", will wait in vain for a long time, if not for ever. The man himself may believe God is on his side and the records so far may suggest he may be right, but in the end a peoples' salvation from tyranny lies in never giving up hope in fighting it.

As one wise saw once observed, the miracle that moved mountains carried a pick axe. To wait for miracle from heaven or from outside without we ourselves speaking up and standing up for our freedoms, without we ourselves in other words, picking up an axe, will be to wait for ever.