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16 PDP NEC members petition EFCC

Sixteen members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) National Executive Committee (NEC) have petitioned the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over what they described as mismanagement of the party's finances and assets by the Chief Audu Ogbeh-led national working committee (NWC) of the party, calling for an independent investigation of the party's finance.

By Isa Sanusi
 The 16-page petition dated December 20, 2004 was signed by members of the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) that includes, Mr. Sony Abang, Alhaji Alhassan Galadima, Dr. C.N. Obioka, Afolabi A. Elijah, Honourable Yunusa Adekunle Yusuf, Chief Oluksola Okunola, Alhaji Ahmed Muhammad Gusau, Dr. Tayo Dairo, Alhaji

Rasheed Salman, Mr. John Igboke, Chief Ropo Adesanya, Alhaji Yusuf Aiyitozo, Alhaji Ibrahim Gubio, Alhaji Muhammad Arzika and Usman Alto Romi. The petition made available to *Daily Trust* yesterday said that: "The PDP under the chairmanship of Chief Audu Ogbeh and the present crop of National Working Committee members is being rapidly run down through financial recklessness, mismanagement, and flagrant breaching of the party's constitution." They alleged that "the national working committee has consistently for three-years failed to prepare operational budget for the party," adding that "payment vouchers that are to be signed by the chairman and the national secretary or the national treasurer are being signed only by the national chairman, thereby removing the internal check of

dual control and counter balance."
 "We would like the national working committee to declare the exact income of the party generated from nomination fees, donations and levies. We estimated that the party's income from the three sources should be about N5,425,000,000.00. We would like a thorough account to be given of how the sum has been expended. We discovered that the national working committee borrowed the sum of N374,363,860 from Habib Nigeria Bank Limited without NEC approval," the petition added.
 The NEC members also alleged that the external auditors appointed by INEC to audit the party's accounts were frustrated and given N700,000 to influence their report adding that the NWC led by Chief Audu Ogbeh has to explain what it meant by "hire charges" on which in 2003 the sum of N178 million was allegedly spent.
 They accused the party leadership of operating accounts in twelve (12) banks, which they also described as a "deliberate ploy to perpetrate fraud."
 The petitioners also alleged that in March last year,



Governor Joshua Chibi Dariye (left) Chief (Mrs.) Valentina Dariye and Chief (Mrs.) Amina Tui Abubakar, wife of the vice-president at the Yakubu Gowon Airport to attend the 2004 award ceremony of hope alive humanitarian network.

2003 polls: APGA wants

Guobadia sacked
By Habeeb L. Pindiga
 Okorie, APGA noted that recent revelations by President Olusegun Obasanjo and Chris Uba on the election malpractice in Anambra State as well as the Appeal Court ruling that voided presidential election results of Ogun State were an indictment on the electoral body and a corroboration of APGA's insistence that the polls were a charade.
 APGA therefore urged that INEC chairman, Dr. Abel Guobadia and the national commissioners be relieved of their appointments to give way for an impartial electoral body.
 "We, therefore, reiterate our call for a genuine election."
 According to him, there are people who know what *shariah* is all about and even the non-Muslim but they

Zamfara gov seeks removal of immunity clause

Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara State has announced his support for the removal of immunity for governors, saying such would ensure transparency and sincerity in governance.
 Ahmed Sani spoke in Gusau, the state capital while charting with journalists on his activities in 2004.
 He explained that if the immunity is removed, no state governor in the country will even attempt to misuse public funds entrusted in his care because he knows that he can be taken to court for prosecution.

From Salisu Zakari Maradun & Abdulfatai Abdulsalam, in Gusau
 Alhaji Sani also maintained that it is because of the immunity that many governors are doing what they like, "because of the belief that nobody can touch or intimidate them," he emphasised.
 Said he: "If a governor knows that he is not going to be arraigned before any court as a result of his misconduct or mismanagement of the public funds he can decide to escape, he cannot even stay to hand over his office. I am therefore fully in support of

that move."
 On the issue of the *shariah* legal system which is currently being practiced in the state, Ahmed Sani narrated that there has always been misconceptions about it, "and that misconception will continue till the end of the world," Ahmed Sani added.
Obasanjo bows to pressure over National Dialogue - Tanko Yakasai
From Musa Umar Kazaure, in Kano
 President Olusegun Obasanjo has yielded to enormous pressure from a section of the country to hold the proposed national dialogue, a second republic politician and elder, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai has said.
 According to him, the pressure was enormous, limited

Contd. on Pg 2

when it was clear that the state of emergency administrator Gen. Chris Ali (rid) had not completed his job.
 Alhaji Tanko Yakasai opined that the national dialogue is unconstitutional because it was against the spirit of the constitution and also



Contd. on Pg 2
 Dr. Abel Guobadia

News

PDP *Contd. from Pg 1*

the party's national chairman authorised the payment of N104 million as sitting allowance for the national officers of the party noting that the National Working Committee (NWC) has to explain the reason why none of the ex-officio and deputies got a kobo.

The petition titled: "Please Save Our Party from MWC's plunder" and addressed to the director general of the EFCC prayed that "an independent investigation of the party is necessary to enable us, party loyalists know the extent of the plunder and these plunderers must be brought to book to serve as

deterrent to all party members.

This came as the party is to hold its national executive committee meeting tomorrow.

This petition is also coming at the heels of a row last month over the letter written to President Obasanjo over the cancerous crisis in Anambra State between Governor Chris and his erstwhile godfather, Chris Uba.

Chief Audu Ogbah had intimidated the president of the potential danger the Anambra crisis poses to democracy. Obasanjo in his reply, had accused Ogbah of hypocrisy in the saga.

Zamfara *Contd. from Pg 1*

don't like it and therefore they can say anything about it.

"Some people," he said are ready to go to any length to either destroy or stop it by using the press "although press are not the only organ of its destruction or stoppage."

He then cautioned those in the habit of creating ten-

sion among the people thereby creating disunity, to stop or face the wrath of Allah.

On the proposed national dialogue, Sani explained that the initiators of the dialogue deserved to be respected.

"But the question here is who is going to represent who at that level."

2003 polls *Contd. from Pg 1*

toral reform that will make the Independent National Electoral Commission and the State Independent Electoral Commissions truly independent," the statement added.

Reviewing the events of last year, the party called for a fresh start in 2005 to "enthroned genuine democracy."

Playing the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) government for drawing the nation backwards, APGA lamented that, "it is disgusting and sickening to see the principles of democracy being debased to immoral mob-rule."

The party said the New Year offers an opportunity for those involved to right the wrongs perpetrated in 2003 polls. "The nation cannot move forward if the people's stolen mandates are not returned. This is the only way the moral burden of the PDP-led government can be lifted and assuaged."

Meanwhile, in a separate statement also in Abuja yesterday, signed by its director of publicity, Okorie Orji, APGA claimed that only N46

million went into its coffers since creation in 2002.

Contrary to allegations by a break-away faction that the party's funds totalling almost N60 million were mismanaged, Orji said what was received was not even enough to run the party, let alone be stolen.

He said that; "the total official revenue of the party since it was registered is N46 million. And this covers all the assets of the party including office furniture, income from INEC, nomination fees, membership registration fees and donations."

Orji also exonerated Okorie from insinuations of trying to "foist" embattled Anambra governor, Chris Ngige on APGA, arguing that the chairman was firmly behind the party's candidate, Peter Obi.

He reiterated the party's resolve of zoning its 2007 presidential candidacy to the southeast, adding that APGA would never merge with any other party but would remain open to progressive alliances.

Obasanjo *Contd. from Pg 1*

against the democratic tenets that we currently operate in the country.

He added, "You have a democracy and a representative government where the president, the executive and legislatures at all level, is elected by the people, therefore they are the bonafide representatives of Nigerian people. If anything affects the polity in Nigeria cannot be channelled through those elected by the people, because democracy is on ground I do not share the view that we should allow an appointed body or nominated body to preside over our fate in this country."

Alhaji Tanko Yakasai stated that the issue of national wealth sharing embod-

ied in the South-south agitation led to a new revenue formula, saying that the constitution has always vested the power to tinker with such formula on the National Assembly which he believed is capable of handling the issue amicably.

On the recent presidential election tribunal judgement, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai hailed General Muhammadu Buhari for choosing to exhaust all legal means and taking the matter before the supreme court of the land.

He argued that the judgement itself, with three judges to one, was a clear testimony that all hope is not lost in the judiciary.

"No doubt, the judgement is a victory for democracy



L-R: The Chairman, House Committee on Aviation, National Assembly, Dr. Martins Oke, Director Safety and Technical Policy, Federal Ministry of Aviation, Capt. Mohammed S. Ruma, and Director of Finance and Supply, (F.M.A.) Mohammed K. Dupchi during 2004 National Ministerial Press Briefing by the Minister of Aviation in Abuja... Weekend. Pic: Kennedy Egbos

Appointment of tax consultants by states illegal - Tax Board chairman

By Ahmed I. Shekarau

Chairman of the Joint Tax Board (JTB), Ms. Ifeuko Omoigui, has described the use of tax consultants by some state governments as illegal and wasteful.

The JTB, whose members comprise federal and states tax chiefs, is established by law to promote uniformity in the application of tax laws throughout the federation.

A statement issued in Abuja said Ms. Omoigui told members of the Board who met at the weekend in Yola, Adamawa state, that whereas salaries and allowances of states boards of internal revenue are fully paid, between 10 and 15 percent of monthly internally generated revenue

is at the same time spent on the tax consultants.

Ms. Omoigui who doubles as chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), said this percentage expenditure on tax consultants by the states quadruples the cost of tax administration in the states.

"If (state) governments reinvest between 3 and 5 percent of monthly internally generated revenue in their boards for manpower development and training, a lot of their revenue projections would be met," she said.

The FIRS boss drew the "attention of state governments to the provisions of Finance (Miscellaneous Taxation Provision) Act No 18 of 1998 which outlaws the use of consultants for any of the revenue board's primary assignments of tax assessment, collecting and accounting.

She suggested that states should strengthen their revenue boards, and adopt best practices that would enable them achieve their goals of improving revenue collections.

One way to do this, she said, is to adopt information technology. Apart from the potential to record significant increases in revenue collections, she said that most economic activities,

including financial transactions and payment systems, are increasingly becoming dependent on electronic hardware.

She reiterated an earlier plea to state governors to provide "a minimum of N45 million each" for the computerization of their revenue Boards in 2005. Doing this would make it easier for the Joint Tax Board to realize its vision to establish "a uniform and vibrant tax and revenue machinery for the benefit of the nation."

She, however, cautioned that the introduction of technology in revenue generation efforts should be preceded by "upgrading the Revenue Authority and building capacity to ensure that the Revenue Authority is effectively handled by those charged with and appropriately paid for the responsibility."

"As we strive to improve revenue collected in each of the states and in the federal government, we should be just as concerned about building an institution that would ensure sustainable generation of revenues in an honest and ethical manner," she said.

Governor Boni Haruna of Adamawa State, who officially opened the meeting, urged the nation's tax chiefs to review revenue generation strategies and suggest measures that would minimise over-

dependence of states on oil revenue.

Such a review, he said, must take into account certain factors that militate against the states as they strive to improve on their internally generated revenue.

He listed some of the factors as "lack of professional expertise on the part of revenue officers, leakages in the collection process, deliberate evasion of taxes by individuals, corporate bodies and other institutions, and lack of review of existing tax laws by some states."

Governor Haruna told the meeting that they should not shy away from proposing pragmatic, viable and sustainable solutions to these problems, as the "federal government certainly has the political will to implement your recommendations that are geared towards enhancing the revenue base of this country, especially through effective administration of our tax laws."



Gov. Boni Haruna

NEWS



Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makurfi discussing with the Director-General of SMEDA, Mrs Modupe A. Adajuru at the stakeholders conference 2004 held in Kaduna...recently.

Intercity Bank targets N20bn from public offer

By Ahmed I. Shekarau

Intercity Bank Plc, has begun moves to raise N20 billion from the Nigerian Capital Market through an Initial Public Offer (IPO) expected to be launched before the end of the month.

An impeccable source in the bank told *Daily Trust* at the weekend that the management has secured approval of the Intercity Board of Directors to go ahead with the IPO, just as it continues its merger talks with some banks.

According to our source: "We (management of Intercity got a board (of directors) approval for a public officer that will commence soon in order to raise about N20 billion," adding that "we plan to offer about 10 billion ordinary shares of 50kobo per share at N2.50 kobo per share."

The source said further that "we've already started

making some contacts and the response we are getting from stakeholders and the general public is quite appreciable."

The source added further that his bank is "very optimistic" that it will hit its target in the capital market, stressing that "if we succeed, we'll be the first bank with northern appeal to raise funds from the capital market in this dispensation of recapitalisation and consolidation going on in the Nigeria banking industry."

The source disclosed further that the intercity management team as well as the board "will continue with wide consultations around the country hoping to establish very strong linkage with like-minded stakeholders in the south-west, south-east and south-south."

Specifically, the source

hinted that Intercity is committed to fostering "viable partnerships that could lead to the emergence of a broad-based national bank, even if with predominant northern shareholders."

Intercity is a medium class bank with 24 branches, *Daily Trust* reported in September last year that the bank had entered into merger talks with Inland Bank and First Atlantic. However, Inland Bank went to sign a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) for a merger with Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB) Plc, while First Atlantic joined the Intercontinental Bank group.

Dariye urges crises-free Plateau in 2005

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Jos

Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State has called on the people of the state to resolve that no human blood is shed under any circumstances in 2005.

In a New Year message to the people of the state, Governor Dariye described the year 2004 as a year of surprise, strange events, the unusual and the extraordinary and urged the people to draw important lessons from past experiences in the state with the view to avoiding the notable pitfalls.

"Let us renew our commitment to the ideals of love, tolerance and spiritual rejuvenation," the Plateau family has to create new vistas for social reintegration, mutual tolerance, development initiatives and economic stability."

According to him, these are the values that would propel commitment and satisfaction with their current disposition in life.

Dariye expressed optimism that they can prayerfully make the year 2005 a year of consolidation, reconciliation, political stability and economic prosperity.

He said government on its part has resolved to provide qualitative leadership to the people of the state as part of the democracy dividend they are expecting.

The governor, however, noted that this cannot be achieved without the support of the people, soliciting their prayers, loyalty, total support and understanding to enable government meet their expectations in the new year.

Flood: Jigawa awards N332m bridge contract

Hassan A. Karofi, in Dutse

Worried by the menace of persistent flooding that has been submerging communities along the Hadejia-Nguru wetlands; the Jigawa state government has awarded the construction of four bridges at the cost of N332m in the area.

Disclosing this to news-state commission for engineering and infrastructures, Alhaji Sidi Yanlema said the difficulties being faced by communities will soon be a thing of the past as the contract would see to the provision of access tunnels to water.

He said the menace of persistent flooding that has been devastating farmlands, properties and causing massive migration would soon be solved.

The commissioner also revealed that communities in Damo, Aranjasko and Akwado would be provided with

bridges as the state government has released over N100m to the contractors.

Yanlema cautioned the contractors against delay in the construction work as government would not condone any failure in the agreement, stressing that a one-year duration has been agreed as the time frame for the completion of the works.

Meanwhile, the construction of the Arawa-Baturiya road is billed to begin this year as feasibility study of the road has been concluded according to the commissioner. He said soon the difficulties being faced by communities in the area would be solved as government is determined to ensure the provision of road networks in all nooks and crannies of the state.

As preparations for the construction of the bridges to curtail the menace of flood-

ing in the area continues, communities along the Birniwa-Nguru area have expressed concern over the continual submerging of the only road linking the two states in the area.

Disclosing this to newsmen, chairman of Guri Alhaji Adamu Hassan said however government is doing all it could to ease the transportation difficulties in the area through the provision of road networks and bridges.

He said government would also compensate victims of the flood menace through resettling them and through the provision of social amenities in the area.

The chairman revealed that already communities in Kadira, Margada, Abunabo, Zago and Lafiya are being provided with electricity as a way to transform the communities and provide them with access to various social infrastructures.

NCNE offers IRI training for Nomadic teachers

From Aliyu Haruna, in Kaduna

The National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) has commenced a national training workshop for nomadic education teachers on Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI), in Zaria, Kaduna.

Declaring the workshop open, the executive secretary of the commission, Dr (Mrs) Nafisatu Dahiru Mohammed said that the training programmes have been organised by the commission over the year in order to update the teacher's skills, abilities, competencies and knowledge.

According to her, the programme exposed the teachers in nomadic schools to a variety of innovative and child-centred methods and approaches to teaching, which were aimed at improving performance, pointing out that once it is achieved, it would

contribute to the attainment of the commissions over all objectives.

She noted that the performances of the teachers in classroom have greatly improved adding that the Universal Basic Education (UBE) of which the nomadic teachers are part of, emphasises on equal access and equity in the provision of basic education to all Nigerians including disadvantaged and the hard-to-reach segment of the populace.

Dr. Nafisatu disclosed that IRI is one way of ensuring an unfettered access to basic education for the nomadic, which is delivered by radio.

The executive secretary said that the IRI audience involvement was a clean change from earlier forms of radio educational programme, say-

ing that radio was inexpensive and is a universal means of redressing educational problems worldwide compared to computers that are highly expensive.

She expressed dismay over the number of the nomadic teachers compared with the number of pupils.

She also disclosed that the IRI is carefully designed to improve the quality of learning environments where students' achievement is low and teachers are poorly trained.

Dr Nafisatu also said that the commission has a radio educational programme for adult pointing out that the programme was successful.

Also speaking, the executive secretary of the Universal Basic Education (UBE), Professor Gidado Tahir said that UBE places greater emphasis on improving the quality of its teachers for effective delivery of the basic education programme.

Hajj: IRS loses pilgrims to Kobo airline

From Musa Umar Kazaure, in Kano

Pilgrims from Jigawa State are now to be air-lifted by Kobo Air Limited to the Holy Land following refusal to give clearance to IRS Airlines aircraft to operate in Nigeria by the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA).

Jigawa State along with Katsina state, the Kano zone were initially slotted to be air-lifted by IRS airlines, the second authorised Hajj carrier for 2005 Hajj operation.

The Executive Director operations, for Kobo Airlines Alhaji Aminu Aliyu, confirmed the change while answering questions from journalists in Kano on the operations of Kano Air in the 2005 hajj.

He also announced that the federal capital territory which is also an IRS slot has requested for Kobo air to assist in airlifting their pilgrims because of the growing impact of the pilgrims who are ready for airlift.

Alhaji Aminu Aliyu said all the request came through the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs which is the main contractor of the airlines.

On Kobo's operation, the executive director operations said there has been no hitch since it commenced the airlift on the 28th of last month, adding that four out of the six aircraft for the operation have been airlifting pilgrims from Kano, Sokoto and Abuja zones (He added that 8 flights have so far been achieved in Sokoto, six in Kano and 4 in

Abuja zones.

Alhaji Aminu said Kobo Air will add to more aircraft on the 4th and 5th of this month when it is due to start the airlift in the remaining zones which include Maiduguri, Lagos, Adamawa and Kaduna. He disclosed that a total of 22 flights are expected from Kano, 22 from Sokoto zone and 4 from Lagos.

The problem of baggage return to Nigeria, he said, is being tackled by the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs through enlightenment of pilgrims to adhere to the official bags given. As far as Kobo is concerned, he added, the 40kg allowed by the carrier still stands and appealed to Nigerian pilgrims to adhere to the advice of the DPA to make this year's hajj a success.

On the possibility of giving Kobo air the go ahead to include pilgrims initially allocated to IRS, the director operations said it will depend on the time limit given his company to do such job because the Saudi authorities has already fixed January 15th as the deadline for transporting all Nigeria pilgrims to the Holy Land.

He, however, expressed the hope that the state pilgrims welfare agencies will ensure their pilgrims are on the days scheduled for their airlift to the Holy land to avoid last minute rush to beat the deadline.

News



Gov Kalu of Abia State (M) addressing the Press after inspecting the new site of Abia State University Teaching Hospital Abu, while the chief Medical Director Dr. Dennis Orji (RT) and the site Engineer/Contractor, Chief Gregory Ibe, listen with interest.

CAN warns politicians over 2007 campaigns

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has called on politicians to concentrate on the effective implementation of the ongoing reforms than the premature campaigns for 2007 elections.

The call was contained in a two-page New Year message made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) and signed by CAN President, The Most Rev Peter Akinola.

According to Akinola, the feverish warming up for the 2007 elections to the detriment of dealing with the issues at hand is not only dangerous but counter productive.

"There is need to warn all people to stop playing god as our tomorrow is in God's hand," the cleric said.

Looking ahead the New Year, the CAN leadership urged politicians to sustain government efforts at good governance, political tolerance and adequate maintenance of all essential infrastructures.

"We remind our politicians that the assurance is there that if they govern well today and perform their assigned responsibilities creditably, their achievements will speak in glorious terms for their tomorrow."

Reflecting on the activities of the church in 2004, Akinola maintained that the various denominations in CAN were providing leadership for the continent including increased responsibility within the church universal.

The industrial sector and academia witnessed giant strides and peace, Akinola said, adding there is hope in the years ahead.

Traditional titles bridge for unity says Gov. Ibrahim

Yobe State Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim has described traditional titles as bridge that unite Nigerians irrespective of tribal or religious inclinations.

Speaking at the palace of the High Chief of Nimo Community who conferred him with the title of Kpa-Kparido of Nimo (star of Nimo) along side Senator Usman Al-Bishir, ANPP Senate Minority leader, and the governor said such honour helps in cementing relationship between the North and South.

A statement by the governor's special Assistant (Media), Ibrahim Jirgi, quoted governor Ibrahim as saying that traditional titles are the best form of uniting Nigerians.

The governor said conferment of traditional titles across ethnic divides would help bridge the gap created by disunity among Nigerians.

"It is very important at this gesture to accommodate one another, be it Hausa, Yoruba or Igbo," he said.



Cross-section of graduands during the graduation ceremony of Prison Staff College, Kaduna.....recently

2007: Ex-chairmen forum supports southern president

The Northern ex-chairman and councilors' forum rose from a one-day meeting in Kaduna calling for the zoning of the presidency in 2007 to the South-South as a way of fostering mutual cooperation among sections of the country.

In a single-point communiqué, jointly signed by its national president, Umar Ibrahim and secretary, Lawal Aliyu, made available to Daily Trust in Abuja yesterday, the forum noted that the Niger-Delta had been providing the nation's main foreign exchange earner — oil — but had never occupied the presidency.

This, the forum said, had led to crises marginalization from the Zone, adding therefore that the Niger-Delta must be pacified with the presidency in 2007.

"The ground of marginalization, alienation and fears of domination of some sections by others still litter the political landscape, crying out for justice, equity and fair play.

"None is so deserving of urgent national attention and consideration as the plight of the South South zone of the Niger-Delta. A zone that has been creating the wealth for the country.

By Habeeb I Pindiga

A zone that has always supported national unity and continues to make unqualified contribution towards national growth and development, despite suffering despicable neglect".

The forum observed. After 47 years of the nation's independence by 2007, according to the forum, all the other five zones except

the South-South would have tested power.

"We therefore call on the council of state, the National Assembly, Civil Society Organisation, political parties, the international community and other stakeholders to support and work for the actualization of power shift to the South-South geo-political zone come 2007." The forum said.

Ex-Kwara Gov's aide arrested over murder

Security agencies may be closing up on the killers of late Accountant of the Kwara State Primary Education Board (SPEB), Mr. Samuel Agboola, with the arrest of one of the aides of former Governor Mohammed Lawal in connection with the murder.

Former Administrative Officer of the Herald Newspaper, Malam Isaka Owolabi and a close aide of the former governor was arrested in his house, in Ilorin last week and had since been reportedly whisked to Abuja for further investigations.

Authoritative intelligence source hinted Daily Trust at the weekend that the former administrative Officer who was the link between Mohammed Lawal and political thugs had allegedly confessed and made useful statements about the murder of late Agboola and other dirty jobs he carried out during the reign of the former governor.

According to the source, Isaka Owolabi among other things allegedly confessed to be linked to the bombing of the National Pilot Newspaper office, stadium road, Ilorin at the peak of the political violence which enveloped the state capital in 2003.

The former administrative officer who is closely related

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo in Ilorin

to Mohammed Lawal also allegedly confessed his part to the murder of the younger brother of a popular musician and staunch supporter of Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki while on their way to Markudi, Benue State for the PDP national convention in 2003.

The PDP delegation was ambushed at Ajasse-Ipo Town by political thugs who sprayed the convoy with gun shots killing the musician's brother and injuring several others.

Late Agboola, a star witness to the Justice Olujemisi Ajayi Judicial Commission of Inquiry which probed activities of SPEB between 1999 - 2003 was brutally murdered in his house shortly after giving evidence before the Commission.

In the celebrated inquiry, late Agboola backed his evidence with video clips of how SPEB money was withdrawn from the bank and diverted to government House Ilorin under the supervision of former Chief of Staff to governor Lawal, Malam Suleiman Olowonjare, who was the link in the fraudulent deals.

The video clip submitted to the Commission as exhibit showed the characters involved in the withdrawal and transfer of SPEB money to the Government House, Ilorin including the former Chief of Staff and bank officials as well as the vehicle used in the process.

At the submission of the SPEB report, governor Bukola Saraki had vowed that officials involved in the deal would not be spared just as he declared that the killers of the former accountant would be brought to justice.

Katsina budgets N31.4 bn for 2005

Governor Umaru Musa Yaradua of Katsina State has presented a budget of N31.4 billion to the State House of Assembly for the 2005 fiscal year.

The budget which was presented with N5.6 billion as opening balance for the year 2005, also has a recurrent estimate of N99,538 billion and N21,864 billion for capital expenditure.

Gov. Yardua said the internally generated revenue for the year is projected at N2,0984,900 while the statutory allocation from the federation account which stands at N22.8 billion with the sum of N90906,904,110 million as capital receipts.

Governor Yardua, however, described the projection of less than 10% of the total budget to internally generated revenue (IGR) as a very serious deficit which poses a serious challenge on the Government to rise and examine ways to rectify the situation.

The highest allocation of 2.5% N5.6 billion is for the provision of roads network across the state followed by education with a vote of N4.9 billion make up of 20% of the capital budget. Agriculture has N2.5 billion (11%) as well as Health and Water Resources having N1.9 billion and N1.2 billion respectively.

The budget, he said would ensure adequate provision for all aspects of

From Lawal Ibrahim in Katsina.

recurrent expenditure and that sufficient provision has also been made for the completion of ongoing capital projects and the execution of new ones for development.

Among the few roads to be undertaken are Kankara - Mesari - Yankara, Musoumatua-Kafin Sofi Charanchi, Ingals Mani-Mashi-Kankuya, Faskari-Maigora-Maudo as well as Katsina township roads phase II and III.

In his address while receiving the budget, the speaker, Alhaji Kabir Kofa pledged to expedite action in order to ensure prompt appropriation and passage of the budget.

Dariye: EFCC Appeals against Court verdict on immunity

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) had Friday filed an appeal at the Kaduna Federal High Court contesting a judgment by the same Court which upheld that Governor Joshua Chibi Dariye of Plateau State cannot be prosecuted over alleged offences of money laundering and diversion of public funds.

The Federal High Court Kaduna presided by Justice

Abdullahi Liman earlier this month, ruled that Governor Dariye cannot be prosecuted after the Commission dragged him to the court accusing him of the above mentioned offences.


Justice Liman on December 16, 2004 ruled that although Dariye can be termed as a principal actor in the case, section 308 of the Nigerian Constitution gave immunity to people in his category as a serving governor.

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REFLECTIONS

By ISSA AREMU

Tsunami: Tragedy or global hypocrisy?

If there were no natural disasters, it seems 'international community' would have invented some! Truly, humans have invented enough disasters which obviously dwarf the so-called natural ones in terms of agonies and human losses. Remember colonialism, earlier slavery, world wars I and II, apartheid South Africa, Gulf war, Iraqi invasion, HIV/AIDS, Rwanda genocide, September 11, dafur, falluja genocide and ad infinitum!

As disastrous as these man-made disasters have proven, they hardly invoke the compassion and outrage in us as we are rudely awakened to our apparently deadened humanity by

divisible; instant, hot and totalitarian when wrought by 'nature' but inexplicably totally detached, cold and shamelessly indifferent when orchestrated and promoted by us? It is bad enough that well over 120,000 deaths have been recorded by Tsunami tragedy. Even more intimidating of is the revelation that double that figure might possibly die as a result of deplorable conditions. But the question persists: If the casualties at the first instance were attributed to paucity of science and technology, which denied earlier warnings in worse hit areas like Sri-Lanka and Indonesia, what then explains the second instance of mass

confronted by its consequences? Why should there be uneven spread of knowledge about natural disasters when the impact is less discriminatory as we have painfully seen in the aftermath of Asian Tsunami? What kind of global allocation of resources is in place, when few have been to the moon and others could not envisage an unrelenting upsurge of tidal waves? Can we truly talk of Tsunami tragedy, or global hypocrisy?

We are told that top on next week UN donor conference is the possibility of debt cancellation of Sri-Lanka! The question is, do we need to physically count dead bodies before we know that debt is a burden for developing world? British Prime Minister,

"British Prime Minister, Tony Blair reportedly described Tsunami tragedy as global tragedy that requires global response. Since when has there been such preference for multilateral approach to multilateral problem from London when both Bush US' and Blair's Britain unilaterally bombed Iraq to Stone Age? By the way, whence the outpouring of charity and contributions for the ever rising victims of Iraqi war campaigns?"

natural disasters. Periodic gory pictures of human miseries occasioned by seismic and atmospheric eruptions (from Iran and Turkish quakes to Florida and Haitian hurricanes) have proved veritable opportunities for us to exhibit our 'humanity'.

The question is: what makes a disaster catastrophic, necessitating our compassion? Is it when it is made by us or by nature? Should our compassion be

deaths if not the unequal world of poverty and deprivations we have entrenched on a global scale? If natural disaster was outside our control, are we still totally helpless to eradicate global poverty? How many die of avoidable diseases in developing countries of the world in spite of their abundant resources? Does eliminating poverty and unequal conditions require further warnings when we are daily

Tony Blair reportedly described Tsunami tragedy as global tragedy that requires global response. Since when has there been such preference for multilateral approach to multilateral problem from London when both Bush US' and Blair's Britain unilaterally bombed Iraq to Stone Age? By the way, whence the outpouring of charity and contributions for the ever rising victims of Iraqi war campaigns? Are we saying a disaster is only catastrophic if we are the victims but not so when others are?

The world awaits the response of Africa Union (AU) to the disaster in which the coverage of African dimension is marginal even if casualties have been reported in Somalia and Kenya. But of what relevance will be AU's response to a distant disaster, when the continent thrives on avoidable leadership disaster contrary to people's outcries? Lastly, of what relevance will be Nigeria's sympathy on Tsunami tragedy, when for two months, now doctors are on strikes and thousands are dying without official or public sympathy?

"We are told that top on next week UN donor conference is the possibility of debt cancellation of Sri-Lanka! The question is, do we need to physically count dead bodies before we know that debt is a burden for developing world?"

Opinion

Nigeria: Irony of a nation

By Adegoke A. Adedamola

Naturally positioned in the African continent with various tapped and untapped materials, human and natural resources of unfathomable magnitude, Nigeria has a complexity that revolves around beliefs and ideologies that are unimaginably synchronised.

An amazing black populace coupled with her abundant and enormous resources make her stand magnificent as the giant and pride of her continent. Nigeria is an icon of the African continent, blessed with a large expanse of fertile farmland but short of food leaving most of her populace's with no food to eat.

It has a beautiful geographical boundary with various hydroelectric power supply and power stations but suffers epileptic power supply. Short of meaningful and efficient industrial sectors, but dumping ground for the developed world.

A powerful nation of unimaginable wealth with amazing debt, a potentially strong, rich African state but ironically ranked among the poorest nations of the world due to gross mismanagement of public funds, overwhelming stagnation in all sectors of economy, hyper-diabolical inflation and huge debt burdens with insurmountable internal crises that scare investors.

A nation short of well-trained police force that lacks technical skills and sophisticated weapons to combat crimes and crises and at the same time suffers porous security network. A nation where her populace goes to sleep with their two eyes widely opened because of insecurity of lives and properties.

Nigeria is indeed a wonderful nation where there are many schools with numerous students but at the same time full of illiterates. An uninspirational African state where teachers and public servants who have spent half of their lives in nation building and development are almost totally neglected, rejected and disrespected. This is a nation where little consideration is given to human development and productivity.

An ailing nation with many seasoned doctors and health workers, standard hospitals and clinics but lacks basic healthcare and services. A terrific nation where there are many vehicles but short of good road networks, full of passengers with little transportation means. Nigeria, the indomitable giant of Africa, stinking rich with natural gas and crude oil but suffers series of perpetual and agonising fuel scarcity. A wonderful land where there is adequate manpower without job opportunities.

Nigeria a country with young dynamic and intelligent youths who are the nation builders, pillars and potentials future leaders but are gradually and regrettably turning to a nation destroyers through prolonged neglect of the youth plight. Many of them have made sacrifice in studying hard to become useful to the nation but found themselves worthless due to gross unemployment coupled with economic repression and depression pushing them into in series of atrocities of unexplained magnitude.

An extraordinary nation with marvellous, quite unimaginable wide gap between the rich and the poor, where someone has more than ten cars and somebody cannot boast of a bicycle, where few are living comfortably in big mansions and many are suffering from homelessness. An ironically dynamic nation where some few have millions of unfaithfully acquired public funds stacked in banks accounts, fatly and robustly rich dubiously in hard currencies somewhere afar forgetting that so many are penniless with no hope of improved standard of living in sight. Nigeria, a fortunate nation with lots of gainful ventures and fascinating tourist attractions but unfortunately short of prospective investors and enthusiastic tourists.

Nigeria an ironically religious nation in the world, full of men and women of God of highest sacrament, full of churches and mosques which are geometrically increasing numerically but her populace are still deeply immorally polluted, poisoned by occultism. Okija Shrine in Anambra state, recently discovered, typified this assertion.

Nigeria, an outstanding entity, full of people of politics and pleasure without principle and conscience, full of multitude with knowledge and courage but lacks characters and encouragement. A big nation full of people with potential without credentials, a place

of happenings and happiness but short of positive events and enjoyment.

Nigeria is a sovereign state characterised by state of confusions, political anarchy and social acrimony, full of neglect of human needs has greatly lost respect and recognition of the wise and intelligent people who have contributed immensely to her momentous development but has given chances to political opportunists who are self centred. A nation where no consideration is given to people with talents, skills, abilities and potentials but allowed to waste away. A glorious, nation with most of her leaders lacking moral sanctity. A mysterious nation of high standard of killing conspiracy by assassins who have no regard for personalities, positions or offices held by such individuals but are mainly concerned with the selfish, devilish desire of their insane contractors. Late Attorney General of the Federation (Chief Bola Ige) and other prominent Nigerian personalities were murdered without traces of their assassins.

An entity so beautiful with promising future, a potentially prominent leading African state with great hopes, aspirations and expectations, a mentor to all other nations of the continent.

The book of Africa can never be fully completed without mentioning Nigeria in many areas of human endeavours, having left an indelible mark on the continent and a remarkable foot print on the soil of Africa will ever remain to stand the test of time.

It is a prestigious nation with unquantifiable magnanimity, an epitome of love and affection to the rest of the world, in terms of trade and markets access in this globalisation age. This is a nation that is physically united but socially, emotionally, politically and psychologically divided. Nigeria what a true nation of irony you are.

Adegoke Austin
Adedamola Maitama,
Abuja, Nigeria.

"An extraordinary nation with unimaginably wide gap between the rich and the poor, where someone has more than ten cars and many cannot boast of a bicycle; where few are living comfortably in big mansions and many are suffering from homelessness."



YOUR LETTERS

Gov Donald Duke, where is our Bursary?

Government, whether military or civilian has always showed concern by encouraging students through the payment of stipend as either bursary or scholarship to cushion the high cost of staying in school.

It will be recalled that even during the military regime, most states had always paid their students no matter how lean were their resources. It is important to note that states like Bayelsa, Rivers, Nasarawa, Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Kogi, Edo, Delta, Akwa-Ibom among others have well organized bursary and / or scholarship schemes that are working equitably well.

It is in this regard that governors such as Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu of Nasarawa state, Chief George Akume of Benue, Dr. Peter Odili of Rivers, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna state and Joshua Chibji Dariye of Plateau state have found their ways into the students good books while a number of others may soon be black-listed as anti students, having denied their students their share of bursary and / or scholarship

as the case may be.

Again, while some states like Bayelsa pay as much as N10,000, Nasarawa, N6,000, Benue, N5,000, a state like Cross River state which benefits from the 13% derivation fund, grudgingly pay an all-round low bursary allowance of between N2,000 and N3000 with the payment coming once in two years. For the avoidance of doubt, Cross River stands out as the least concerned with students issues among the nine oil producing states. Even when bursary is paid, the beneficiaries are more of ghost students than registered students as those contracted to disburse the meagre fund only pay in Calabar and environs while other institutions are neglected.

The last time they came to the university of Jos, only a handful of students collected the N2,400. I had written an article in protest, which by the grace of God was kindly, published by Daily Trust but nobody seem to have acted.

Today, like in the past, the bursary for 2003/2004 session is long over due. Will we get it? Please, help us ask

governor Donald Duke to pay our bursary or prevail on those handling the disbursement to pay us now in the spirit of the Christmas and New Year celebration, as well as the democratic doctrines equity, fair play.

*David Olom Nkpe
Department of Sociology, University of Jos
P. M. B 2084, Plateau state.*

Re: NECO should check this...

I wish to respond to the allegations made by Mr. Andrew P. Nandip on page seven of this paper under the caption "NECO should check this," on the 23rd of December, 2004.

I would like to inform Mr. Andrew that the National Examinations Council is not directly involved in the appointment of its invigilators.

The task is the responsibility of the State Ministry concerned and/or the principals of such centres. Normally, the teachers of such schools are recruited for the job.

What Mr. Andrew should have done, instead of keeping mum only to come out later with such grievous claims, is to have raised alarm when he noticed the malpractices being perpetrated in the examination hall. He should have drawn the attention of the supervisor, other invigilators in the hall, the principal of the school or even the whole class if need be.

That would have assisted in bringing the culprits to book. He did none of these but came out with his pen blazing!

I wish to bring to the notice of Mr. Andrew that NECO is very keen on examination malpractice.

At any level, it strives to put in place measures that can stem it, not encourage it.

Results of candidates are cancelled every year to buttress this fact. Various cases of examination malpractices have been pursued in many courts of law in an attempt to prosecute those involved. Members of staff caught in the web lost their jobs! What more is expected of the council?

The public can do better by suggesting ways of further stemming this monster not by trading unnecessary blames and allegations!

*Abdullahi Idris
NECO headquarters,
Minna.*

Tribute to slain customs officers

The recent killing of custom officers of marine command Apapa Lagos, by some dare devil smugglers at Ilaro has shown how saboteurs would go to any length in achieving their inordinate quest for quick money at the detriment of the nation's economy.

Nigeria Customs Service has never had it so bad since its coming into existence losing this generation of fine officers, who are legitimate duty of protecting the territorial integrity of this country, also to perform their statutory duty of suppressing smuggling when they met their untimely death.

The entire country wokeup that very Thursday of 23rd December, 2004 to hear the shocking news that befell this country of slain Customs Officers, that hit the news-wave.

The prompt response of Customs Management, led by the Comptroller General, Jacob Jang Buba would rekindle the hope of the families of the slain customs officers that their bread winners did not die in vain.

The address by Buba as

shown by N.T.A. courtesy of customs duty programme, while addressing the officers and men of marine command, was to brace up and see the incident that led to the death of their colleagues as the hazard of the job in protecting the interest of this country and making great sacrifice which customs service is noted for.

He said this would go along way to re-engineers the customs officers to be more dedicated to their duty, hence the believe that no sacrifice is too small to be made in bringing out the best from customs service.

The Assurance by customs high command of taking the responsibilities of burial arrangement of the slain officers would ensure officers of customs be alert to their responsibilities and prompt better service delivery.

We pray that the soul of the departed slain customs officers lives in perfect peace and entire country would continue to remember them for giving their lives for the suppression of smuggling in the country.

*Bala Nayashi
No 1 Yashi Area Lokoja.*

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

Black ...

Appreciation

As we usher in the **N**ew year
We wish to express our deep **A**ppreciation to our
customers and friends for our **S**uccesses through the
Year and for your wonderful **C**ontributions
in various ways towards our **O**rganisational growth

Thank you! Thank you!! Thank you!!!



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Trust International

Tsunami: US unwilling response

By Patrick Martin

President Bush briefly interrupted his vacation on Wednesday to issue a public statement, after three days of silence as the greatest natural disaster of the last half-century unfolded on the television screens of the world. He made a perfunctory and semi-coherent statement to the press corps assembled at his Crawford, Texas ranch, shortly after the administration had announced a doubling of the US government's contribution to disaster relief efforts in South Asia.

The initial US pledge of \$15 million was widely derided in the international media—one commentary noted that this was less than the cost of a single F-16 fighter jet. It brought a pointed response by the emergency relief director for the United Nations, Jan Egeland, who criticised the "stingy" response of unnamed Western countries. The Scandinavian diplomat later denied he was referring to the United States, after the US Agency for International Development added another \$20 million to the aid package.

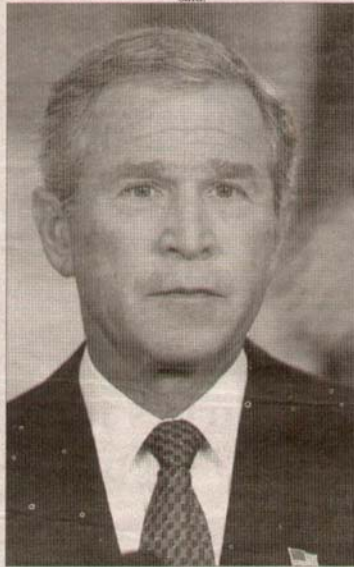
Outgoing Secretary of State Colin Powell was trundled out to rebut the charge that the US was ignoring the disaster. "The US is not stingy," Powell declared. "We are the greatest contributor to international relief efforts in the world." (He was silent on the fact that the two largest US-financed "relief" efforts, in Iraq and Afghanistan, are in support of stooge regimes established through the US conquest of sovereign countries).

Even the increased contribution represents a minimal gesture, given the monumental scale of the tragedy and the enormous resources of the United States. The donation amounts to half a day's spending on the war in Iraq. It is less money than will be expended on the parties and official festivities surrounding Bush's January 20 inauguration.

The US government relief effort can be measured by another yardstick—its response to the hurricanes that hit Florida this year. The Federal Emergency Management Agency alone has pumped \$3.17 billion into the state, nearly 100

times more than the proposed US contribution for the South Asian tsunami. The four Florida hurricanes combined killed 116 people, compared to over 100,000 dead in the South Asian disaster. According to the brutal calculus of American

the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon," *The Post* reported that "even some administration officials familiar with relief efforts said they were surprised that Bush had not appeared personally to comment on the tsunami tragedy at first. 'It's kind of freaky,' a senior career official said."



George W. Bush

imperialism, a human life in the United States—especially in a battleground state in the months before a presidential election—is worth infinitely more than a human life in Sri Lanka or Indonesia.

Media criticism of the White House reached its peak in a front-page article published by *The Washington Post* December 29, only a few hours before Bush made his appearance in Crawford. *The Post* commented: "Skeptics said the initial aid sums—as well as Bush's decision at first to remain cloistered on his Texas ranch for the Christmas holiday rather than speak in person about the tragedy—showed scant appreciation for the magnitude of suffering and for the rescue and rebuilding work facing such nations as Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and Indonesia."

Noting the "international outpouring of support after

estimated at only \$150 million—a comparative pittance, less than the cost of four days of war in Iraq.

There is already evidence that the US government had ample warning of the earthquake-driven tsunami, but did not communicate the information to the countries involved. US press reports

Department and the government of Australia. The State Department claimed to have notified India, but the Indian government said it received no such warning in the two hours that elapsed between the quake off Sumatra and the tidal wave that hit the Indian coastline in the southern province of

Bush's press statement in Crawford did contain one indisputable truth. "This has been a terrible disaster," Bush said. "It is beyond our comprehension."

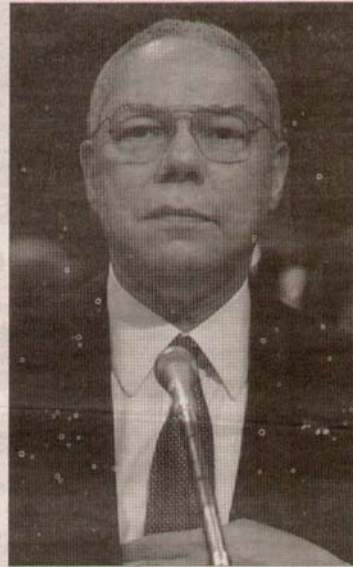
The speechwriter who crafted those words revealed more about Bush than he perhaps intended. This failure to grasp the dimensions of the south Asian disaster—and anticipate the public reaction to a display of indifference—is a measure of the moral and intellectual cretinism of Bush and his cohorts.

The administration's callous and barely concealed indifference to the suffering of millions of people says a great deal about the corrupt oligarchy whose interests it serves. The Bush administration, and the occupant of the White House himself, are body and soul the creatures of a ruling elite that has descended into criminality and unbridled greed.

The New York Times, for example, found nothing untoward in publishing on the front page of its December 28 edition articles and photographs on the death and devastation in South Asia alongside a light-hearted report on the multi-million-dollar Christmas bonuses awarded by Wall Street firms to their top executives ("That Line at the Ferrari Dealer? It's Bonus Season on Wall Street").

If great events take the true measure of men, the enormous tragedy on the shores of the Indian Ocean has provided another yardstick of the vicious and small-minded man who occupies the White House. Bush personifies the ignorant and reactionary character of American imperialism.

#SWS



Colin Powell

indicate that the Pacific Warning Centre in Hawaii, a facility of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, detected the earthquake when it occurred and immediately warned of the likelihood of tidal waves generated by one of the largest temblors ever recorded.

Charles McCreery, director of the centre, confirmed that his team had transmitted warnings to the US Navy, the US State

Tamil Nadu. Nor did the Sri Lankan government receive a warning.

But one Indian Ocean Island was promptly warned—the US military base on the British-controlled island of Diego Garcia, the site from which US bombing raids have been staged on both Afghanistan and Iraq. The US base, about 1,000 miles south of India, directly in the path of the tsunami, reportedly suffered no damage.

"The initial US pledge of \$15 million was widely derided in the international media—one commentary noted that this was less than the cost of a single F-16 fighter jet. It brought a pointed response by the emergency relief director for the United Nations, Jan Egeland, who criticised the "stingy" response of unnamed Western countries."

Trust International

Somalia tsunami death toll grows

At least 142 people were killed in Somalia in the deadly Indian Ocean sea surge last Sunday, officials said. The country's transitional government is reported to have set up a special commission to co-ordinate relief.

The UN said it has begun distributing emergency supplies to hundreds of families affected by the tsunami.

It previously warned that Somali victims of the devastating tsunami are in danger of being forgotten by the international community.

Most of the casualties were reported to be from the Puntland region in north-east Somalia.

Around 50,000 people have been displaced, Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Ghedi said on Thursday.

"The damage was felt all along the southern part of Somalia," Mr Ghedi, whose government is currently based in Kenya as the capital is considered too dangerous for ministers, told AFP news agency.

Presidential spokesman Yusuf Ismail Baribari said reports of cases of acute diarrhoea raised the risk of an outbreak of cholera, the AFP news agency reported.

UN agencies are expected to make an appeal for assistance once they have completed an aerial assessment of the full scale of the damage along the Somali coastline.

Senegal, rebels finalise peace deal

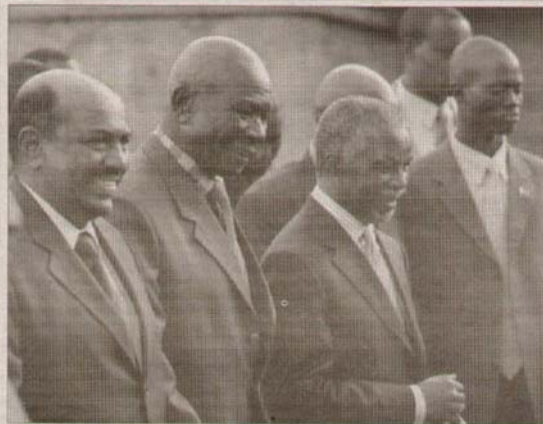
Senegal's government has signed a peace deal with separatist rebels in Casamance, ending one of West Africa's longest-running wars.

Thousands of people cheered as the interior minister and rebel leader put their names to a cease-fire pact. Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, who made peace a priority when he came to power in 2000, is expected to join the ceremony in Ziguinchor.

The signing took place in spite of concerns about rebel factional splits. Some 3,000 spectators - many of whom wore pro-peace T-shirts - welcomed the signing by chanting and dancing.

Details of the agreement signed by rebel leader Father Diamaoune Senghor and Interior Minister Ousman Ngom have yet to be made public but the pact is believed to include details on disarmament and the reintegration of rebel fighters.

According to the BBC's West Africa correspondent, the treaty is likely to be more of a building block than an immediate solution to the separatist sentiment.



From left, Sudanese President Omar El Bashir, Kenya's Vice President Moody Awori and South African President Thabo Mbeki, walk to witness a signing agreement ceremony in Naivasha, Kenya, Friday Dec. 31, 2004.

Sudan, rebels sign permanent truce

Sudan's government and southern rebels have signed a permanent cease-fire as part of a peace deal to end one of Africa's longest-running civil wars.

It was signed along with a detailed plan on how to implement earlier agreements just hours before the year-end deadline agreed with the UN.

Friday's ceremony in the Kenyan town of Naivasha is expected to lead to a comprehensive peace deal in January.

South African President Thabo Mbeki was there to

witness the signing.

He was joined by his Sudanese counterpart, Omar al-Bashir.

The BBC's correspondent at the ceremony in Naivasha, said there were euphoric cheers as the documents were signed.

She said although there are many skeptics who say the plan is unworkable, the feeling in Naivasha is that the deal is done and peace is finally coming to south Sudan.

"We now have all the components that will form the comprehensive Sudan peace agreement," said Kenyan mediator Gen Lazaro Sumbueyiwo.

"Every topic on our agenda has been discussed and agreed on."

In the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, southerners took to the streets, singing and waving rebel flags, unhindered by police.

It was a rare display of southern sentiment in the tightly controlled capital.

The two sides had pledged in writing to the United Nations Security Council in November that they would sign a final peace by the end of the year, when a temporary cease-fire was due to expire.

The final January peace settlement will tie together agreements already signed by the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

These deal with the share of power and wealth, the formation of a decentralised administration and steps towards a referendum on secession for the south in six years.

Some two million people have died since the war broke out in 1983, when rebels in the Christian and animist south demanded autonomy from the Muslim north.

Uganda to clamp down on rebels

President Yoweri Museveni has vowed to step up military action against rebels in northern Uganda, after a seven-week truce expired without agreement.

The government said the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rejected a deal meant to pave the way for peace talks, and staged an ambush on the army.

Mediators said the LRA wanted more time to study the government's proposed memorandum of understanding.

Some 1.5 million Ugandans have been displaced during 18 years of fighting.

The Lord's Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony, stands accused of abducting more than 20,000 children, making the boys fight and the girls work as sex slaves, and of mutilating and burning its civilian victims.

On Friday, the LRA and the government failed to agree on the terms of a negotiated truce. Then early on Saturday the army said it was ambushed by the LRA near the northern town of Gulu, and that one soldier was missing.

"Operations will not cease ever again until the Kony group irreversibly commit themselves to come out of the bush," Mr. Museveni told crowds in Gulu.

"It is the rebels who refused to sign the cease-fire memorandum of understanding and this is the reason why the government has taken the decision to start fighting them while the peace option remains," the president said, adding that negotiations would continue.

There has so far been no word from the rebels.

A limited ceasefire had been declared in November to allow the rebels to meet to discuss prospects for peace.

Interior Minister Ruhakana Rugunda said the government remained ready to sign a deal at any time.

He had earlier described how rebel and government negotiators had embraced during the first direct talks between the two sides for a decade.

Mediators have said that there are still contacts between representatives of both sides, despite the clash.

The United Nations, Britain, Netherlands and Norway are also supporting

UN urges increase in AU membership

Welcoming the recent decrease in African conflicts, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the resulting increase in demand for peacekeeping missions on the continent carries challenges to expand the capacity of the African Union (AU), while rejecting mechanisms that limit the participation of non-African UN members.

"The United Nations has already provided some assistance to the African Union in its efforts, particularly in terms of planning. My view is that the organisation must be ready to provide a new level of support to the African Union as the union moves forward and for this I will, when appropriate, seek a mandate and resources from the United Nations," he said in a new report to the UN General Assembly.

The UN, in putting together packages of support for the AU, should base them on "principles of flexibility and openness," he said.

Peacekeeping in any region is strengthened by troops and equipment from other regions, he said. In the same way, "we should support any initiative that promises to add real peacekeeping capacity where such capacity is needed, while eschewing any mechanism that would limit the room for non-African Member States to shoulder some of the

burden for peacekeeping on that continent."

Since many conflicts are first dealt with regionally, the UN's support packages for the AU should focus on its start-up operations, he said, adding that he welcomes "the decision of the African Union Assembly to approve the African Standby Force concept" and the offers from some members to provide police officers for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) on-call roster.

He noted, too, parallel needs in the field of post-

conflict peace building. After providing security in a country, he said, the UN needs to follow up "with programmes that can engender a smooth transition to a sustainable peace: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; rule of law; democratization and good governance."

"I will continue to highlight the urgent need for the international community to provide adequate support to strengthen African peace building capacities," Mr. Annan said.

...denies fight between Ethiopia, Eritrea

United Nations (UN) officials denied on Thursday new border fight between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The officials told *The Daily Monitor* that the UN mission in the area, which is patrolling the two countries ceasefire didn't find and didn't observe new fighting between the two countries.

It was reported over the week that Eritrean troops have killed and wounded several Ethiopian inhabitants of Hadish Adi near Badme area.

However, UN officials who *The Daily Monitor* talked to said that the mission didn't get any reliable facts on the reported issue.

"We heard the news from the media over the week. But the mission didn't find and receive any report regarding the incidents as it was reported."

The two countries should seek peaceful means to end their differences on any issue that they may have," the officials said.

The reported attack on Hadish Adi, which was a scene of fierce fighting during the 1999 war between the two countries and was retaken by Ethiopia, is the first major attack since the two countries signed a peace agreement in Algiers in June 2000.

Trust International

Abbas rules out force against activist

Mahmoud Abbas, tipped to become the new Palestinian president, said that he will not fight against activist groups.

After receiving a hero's welcome by activists in the Gaza Strip, Mr. Abbas said he would use persuasion to bring about a ceasefire with Israel.

At one point during the visit at Rafah refugee camp he was hoisted on the shoulders of gunmen clad in black.

The Palestinian election, on 9 January, will decide who will take over from Yasser Arafat who died in November.

Mr. Abbas is often said to be less charismatic and to have less popular support than Arafat, but he was loudly cheered by the crowd.

On the 40th anniversary of his Fatah faction, Mr. Abbas repeated his call for an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem.

He has the tacit support of Israel and the US as a potential partner in a revived peace process.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon refused to negotiate with Arafat, accusing him of backing terrorism.

Mr. Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, has been campaigning hard in Gaza - a stronghold of organisations like Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

The two groups are committed to armed confrontation with Israel.

Car bomb attack kills 19 Iraqis

At least 19 Iraqis, 18 of them National Guardsmen, have been killed in a car bomb explosion, the US military said.

A suicide bomber set off the explosion next to an Iraqi security force bus near the town of Balad, north of Baghdad, a US military spokesman said.

The attack happened in the area known as the Sunni Triangle, which has been the scene of repeated violence.

Insurgents have staged a series of attacks in the run-up to nationwide elections planned for 30 January.

The BBC's correspondent in Baghdad said this is one of the most deadly incidents in the recent spate of attacks, which are increasingly directed at Iraqis as well as American troops.

Iraqi police and National Guards will be providing security during the elections.

In Rafah, where scores of Palestinians have been killed in the four-year uprising, Mr Abbas praised the residents, those killed in fighting with Israel, and the activists on the run.

In an interview with the BBC, Mr. Abbas said he believed that he might be able to persuade the militants to agree a ceasefire, if elected.

"We will not use force with Hamas but we will use the way of persuasion and negotiation," he said.

"We consider that fighting among Palestinians is a red line that must not be crossed."

The AP news agency said the presidential front-runner had gone even further and vowed to protect the



Kofi Annan

'Tsunami recovery will take years' -Annan

Areas hit by the Asian tsunami could take up to 10 years to recover, the UN secretary general has warned.

Kofi Annan spoke of the "sheer complexity" of the relief effort, which is spread across a dozen nations.

Aid supplies are piling up in regional warehouses, but in some places, heavy rain has provided an extra obstacle to delivering them to outlying areas.

Mr. Annan will travel to Indonesia on 6 January to take part in a meeting of world leaders to discuss further aid.

In other developments, US Secretary of State Colin Powell and President George W Bush's brother Jeb head for Thailand and Indonesia later on Sunday as part of an American delegation to see the devastation at first-hand.

The UN's relief co-ordinator Jan Egeland said the \$2bn in aid have been promised so far, pledged by 40 countries, with up to \$500m in emergency assistance pledged by Japan. He said it was more than all the donations made to the UN's other humanitarian appeals in 2004 put together.

"The international compassion has never been like this," Mr Egeland said.

Aid supplies have been air-dropped onto all of the Andaman and Nicobar islands, according to the military commander in charge of relief operations, after strong criticism from survivors that aid was slow to arrive.

US Navy helicopters brought relief supplies to Indonesia's Aceh province from an offshore aircraft carrier.

Survivors are still emerging from the ruins left

by the huge quake-triggered waves, which struck a week ago.

At least 124,000 people have been confirmed dead around the rim of the Indian Ocean, with Aceh in Indonesia worst-hit.

The UN has warned the final death toll is likely to be more than 150,000 - and may never be known.

In Indonesia, aid is finally being distributed, but only in small quantities, said the BBC's correspondent in Aceh.

A spokesman for the UN's World Food Programme said a few helicopters had tried to land in the coastal villages outside Banda Aceh, but food and other supplies had to be thrown to the ground after desperate mobs had prevented them from landing.

The aid operation in Aceh remains without a visible strong leadership. In this sensitive region - scene of a long-running conflict between Jakarta and separatist rebels, the government is unwilling to allow the US military unfettered access, BBC correspondent said, and there are few UN personnel on the ground.

But speedy, well-led and co-ordinated action is crucial to

Iran set for Presidential election

Iran's constitutional watchdog has approved June 17 as the date for presidential elections, state-run television reported Saturday, marking the first contest for control of the presidency since ruling clerics barred reformist candidates from last year's parliamentary election.

The Guardian Council has agreed to hold the presidential election on June 17, television quoted council spokesman Gholamhossein Elham as

save the isolated clusters of survivors spotted on the Sumatran coast and islands, who may have spent a week without food and clean water.

More than 1.7m people will have to be fed for months, said the UN.

In Sri Lanka, heavy rains have brought flash flooding, cutting off parts of the east and south-east of the island and seriously disrupting aid distribution.

Fears of an outbreak of waterborne disease among the hundreds of thousands of people thought to be flocking to emergency camps are high.

There are similar fears in Aceh, where heavy rains have also hit.

The Indian army said planes have managed to drop supplies of food and water to all the inhabited islands in the remote chain, some of which are only a short distance from the epicentre of last Sunday's earthquake.

Six thousand people are officially listed as dead or missing on the islands, while at least 10,000 more are thought to be unaccounted for.

Man swallows man's finger

A man allegedly bit off and swallowed another man's finger during a bar brawl, court officials said Thursday.

Alex Nyarubakora, 39, appeared in court in the town of Chitungwiza, 15 miles south of Harare, on Wednesday charged with assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

ODD WORLD

Couples name new baby Tsunami

Six-day-old Tsunami Roy doesn't know what all the fuss about him is, as he hungrily suckles at his mother's breast before dropping off for a contented nap.

Sitting in a classroom in the capital of India's tsunami-ravaged Andaman and Nicobar islands, his 34-year-old father, Lakshmi Narain Roy, recounted Saturday the dramatic events leading to Tsunami's birth, three weeks ahead of time.

"It was early morning Sunday, when I made my pregnant wife a cup of tea and woke her up. She was just about to take a sip when we felt the first jolt of the quake. She immediately screamed for me to pick up our sleeping son and rush out."

Roy grabbed his 6-year-old older son and ran out of their home near the coastal settlement of Hut Bay on the Little Andaman island before turning back to see if his wife was following.

"She had fallen down and briefly lost consciousness. But then she heard people screaming 'the water is coming' and managed to crawl out to the street and asked me to put our son on my cycle-rickshaw."

After hoisting his injured wife and son on to the rickshaw Roy pedaled and pushed the rickshaw as fast as he could up and away from the shore toward a nearby rocky slope. There he half-carried and half-pushed his pregnant wife up the last 150 feet or so to a wooded area where many others had fled.

The Roys are among the fortunate few who survived Sunday's devastating tsunami that has killed more than 126,000 people in Asia, including more than 8,900 in India.

They spent the next few hours watching the angry water foam over their submerged homes and waiting for a mahout to come and lead away a restless elephant, that was used for logging work and had been tethered to a nearby tree.

"Soon she was complaining of pain in her abdomen and at first I told her it must be due to the fall as the baby was not due till January 15. But as the pain got worse by nightfall, I became frantic and started looking for help, and luckily found a nurse."

The nurse, with the help of other women who had fled the waves, rigged up a makeshift curtain, laid the 26-year-old Namita down on a bed of dried leaves and grass and ordered the men to get some clean cloth, thread and a bowl of hot water.

"A few hours later the child was born. But the nurse had no instruments, she was unable to remove the placenta from inside my wife's womb and within hours she was again in pain." Unable to find any help locally, Roy trekked nearly a mile down to the police outpost at Hut Bay Tuesday and located a doctor, who examined his wife and advised that she be taken to hospital as soon as possible.

"On Wednesday, we learned a Navy ship had come into the bay but the jetty was damaged and so with help from other locals I carried her and the baby on to a dinghy and took her out to the big ship at sea."

Reaching Port Blair after a 7-hour journey Roy's wife was rushed to the local hospital where doctors immediately cleaned up her uterus and gave her some medicines.

"It was the doctors who suggested we name the boy Tsunami and we also liked the name and decided to call him that. After all it is a name everyone will instantly notice and remember."

Briton surfs Tsunami, survives

British surfer Martin Markwell had always dreamed of catching that perfect wave — but when it finally came along, it was a nightmare.

Markwell was paddling on his surfboard Sunday off the popular Hikkaduwa beach resort on Sri Lanka's palm-fringed southern coast when he was swept up by a tsunami wave and sent crashing over a white sand beach and into a hotel restaurant.

"It was really terrible because I was surfing, I was really surfing on a wave I wasn't supposed to be on," he told Reuters. "As an experienced surfer, when I saw the wave come I realized something was wrong, but I couldn't escape because my surfboard was tied to my ankle."

His wife Vicki and son Jake looked on in horror from a hotel balcony as he crashed toward the shore. Miraculously, he stayed atop his board until he reached the hotel, jumped off and waded to safety as the ocean rolled back to feed a much larger tsunami wave on its way.

The family regrouped and ran inland into jungle to safety just minutes before a giant tsunami wave 30 feet high crashed into Sri Lanka's coast, killing more than 28,500 people.

Man swallows man's finger

A man allegedly bit off and swallowed another man's finger during a bar brawl, court officials said Thursday.

Alex Nyarubakora, 39, appeared in court in the town of Chitungwiza, 15 miles south of Harare, on Wednesday charged with assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

Prosecutor Issau Janhi said Nyarubakora was arguing with his wife in a bar last week when he became angry at a second man's attempts to intercede.

After the two men began fighting, Nyarubakora is accused of biting off his opponent's finger, chewing and swallowing it. No remains of the finger were found by police at the scene, Janhi said.

Nyarubakora was freed on bail to reappear on court on Jan. 14. He faces the penalty of a fine or imprisonment.



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Business Trust

AVIATION

FG uncovers 70 secret airfields

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air

Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja	06:50
Abuja - Maid.	17:00
Abuja - PHC	9:00a.m.
PHC - Abuja	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Yola	1:00 p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.

Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.

IRS Airlines

CBQ - Abuja	8:00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Kano - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - CBQ	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.

EAS Airlines

Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos	2:30pm.

Dasab Airlines

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

ADC Airline

Lagos - Abuja	7:15a.m.
	12:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
Lagos - Calabar	11:15a.m.
Lagos - Sokoto	8:55a.m.
Sokoto - Lagos	11:55a.m.
Calabar - Lagos	7:00a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:45a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

The federal government on Friday revealed that it has discovered 70 illegal airfields (aerodromes, helipads, airstrips) in operation across the country without due inspection and certification from the aviation regulatory agencies.

Disclosing this to newsmen in Abuja, the

By Mohammed S. Shehu

...issues re-capitalisation ultimatum for domestic airlines

The federal government on Friday issued an ultimatum to indigenous airlines operating international routes to re-capitalise to N1 billion, while those on West Coast operations are to increase their equity base to the tune of N500 million. These, the airlines are expected to do or face ban.

It has also lifted the ban imposed on Chanchangi Airlines following Wednesday's crash landing of its aircraft with about 170 passengers on board at the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos.

The minister of aviation, Mallam Isa Yuguda who stated this at the ministerial press briefing for 2004 in Abuja, stressed that the 24 months ultimatum for the recapitalisation is to ensure that only airlines with sufficient resources to provide world class service to passengers are allowed to operate.

He added that following the allocation of additional frequencies to foreign airlines and increased traffic at major airports, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) had generated a total of revenue of N11.8 billion between November and December, 2004.

However, in order to consolidate on the achievements recorded by the ministry in 2004, Yuguda said FAAN needed additional electronic screening equipment to achieve the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) recommended performance benchmarks of passengers check-in service time of 30 minutes baggage delivery within 40 minutes of aircraft arrival.

On the clearance of Chanchangi Airline, the minister said preliminary report of investigation conducted by the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) revealed that the airline has satisfactory

aviation minister, Mallam Isa Yuguda described the findings as frightening and inimical to national security.

Yuguda who stated this at the ministry's end of the year 2004 ministerial press briefing, said the findings were contained in the report of a high-powered ministerial committee set up on monitoring and control of all

airports.

He however, directed the task force to immediately inspect, licence and handover the control of such airfields to the relevant agencies for proper scrutiny, while owners of the illegal airstrips have been directed to comply with government procedures or face the wrath of the law.

On the rehabilitation of the Nigeria College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Zaria, the minister disclosed that a total of N3.6 billion has been approved by the federal government for the turn around of the college within a period of three years.

He said the money would be drawn from the Bilateral Air Service Agreement (BASA) funds scheduled to be released in the 2005 financial year.

"Funds will be wholly injected into equipment upgrade and replacement in line with the total rehabilitation plan for the college which I had presented and obtained council's approval," he said.

He added that all test flights carried out by a team of investigators and aviation experts had ascertained the airworthiness of all the aircraft on its fleets.

"It was also particularly observed that C-check was carried out by the Ethiopian Airline on the aircraft. Also, the certificate of renewal of service was duly issue din October 2004. The operator also carried out A1 check on the November 21, 2004, and work pass, including inspection of landing gear."

"The inspectors went on test flight on all the remaining Chanchangi aircraft, that is the 727-200 aircraft on the Abuja-Kaduna and Abuja-Lagos flights to confirm the airworthiness of the aircraft with all our inspectors on board."

Therefore, Yuguda disclosed that the airline would be allowed to resume normal flights this week.

He also commended the pilot of the plane that crash-landed for the way he manoeuvred the plane to save the lives of about 170 passengers on board.



Boeing sees a big future for medium-sized jets

NCAA to license private aerodromes, airstrips

In an effort to ensure safety and security of the country's airspace, the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) is to license all private aerodromes, airstrips and helipads.

The minister of aviation, Malam Isa Yuguda, made this known at the 2004 ministerial news briefing held Friday in Abuja.

Yuguda said that President Olusegun Obasanjo had approved the

licensing of the facilities, which, he said, would go a long way to enhance security and safety operations at the aerodromes.

He said that it was discovered through a ministerial committee directed to monitor and control airfields operations in the country that there were more than 70 of such "illegal and unlicensed airfields in use which may be inimical to our national security."

According to him, the existence of such aerodromes poses danger to the country as there can be likelihood of illegal trafficking in arms and human beings with its attendant security implications.

He said that already a task force had been constituted to immediately inspect, license and handover the control of such airfields to relevant aviation agencies for proper management.

The minister, therefore, advised owners of such airstrips and helipads to comply with government directives or risk the wrath of the law.

He expressed regret that the aircraft and helicopters using these facilities were also not being monitored by both the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Nigerian

Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) and Nigerian Metrological Agency (NIMET).

Yuguda said that relevant aviation and security agencies had been mandated to establish their offices in all the identified aerodromes as well as take over their management and control.

He further said that oil and gas companies operating in the country and using such facilities had been directed to liaise with the aviation parastatals agencies for the purposes of licensing them.

Speaking on dormant airports in the country, the aviation minister expressed happiness that some of them were currently enjoying patronage.

He listed Ilorin, Buechi, Akure, Katsina, Mskurdi, Ibadan and Obudu airports, which, he said, had been actively operational and exposed to increased air traffic activities for commercial and tourism purposes.

He assured Nigerians that the aviation ministry would not compromise on the safety and security of the country's airspace and airports in order to attain international standard and attract greater volume of air traffic into the country.

Continental orders 7E7 Dream liner

Continental Airlines has become the first major airline in the US to order the Boeing 7E7 medium-sized jet.

Continental chief executive, Gordon Bethune said the \$1.3bn order for 10 planes makes it "an important part of our international growth strategy."

The 7E7, which will fly into business in 2008, is central to Boeing's aim to beat its European competitor Airbus.

Boeing continues to enjoy dominance in the US, though in Europe some carriers favour Airbus instead.

Last week, Airbus

announced the first sale of its A350 aircraft which will be launched as a rival to the Boeing 7E7, also known as the Dream liner.

Both the 7E7 and the A350 are being designed to be as fuel-efficient as possible in the 200- to 300-seat sector, and each will be available in both short and long range versions.

Airbus is to sell 10 of its forthcoming A350s to Spanish carrier Air Europe, which has the option to buy two more in a deal that could be worth more than \$1.8bn.

Also last week, Boeing secured a \$6bn deal with Japan Airlines to supply up to 50 of its 7E7 planes.

Business Trust

Energy

Alamiyeseigha hands over Croatian hostage to Shell

Bayelsa State governor, Diepreye Alamiyeseigha has handed over Mr. Ivan Roso, a Croatian technician who was taken hostage on Christmas Eve in the state to Shell.

Roso, an employee of SEABULK, an oil servicing firm working for the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), was handed over to Shell's management.

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, with agency report

Alamiyeseigha said "the handing over of somebody who was held hostage is never one of my functions as a governor, and I pray that this type of event will not repeat itself in the state."

Handing over Roso to the SPDC on Wednesday in Yenagoa, the governor said

"this is not a happy moment for the government and good people of Bayelsa State."

Alamiyeseigha regretted the incident, blaming Shell for the development, especially for not honouring the memorandum of understanding (MOU) it signed with communities in its areas of operation.

The governor said the briefings he got from the leaders, legal adviser and youth president of the community hosting Shell's Sea Eagle

floating oil field showed that "the company and its contract workers have always acted irresponsibly."

He noted that the company and the workers had formed the habit of infuriating the local people.

"They should note that they have a joint venture agreement with the federal government, but the area they are drilling the oil belongs to the people," the governor said.

He regretted that a multinational organisation such as Shell had signed an MOU with the communities since 2001, but had failed to honour the accord up till the end of 2004.

Alamiyeseigha decried the employment pattern of the SPDC's contracting firms in the state, frowning that even boat drivers, messengers and

cleaners were employed from neighbouring states.

He warned: "I will not want any multinational company operating in my state to create problems for me; multinational companies fuel crises in various parts of Bayelsa State."

The governor regretted that Nigeria had played into the hands of these companies and said this "must be stopped because they do not do that in their countries."

"I can never be a slave to any multinational company operating in my territory. And for God's sake, Ijaw man has never been conquered and we shall remain so."

He warned the people of the state that his administration would not tolerate any group holding hostage an expatriate or Nigerian staff

working for an oil company. "It is not acceptable; it is not in our character, it will be condemned. For those who will indulge in it, they will be treated as criminals."

"They may have a good case, and we have established channels to follow in addressing any issue," he said.

Responding on behalf of the SPDC, its Manager in the state, Mr. Fidelis Agbiki, thanked Alamiyeseigha for his quick response to the company's distress call.

Roso was taken hostage by members of the Iduwini National Youth Movement from Iduwini clan from both Bayelsa and Delta states because of Shell's refusal to honour an MOU it signed with them in 2001.

Nigeria's gas flare highest in the world - NNPC

The Nigeria's gas flare has been ranked as the highest in the world resulting to economic waste and environmental problems.

The group managing director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Engineer Funsho Kupolokun, disclosed this during a world press conference held at NNPC Towers, Abuja last week.

Kupolokun said "National gas development did not receive focused attention to the extent that as much as 70 percent of Natural gas produced was being flared (the highest in the world) resulting in economic waste and environmental problems."

"Nevertheless, as a result of the federal government's intervention in the last 4 years the flaring has drastically reduced to 42.6 percent."

He said with a reserve of about 187.5 trillion cubic feet, Nigeria ranks seventh in terms of global gas reserves and first, in Africa.

Kupolokun disclosed that, already, total gas utilised in the country increased from about 197 million scf/d in 1999 to about 573 mm scf/d in 2004.

According to him, by 2010 domestic demand for national gas will increase to about 1700 mm scf while gas export is expected to reach over 7 billion scf/d. He said the sector is ready to attain zero gas flare by 2006, capturing economic value of gas in both domestic and export market and ensuring increased private sector participation.

He said in the quest of improving the opportunities for Gas monetizations, the corporation identified expansion of domestic utilisation, in independent power plants, and the use for heavy industries like NAFCON, and ALSCON.

"The final investments



Funso Kupolokun, NNPC GMD.

By Hamisu Muhammad

Decision of the West Africa Gas Pipeline was signed on 16th December 2004. This project which is of strategic importance is expected to

foster corporation and economic development to countries in the sub-region."

"Furthermore, it is estimated to provide between \$75-100 million in local goods and services within the region during construction."

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Business

Accountants urged to devise ways of effective practice

Government and private sectors in the country have been asked to adopt effective reward and punishment measures that would motivate the practice of honesty and integrity at all levels.

The advice was contained in a communiqué issued at the end of the third National Conference on Ethical issues in Accounting organised by the Department of Accounting, Bayero University Kano. The conference also called on the National Assembly to promulgate laws for adequate protection of private sector to encourage people to play a significant role as National Image protector and prevent abuse of public trust.

The communiqué which was signed by the head of the department Dr. Kabiru Isa Dadago also called for delimitation of the situation where by an accounting firm doubles as the auditor and the consultant for a single company or organisation thereby raising the problem of the conflict of interest as to who is checking who.

The accountants also recommended that the whistle-blowing should be institutionalised in Nigeria's educational institutions and the society as a whole to ensure greater honesty in the polity, adding that an ethics commission should be established and empower to recognise and reward genuine whistle blower who

From Musa Umar Kazare, in Kano
exposes treasurer looters and abuse of public trust.

The conference also called on professional accounting bodies in Nigeria to ensure that this basic ethical rules and principles of auditing are strictly followed in audit practice so as to regain the lost glory of accounting information.

"Conditions of service should be made attractive,

minimum level of comfort must be given to every civil servant, general macro socio-economic environment must be made congenial for productive service, career insecurity must be combated in all sectors, retiree entitlement must be paid as at when due and provocations like incessant tinkering with pump price of petroleum product must be avoided no matter the pressure from foreign influence." The Communiqué advised.

A survey measuring the level of poverty in Nigeria called Nigeria Living Standard Survey (NLSS), has showed a slight reduction of 7.8 percent in incidence of poverty in 8 years.

The NLSS is an enlarged survey of the existing National Consumer Survey (NCS), designed to address the limitations inherent in terms of scope and coverage in order to ensure measurability at the national and sub-national level.

The survey which was conducted by the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS)

Poverty drops by 7.8% in 8 yrs -FOS

By Hamisu Muhammad said "the result of NESS 2003,2004 showed a decrease in incidence of poverty of 57.8 percent when compared with the figure of 1991, which was 65.6 percent.

A statement made available to business Trust signed by the director general, FOS Alhaji Ahmadu Umaru said in the 2004 survey, more than 13

states were found to have below 50 percent incidence of poverty.

"When disaggregated by sector, urban poverty appeared to be decreasing from 58.2 percent in 1996 to 35.4 percent in 2004.

Also, rural poverty went down by 5 percent from 19.8 percent for 2100 calories and 33.6 percent for 2900 calorie." The statement added.

It added that, the 2003/04 NLSS report considered different poverty measures such as relative measure, absolute measure and subjective measure.

"Other measures include Quintile analysis and inequality measures."

Meanwhile, another survey conducted at size states of Abia, Cross Rivers Gombe, Kebbi, Osun and Plateau called core welfare indicator Questionnaire (CWIQ) showed that households in Abia and Cross Rivers states felt that their economic situation so far in 2004 was worse than that of 2003.

The CWIQ also revealed that primary and secondary schools indicators in terms of school enrolment and access to school were relatively stable in the six states.

The CWIQ survey has been recognised as veritable instrument for regular monitoring of welfare and social trend for different population groups of the society especially the poor.



Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna state presenting a cheque to Malam Abdulmumin Kujama, during the disbursement of micro credit loans to the state's civil servants in Kaduna...recently

ADB to open 25 field offices in Africa

The African Development Bank (ADB) group is planning to open 25 field offices by 2006 in member countries of the continent, said an ADB official last week.

P.T. Seya, resident representative of ADB to Ethiopia, said that the 25 field offices would help the bank's operational arms to be strengthened at the continental level, adding that new and additional professional officers who have experience in various fields are expected to be deployed in member countries.

"Furthermore, more authority will be delegated to us in order to enable our offices to undertake procurement and disbursement activities," Seya said.

The Ethiopian country office is currently undergoing a capacity strengthening process.

"As a result, it will have three new professional

officers very early in the new year, namely an experienced operations officer, transferred from headquarters, and two locally recruited officers, one for agricultural projects and one for social sector project," he said.

For Ethiopia, the ADB group has approved and implemented six developmental operations including the agricultural sector, transport and public utilities worth 137 million U.S. dollars in 2004.



Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Finance Minister

Market Indicators

NIFEX Rates as of 27th-12-2004
Spot Fixing 133.192 133.492

Tenor (Days)	Swap Points	Forward Fixing
30	1.2179 / 1.2207	134.4096 / 134.7124
60	2.4310 / 2.4365	135.6227 / 135.9282
90	3.6393 / 3.6425	136.831 / 137.1392
180	7.2359 / 7.2522	140.4276 / 140.7439

NIBOR Rates

Quotes as of: 27/12/2004.

7 Days	10.5833
30 Days	13.3750
60 Days	13.6667
90 Days	13.9583
180 Days	13.9917
270 Days	0.0000
365 Days	13.8583

OMO Auction as of 24/12/2004
Rates

Security BONDS	
Tenor	28 DAYS
Maturity Date	21/01/2005
Total Amount of Bids received	N 13270 Million
Total Amount Sold	N 13270 Million
Range of bid Rates	12.5000%

Stop Rate 12.5%
True Yield 12.6207%
Weighted Average Rate Nil

Naira official rates as of: 13/12/2004

Currency	Buying	Selling	Central
US DOLLAR	131.85	132.85	132.35
P/STERLING	252.585	254.5007	253.54285
EURO	173.6465	174.9635	174.305
S/FRANCS	0	0	0
J/YEN	1.256	1.2655	1.26075
CFAFRANCS	0.2561	0.2661	0.2611
WAUA	200.208	201.7265	200.96725
SAUDI RIYAL	35.1638	35.4304	35.2971

Bureax De Change rates as of 21/12/2004

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

Business

Iraqi minister accuse insurgents of economic sabotage

Iraqi insurgents are waging an all-out war on the country's vital oil industry which has lost nearly eight billion dollars in revenue since last year's US-led invasion, oil minister Thamer Ghadban said.

"We want to tell the Iraqi people that there is an all-out war against the country's oil infrastructure," Ghadban told reporters as he toured the capital's Dura refinery, which came under mortar fire last week. Ghadban estimated lost

export revenue from sabotage at about eight billion dollars since the March 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, which sits on the world's second largest reserves of crude oil. "Exports are now limited only to the south, there are no exports in the north," he added. Oil exports from southern terminals in Basra are averaging 1.8 million barrels per day. Osama bin Laden (news - web sites) ordered his supporters to sabotage oil facilities in Iraq and the Gulf,

in an audiotape attributed to the Al-Qaeda leader broadcast on an Islamist website last month. "Take jihad (holy war) to stop (the Americans) getting hold of (the oil). Concentrate your operations on the oil, in particular in Iraq and the Gulf," said the voice on the tape. Ghadban said there was "a plot to create a shortage of oil in the country and prevent exports from Iraq", adding that "this plot has become widespread and has almost

reached its peak." He said that



Osama bin Laden

intelligence indicated that a mortar attack on the southern Basra refinery on Saturday was carried out "by a terrorist group close to Al-Qaeda" and that insurgents in the north of the country were distributing tracts warning truck drivers not to supply refineries with crude. Ghadban said other attacks took place over the weekend, with a pipeline transporting crude from the oilfields of Kirkuk in northern Iraq to the Baiji refinery bombed and a power plant in Mussayab, south of the capital, also attacked. The attacks are carried out "to sow terror among the population", he said. "Terrorists are not content to hit pipelines, but have also hit tanker trucks, and have threatened, beaten and killed drivers," he said.

Ghadban warned that sabotage is to blame for fuel shortages that continue to plague the country despite its oil wealth, sometimes forcing people to wait a whole day to fill up their vehicles. But power supply is also affected with most sections of Baghdad plunged in darkness almost every night and residents having to rely on generators. The Dura refinery, which provides fuel for Baghdad's main power plant that supplies most of the capital with electricity, has been the target of 11 insurgent attacks in the last two months alone. "I don't see an imminent or swift end to this crisis," said the minister, adding that more security forces would be deployed to protect oil installations against insurgent attacks.

Court voids US' limits on Chinese exports

An injunction issued late Thursday by the US Court of International Trade halted consideration by the US administration of petitions from the US textile industry, which fears the impact of a likely flood of "Made in China" garments. The ruling leaves the door open to an unchecked increase in Chinese goods with the expiration of quotas on January 1. The US Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel filed the court action in an effort to head off a possible decision by the US government to cap Chinese imports under a provision in China's World Trade Organization (news - web sites) accession agreement. The association, which represents major US retailers, has argued there was no specific threat to US industry and that freer trade would benefit American consumers. Judge Richard Goldberg ruled that the retailer could suffer "irreparable damage" from any import limits that might disrupt the supply chain. "An injunction will preserve

plaintiff's rights until the merits and the issue of compliance with the law are fully considered," the judge said. "It will provide interim relief until those doubts that have been raised are eliminated." But the American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition (AMTAC), which represents US textile makers, said the judge's decision if upheld could end up causing enormous damage to American industry, which would be at a severe disadvantage to low-cost Chinese makers. "AMTAC believes that the safeguard process was wrongly enjoined and that it is imperative that the US government appeal this flawed decision as soon as possible," the group said in a statement Friday. This ruling could open the door to allowing China to gain a monopoly share of the US textile and apparel market in short order, threatening the economic livelihood of nearly 700,000 US textile and apparel manufacturing workers in the United States." The end of the quotas, enshrined in the 1974 Multifibre Arrangement

and later in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, was expected to have a major impact not only on wealthier nations that import goods, but on other

developing countries that may lose market share to China. The ruling dashes hopes for an immediate move by Washington to allow for only gradual increases in Chinese imports.



Managing director, Peugeot Automobile Nigeria (PAN) Mr. Francois Serre second left, surrounded by PAN management staff cutting a tape at the launch of the Peugeot 306 edition by PAN at the just concluded Lagos State trade fair...recently pix: Oladipupo Odunewa

Japanese stocks to ship this year

After seeing the market end 2004 on a positive note,



Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe

investors are betting that the semiconductor industry will emerge from the current downturn to help drive exports and so the economy by mid-2005. They said other positive factors include an expected recovery in corporate capital spending and stronger consumer sentiment later in the year. "Growth concerns in Japan are most likely to weigh heavily on the equity market in early 2005," said Societe Generale Asset Management senior economist Akio Yoshino. "We think that there is the possibility that the Nikkei index could slip to below the 10,000 mark around

March, when the Japanese fiscal year ends." Japanese shares posted a second consecutive, but modest, annual gain over the past 12 months. The benchmark Nikkei-225 index closed 2004 at 11,488.76, up 7.6 percent, after hitting a low of 10,299.43 and a high of 12,195.66. The broader TOPIX index of all First Section shares ended the year at 1,149.63, up 10.15 percent, after a low of 1,017.84 and a high of 1,225.97. Investors have had a lot to be wary about in the final months of 2004. There have been concerns over slowing demand for information technology products from

overseas, the appreciation of the yen against the dollar and the soaring price of oil, steel and other commodities. Any combination of these factors could send the Japanese economy back into stagnation or worse. Japan's economy only narrowly avoided a technical recession when it contracted 0.1 percent in the second quarter to June on slowing exports, followed by feeble 0.1 percent growth in the three months to September. The Bank of Japan's quarterly Tankan survey for December showed that sentiment among large manufacturers fell for the first time in seven quarters.

THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC,
BAUCHI
PMB 0231, BAUCHI
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

POSTPONEMENT OF RESUMPTION DATE

This is to notify the General Public particularly the Students of the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi that the resumption date for academic activities in the Institution has been postponed from 4th January, 2005 until further notice.

A new resumption date would be communicated in due course, please.

Signed
L. IBRAHIM
REGISTRAR

CC: The Rector
All HOD's/Head of Units

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2004

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
THE OKOJU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	16	14.30	624,901	9,375,874.50
PRESCO PLC	1	9.71	4,500	43,695.00
Sector Totals	17		629,401	9,319,369.50
AIRLINES				
AVIATION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PLC	1	1.01	100	101.00
Sector Totals	1		100	101.00
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC	17	2.16	39,315	82,544.16
K. T. IREKODI PLC	1	7.23	2,023	14,606.06
Sector Totals	18		40,338	97,150.22
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	7	3.42	42,968	215,550.56
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	5	6.63	14,042	93,098.46
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	68	3.26	22,928,073	70,733,805.29
CHARTERED BANK PLC	12	3.04	581,871	1,768,887.84
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC	9	1.18	37,000	43,660.00
EBI INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	24	2.26	2,986,200	6,520,842.00
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	261	23.60	860,369	20,081,882.80
FBI INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	10	1.33	149,586	198,949.38
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC	79	11.69	1,985,111	23,205,970.97
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	13	0.89	406,000	356,470.00
HALLMARK BANK PLC	4	2.00	1,102,700	2,119,479.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC	27	0.58	12,907,000	7,086,130.00
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	8	1.07	3,148,250	3,368,827.50
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	11	7.81	5,830,979	43,977,945.99
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC	88	1.27	105,556,147	128,856,614.09
NAI BANK PLC	5	1.74	251,914	443,390.64
OCEANIC BANK PLC	24	1.34	3,711	23,379.30
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC	5	7.41	34,889,071	42,968,833.41
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	2	1.28	361,500	1,931,231.25
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC	1	1.35	5,000	975,000.00
TRADE BANK PLC	47	9.05	1,074,159	6,750.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC	247	21.60	2,716,634	9,697,546.71
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	6	3.93	207,200	55,349,351.45
WEMA BANK PLC	31	15.69	377,943	161,616.80
ZENITH BANK PLC	1,019		197,580,888	148,683.69
Sector Totals				5,929,925.67
BREWERIES				425,667,958.00
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC	142	116.99	795,813	91,564,602.72
JOS INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	2	3.80	6,000	22,800.00
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC	241	42.80	780,821	31,927,352.48
Sector Totals	385		1,582,634	123,509,755.20
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	89	22.50	4,391,010	104,472,735.83
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	6	6.63	189,290	1,926,705.30
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC	16	11.30	2,833	812,731.70
Sector Totals	111		4,753,133	107,212,189.83
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC	3	0.76	6,000	29,100.00
CAP PLC	7	1.75	1,800	7,150.00
D. N. MEYER PLC	1	0.76	605,516	20,390.04
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC	7	1.75	73,312	373,477.54
Sector Totals	18		198,000	38,000.00
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
THOMAS WAT NIGERIA PLC	1	0.76	2,000	2,000.00
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC	2	2.00	2,000	40,000.00
Sector Totals	3		4,000	42,000.00
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTH NIGERIA PLC	3	4.50	15,000	18,200.00
C. F. A. O NIGERIA PLC	2	82.00	82,000	374,490.00
JOHN HOLT PLC	2	9.50	7,000	6,930.00
DINGLEY NIGERIA PLC	126	16.50	1,228,243	18,739,079.72
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC	12	12.50	123,015	1,423,654.20
S. C. D. A NIGERIA PLC	9	11.75	16,723	19,231.45
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC	17	14.17	73,521	1,641,792.57
UTC NIGERIA PLC	16	1.15	129,622	156,712.62
Sector Totals	283		1,677,224	31,781,496.56
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC	17	0.97	165,900	160,050.00
R.I.L.S. BERGER NIGERIA PLC	4	16.40	3,439,844	56,408,521.60
Sector Totals	21		3,604,544	56,568,571.60
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC	3	0.89	21,400	20,836.00
Sector Totals	3		23,400	10,826.00
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	28	25.00	183,033	4,540,668.00
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	132	99.00	663,592	27,930,293.48
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	22	16.81	82,890	1,376,802.90
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	15	97.75	53,854	3,110,608.50
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC	16	149.82	34,638	3,143,091.30
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC	2	15.82	5,600	79,100.00
Sector Totals	216		827,507	42,179,964.18
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	10	3.01	113,000	379,800.00
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	8	5.20	38,000	198,432.68
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	1	1.17	52,800	61,776.00
NIDEMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC	5	2.84	103,000	305,250.00
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC	87	7.95	3,101,750	16,797,052.18
Sector Totals	111		2,410,559	17,702,918.87
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC	18	0.94	670,000	631,580.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC	14	3.08	147,401	453,995.08
VITAFODAM NIGERIA PLC	24	3.50	197,622	687,836.15
Sector Totals	54		1,015,023	1,773,411.23
INSURANCE				
AICO INSURANCE PLC	1	1.67	8,500	14,195.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC	21	1.25	651,710	814,316.80
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC	2	1.29	25,000	32,250.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	6	1.51	82,212	98,210.96
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.93	1,000	2,790.00
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) PLC	4	0.76	400,000	304,000.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	11	4.04	371,250	1,480,063.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	1	1.97	50,000	98,500.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC	5	5.01	196,028	977,669.44
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC	1	2.65	1,900	2,650.00
Sector Totals	53		1,768,870	3,828,265.28
MANAGED FUNDS				
C. & I LEASING PLC	6	1.49	145,450	216,720.50
Sector Totals	6		145,450	216,720.50
PACKAGING				
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC	1	4.53	14,800	67,844.00
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC	1	0.42	50,000	21,000.00
Sector Totals	2		64,800	88,844.00
PETROLEUM/MARKETING				
AFROBI PLC	2	0.64	571,620	380,885.40
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	96	69.00	1,300,917	89,819,891.03
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC	4	1.99	85,751	170,648.40
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC	36	184.00	893,863	163,122,285.71
CONOH PLC	90	131.00	291,772	37,829,823.41
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC	10	169.00	12,204	2,056,921.00
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	17	182.46	148,989	27,309,182.08
QANDO PLC	92	112.00	176,657	19,833,017.65
Sector Totals	441		3,481,713	340,493,343.79
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC	26	8.90	272,347	2,410,314.30
Sector Totals	26		272,347	2,410,314.30
TEXTILES				
AFRINT NIGERIA PLC	11	0.55	240,057	135,652.49
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC	13	1.87	169,703	321,702.33
Sector Totals	24		409,760	457,354.82
Overall Totals	2,690		228,462,893	1,153,647,289.34

TOP10 TRADES ON FRIDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
INLAND BANK	3,148,250.00	3,368,827.50	8
JBERGER	3,439,544.00	56,408,521.60	4
ASHAKACEM	4,391,010.00	104,472,735.83	9
INTERCONT	5,630,979.00	43,977,945.99	11
IMB	12,007,000.00	7,068,130.00	27
ACBINTBANK	12,785,000.00	12,017,900.00	19
FCMB	17,663,045.00	89,777,396.43	94
ATLANTICBK	22,928,073.00	70,733,805.29	68
OWENABANK	34,889,071.00	42,968,833.41	24
MANNYBANK	105,556,147.00	128,856,614.09	88

TOP10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LAST CLOSE	FRIDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
TEXACO	161.00	169.00	+8.00
NESTLE	142.50	149.62	+7.12
MOBIL	176.88	184.00	+7.12
GUINNESS	111.90	116.99	+5.09
NOLICHEM	127.05	131.00	+3.95
NBC	55.00	57.75	+2.75
NB	41.00	42.80	+1.80
7UP	23.82	25.00	+1.18
UNIPETROL	111.00	112.00	+1.00
LEVBROS	14.94	15.50	+0.56

TOP10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LAST CLOSE	FRIDAY'S CLOSE	CHANGE
AP	69.88	69.00	-0.88
JBERGER	17.26	16.40	-0.86
ASHAKACEM	22.88	22.50	-0.38
SKBEECHAM	8.05	7.95	-0.10
COOPBANK1	24	1.18	-0.06
UTC	1.21	1.15	-0.06
TIB	1.32	1.26	-0.06
COSTAIN	1.02	0.97	-0.05
UBA	9.10	9.05	-0.05
AFROIL	0.67	0.64	-0.03

Market State : Open
 Index : 31,156.69
 Deals : 2,804
 Volume : 250,911,088
 Value : N1,255,442,625.77
 Cap. : N1,842,866,439,829.40

Societe Bank seeks CBN's nod to restructure

From Adelanwa Bamgbeye, in Lagos

Following approval of its Board of directors, the management of Societe General Bank of Nigeria (SGBN) has presented its restructuring plans to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) with a view to resolving the bank's ongoing crisis.

In a telephone conversation with *Business Trust* the ag head of corporate affairs, Mr Yinka Adeyemi, disclosed that the board and management of the bank have been working assiduously to relieve the suffering of depositors since SGBN's suspension from the clearing house in July last year.

It would be recalled that SGBN, along with African International Bank (AIB) were suspended from the clearing house in July 2003.

Mr Adeyemi stated that the bank's shareholders, mindful of the inconveniences and extreme hardship their customers have faced following the bank's suspension, have made funds available which will be paid on an equal basis to all depositors.

Business Trust gathered that a proposal along these lines has been submitted to the CBN with a view to obtaining the apex bank's consent to undertake this first phase of the restructuring exercise.

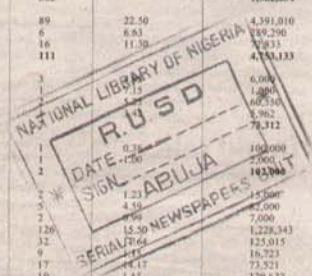
It is envisaged that this move will substantially reduce the number of depositors with outstanding balances.

The second phase of the exercise will involve the conversion of all outstanding liabilities to equity of the bank. This multi stage restructuring plans is expected to improve the banks balance sheet and make it attractive banks, some of whom have already indicated their interest in taking over SGBN.

According to Mr Adeyemi, a number of banks have signified their interest in acquiring SGBN once the bank has concluded its restructuring exercise.

His words: "this is more so because of the bank's established branch network and broad customer base with strong roots in the northern and south western parts of the country."

The measures outlined by the bank, he claimed, it approved by the CBN, will go a long way towards resolving its problems and positively contribute to the much needed stability in the banking sector



Business Trust

International

US SEC okays

Argentina's debt swap

The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has given the green light to a huge restructuring of Argentina's debt.

Argentina, which defaulted in 2001, has offered to

...seeks firm's support in insurance probe

US financial regulators have requested information from Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway group as part of a probe into certain insurance products. (Warren Buffett is the world's second-richest man).

The United States' Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has asked the billionaire businessman's firm to provide documents relating to the sale of 'non-traditional' products.

The watchdog is examining allegations that these products have been misused to manipulate corporate earnings.

Berkshire, which is not accused of any wrongdoing, has said it will cooperate. The SEC is seeking information from General Re, Berkshire's reinsurance unit, as part of a wider inquiry into the legality of 'non-traditional' policies, also known in the industry as 'loss mitigation' or 'retroactive' products.

The regulator is investigating claims that some companies have used these products to hide losses from investors. The accounting rules governing these products are unclear.

The culture at Berkshire is such that they would congenitally be unlikely to play anywhere close to the line Thomas Russo, Gardner Russo and Gardner Leading insurers such as ACE, Chubb, Swiss Re and Zurich Financial, have already been approached to hand over documentation for the investigation.

"Berkshire Hathaway and General Re will cooperate fully with the request," the company said in a statement.

'Non-traditional' policies provided less than 1% of Berkshire Hathaway's income in the first nine months of 2004.

"It is possible that an individual could have fallen short of Berkshire's standards or the law but it is unlikely given Berkshire's culture."

The company, which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, has interests in a variety of different industries but specialises in insurance and re-insurance.

Mr Buffett - known as the Sage of Omaha for his ability to predict stock market trends - is the world's second-richest man with an estimated fortune of \$41bn.

swap about \$102bn of unpaid bonds for up to \$41.8bn in new debt.

One-third of these new bonds will be sold in New York, with the rest going to European and Argentine markets.

Pending approval from European financial regulators, the scheme should go ahead on 17 January.

Analyst expects some 70% of investors to accept the offer, but some bondholders have already expressed their disagreement with the offer.

The scheme will leave many bondholders with only some 25-50% of their initial investment.

The administration of President Nestor Kirchner has resisted pressure to improve the offer, arguing Argentina needs its resources

to fight a social crisis that has left more than 40% of population below the poverty line.

The Administrator of President Nestor Kirchner has resisted pressure to improve the offer, arguing Argentina needs its resources to fight a social crisis that has left more than 40% of population below the poverty line.

The heads of LSE's suitors Deutsche Boerse and Euronext both met LSE head Clara Furse last week, a source close to the negotiations told BBC News.

The two bourses are locked in a bid battle and further talks to explain the benefits of both bids have been scheduled for the new year.

A £1.3 billion (\$2.5 billion) offer from Deutsche Boerse has been rejected by the LSE.

In a 13 December statement, the LSE said the proposal undervalued its business but agreed to hold talks with Deutsche Boerse to ascertain whether a "significantly improved proposal" would be in the interests of LSE's shareholders and customers.

Paris-based Euronext, which owns the Liffe derivatives exchange in London and combines the Paris, Amsterdam and Lisbon stock exchanges, has also begun talks with the LSE.

The meetings in January with the German bourse's chief Werner Seifert and his rival bidder Jean-Francois Theodore are set to build on discussions held on 21 December in London.

Deutsche Boerse has held a total of two "very constructive" meetings with the LSE since its initial proposal was made, a spokesman said.

Further talks between Mr Seifert and Ms Furse are expected to focus on the ben-



The very busy New York Stock Exchange during end of year 2004 transactions last week Friday.

Dollar hovers around record lows

The US dollar hovered close to record lows against the euro on Friday as concern grows about the size of the US budget deficit.

Analysts predict that the dollar will remain weak in 2005 as investors worry about the state of the US economy.

The administration's apparent unwillingness to intervene to support the dollar has caused further concern.

There are no dollar buyers now, especially after the Chicago data yesterday the dollar was trading at \$1.3652 versus the euro on Friday morning after hitting a fresh record low of \$1.3667 on Thursday. One dollar

bought 102.55 yen. Data Impact Disappointing business figures from Chicago triggered the US currency's weakness on Thursday.

The National Association of Purchasing Management-Chicago said its manufacturing index dropped to 61.2, a bigger fall than expected.

"There are no dollar buyers now, especially after the Chicago data yesterday," said ABN Amro's Paul Mackel.

At the same time, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi voiced concerns about the strength of the euro. Mr Berlusconi said the euro's strength was "absolutely worrying" for Italian exports.

Mr Schroeder said in a newspaper article that stability in foreign exchange markets required a correction of global economic imbalances.

London Exchange suitors in bid talks

Talks between the London Stock Exchange (LSE) and the heads of two European bourses are set to resume next week.

The heads of LSE's suitors Deutsche Boerse and Euronext both met LSE head Clara Furse last week, a source close to the negotiations told BBC News.

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Deutsche Boerse has held a total of two "very constructive" meetings with the LSE since its initial proposal was made, a spokesman said.

Further talks between Mr Seifert and Ms Furse are expected to focus on the ben-

efits of putting the London and German markets on one technological platform. Deutsche Boerse has long wanted to link up with London. The two tried and failed to seal a merger in 2000.

Commentators have said that a deal with Euronext could potentially offer the LSE more cost savings than

a deal with Deutsche Boerse. But a deal with either bidder should, theoretically, make it easier for shareholders to invest in overseas companies and markets.

It would also create the biggest stock market operator in Europe and the second biggest in the world after the New York Stock Exchange.

Indonesia, Indian and Hong Kong stock markets reached record highs despite the scale of the tragedy that hit the region.

Investors seemed to feel that some of the worst-affected areas were so underdeveloped that the tragedy would have little impact on Asia's listed firms.

"Obviously with a lot of loss of life, a lot of time is needed to clean up the mess, bury the people and find the missing," said ABN Amro's Eddie Wong. "[But] it's not necessarily a really big thing in the economic sense."

Shares soar The financial and world community will be turning toward reconstruction efforts and at that point people will begin to have a sense of the financial impact International Monetary Fund official India's Bombay Stock Exchange inched slightly above its previous record close on Wednesday. Expectations of strong corporate earnings in 2005 drove the Indonesian stock exchange in Jakarta to a record high on Wednesday.

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng index may be benefiting in part from the potential for its listed property companies to gain from rebuilding contracts in the tsunami-affected regions of South East Asia.

"Our nation is in peril here... It won't be surprising if the cost exceeds our GDP," he said. "In the last few years, we made great progress in our standard of living - the United Nations recognised this. Now we see this can disappear in a few days, a few minutes."

Shaheed noted that investment in a single tourist resort - the economic mainstay - could run to \$40m. Between 10 and 12 of the 80-odd resorts have been severely damaged, and a similar number have suffered significant damage.

However, many experts, including the World Bank, have pointed out that it is still difficult to assess the magnitude of the disaster and its likely economic impact.

In part, this is because of its scale, and because delivering aid and recovering the dead remain priorities.

"Calculators will have to wait," said an IMF official in a briefing on Wednesday.

"The financial and world community will be turning toward reconstruction efforts and at that point people will begin to have a sense of the financial impact."

Chinese firm

bids for 20% of Yukos

China's state-owned oil company, CNPC may get a 20 per cent stake in Yukos' former oil production unit, Russia's energy minister Viktor Khristenko, has said on Thursday.

Yuganskneftegas was sold for \$9.4bn to state oil firm Rosneft a week ago to help pay off Yukos' massive tax bill.

Mr Khristenko said that Yuganskneftegas would function as a separate entity and would not be part of a planned merger between Rosneft and Gazprom.

China's demand for oil has helped end oil prices to record highs this year.

Russia may buy CNPC's assets in third countries as well as in China as part of Thursday's deal, said Mr Khristenko in a statement.

The main incentive behind this move is to protect both Gazprom and Rosneft from legal risks Steven Dashevsky, Atom analyst "These agreements are part of strategic agreements between the Russian and Chinese leadership on the expansion of their partnership in the energy sector," he added.

The latest announcement comes after more than a year of wrangling which has pushed Yukos, one of Russia's biggest companies, to the brink of collapse.

The Russian government put Yukos' Yuganskneftegas subsidiary up for sale after hitting the company with a \$27bn (£14bn) bill for back taxes and fines.

Keeping Yuganskneftegas as a separate entity may be a way to avoid litigation by Yukos' shareholders.

Yuko's has filed for bankruptcy protection in the US and a judge issued an injunction against Gazprom, barring it from taking part in last week's state auction.

"The main incentive behind this move is to protect both Gazprom and Rosneft from legal risks," said Steven Dashevsky, an oil analyst at the Aton brokerage.

"The sale of the stake to a foreign partner could also partly help Russia legitimise the nationalisation of Yuganskneftegas in the eyes of the international community."

Last week, it emerged that Rosneft had bought Baikal, the mystery winner of the Yukos auction.

Analysts believe the tax dispute between the Russian government and Yukos is partly driven by Russian President Vladimir Putin's hostility to the political ambitions of ex-Yukos boss Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Asian shares defy post-quake gloom

Indonesia, Indian and Hong Kong stock markets reached record highs despite the scale of the tragedy that hit the region.

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"The financial and world community will be turning toward reconstruction efforts and at that point people will begin to have a sense of the financial impact."

here," said Ahmed Shaheed, the chief government spokesman. He estimated the economic cost of the disaster at hundreds of millions of dollars. The Maldives has gross domestic product of \$660m.

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FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY OF SAFETY DOUBLE DOOR METAL WARDROBE FOR STOWAGE OF FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) hereby invites tenders from reputable companies for the procurement and supply of safety metal wardrobe for Airport Fire Service.

SPECIFICATION :

- ▶ **Appearance:** Double door metal wardrobe constructed with 1 mm metal sheet
- ▶ **Measurement:** Length - 65cm (Front)
Breadth - 56cm (side)
Height - 164cm (stand exclusive)
- ▶ **Colour:** Front (double doors) - light brown
Body - Dark brown
- ▶ Each wardrobe comprises four compartments divided into upper and lower - the two upper apartments will consist of equal dimension of 56 x 32 x 33 each while the lower compartment shall consist of 56 x 32 x 130 each and fixed with iron rod for hanging of uniform clothing.
- ▶ The two doors for the locker to be fixed with handle and locking facility.
- ▶ The four legs attached to the bottom of the locker will consist of equal height of 27 cm above the surface
- ▶ The sample of this locker shall be obtained from the General Manager (Fire and Safety)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- All goods to be supplied must comply with sample and or specification provided by the Authority.
- The items/equipments brand names/trade marks must be registered and approved by the appropriate authority / organization.
- All imported goods must be accompanied with a CERTIFICATE OF ASSURANCE from the Manufacturers.
- Payments are made ONLY after satisfactory delivery with FAAN. All contractors' documents must be accompanied with a photocopy of Certificate of Registration with FAAN.
- All eligible tenders must be submitted in sealed envelopes containing evidence of payment of a non-refundable tender fee of N20,000 (twenty thousand naira only) and marked "CONFIDENTIAL: TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY OF SAFETY METAL WARDROBE" to The Board Secretary, FAAN Headquarter, Ikeja not later than two weeks from the date of this publication.

Signed:
Management

ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF CLEANING AND SECURITY SERVICES TO THE KADUNA STATE GOVERNMENT

Kaduna State Government is desirous of privatising the provision of cleaning and security services of its Ministries, Extra Ministerial Departments and Parastatals throughout the State.

2. To achieve this objective, Government has concluded plans to contract out the provision of these services to reputable cleaning and security firms.

3. Interested cleaning and security firms will have the following duties/responsibilities;

(a) Security Services:

- (i) provide round the clock security cover for Ministries and Department of Kaduna State Government;
- (ii) Identify and implement security strategies/practices that enhance effective security of public institution;

(b) Cleaning Services:

- (i) Maintenance of high level cleanliness of Government Offices and premises and other services incidental to the contract.

4. Interested cleaning and security firms are required to indicate interest and forward 10 copies of the following documents:

- (i) Detailed company profile;
- (ii) Evidence of registration with the relevant agency;
- (iii) Documented organisational structure of the company indicating manpower with list of key professional staff and their resume;
- (iv) Verifiable experience of the company in provision of cleaning/security services of similar nature and scope in the last ten (10) years;
- (v) Tax clearance certificate for the past three (3) years.

METHOD OF APPLICATION

Interested cleaning and security firms are requested to forward their application for the provision of the relevant service to the Head of Service, State House, Kawo-Kaduna highlighting their competencies and the financial implication of the service they wish to provide not later than two (2) weeks from the date of this advertisement.

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World

2004: The Year of ICT breakthroughs

Despite the dawdling growth of the information technology (IT) sector within the year compared to some of its counterparts in Africa and Asia, Nigeria has made of remarkable achievements in the IT World. Below are some of the significant successes recorded in the field.

January: The dispute over control of the Nigeria ng Domain Name has taken another dimension, when the Nigeria Internet Group (NIG) requested the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to probe the alleged deal between Mrs. Ibukun Oduosule who is the administrative point of contact recognised by Internet Corporation and Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and Nigeria Telecommunication Limited (NITEL).

The deal, according to the NIG was struck when Mrs. Oduosule allegedly sold the ng Domain Name Control to Nitel for the sum of US\$50,000 in 1998.

The head, corporate Affairs, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Mr. Iye Kemabonta has urged Mrs. Ibukun Oduosule to quickly redelegate Nigeria ng Control Top Level Domain Name (CC-TLD) to the Nigeria Internet Group (NIG).

The deadline issued by the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to vacate the ISM band ended. The new guideline requested that all ISPs that are offering services on a point to multi point basis over long distances across the country should know that it is currently illegal to use the ISM band over such long distances in Nigeria and order them to switch to 3.4GHz frequency spectrum.

February: The former general manager (operations) in the Nigerian Telecommunication Commission (NITEL) Engr. S.O. Ogundele has petitioned president Obasanjo over Interconnectivity between the nation's GSM operators and the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC). Urging the president to probe the NCC.

The Federal High Court sitting in Abuja rules February 9, 2004 as a date to deliver ruling in application on the preliminary objection filed by the Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) against MTN suit over Internetworking agreement.

Software giant, Microsoft said it would bring cash and software to a computer training programme it has set up with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as part of a \$1 billion Company Investment to bring computers to developing countries.

Jigawa State government has explained that the state's new approach in utilizing information technology (IT) in governance was to ensure efficiency, reduce time wastage and cost of governance, adding that it will train 300 youths in IT annually.

Dutch Police arrested 52 Nigerians suspected of

By Hamisu Muhammad

defrauding gullible Internet Users in one of the largest bursts of the Infamous Nigerian e-mail scam.

An Internet Virus 'My doom' hits e-mail worldwide, in one of a dangerous attack where over 500,000 computers worldwide affected.

Nigeria has recorded considerable improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) in recent times, said the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), Ibadan in first progress report on millen-

in order to enhance socio-economic development of the nation.

The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) held a one-day workshop for practitioners in the telecommunication industry in the country, in Lagos, the participants include GSM service providers, internet service providers (ISP) among others.

A three-day information technology (IT) conference for judicial, law enforcement and security officers kicked-off in Abuja. In his speech the Chief Justice of the federation, Mohammed Lawal Uwais said he is very



Set of ICT equipment

nium development Goals (MDGs).

The report said the two indicators of the International Telecommunication tele density and personal computers (per 1000 people) are indeed suitable for assessing the situation.

Seventeen competitors, including five universities made presentations on their software programmes for effective information management for tertiary institution in Abuja.

The federal government has ordered the removal of import duty on all computers from foreign donor agencies into the country for use by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other non profit making organizations.

Dell Incorporated launched a new range of products into the Nigerian ICT market.

March: Progenics Limited, an indigenous information technology (IT) firm has developed solution for e-government called GIMAC, which could be adapted for use by all level of government, federal, state, and local.

National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) in collaboration with National e-government Strategies Limited (NeGST) has organized a two-day National e-government stakeholders conference at NICON Hillon Abuja.

Participants at the conference on e-government stressed the need for Nigerians to embrace information and communication technology (ICT)

optimistic that the full use of e-judiciary applications will lead to the improvement in judicial services in the country.

Meanwhile, the minister of justice and attorney general of the federation Chief Akin Olujimi (SAN) advocate laws for ICT in the country.

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) in collaboration with the Educational Tax Fund (ETF), HP and other private sectors have planned to set up centre of excellence in the six geo-political zones in the country.

April: The federal government has announced the introduction of Information Technology (IT) education into schools curriculum and makes it compulsory. The secretary of the government of the federation (SGF), Chief Ufor Ekaette disclosed this at a Microsoft Enterprises Agreement stakeholders meeting in Abuja.

Startech Connections, an Abuja based Information and Communications Technology (ICT) firm launched a new product called starspot, a wireless area network where a computer equipped with a WLAN module can be connected to the Internet through a wire less access point.

Reltel, a Lagos based telecommunication company, said it had installed a code division multiple access (CDMA) 2000IX technology into its existing system for improvement of services to its customers.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in collaboration with the National Office for Technology Acquisition and promotion (NOTAP) have urged government to initiate policy that will encourage indigenous capacity in information technology. The called was made in a communiqué issued at the end of the two-day workshop they organized on licensing of intellectual property assets.

Google introduced Free-e-mail service with a promise to deliver 250-500 times more storage space than the market-leading e-mail service provided by Yahoo and Microsoft's Hotmail.

Peter Okoeguale, Nigerian 33, was jailed for 20 months for his part in the e-mail fraud also known as the 419 scam in North Wales.

The federal ministry of education has announced plans to equip a computer laboratory in at least 102 schools throughout the country.

Motorola has completed arrangement to enter the Internet business arena, as it has introduced into the country the canopy system which is described as the secure and reliable wireless solution for extending broadband networks.

The United States Consulate General in Nigeria organized a five-day trade event for information technology industries around the world in Lagos.

May: InterSwitch Limited Nigeria's leading transaction switching and payment processing company has won a gold medal for innovation at the 21st century achievement award of the compurworld honours foundation in San Francisco, USA.

The Joint Action Committee for ICT Awareness and development (JACITAD) has organized for journalists and other stakeholders from public and private institutions an ICT training programme aimed at acquainted with trends in the



Late Professor Gabriel O. Ajayi until his death, he was the DG/CEO National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)

world's most dynamic industry.

In another development, Top shots in the ICT industry arranged a roundtable discussing to trash out best ways to harness Nigeria's abundant ICT human resources and

the imperatives of private-public partnership in driving the country's ICT goals.

June: The e-Nigeria 2004 conference held in Abuja, where member countries of Economic Community of West Africa State (ECOWAS) discussed at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja for three days in preparations for the implementations of world summit on information society (WSIS) and prepare ahead for the Tunis 2005.

The conference set up a task force that would ensure that all members-states finalize their e-strategies and action plans by this year in line with WSIS recommendation and set time frames for the implementation of the policies.

The Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) has launched a Digital Bridge Institute (DBI) aimed at providing training and research based knowledge towards bridging the digital divide between the information haves and have nots.

HP and Oracle developed a solution to manage public finances for government ministries and agencies.

Accelon, a broadband internet connectivity via satellite company, has launched its services in the country. The company, introduced new business communication solutions, internet access, and managed private networks.

The Nigeria Computer Society (NCS) held its 19th national conference and annual general meeting (AGM) in Abuja. The theme of the conference was, indigenous information technology capacity development: a veritable source of national income (ICADEV 2004).

The Nigerian University Commission (NUC) has said plan to establish a new information and communication technologies (ICT) curricula development guidelines for Nigerian Universities has reached a conclusion stage.

The National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) in collaboration with Remote Sensing and Geo-Information Society of Nigeria (RESGAN) and Geo-Information Society of Nigeria organized a national workshop on Nigeria Sat-1, theme: Satellite Remote Sensing (NIGERIASAT-1) and GIS: A solution for sustainable development in Abuja.

The managing director of Omatck Computers Limited, an indigenous computer assembling company, Mrs. Florence Sarki has lauded the federal government directive that all its establishments should patronize made in Nigeria computers.

The American Power Conversion (APC) Limited has appointed Mr. Charles Iyo as a district manager in charge of West African region.

July: The president, Nigerian Information Technology Professionals in America (NITPA), Professor Manny C. Aniebonam has said that over 174,000 Nigeria's IT professionals are

operating in the United State's IT sector.

Nigeria has been losing about \$1 billion annually to Software imports said a survey carried out by System Specs Limited.

In a bid to boost information technology in the country, the federal government has certified four indigenous companies to produce computer hardware.

Nigerian Diaspora Day Declaration of Principles been jointly signed by the federal government, the Nigeria Computer Society (NCS) and the Nigerian IT professionals in America (NITPA).

Arivia.KOM Nigeria has commented three technology and services agreements one with association for the development of Africa (ADEA), another with software application vendor industrial and financial system (IFS) and the third with video in knowledge out (VIDO).

The Nigerian Telecommunication Limited (NITEL) has executed its best Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) with the connection of shell Trustees Nigeria Limited in Abuja to the Internet.

The representative of the United Nation Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Dr. David Tommy has said that the Internet access and telephone main lines per capita of Nigeria are the lowest in Africa.

UNIDO also commissioned an Industrial Information Centre (IC) at the premises of the ministry of industry in Abuja.

The federal ministry of education in collaboration with association for the development of education in Africa (ADEA) commenced a 5-day sub-regional ministerial conference in Abuja.

Following President Olu-segun Obasanjo's directives that major operators in the telecommunication industry should begin manufacturing recharge cards locally by the end of 2004, the Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) has said that seven companies have indicated interest in manufacturing the cards in the country.

August: President Olu-segun Obasanjo has praised Nigerian Online real time, multi-channel electronic payment platform, eTranzact and recommended a pilot scheme of the solution for Abuja.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) has commenced training on information technology (IT) attempted at building technology capability for chartered Accountants to serve clients and employers better.

MTN Nigeria has roll out 1.2 million SIM Packs into the market before the end of the year through the MTN-Active-later-promotion

Minister of education, Professor Fabian Osuji said that National Open Polytechnic and Schools would be established for information and communication technology education in the country.

Cont'd on page 23

IT World

2004: The Year of ICT breakthroughs

Continued from page 22

Communications minister, Chief Cornelius Adebayo has officially flag-off the National Rural Telephony Programme (N RTP) in Kwali Area Council, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and Abuja.

The second GSM operator, Globacom has partners National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP) on poverty eradication in Nigeria. The saying agreement held NICON Hilton Abuja.

The Jigawa informatic Institute, Kazaure has admitted 1000 students during the June 2004 academic year in continuation of its plan to graduate 100,000 Information Technology experts by 2007.

Starcomms Nigeria Limited has launched a premium data services into the Nigeria Telecommunications market.

MTS the First Wireless Telecommunication company during pre-regulation era is back into the country and launched its services in Lagos.

Participants at conference on education in the northern part of the country have called for more attention on the training of students in information Technology.

Absence of legislation on Cyber crime has been identified as a major obstacle in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and effective deployment of e-business in the country. The Nigerian Cyber crime Working Group (NCWG) revealed this in a communiqué issued at the end of the one-day workshop in Lagos.

A United State of America based Software Company, Adobe Systems Incorporated, has appointed Software Distribution Limited (SDL) as its master distributor in Nigeria and the rest of West Africa.

ZINOX Technologies Limited, an indigenous Company manufacturing computers made in its Lagos Factory last Fiscal year said the managing director of the company, Mr. Amasike Emelonye

IBM, the world-larges super computer maker, has commenced operations in Nigeria by launching its service centre in Lagos.

SAP (Nigeria) Limited, a software solutions company has moved to Abuja.

Linkserve Limited has concluded plans to launch in special education support initiative (SESI) for all tertiary Institution in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Telecommunication Company (NITEL) is set to launch its pre-paid services on the fixed line (land-line) telephone network.

September: Nigeria has exported some software developed locally to two African countries, Uganda and Sierra Leone.

Intel Vice President, Dr. John Davies visited Nigeria where he held series of discussions with top government officials and members of the private sector

Visa International, one of the world's leading e-payment companies and Valucard Nigeria Plc formally

launched their partnership agreement.

Communication Trend Limited (CTL) has commenced deployment of direct satellite television services, Trend TV with a promise of becoming the best value for quality direct to home.

October: M-tel Nigeria has launched a N250



Students in the digital lab in Abuja commissioned by schoolNet recently.

recharge cards in order to market possible for more Nigerians to talk-the-talk.

Oracle has named its Nigeria-based partner Computer Warehouse as winner of the most successful marketing award 2004.

Renowned Japanese printer and manufacturing company, Oki is to step up its marketing presence in

Nigeria by appointing channel IT as its main distributor in the country

As part of its strategy to capture the Nigerians GSM market, Vmobile Nigeria has announced a new price N500 on its SIM pack and issued more in stock

Vmobile commenced legal proceedings that could culminate in the winding up

understanding (MOU) on Telsep, the telecommunication self-employment project for Niger-Delta Youth.

Digitalink, an independent developer of innovative intelligent voice switching platforms headquartered in the United Kingdom, has announced that it is entering the expanding Nigeria telecommunication market.

More than 3,000 graduates of computer operation techniques have been trained in the South-South community Resource Centre, Calabar in the last one year, the centre director, Mr. Henry Ikwang has disclosed.

A Lagos based Internal services provider Junisat, has said that its latest solution is particularly targeted at the Hinterland and rural areas in order to give the rural people easy access to internet.

The Ericsson Group, Manufacturers of Ericsson handsets and communications cable, donated \$7.5 million worth of equipment to Nigeria Telecommunication Limited (NITEL).

The head of service of the federation, Alhaji Yayale Ahmed has decried the poor utilization of information communication technology (ICT) on governance at both the state and local government levels.

The Jigawa state owned information and communication technology company, Galaxy ITT has received a license to commence its Public Head

System (PHS) mobile telecommunications from the Nigerian Communication Commission.

Two private telephone operators (OPOs), InterCellular and Retel, Have abolished the payment of access charges by subscribers to their networks.

One-month computer and internet training for 880 officers and men of the Port Authority Police command kick off in Lagos.

December: The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) has disclosed government's plan to offer scholarship to deserving Nigerians who are talented in Information Technology (IT).

Microsoft Nigeria has launched its office at Abuja, Nigeria's capital city located at Cairo Street, in Wuse Area of Abuja.

The director general, National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and Administrative point of contact of the Nigeria's domain Name .ng CCTLD at the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Number (ICANN), Professor Gabriel Olalere Ajayi has passed on. The federal government has signed a US \$362 million (about N50.374 billion) contract for design, manufacture and launch of communication satellite with a Chinese firm, China Great Wall Industry Corporation Limited in Abuja.

First Bank of Nigeria Plc has opened a window for electronic banking services (e-banking) with the launch of the first point of sale (POS) terminal which accepts local debit cards.

ICF urges Muslim group to embrace ICT

ALagos-based Islamic Information and Communication Technological group, the Islamic Computing Foundation (ICF) has called on Muslim groups in Nigeria to incorporate ICT into their religious activities.

Speaking in Lagos yesterday during the graduation ceremony of the group, the rector of ICF, Alhaji Abdul-Lateef Foloweyo said Muslim groups have not been utilising ICT in their *dawah* works.

He revealed that non-utilisation of power of information technology still constitute barriers to the progress of many Islamic groups in the country.

His words: "non-utilisation of ICT by most Muslim groups still constitute barriers to the progress of our Deen in Nigeria. The current laxity of Muslims to introduce information and communication technology into their activities calls for concern. Islamically, we lag behind because of the deep

From Zakariyya Adaramola, in Lagos

entrenchment of manual processes, which is a contrast to the realities of present times."

The ICF rector explain that being computer literate is the key to survival in the present. Muslim groups must move forward in this aspect.

"We must perform our own feat, give this realistic concept a chance and

consolidate effectively, our resources. Being computer literate is the key to survival in the new century, so we need to be more productive and utilise ICT very well," said Alhaji Folaweyo.

He said the training of youths, students and Muslims remained the corner stone of the foundation programme, adding that the foundation had trained more than 500 students.

LG electronics opens digital service centre

LG electronic has commissioned a 400 square meter space digital service centre in Lagos to create a platform for its customers "to have a first hand opportunity of experiencing direct quality service from LG."

Speaking during the commissioning of the centre last week, the head of LG in Nigeria, Mr. Anudeep Sharma said the ultra modern digital centre located on Opebi road,

Ikeja, would serve as a point of enjoying LG electronics after sales services.

"Traditionally, all LG electronic products carries a one year warranty which affords the customer an opportunity to make a call on the company's technicians within the period of one year. But LG will in its usual tradition of maintaining a database of its customers use the facility to sustain relationship with customers

through the use of special software, thus a regular check would be conducted from time to time amongst customers," said Sharma.

He disclosed that LG is convinced that Nigeria is not just a potential market but that it is a good market that has shown positive response to LG as an organisation as well as its products.

Unlike the digital centre, which was commissioned in

AP explains Oracle e-Business suite

From Mohammed Shosanya, in Lagos

process misfeasor and projects costing modules.

According to the company's information technology manager, Tony Eze, AP deployed the Oracle e-business suite because it will evidently put the company at a vintage

position to grapple with the new challenges brought about by the deregulation of the nation down stream sector.

The manager who also disclosed that African petroleum Plc is the First Oil Company to embrace the application in Nigeria, said it will radically change the company's operational processes.

"Even our customers will be allowed access to the system to make inquiries print reports about their transactions within the comfort of their offices without visiting our offices", he said.

According to him, while the electronic archiving system will enable documents to be scanned and stored electronically permanently the latter will facilitate intra company communication between Head office and other distant office locations without incurring bills.

IT World

Cyber crime booms in 2004

2004 saw the appearance of real phone viruses. The last 12 months have seen a dramatic growth in almost every security threat that plague Windows PCs. The count of known viruses broke the 100,000 barrier and the number of new viruses grew by more than 50 percent.

Similarly phishing attempts, in which conmen try to trick people into handing over confidential data, are recording growth rates of more than 30 percent and attacks are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

Also on the increase are the number of networks of remotely controlled computers, called bot nets, used by malicious hackers and conmen to carry out many different cyber crimes.

One of the biggest changes of 2004 was the waning influence of the boy hackers keen to make a name by writing a fast-spreading virus, said Kevin Hogan, senior manager in Symantec's security response group.

Although teenage virus writers will still play around with malicious code, said Mr Hogan, 2004 saw a significant rise in criminal use of malicious programs.

The financial incentives were driving criminal use of technology, he said. His comment was echoed by Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant from anti-virus firm Sophos.

Mr. Cluley said: "When the commercial world gets involved, things really get nasty. Virus writers and hackers will be looking to make a tidy sum."

In particular, phishing attacks, which typically use fake versions of bank websites to grab login details of customers, boomed during 2004.

Web portal Lycos Europe reported a 500 percent increase in the number of phishing e-mail messages it was catching.

The Anti-Phishing Working group reported that the number of phishing attacks against new targets was growing at a rate of 30% or more per month.

Those who fall victim to these attacks can find that their bank account has been cleaned

out of their good name has been ruined by someone stealing their identity.

This change in the ranks of virus writers could mean the end of the mass-mailing virus which attempts to spread by tricking people into opening infected attachments on e-mail messages.

"They are not an efficient way of spreading viruses," said Mr. Hogan.

"They are very noisy and they are not technically challenging."

The opening months of 2004 did see the appearance of the Netsky, Bagle and MyDoom mass mailers, but since then more surreptitious viruses, or worms, have dominated.

Mr. Hogan said worm writers were more interested in recruiting PCs to take part in "bot nets" that can be used to send out spam or to mount attacks on websites.

About 70 percent of all e-mail messages are now junk mail. In September Symantec released statistics which showed that the numbers of active "bot computers" rose from 2,000 to 30,000 per day.

Thanks to these "bot nets", spam continued to be a problem

in 2004. Anti-spam firms report that, in many cases, legitimate e-mail has shrunk to less than 30 percent of messages.

Part of the reason that these "bot nets" have become so prevalent, he said, was due to a big change in the way that many viruses were created.

In the past many viruses, such as Netsky, have been the work of an individual or group.

By contrast, said Mr. Hogan, the code for viruses such as Gaobot, Spybot and Randex were commonly held and many groups work on them to produce new variants at the same time.

The result is that now there are more than 3,000 variations of the Spybot worm.

"That's unprecedented," said Mr. Hogan. "What makes it difficult is that they are all co-existing with each other and do not exist in an easy to understand chronology."

The emergence of the first proper virus for mobile phones was also seen in 2004.

Phishing attacks are becoming popular among net savvy criminals.

In the past, threats to smart phones have been largely theoretical because the viruses

created to cripple phones existed only in the laboratory rather than in the wild.

In June, the Cabir virus was discovered that can hop from phone to phone using Bluetooth short-range radio technology.

Also released this year was the Mosquito game for Symbian phones, which surreptitiously sends messages to premium rate numbers, and in November the Skulls Trojan came to light which can cripple phones.

On the positive side, Finnish security firm F-Secure said that 2004 was the best-ever year for the capture, arrest and sentencing of virus writers and criminally-minded hackers.

In total, eight virus writers were arrested and some members of the so-called 29A virus writing group were sentenced.

One high-profile arrest was that of German teenager Sven Jaschen who confessed to be behind the Netsky and Sasser virus families.

Also shut down were the Canterbury and Shadowerew websites that were used to trade stolen credit card numbers.

Top viruses of 2004 include Netsky-P, Zafi-B, Sasser, Netsky-B, Netsky-D, Netsky-Z, MyDoom-A, Sober-I, Netsky-C, Bagle-AA.

Oracle officers take over PeopleSoft posts

Four executives of PeopleSoft Corporation were replaced by officers of Oracle Corporation, which is working to complete a \$10.3-billion acquisition of its business software rival, according to a regulatory filing Thursday.

The replaced PeopleSoft executives are Co-President and Chief Financial Officer Kevin T. Parker, Co-President W. Phillip Wilmington, Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Nanci Caldwell and James P. Shaughnessy, senior vice president, general counsel and secretary.

Safra Catz and Charles E. Phillips Jr. were named as co-presidents, Harry L. You as financial chief and Daniel Cooperman as senior vice president, general counsel and secretary, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission filing. They each hold the same posts at Oracle.

The move comes after Oracle said it had taken control of PeopleSoft and appointed four people to PeopleSoft's board, giving it a majority. PeopleSoft also said this week that its chairman and chief executive, David A. Duffield, resigned.

Internet assists in tracing Tsunami victims

The Internet has proved a godsend to people trying to track down family members and friends amid the chaos following the wave disaster in south Asia, in which almost 120,000 people were reported to have died.

So far, more than 240 foreigners are known to have died in the catastrophe, but nearly 7,000 foreigners were still reported as missing or out of contact on Thursday, mostly from Europe.

Messages from all over the world were arriving at sites such as the BBC which permitted Dutch citizen Rob Delissen to trace his brother, Theo, and his family on the island of Koh Raeha Yai, south of the devastated Thai resort of Phuket.

Of the scores of messages that have been posted on the service, many have received quick and sometimes reassuring replies from people in the region.

Serina Abrahams turned to the BBC for news of her cousin Paul Rogers, and received two emails, one from a compatriot and another from a Thai woman, locating Rogers in a hospital at Surat Thani.

A two-year-old Swedish boy whose photograph was posted on the Internet by the Phuket international hospital (www.phukethospital.com) was identified by his uncle. The site lists the names of foreigners admitted into all six hospitals in the resort.

The boy, Hannes Bergstroem, was found on a road near Khao Lak, his face covered with insect bites and bruises.

"It is a miracle, the most beautiful thing that could happen," the uncle said.

The English-language online news site Phuketgazette.net also has a place where people can post messages and receive news, but the site was clearly overstretched Thursday and responding slowly.

On the hospital site, a 10-year-old German girl, Sophia Michl, sought news of her missing parents, Norbert and Edeltraud Michl.

Earlier this month, Pleasanton, Calif.-based PeopleSoft agreed to be acquired by Oracle for \$26.50 a share, ending an 18-month hostile battle.



Digital library is now a famous and easy accessible way of research in the ICT developed countries. The picture shows some student conducting their research.

Mobile phone firms target high-speed standard

Leading wireless carriers and telecom equipment makers have agreed to develop an advanced mobile phone standard capable of sending high-resolution video in an instant, Japan's NTT DoCoMo said on Friday.

A group of 20 companies, including Britain's Vodafone Group Plc, Germany's Siemens AG (news - web sites), France's Alcatel and Japan's NEC Corp. and DoCoMo, will support the standard, Japan's top wireless operator said.

Mobile phone services based on the technology will offer transmission speeds more than 10 times as fast as the current third-generation (3G) service, DoCoMo said.

Basic technological specifications will be completed by 2007, but no date has been set for a commercial launch, a DoCoMo spokesman said.

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun business daily said, however, DoCoMo aims to offer the high-speed service as early as 2009.

The operator is likely to invest more than 100 billion yen (\$963.6 million) to upgrade its telecom infrastructure for the launch, the newspaper said.

The unified standard is expected to create demand for

cellphones with a large liquid crystal displays for playing games and watching movies, and to help handset makers cut costs through mass production, the paper said.

DoCoMo wants to lower procurement costs for cellphones because its revenues have been capped by the introduction of flat-rate services and fierce

competition. "With each other character any more, it has the option, at the touch of a few buttons, of multiple personalities. First of all there's that choice of power outputs, but what goes with that is also a choice of damper settings to vary the ride comfort and handling balance, a choice of how aggressively the traction

and stability controls cut in (and even the option to switch the stability control out altogether when conditions permit), a choice of manual and automatic transmission modes, each with its own range of programmes to vary the shift time and responses, and most extreme of all, a 'launch control' function for ultimate take-offs.

IBM launches WebSphere

IBM has unveiled additional middleware components to work with the Tregio technology to ensure product data synchronization between retailers and suppliers.

The IBM Global Data Synchronization (GDS) for WebSphere Product Center announced last week will handle the actual publication of product data, putting it into proper formats to be read by data pools.

At the moment there are a number of large data pools that do not all share formats with one another, according to Kara Romanow, research director at AMR.

Some of the major data pools are the WWRE (Worldwide Retail Exchange), Transora, and UCCNet.

GDS for WebSphere Product

Center also manages the subscription to the data pools and the messages between trading partners, a critical component before, during, and after the exchange of secure data.

Romanow said that Big Blue's competitive differentiator can be found in that their GDS solution does not require technical expertise to use.

"Everybody else manages these transactions with a technical person and they have to know XML. IBM's tool looks like Outlook and can be used by an end-user," Romanow said.

Dan Druker, director of product information management at IBM, said the problem of managing and sending product data cannot be solved through IT.

"This can be used by buyers

and sales persons," Druker said.

Earlier this year, IBM announced WebSphere Product Center, which took the technology from Tregio and created a data repository to manage thousands of SKUs with hundreds of attributes for both manufacturers and retailers.

While the worldwide effort to synchronize product data is far from complete it will over time greatly reduce shipping errors, inventory levels, and the possibility of empty shelves at the retailer by insuring that what is ordered is what is sent and received.

"When a trading partner says I want item number XYZ, both sides will agree that it is the same color, the same size, the same number of items per pallet, the pallet size, and how many

329m Chinese use mobile phone subscribers

Mobile phone subscribers in China topped 329 million at the end of November 2004, with the world's largest cell phone market expected to hit 402 million in 2005.

"China is expected to have

402 million mobile phone subscribers next year," Yang Qing, deputy director of the China Academy of Telecommunications under the Ministry of Information Industry (MIIT) was quoted by Xinhua news agency as saying.

Such numbers would mean that nearly one-out of every three Chinese citizens would have a mobile phone.

China's mobile telecommunications equipment industry has also posted fast growth, with output rising from 10 billion yuan (1.2 billion dollars) in 1998 to 280 billion yuan last year, the report said.

The number of mobile phone manufacturers increased from eight in 1998 to 37 last year with total production presently exceeding 250 million sets a year.

China is expected to export some 100 million hand sets this year but with only about 2.7 percent coming from domestic manufacturers, while multinational makers like Nokia and Motorola lead the charge, the report said.

NORTHERN EX-CHAIRMEN AND COUNCILORS FORUM

ADVERTORIAL

OFFICE:
6th Floor, NIDB House
18 Waff Road, Kaduna
0803-7879196

Aroused and disturbed by the potential consequences of the Presidential race in 2007, the Northern Ex-Chairmen and Councillors Forum, a non-governmental organisation met at the Hamdalla Hotel Kaduna on December 18, 2004 and after several hours of brain storming sessions made the following observations:

In a Federation such as Nigeria which is founded on Rule of Law and Justice, all the federating units are equal.

- The six geo-political zones of Nigeria are not therefore merely equal in name only: they also collectively share the values of justice and fair play.
- The tenets of Justice, fair play and equality were the basis for the desire to rotate power among themselves, especially the Presidency and to enshrine the principle of federal character in appointments at all levels of governance in the Nigerian constitution.
- In the political history of Nigeria, 1999 would remain evergreen as a major milestone in our march towards inclusiveness and national integration. It was the year, power-shift was accepted by all stakeholders and candidates for the Presidency in all the parties were from a single zone, the South-West. This very noble and wise decision attenuated tensions and resolved some thorny political and social problems. In addition, after eight years of South-West Presidency by 2007, Awoist clamour for power and June 12 actualization advocates shall have been adequately compensated.
- The wounds of marginalization, alienation and fears of domination of some sections by others still litter the political landscape; crying out for justice, equity and fair play.

None is so deserving of urgent national attention and consideration as the plight of the South-South zone of the Niger Delta. A zone that has been creating the wealth for the country. A zone that has always supported National unity and continues to make unqualified contributions towards national growth and development, despite suffering despicable neglect.

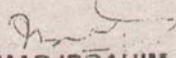
A zone that by 2007 and after 47 years of self-rule in Nigeria, would not have tested power when the other zones shall have tested power, Viz: South-East 6^{1/2} years, North-East- 6 years, North-Central - 19 years, North-West - 13 years, South-West - 11 years


In our view, in order to foster peace, harmony: mutual co-operation, understanding and the much desired stability to our polity, power in 2007 should shift to the South-South zone.

The South-South zone has what it takes to produce a good President for Nigeria among its numerous competent, patriotic and well qualified persons of proven integrity and character.

We therefore call on the Council of State, the National Assembly, Civil Society Organizations, Political Parties, the International Community and other stakeholders to support and work for the actualization of power shift to the South-South geo-political zone, come 2007.

ARISE NIGERIANS to this Noble and patriotic call, obey!!!


UMAR IBRAHIM
National President


ALHAJI LAWAL ALIYU
National Secretary

BEING TEXT OF A PRESS BRIEFING ON THE OCCASION OF THE END OF YEAR REVIEW AND SPECIAL REPORT BY MFCT PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE MINISTRY AND ITS PARASTATALS ON FRIDAY 26TH NOVEMBER, 2004 AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, ABUJA.

**FEDERAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:
BUILDING A CAPITAL CITY THAT IS PRIDE OF ALL NIGERIANS.**

BACKGROUND

The enactment of Decree No.6 of 1976 by the Supreme Military Council on February 5, 1976 led to establishment of a new Federal Capital and consequently, the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) charged with the responsibility to plan, design and develop the territory.

FUNCTIONS

The Authority by the Decree establishing it, is charged with the following responsibilities:

- (i) The choice of site for the location of the capital city within the Capital Territory;
- (ii) The preparation of a master plan for the Capital Territory;
- (iii) The provision of municipal services within the Capital Territory;
- (iv) The establishment of infrastructural services in accordance with the Master Plan and;
- (v) Co-ordinating of the activities and agencies of Government of the Federation within the Capital Territory.

The enactment of Decree No. 12 of 1985, which entrusted executive powers, and responsibilities of administering the territory, vested in the President to the Minister of the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT), meant that the Federal Capital Development Authority had become a parastatal of the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory. In line with the stated responsibilities of the FCDA, it thus performs two broad functions namely planning and development.

REPOSITIONING THE FCDA

In furtherance of Government's efforts to reposition the parastatal to become more effective, the Minister of the FCT approved the emergence of 10 Departments namely: Administration and Supplies; Finance and Accounts; Urban and Regional Planning; Engineering Services; Development Control; Parks and Recreation; Resettlement and Compensation; Legal Services; Public Building and Maintenance.

Today, the good intentions and noble objectives that informed the restructuring of the Authority are justified as the FCDA is better disposed to discharge its developmental responsibilities.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FCDA

A trip around the territory will enable anyone have a better appreciation of the efforts of this development Agency as the physical infrastructure and amenities on ground point at the giant strides of the Authority.

URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Following the organizational reform of the Administration of the Federal Capital Territory, which came into being on the 13th April, 2004, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning emerged from the erstwhile Department of Planning, Survey and Development Control. The services provided by the department emanated from the responsibilities vested on FCDA by Decree 9 of 1976.

Within the period under review, the department has been able to achieve the following:

- (i) Detailed designs of all residential districts in Phase II of the Federal Capital City (FCC) have been completed with their preliminary Engineering Designs.
- (ii) The general land use of Phase III of FCC has been completed while the detailed site Development plan and preliminary Engineering design of its districts is on-going for Karfe, Galadimawa, Wumba and Lokogoma Districts and recently contracts have been awarded for Kabusa, Pyakasa, Okanye, Dakwo, Lokogoma, Industrial Area II, sector centers G and H to a number of indigenous consultants.
- (iii) The Department is also working in conjunction with AIPDC on screening of the development proposals for markets, District centers, Neighbourhood Centres and Multi Level Car Parks in the FCC.
- (iv) Most recently, the re-design and planning of all undeveloped FGN plots and estates took place as a result of government policy of Monetization. The re-design will release more plots for allocation to the general public.
- (v) The department within the period under review also undertook a census of all private Housing Estate Developers in the FCC with a view to ensuring that they conform with the master plan provisions as well as drawing framework for controlling quality and adherence to standards.
- (vi) It has also received the final submission of Master Plans, Detailed site development Plan and preliminary Engineering Design from four out of the six consultants working on designated Satellite Towns in FCT at a total package contract sum of N169 million. These include

By Engr. Mohammed Sani Alhassan (FNSE)

Bwari, Karshi, Kusaki / Yanga and Kubwa while Kuje and Dobi are still at stage II of the contractual Agreement. The review of Abuja Master Plan has been a major issue, which the Authority is currently studying and analyzing for Departmental inputs. The FCDA is also looking at the Existing Neighborhood centers with a view to planning and designing model functional Neighborhood centers for the city, free from all deficiencies.

ABUJA BEAUTIFUL

The FCDA Department of Parks and recreation has taken some immediate steps to actualize its mandate of securing, recovering



**ENGR. MOHAMMED SANI ALHASSAN (FNSE)
Co-ordinating Executive Secretary, FCDA**

and facilitating the development of green areas, open spaces and designated parks. It has also started stock piling assorted seedlings to be planted within the FCT. Already about 54,000 such assorted seedlings have been purchased from the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ile-Ife.

Also a total of 17 parks covering 73.25 hectares have been recovered with assorted plants and flowers grown there for recreation by residents.

15 road corridors have also been greened. Very soon, the 37 kilometers Abuja Airport road will wear a new look. All these will enable Abuja attain Mr. President's directive of One Million tree mark by 2007 which is expected to transform Abuja into a garden city.

MAJOR ON-GOING ENGINEERING PROJECTS

Among the numerous projects being undertaken by the Department of Engineering Services, the following need particular mentioning:

1. Complimentary Infrastructure to the City.
2. Gudu II District Infrastructure
3. Jahi District Infrastructure and Addendum
4. Utako District Infrastructure
5. The provision of Engineering Infrastructure to Katampe District Extension
6. Construction of 2 and 5 and Associated Mains
7. Construction of Wupa Basin Sewage Treatment Plant.

Most of these projects formed the bulk of projects recently visited by Members of the Senate Committee on FCT as part of their legislative oversight on year 2004 Appropriation Act.

WATER SUPPLY

The first stage of water supply scheme to the city is designed to consist of the Lower Usama Dam and four trunk Mains of 1.4m diameter each, four water treatment plants of two units each and ten Main water reservoirs. Out of this, the Lower Usama Dam with a reservoir capacity of 100 million cubic meters. One trunk main and two main reservoirs of 24, 000m each have been completed and in use since 1985 while the second unit of water treatment plant of the same capacity was completed in the year 2000. Presently the construction of the second trunk main and two main reservoirs of 45,000m and 40, 000m each are under construction.

HOUSING

Detailed design of all residential districts in Phase II of FCC has been completed with their preliminary Engineering Designs. The lack of infrastructure is however hampering full-scale development by developers.

The government's monetization policy, which is aimed at encouraging workers to their own houses, has ensured that the Authority has not done much in the provision of houses this year. Nevertheless, it is partnering with FHA and other parastatals and Agencies of Government involved in development in the FCT to release their development plans and layouts with the list of all the allottees to enable them secure their Certificates of Occupancy through AGIS in line with the constitutional provisions of the FCDA. This is to afford such beneficiaries the opportunity of using the title as collateral in financial houses.

RESETTLEMENT AND COMPENSATION

The policy thrust of the new Department of Resettlement and Compensation is to properly resettle the original inhabitants and squatters from the Federal Capital City (FCC). The Department is also to ensure that adequate compensation is paid to those whose properties, crops and economic trees are affected by on-going projects within the FCT.

The original inhabitants who resided within the FCC before 1976 are entitled to compensation and resettlement and those living outside the FCC could remain as residents of FCT. Since the original inhabitants are farmers, they would be resettled in locations where they can have access to abundant fertile land for farming and grazing. The department is to ensure that about 49 villages totaling approximately 41,270 households are resettled in designated areas in the FCT. About 423,077 plots of land are required in designated satellite town to accommodate squatters. The creation of the Department of Resettlement and Compensation in FCDA will no doubt usher in a new era of record documentation and data collation in resettlement and compensation activities.

It is hoped that with time both the problems of non-availability of adequate base records on resettlement and compensation as well as that of squatter settlements will soon be a thing of the past.

DEMOLITION CONTROL ACTIVITIES

The issue of demolition has been a recurring decimal in the FCT Administration's effort to restore the Abuja Master Plan. Demolitions are not meant to inflict pains on the people. They are done out of the over-riding interest of government to acquire land for expansion.

Therefore in its continued effort to rid the Federal Capital Territory of squatter and shanty settlements, the Department of Development Control intensified its demolition exercises to Karmajiji village on Airport road and Dantata village, a sprawling ghetto behind the station. Earlier exercises had taken place in the high brawf areas of the city center and Kubwa satellite town respectively.

The Authority has equally served notice on Karmo to vacate the area. The Department has in the same vein issued ultimatum to container owners within Abuja metropolis to remove them from the streets and within residential areas. All residents should therefore cooperate with the Authority to ensure that Abuja does not become another Lagos, which, was why a new capital became imperative in the first place.

TRAINING STAFF WELFARE

All staff attending in-service training in institutions of higher learning across the country have been duly paid their 2002 and 2003 outstanding allowances between September and October 2004.

Also an In-House Workshop on Security Awareness for 60 staff of the Authority was conducted recently.

It is equally worthy to note that the Authority has just released the 2002 and 2003 promotion exercise for senior staff. A total of 580 staff were successful. The junior staff list will follow soon. Meanwhile, all recently retired staff are being paid their benefits promptly.

FUNDING

While the Authority would have loved to move at jet speed, as usual funding has been a very serious constraint.

Presently, the total indebtedness of FCDA is in the region of N20 billion. This is attributed to the competing demands of other sectors such as Education, Health and other social services on the national budget. The Federal Capital Authority (FCDA) is however optimistic that going by the understanding of the situation of the FCT by the National Assembly, help is definitely on the way.

With more funding, Abuja will witness the execution of more projects as well as relocating and compensating those who have genuine claims as a result of over-riding government interests.

CONCLUSION

Abuja abounds with investment opportunities waiting to be explored by both indigenous and foreign investors as the FCDA has provided this needed enabling environment.

Stakeholders are therefore enjoined to cooperate with the FCT administration to build a capital city that will match the dreams of our founding fathers.

ABUJA TRUST

Abuja People's Forum inaugurated

A non-government, non-partisan and all-inclusive forum tagged: Abuja People's Forum, was formerly inaugurated in Abuja last Friday.

Chairman, Board of Trustees of the forum, Alhaji Usman Jibril Wowo, at the launching, said the absence of a unifying platform for all stakeholders in Abuja is worrisome in the face of an increasing dynamic and volatile socio-political feature of our national life.

Alhaji Wowo said that the objectives of the Abuja People's Forum is, among others, to serve as a resource centre of policies and strategies for the development of Abuja, and to initiate and adopt pragmatic steps, strategies, programmes and action aimed at truly making the FCT the fountain of unity.

The Kuje area council chairman said that "while government is concerned with development, administration and security of the FCT, the people in Abuja today remain largely segmented and uncoordinated under various levels of leadership along social, religious, ethnic,

By Nasir Imam
political and traditional divides."

Alhaji Wowo, who gave the assurance that the forum would not be hijacked by politicians, also said that the forum would work assiduously to ensure Abuja indigenes are not deprived of their rights.

He particularly singled

... residents express mixed feelings

Barely 72 hours into the year 2005, some residents of the Federal Capital City have expressed fear and apprehension about what 2005 holds for them.

A survey conducted by a correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) today indicated that a majority of the residents did not expect much progress in their financial status.

An employee of the Ministry of Works in Abuja, Mr. Sylvester Okoro, said that if government was to continue with the various deductions from civil servants' salaries, "there is no hope of any increase in the status of the workers."

"Early in 2004, we witnessed an increase in our salaries but as the year progressed, the same hand that

out the effort of past and serving heads of states and FCT ministers, saying their participation at the forum is not only desirable but a call to duty for the actualisation of their vision and effort of making Abuja a reality.

On the other hand, Alhaji Wowo said investors, trade unions and the political class who are also principal stakeholders in the FCT are invited

to be part of the mission for the guarantee of their individual and collective interests by registering with the forum.

He said branches would be opened in all the area councils of the FCT with a few liaison offices to be established in some selected states.

The forum commended the recent move by the present government to institute a dialogue which will enable every segment of the Nigerian society to be better appreciated and carried along.

He, however, prayed and expressed the hope that things would improve for civil servants in 2005.

Another worker, a staff of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, who simply identified herself as Carol, also predicted the worst for workers in 2005.

She said that most of the policies that were introduced to better the lives of civil servants in 2004 never saw the light of day.

"Most of us have not benefited from the monetisation policy of government introduced at the beginning of 2004 neither

FCT 2005 hajj airlift commences

The airlift of hajj pilgrims from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja commenced last week with about 580 pilgrims from FCT, Nassarawa, Kogi and Niger States.

Mallam Salisu Hussein Ashara, the Director Abuja Hajj Pilgrims Board, Gwagwalada, told *Abuja Trust* in his office that about 2,360 pilgrims are expected to perform this year's hajj.

According to him, accommodation arrangements for 200 pilgrims at Saudi Arabia have been concluded.

Commenting on pilgrims' health, Mallam Hussein Ashara said pilgrims will be immunised against cholera and cerebro spinal meningitis.

Already, over 300 have been immunised and have been given yellow card.

According to Mallam Ashara, a new album with each pilgrims' passport photograph, address and other relevant information have been introduced for easy identification of pilgrims.

However, at the hajj camp, it was so crowded with pilgrims and their relatives who accompanied them to the camp; at the same time, others have been queuing up for screening and registration with immigration, customs and National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies.

One of the pilgrims, Mallam Garba Sirajo who was at the camp with his wife and daughter, expressed optimism that this year's hajj will be successful because of the level of arrangements and preparedness.

By Maimuna Yusuf

NAN correspondent ran in to a driver, Alhaji Salau Jimoh, who benefited from the sales, through balloting, of the Games Village Housing Estate.

Jimoh was full of praise for the government.

"I have never known that I would benefit from the ballot. I just bought a form for N5,000 and I was lucky to have won. I pray for better things in 2005," he said.

Jimoh, who has since sold the house for an undisclosed amount, said he bought a house in his village with part of the money and relocated there.

"I have a lot to thank God for in 2004. It was the year I won a house and also was paid my entitlements following a rationalisation exercise in the Ministry of Housing," Jimoh stressed.

"This phone business helps me to keep body and soul together. Things were really rough in 2004 but I pray for the millions of other unemployed Nigerians that 2005 brings them

joy," she added.

"I thank God though for the gift of life for if we have had to rely on government, we would have died a long time ago," she said.



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072-220405

Congratulations

The Management & Staff of GURUYEL & COMPANY NIGERIA LIMITED, hereby join thousands of well wishers in congratulating

His Excellency, Alhaji Mohammadu Danjuma Goje
(Sarkin Yakin Gombe - Sarkin Aiki) The Executive Governor of Gombe State, for the New Year 2005 Celebrations.

We also want to register our appreciation for the laudable development Projects, which His Excellency is executing inline with the dream for the State Creations.

Once again your Excellency, Congrats!



His Excellency,
ALHAJI MOHAMMADU DANJUMA GOJE
(Sarkin Yakin Gombe - Sarkin Aiki) The Executive Governor of Gombe State



ALHAJI AHMAD UMAR
Chairman/Managing Director



KANO TRUST

Images of Kano in 2004



BUK staff quarters burnt during the Yelwa Shendam reprisal violence in Kano



Suspected Indian hemp traffickers arrested by Kano NDLEA



Male ward of Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) converted to cholera ward



Deportees from Saudi Arabia at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano



Reconstruction of Kano walls in progress



Bello Damagun, a director with Mollá Trust Ltd, released by the State Security Service (SSS)

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First to offer you Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)

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First to give you N1 SIM pack

First to enable you enjoy text2email

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First to put you on our record of one million subscribers in 9 months

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It is our foremost wish that

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your life will
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firsts.**

You will lead where others follow

Your life will be full of endless possibilities

Your voice will ring clearer and stronger

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EKO TRUST

OPC members arrested over assassination attempts

Following the commencement of investigations by the Lagos State Government over various cases of assassination attempts and other crises within the premises of the state College Primary Education, over seven members of the Oodua Peoples Congress have been arrested.

Sources closed to the Epe Divisional Police station, said the suspects were picked in various parts of the school premises along with their offensive weapons following public indignation towards them.

The suspects who were briefly detained at the Epe Divisional Police Headquarters after being handed over by the student's union government were accused of illegal possession of offen-

By Oluwafemi Bajulaiye

sive weapons. The arrest was the climax of the dislike of the staff and students of the school for the administrative style of the management, which includes the invitation of OPC members and non-promotion of deserving people.

The school's registrar, Olojede had petitioned the police and the state government accusing the Provost of the school of making attempts on his life.

While confirming the arrest, the Divisional Police Officer, Emmanuel Ajayi said they were detained at his station but have since been transferred to the anti-robbery section of the Lagos state Criminal Investigation Department.

Meanwhile members of the

Dr. Fredrick Fasehun and Gani Adams led members of the OPC in Oshodi/Isolo local government have promised to maintain peace and order in the area.

At a meeting held in the local government last Thursday, both groups represented by its leaders affirmed that the maintenance of peace and tranquility would be their focus in the New Year.

In a communiqué signed by the Council Chairman, the Chairman of the CDC and Divisional Police Officers of Makinde and Akinpelu police stations, the two groups said their leaders should be made responsible for any breach of peace by members of either factions, while promising to abide by the decision and to maintain peace.



Alh. Hassan Adamawa, former minister, (left) and Gov. Donald Duke of Cross River State at the 4th anniversary lecture of the Nigerian Law School, held in Lagos... recently pic: Oludipupo Odunewu

Retired policeman's son arrested for robbery

A twenty-eight year old son of a retired Inspector of Police, Dafe Akpovona was for the second time last week arrested for armed robbery.

The suspect was first arrested in September 2003 for alleged involvement in a robbery incident, but was however released when his father, who was then with the federal Anti-robbery Squad, Adeniji-Adede annex of the force criminal investigation department CID Alagbon, allegedly brought his influence to bear on the case.

He was however picked up again last week by the anti-robbery detectives for yet another robbery incident, which took place along Oshodi-Mile2 expressway, Lagos. Investigations by *Eko Trust* revealed that Dafe was picked up after a gang that was reportedly caught red-handed along the route while robbing traders from the ever-busy Aswani market implicated him.

According to police sources, the gang operated with a bus painted in the Lagos State commercial bus colour with registration number XA 286 LAW.

After picking the unsuspecting passengers at Aswani market, they allegedly robbed them on the expressway and pushed them out of the bus.

It was also gathered that as they pushed their victims out of the bus, a police anti-robbery patrol team coded Raiders from the SCID led by Inspector Dele Ajewole received a distress call and acted promptly by intercepting the bus.

Police recover six corpses on Xmas day

The police in Lagos have recovered the corpses of six persons allegedly killed in separate incidents on Christmas day.

The corpse of one Mohammed Tukur and Zaharaden were recovered from Alaba Rago market in Ojo area of Lagos early on Christmas day in a fire incident.

The deceased persons were said to have been sleeping in one of the stalls in the market when the fire broke out.

They were said to have been burnt beyond recognition before the fire was put out by fire fighters and policemen who raced to the scene.

The corpses of the victims have since been taken to the public mortuary. Properties worth millions of naira were also destroyed in the fire.

Same day at Orile area, a young man identified as Adewale Ogunaike was

From Bola Ojuola, in Lagos

killed by some area boys.

Eko Trust learnt that a fight broke out between two factions of miscreants popularly known as area boys and Adewale was caught in the midst of the whole trouble, at the end he was said to have obtained serious injury from which he shed to death.

The incident occurred at Afulogun Street, Sari Iganmu, Orile, at about 1pm that fateful day.

In Oshodi area, at about 6.30am, same Christmas day, a yet to be identified man was lynched by irate mob.

The deceased person according to public service was said to attacked a house in the area with other suspects now at large but he was caught and given a jungle justice.

Other members of his

group were said to have escaped.

The corpse of the deceased was recovered from Agbalakale Street, close to Mafoluku Grammar School, Oshodi.

Also in Ikeja, a young man identified as Akin was said to have stepped on a live wire and got electrocuted.

Akin, a resident of house

number six, Onigbongbo, Maryland was said to have died before medical help could reach him.

At Amukoko, in Orile area, one Fatai was said to have fell off a bench and died.

Fatai, *Eko Trust* learnt was fast asleep on the bench in front of his residence located on plot 19 Sanni Street, Amukoko that fateful

evening and fell during an attempt to turn.

He was found unconscious by neighbors who later rushed him to a nearby hospital where he was confirmed dead.

The Lagos state spokesman Mr. Emmanuel Ighodalo confirmed the reports, he said the causes were already being investigated.

Airport shuttle bus operators protest LASTMA harassment

Hundreds of commuters and passengers were stranded last week at various bus stops along the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos following misunderstanding between airport shuttle bus drivers and officials of Lagos state traffic management agency

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, in Lagos

(LASTMA). Hundreds of passengers and airport users who were left stranded had to trek to their working places.

Bus operators told newsmen at the airport, that they had to withdraw their vehicles from the road to protest what they called victimization by the officials of the state traffic management agency (LASTMA).

The chairman of the airport shuttle operators, Mr Samuel Olusola Ashamu said the traffic agency had last week seized 18 of their buses at Ikeja "with the active connivance" of armed mobile policemen and vehicle inspection officers.

The Agency had ordered that the airport buses be painted in the yellow colour of Lagos state commercial vehicles or they get confined to the airport, though most of the buses operate Airport-Ikeja route.

Ashamu explained that they were ordered by the LASTMA to pay a fine of N21,000 per vehicle to get the confiscated buses released and to pay a

demurrage of N500 each day.

Ashamu however berated the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria FAAN for failing to intervene in the rift stressing that the vehicle were duly registered by FAAN to operate.

He disclosed that the strike by the airport shuttle operators will continue until their impounded vehicle were released.

One of the stranded passengers who identified himself as Stephen expressed displeasure over the situation saying "most of us arrived the airport and Ikeja bridge beside the Lagos state University Teaching Hospitals only to encounter this problem. No vehicle is plying the Airport-Ikeja route and passengers have been trekking long distance since morning.

Meanwhile, the Murtala Muhammed Airport Manager, Engineer Obi Anadu told newsmen that FAAN management will soon intervene in order to resolve the rift between the operators and Lagos state government.

Over 188 persons declared missing in Lagos

No fewer than one hundred and eighty-eight persons were declared missing in Lagos State last year and are still unaccounted for.

Statistics of missing persons for the year 2004 was sought by our correspondent from the state police command.

The statistics showed that an upsurge in cases of missing persons was recorded in January, March, July, October and November.

Each month according to the statistics had 24, 22, 20, 21, and 20 persons missing respectively.

Also, the police in the state recorded 133 robbery cases while 731 cars were reported stolen during the period under review.

The police said they recovered 593 cars, which had either been retrieved by their owner or waiting clearance.

The figures showed that 71, 75 and 73 cars were stolen in the months of January, March and November respectively, while October recorded 77.

According to the spokesman of the police, Emmanuel Ighodalo, the figures were considerably lower than

those of 2003, which he described as an improvement in police efforts.

In a telephone chat with our correspondent, the state commissioner of police, Israel Ajao, promised the residents that his command would continue to ensure that their security is well taken care of in the year 2005.

According to him, his command would intensify more efforts to ensure that security of lives and properties remain paramount to them, adding that all criminals in the state would be giving a hot chase.



PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO ALL MEMBER OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



NOTICE OF PETITION ON FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT CONSTITUTIONAL BREACHES AND OTHER MISDEMANOUR AGAINST CHIEF AUDU OGBEH, CHAIRMAN OF PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND SOME NATIONAL OFFICERS.

Whereas the undersigned hereby give notice to all members of the National Executive Committee that a petition and motion concerning issues of constitutional breaches, financial mismanagement and other misdemeanour committed in contravention of the constitution of our great party by Chief Audu Ogbeh and others has been served to the party secretariat and the affected officers by a group of members of National Executive Committee and the National Working Committee of our party whose names and signatures are reproduced below.

PARTICULARS OF THE PETITION

A. FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

1. That the National Chairman, the National Secretary and the National Treasurer have not accounted for the expenditure of fund realized from the sales of forms for the conduct of party primaries in year 2002 and 2003.
2. That the National Treasurer and the National Chairman have not accounted for sums of money, that were part payment of campaign funds received by the Treasurer on behalf of the party in year 2003.
3. That the National Chairman has not accounted for the expenditure of N50m monthly subventions from Donors which amount to over N1.5 billion to date for which barely N15m monthly (N450m) is spent on salaries and personal emoluments of staff in the last three years.
4. That there exist an inflation of the Award of contract for the purchase of footballs as souvenirs for the last election, and the award of such a contract was done without due approval of NWC and NEC.
5. That there exist an inflation of Award of contract for the supply of 50 (fifty) office chairs at a ridiculous price and the contract was done without approval of NWC and NEC.
6. Overdraft borrowing of over N300m without authorization of National Executive Committee as required by the constitution of the party.
7. That the National Chairman and Treasurer have not accounted for the sum of N260m received from INEC on behalf of the party.
8. That no proper accounting records are being kept.
9. That there is complete prevention, and circumvention of the operation of the internal audit system of the party.
10. That withdrawals from party accounts were done without mandatory authorized signatures of "Two" as provided for by the Article 22 (iii) of the party constitution.
11. Payment vouchers were authorized by only one signatory and in most cases carried no specific payee beyond the party Cashier that had consistently withdrawn hundreds of million in cash.
12. Indictment on the Party's Financial management by INEC appointed External Auditors and the elected National Auditor of the party.

B. CONSTITUTIONAL BREACHES

1. Lack of prepared and approved budget of income and expenditure since year 2001 in contravention of Article 14, section 16 b of the party constitution and contrary to laid down tradition and practice of PDP, NEC.
2. Unilateral decision on matters of nominations, contrary to article 14 section 16g of the party constitution.
3. Consistent unilateral reversal of decision of NWC and NEC by the National Chairman in breach of article 14 of the constitution of the party.
4. Consistent usurpation of Article 14 as regard power of NEC by the National Chairman.

C. MAL ADMINISTRATION.

Policy inconsistencies largely due to suspected inducement and other extraneous factors. The names and signatures below exhibited are signatories to the petition by NWC members dated 16/03/04 and NEC members dated 25th November 2004 already served on the affected Officers.

SIGNED:

1. Sen Ibrahim A. Gafar DNC (N) *[Signature]*
2. Alh Shuaib Opeyemi DNC (C) *[Signature]*
3. Song Abubakar Abubakar NWC (NE) *[Signature]*
4. Senate B. Tafida Yami NWC (NE) *[Signature]*
5. *[Signature]* Akpobi EC: DHS
6. Faruq Babi Faruq NWC
7. Ikem Veru A. NPS
8. Hon. Barrister Ruyi A. Nwagwu
9. Alga Opeyemi S. Chibuzum
10. *[Signature]* Marjorie NWC (NE)
11. Tope Ojofeitans NWC
12. Bode George NPS
13. Hon. Dina Latun NWC

1. Chief A. Ogburn Nwagwu
2. Chief Alh. Don Ogburn
3. Chief Nwa Ogburn Ogburn
4. *[Signature]*
5. DR (Hon) J. O. Ojo
6. *[Signature]*
7. Alh M. M. Ogburn
8. Alh. Adenuga S. Ogburn
9. *[Signature]*
10. *[Signature]*
11. *[Signature]*
12. *[Signature]*
13. *[Signature]*
14. *[Signature]*
15. *[Signature]*
16. *[Signature]*
17. *[Signature]*
18. *[Signature]*
19. *[Signature]*
20. *[Signature]*
21. *[Signature]*
22. *[Signature]*
23. *[Signature]*
24. *[Signature]*

25. Hon. Alh. Habu A. Sani - PDP Chairman
26. Umaru Faruqi Abdullahi P.O.P. Chairman
27. Hon. C. S. A. A. Argwada
28. Alh. Alhassan Gwofwa
29. Alh. Abdullahi Zubairu PDP Chairman
30. Chief John S. Odawa Kogi PDP Chairman
31. Hon. Aloysius Wware Benue Chairman

SN	NAME	POSITION	DATE	SIGN.
1	Alh. Wadwan Nwankwo	Chairman		<i>[Signature]</i>
2	Alfalahi Elye	Ex-officio		<i>[Signature]</i>
3	Alh. Richard Solomon	Ex-officio		<i>[Signature]</i>
4	Alh. Ogburn			<i>[Signature]</i>
5	Dr. Chika Ogburn	Ex-officio		<i>[Signature]</i>
6	Alh. J. J. Ogburn	Ex-officio		<i>[Signature]</i>
7	Alh. Nwa Ogburn	Ex-officio		<i>[Signature]</i>
8	Chief Ogburn Ogburn	NWC Ex-officio		<i>[Signature]</i>
9	Hon. James A. Ogburn	NWC Ex-officio		<i>[Signature]</i>
10	DR. JAMES A. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
11	DR. A. A. OGBURN	NWC EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
12	DR. J. O. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
13	DR. M. O. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
14	DR. S. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
15	DR. J. O. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
16	DR. S. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
17	DR. J. O. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
18	DR. M. O. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
19	DR. S. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
20	DR. J. O. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>
21	DR. M. O. OGBURN	EX-OFFICIO		<i>[Signature]</i>

NEWS



Pix shows Comrade Hasiya Ahmed branch chairperson NULGE Nasarawa State (right) listening to the National President of NULGE Women Committee Comrade Iyabode Obaia (middle) while com. Funmilayo Bakare Women leader NUPENG (left) looks on during the Nigeria Union of local government employee women committees' forum on enhancing women participation in trade union held at Women Development Centre Agege Lagos...recently. Pix: Olatidapo Odunewu

Aliero promises pilgrims better welfare

Governor Muhammad Adamu Aliero of Kebbi State has assured intending pilgrims to Saudi Arabia of adequate care and welfare at home and at the Holy Land throughout the Hajj period.

He gave the assurance while addressing the first batch of intending pilgrims from the state at the Sultan Abubakar III International Airport, Sokoto, shortly

before their departure to Saudi Arabia last Friday.

The governor informed them that the state government has made adequate arrangement for the comfort and medical care when the need arise while on transit in the country and at the Holy Land.

In Saudi Arabia, Governor Aliero further disclosed that, similar arrangement in terms of accommodation,

transportation and other logistics requirement have been put in place for smooth and successful Hajj operation.

He then advised the intending pilgrims to be law abiding and conduct themselves in accordance with the laws of the land and stipulated rules governing the conduct of the religious obligations.

The governor also warned against involvement in criminal acts such as drug trafficking or transacting illegal businesses while at the Holy Land, threatening that, the government will disown any pilgrim caught involved in such acts.

NGO donates resource centre

A fully operational resource centre has been donated to the Jigawa State government by the Bureau for state and local government under the British International Development programme to assist, enhance and improve public service provision, expenditure management and good governance.

According to the national Coordinator of the SLGP (DFID), Mr. Neil, the decision was to assist the state government in the field of good governance and sustainability.

He said SLGP would continue to partner with the government in order to enhance public service.

In his speech, the acting chairman of the Bureau for local government in the state, Alhaji Bashir Hussaini Adamu, said the resource centre was initiated at the instance of the SLGP in 2002 to specifically support the civil servants in the areas of good governance, expenditure management through information, literature and other publications in the centre.

He said internet facilities, books, journals and other

resources aimed to achieve the set goals have all been provided to ensure the training of civil servants with vision.

Alhaji Bashir Adamu added that 3 staff was trained to manage the centre even as an exercise between offices of government to run the centre, however, office of the Head of Service was chosen due to its convincing blue print handed to the bureau.

The centre has four computers, 1 sever, 2 printers, scanners, heavy duty photocopiers, 27.5 KVA generator, 150,000 cubic water tank and a mast for broadband utilisation.

Talking over the centre, the state Head of Service, Alhaji Ibrahim Manzo, said the learning centre will provide civil servants, students and the public services with conducive environment to further their knowledge on various fields.

He pledged to sustain the project in order to ensure its objective to provide source of efficient and prudent management of resource knowledge is generated.

While wishing them a successful and blessed Hajj operation, the governor wished them safe return after the operation.

The governor who was earlier received at the airport by the state Amirul Hajj and Speaker of the state House of Assembly, Alhaji Muhammad D. Dantani, was accompanied by some members of the state executive council and the Secretary to the state government, Alhaji Bala Musa Sakaba.

Answering questions from journalists after addressing the intending pilgrims, the governor expressed satisfaction with the adequate preparations made by the officials and the conduct so far exhibited by the intending pilgrims at the Hajj camp and the airport.

Rivers tasks citizens on sanitation

The Rivers State commissioner for Information, Mr. Magnus Abe, has expressed dissatisfaction with the sanitation and traffic situation in the state and urged citizens of the state to improve their sanitation habit.

Briefing newsmen in his office, Mr. Abe said the sum of N60 million spent on sanitation in Port Harcourt city alone has not yielded much result as residents of Port Harcourt and other Akpor local government areas do not complement the good gesture of the state government.

He warned that the government may be forced to take other measures that may not be conducive to the people in the New Year if they refused to comply with the sanitation policies and exercise which holds every first Saturday of the month.

Abe further noted that the number of accidents along the Port Harcourt airport road was alarming and wondered if people were using the road to test their vehicles.

He, however, appealed to the drivers to take precautions and limit their speed when on smooth roads, to save not only their own lives and property but also others.

Reacting to speculations that the state Governor, Dr. Peter Odili, was nursing the intention to run for 2007 presidency, the information

From Muhammad Ajah, in PHC

commissioner averred that the state government as a whole is not involved in any political campaign ahead 2007 even as he said the governor was capable of handling any political office.

He said the state government has cordial relationship with all the former heads of state, presidents and elder statesmen including IBB whom people speculate has endorsed Odili as a

running mate for 2007.

He denied the publication in page 55 of *This Day* Newspaper on Tuesday, December 28 2004, which was signed by one Chief Peter Odili and which was inviting the South-South people to embrace IBB for 2007, saying that the coordinator was not the governor of Rivers State since there could name sake in the South-South zone.

Abe warned civil servants in the state to restrain from making public statements to the press owing to the fact that the ban on such attitude still stands.

Rep seeks community support over bridge project

The House of Representatives member for Buruku federal constituency in Benue State, Hon. Gabriel Tarhule Nev, at the weekend urged the community to support the National Assembly in appealing to the federal government to construct a bridge across River Benue running through Buruku.

Hon. Nev. made the appeal while briefing his constituents at various places including the palace of the paramount ruler of Buruku, Zaki David Afaiyo Ajoko.

The federal legislator who disclosed that he is a member of six standing committees, told the people that the 2005 Appropriation Bill before the National Assembly has

From Hir Joseph, in Makurdi

proposed the construction of a bridge whose contract has long been awarded but without cash backing.

He said on paper, the bridge had long been constructed, but that following much pressure from members from the state house committee on works visited the area where they discovered that there is no bridge across the river in Buruku.

To this end, Hon. Nev stated that the inclusion of the bridge in the 2005 budget proposal was recommended, but said that the federal government can implement it only when there is pressure from the people.

He said already, a survey of the proposed bridge has been carried out and a design made by some expatriate, even as he said that was not enough unless there is pressure on the government to award the contract for its construction.

Hon. Nev also asked his people to also table their worries before the National Assembly as he said leadership is poised to address all matters brought before it to further strengthen the people's confidence in democracy.

He also asked the people to be steadfast in their support of the President Olusegun Obasanjo administration, saying its policies have long term benefits that require much security from the people.

Supported by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) members from the area, Hon. Nev commissioned his constituency office where he appealed to the people to always table their needs for onward consideration.

From Jamilah Nuhu, in Kano

said that after the deceased parents reported the disappearance of the boy, the police in Kano left for Potiskum where they identified the corpse to be that of Haman.

He stated that Babagana who is a final year student of Maiduguri University, who was also last seen with Haman was immediately arrested.

The PPRO said that Babagana has revealed where he had hidden the car which belonged to Haman. He also made useful statement to the police on the death of the victim.

ASP Mohammed Gambo then advised parents to monitor the movement of their children to ascertain their company.

Police arrest unimaid student over murder

A 27 year old student of the Geology Department of Maiduguri University, Babagana Hamidu, has been arrested by the police for allegedly killing his friend, Haman Rabiu Gambo who resides in Kano State.

Babagana who is now helping the police command in Kano with investigations, in his confessional statement said that he hit Haman on the head after an argument ensued between them at Abbas road, saying when he discovered that Haman had died he left the body in Haman's car and left for Azare, Bauchi State.

He further stated that early in the morning he took off for Azare and few kilometres after Azare, he dumped Haman's body by the road side and ran over it with the car to look like an accident victim.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Mohammed Gambo, of the police command zone one Kano, who confirmed the story, said that the police in Azare had discovered the body which had already decomposed and deposited it at the mortuary in Potiskum.

ASP Mohammed Gambo

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News

IDPU honours outgoing Kwara police boss

For the first time in the history of Kwara State and Ilorin Emirate in particular, the Ilorin Descendants' Progressive Union (IDPU) honoured an out-going police commissioner for discharging his duties according to his conscience and with the fear of God.

At the Ilorin West local government council secretariat where the send-off party was held for the police boss, prominent Ilorin indigenes showered encomiums on Alhaji Mohammed Dikko Abubakar for bailing the emirate out of the impending collapse of social order which threatened the law abiding and peace loving citizens of the ancient town.

A former vice chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Professor Shuaib Oba Abdulrahim, said Alhaji Abubakar assumed office "when the community was facing an impending disaster arising from political violence characterised by killing, maiming and destruction of property of perceived political opponents".

According to Professor Abdulrahim, "he prevented social collapse of the highest order," adding "every person or colleague I spoke to described him as a refined gentleman."

He said it was on record that despite being enticed with mouth watering offers during the political heat period, he rejected the offers and performed his job as an unbiased referee in a contest between two contenders.

In his comments, the Grand Khadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal, Justice Mutalib Ambali, traced the history of past state police commissioners posted out of the state saying "none performed or discharged his responsibilities in the manner Alhaji Mohammed Dikko Abubakar did".

Kwara NLC commends Saraki over workers' welfare

The Nigeria Labour Congress in Kwara State has commended Governor Bukola Saraki for improving the welfare of workers in the state. In a letter signed by the state's chairman of the union, Comrade Emmanuel Ayeyoribe, the NLC noted with keen interest the effort of Governor Bukola Saraki in improving the living standard of workers and masses of the state.

"It is on record that your Excellency demonstrated exemplary leadership by tolerating workers' dissenting views on certain government policies. This action no doubt distinguished you as an accommodating and responsive leader. We respectfully urge your Excellency to continue and improve on this stride," the NLC chairman declared.

While urging the governor to address the injustices in Kwara Polytechnic, Ilorin and Kwara Express, Comrade Ayeyoribe hoped that 2005 would



The minister of Aviation, Mallam Isa Yuguda (middle), the representative of the Minister of Information and Orientation, Dr. Chris Agboli (director of Domestic Publicity, Feder of Ministry of Information and Orientation) second (R), the Perm. Sec., Aviation Ministry, Mr. T. Oyelade (L) during 2004 National Ministerial Press briefing by the Minister of Aviation held in Auja.....recently
Pix: Kennedy Egbonode

Why Kebbi records development - Aliero

The Kebbi State Governor, Alhaji Muhammad Adamu Aliero, has attributed the physical and human development as well as peaceful co-existence witnessed in the state in 2004 to the perseverance, co-operation and support of the people.

In his New Year message to the people of the state, Governor Aliero said he, "As an individual and the government of Kebbi State have every reason to remain grateful to God and the entire people of the state for the blessings, guidance and wisdom that made his administration to further take the state to greater height last year."

A Press statement which contained the governor's message and signed by his Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Abdullahi Idris Zuru, said the governor noted with

satisfaction the moderate development recorded in each sector of development which has considerably improved the socio-economic well being of the citizens.

He said, a number of capital intensive development projects in water and electricity supply, roads, housing, agriculture, health care delivery, education and economically viable ventures have either been initiated, completed or commissioned within the year.

These projects according to him have by and large impressively transformed the physical development of the state, socially promoted unity of purpose and peaceful co-existence and economically empowered the citizens.

Governor Aliero however observed that, the challenges before the government are truly enormous and daunting, but re-assured that as a responsible government, his administration will continue to give honest, selfless and sincere leadership to the people.

He expressed gratitude to the traditional and religious leaders, elders and leaders of thought, politicians, security agencies and members of the business community for their valuable advice and workable suggestions to the government in 2004 and hoped that they will maintain the tempo.

To the civil servants, Governor Aliero, commended them for their sacrifices and dedication to duty which he said demonstrated their appreciation for the government commitment to the payment of their salaries, allowances and provision of incentives as at and when due.

He assured them of an improved condition of service in 2005, adding that the recent retreat conducted for public servants by the Centre for Democratic Studies of Bayero University, Kano, will greatly enhance service delivery to the people and improves effective as well as result-oriented conduct of public service in governance.

Bafarawa warns LG Chairmen over non-performance

Governor Attahiru Bafarawa has announced that he will not hesitate to remove any local government chairmen who failed to perform. Governor Bafarawa gave the warning while on an inspection tour of projects executed by council chairmen in Sokoto State.

He said in Wurno local government that he will remove the council chairman, Alhaji Bello Hali Wurno, if he failed to improve on his performance. The governor, while inspecting the dilapidated nature of the late Muazu Model Primary School in Wurno town, lamented that the condition of the school was most unfortunate.

Governor Attahiru Bafarawa, who expressed dismay on lack of furniture in the school despite approval by the state government for their provision across the state, directed that the council chairman should immediately effect repairs or be removed from office.

The governor assured of his administration's commitment to provide facilities and manpower development to effectively manage hospitals across the state.

From Abdulfatai Abdulsalami, in Sokoto

While at Gwadabawa, Governor Bafarawa visited the Gwadabawa Rural Health Centre and assured the management of the health centre that his administration will provide the necessary facilities

Unemployed graduates get allowance in Katsina

From Lawal Ibrahim in Katsina

About 10,391 unemployed graduates of tertiary institutions in Katsina State are to be placed on a two-year employment allowance under the newly created Katsina Youths Empowerment Scheme (KYES). Briefing newsmen after the 25th end of year regular executive council meeting, the Commissioner of Information, Alhaji Abdul Haro Mashi, said decree and HND holders are to receive N7,000 monthly; NCE and ND holders will get N5,000, while health technology graduates and its equivalents will receive N4,000 monthly.

Government, he said, has budgeted a total of N366,000,000 for the payment of the graduates while the governor has approved the establishment of four new basic apprenticeship training centres and the expansion of the existing Katsina training centre.

The four new centres to be located at Batsari, Danya and Kankara local governments are to gulp the sum of N115 million for construction, while the expansion of Katsina centre will cost the state N25 million.

Giving a breakdown of unemployed graduates of tertiary institutions in Katsina State as at 2004, the commissioner of information said at present, the state has 352 degree and HND unemployed graduates, 2,098 NCE and NE - its equivalent qualifications; 1,911 nursing and health technology related certificates holders as well as 6,03 post-secondary and BATC certificate holders.

In a related development, the state government has announced 30 per cent discount on the construction cost of the just completed 272 housing units and directed the state housing authority to commence sales of the houses to civil servants as well as individuals.

Also, of the 49 houses not sold during the previous exercise, the council has approved the sale of 2 completed houses on owner-occupier basis; while the 22 uncompleted but abandoned to be sold to interested people while the rest are designated as institutional quarters.

Give reform human face - expert urges FG

From Adelanwa Bamigboye in Lagos

A group of companies however pointed out that nearly all the past rulers referred to are in one way or the other involved in the present administration.

"If they are not ministers, they are advisers or head of parastatals, agencies or at the executive organ of the ruling party," he said.

He lamented that although Mr. President had always aimed well, but there are no good for sincere supporters for him to accompany his aims of its reform.

"Those that have been put in place to head different directions did not really carry the reform in high spirit like the president, they still believed that Mr. President just wanted them to benefit and that was all".

On the violent attack on security agencies particularly in the defunct Bendel area, where police could no longer handle the security, he said that this was as a result of bad economy. According to him, the teaming unemployed youths in the country are alarming - some of them prefer to die by bullets than to be killed by hunger.

He said further that if there is no solution to 'our economy, we should expect more of such violence in the year 2005 because the number of those retrenched has out numbered the unemployed'.

An expert in the maritime industry, Prince Olu Ologbese, has charged President Olusegun Obasanjo to give the on-going economic reforms a human face.

According to Prince Ologbese, the federal government reform agenda is very hard to defend considering some interference connected with the exercise and because there is no visible effects on the economy and the life of the people.

"I urge Mr. President to really use this period of new reflection to study his many reforms carefully and make amend where necessary," Ologbese said in the press release, dated 28 December, 2004.

He noted that many aides of the president have tried to define the reforms but most of the time they run into trouble as they end up damaging the exercise.

"For instance, a friend of the government who wanted to defend the reform ended up saying he admitted that people suppose to be seeing some good results of the reforms after so many years of Baba Iyabo's efforts. He said that others put the blame on the past rulers whom they described as spoilers who have really damaged and ruin things before this present administration came to power. Prince Ologbese who is also the chairman of Ogbese

Inside Politics

2007: Fighting for the soul of PDP

If the People's Democratic Party (PDP) is the largest political party in Africa, one may rightly say, it is also the party facing about the biggest problem in the

By Isa Sanusi

Adamawa State, Boni Haruna accused his Nasarawa State counterpart, Abdullahi

making the point that, though power has to shift but there is nothing like zoning the presidency to the North.

The PDP crisis deepened when in September last year,

like General Ibrahim Babangida, Chief Tony Anenih, Deputy Senate President, Ibrahim Mantu and governors like Peter Odili of rivers, Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna and

Obasanjo by the PDP National Chairman, chief Audu Ogbeh in some quarters both within and outside the part. In the letter dated December 6, 2004

The battle is on

Series of meetings immediately ensured following the exchange of letters between Obasanjo and Ogbeh with one thing becoming clear; That is



President Obasanjo

country considering the personalities involved. Crisis from time to time is a normal feature of party politics worldwide and the survival of a party depends largely upon its ability to manage its crises well. The PDP is confronted by so many problems since inception. Most of such internal turmoil borders on the desperate struggle for supremacy and control of the party machinery. With a majority at almost all elective levels the party has it would seem so far failed to utilise its strength in moving it away from mundane crises that have now its middle name. At a point, founding members of the party were almost forced to become irrelevant by the high level political manoeuvre that has now assumed the dimension of business as usual. However, in all these instances the party handles internal squabbles not by solving them but by sweeping them under the proverbial carpet. Infact the party takes the credit for introducing into the political parlance the concept of "family affair". This was how the party handled accusations of threat to life made by Abia State governor, Orji Uzor Kalu against the party's chairman board of trustees, Chief Tony Anenih. The protracted political crisis in Anambra State still remains metaphor for the internal crack within the party. Recently the Governor of

Adamu of being a sort of agent of the president amongst his colleagues.

The 2007 question Every witness to the 2003 general election needs not to be told that the battle for relevance in 2007 started immediately after that contentious contest. Much of the contention centres around the struggle between the supporters of the vice President Atiku Abubakar and those behind the former military ruler, General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd), first Signs of serious crises manifested themselves when sometimes last year the National Chairman of the party, Chief Audu Ogbeh reaffirmed that, the PDP had zoned the presidency to the North come 2007. Two weeks later in a presidential media chat, President Olusegun Obasanjo however, refuted what Chief Ogbeh said,



Vice President Atiku Abubakar

northern senators forum held a retreat in Sokoto. Though the forum was chaired by a frontline member of the PDP, Senator Idris Kuta, many other PDP senators were barred from attending the retreat by their governors. Those who shunned the retreat alleged it was organised to garner support for the presidential ambition of General Babangida. Even at both the Upper and the Lower Chambers of the National Assembly the PDP caucus is sharply divided between those backing the vice President Atiku Abubakar and those behind IBB. These divisions are clearly underlined by the desperate moves for relevance come 2007.

The bold division within

To say that the PDP is now a two-in-one party is only to state the obvious. President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Vice Atiku Abubakar have distinctly different following within the party. It is no longer news that President Obasanjo has behind him heavyweights

Abdullahi Adamu of Nasarawa. The likes of Professor Jerry Gana and Andy Uba are also lined up behind the president.

In his first term as Vice President, Atiku Abubakar conducted himself like an avowed loyalist who saw nothing wrong in his boss while at the same time building support for himself within the party. Atiku displayed his gains at the party presidential primaries. Chief Audu Ogbeh is not leaving his political stake to chances, and, he put to use his political wits in maintaining a full grip on who will become who in 2007. Apparently he pitched tend with the Vice President Atiku Abubakar. Others keenly behind Atiku are, the governors of Abia, Delta, Adamawa, Oyo, Akwa-Ibom, Gombe and Edo.

Letter writing.

Surprise and even shock greeted the letter written to President Olusegun



Chief Audu Ogbeh

Chief Ogbeh told the president: "I am afraid we are drifting in the same direction again. In life, perception is reality and today we are perceived in the worst light by an angry, scornful Nigerian public for reasons which are absolutely unnecessary." Chief Ogbeh impliedly heaped the blame for the protracted crises in Anambra State on the President. The President, in his usual style replied Ogbeh in equally accusatory tone. Obasanjo told Ogbeh: "But whatever agenda you may be working at, God is always in charge and in control. Not too long ago I challenge you to think beyond the ordinary" this exchange of letters, between the President and his party chairman underscored what is perceived to be a struggle for the soul of the party between forces not ready to joke with their relevance come 2007.

The exchange was leaked to the public to uttermost surprise. Those against Audu Ogbeh accused him of trying to be smart by shifting the whole blame for a problem he is part of the president. They believe not Chief Ogbeh leaked his letter to the press to score cheap political point and point himself in the image of a saint. Some however were of the opinion that it was the presidency that leaked the letter to the press to score its own points.

Chief Audu Ogbeh has to fight a battle of survival. The Obasanjo/IBB seems all out to push him out of his position. The move thickens with circulation of documents alleging financial recklessness on the part of Chief Audu Ogbeh. It was alleged that Chief Audu Ogbeh had embezzled over N5 billion party funds. Those in support of Chief Audu Ogbeh were however, of the opinion that, allegations of financial indiscipline were only a gimmick to witch hunt Chief Ogbeh. To them therefore, the PDP Chairman is only unfortunate to be caught in the middle of a titanic battle between the President and his Vice.

PDP: is this the beginning of the end

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is of course not a stranger to crises. But this one looks like the one that may remain around for a very long time to come. One of the reasons is that 2007 is inching on and its like the heat is already on. The battle for the soul of the party is now clearly between the Obasanjo/IBB and Atiku/Ogbeh camps.

With the stakes very high, one does not expect any of the sides to back down easily. But what further damage will this face-off have on the party which is populated by people determined to clinch power at all cost will only be determined in due course. But at the moment it would appear as if the crisis has already done much damage for the PDP to ever be the same again.

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Inside Politics

Ogbeh's letter is diversionary- Gbenga Olawepo

Mr. Gbenga Olawepo is a founding member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and its Deputy National Secretary. He spoke to our reporter, Isa Sanusi on the crises engulfing the PDP and other political parties in the country. Excerpts.

As a politician how can you describe the spate of crises locking almost all political parties?

I think this is typical of emerging democracies coming from a background of dictatorship. Moreso, in a country where democracy was achieved not by the triumph of democratic values but by the miraculous death of a dictator such things should not come as a surprise. Some of the rules that should guide a new democracy did not triumph and so they are still in contention. So it is normal and will continue until it comes to an equilibrium where some values are accepted and settled.

Your party the PDP is swimming in crisis particularly following Chief Audu Ogbeh's letter to president Obasanjo...

(Cuts in) I think Mr. Ogbeh was just being smart. I am aware that prior to the letter, Mr. Ogbeh has been facing challenges from both the National Executive Council (NEC) and the National Working Committee NWC of the party on charges of financial impropriety and breach of the party constitution. They are building up to challenge him. For instance, some times in March, I understand even members of the national Working Committee have confronted him, that they are going to raise the issue before the National Executive Council. Seeing that he was going to be put on the spot light on questions of integrity he quickly found a convenient distraction by leaking the letter he wrote to President Olusegun Obasanjo. And I think that was quite smart of him. He perfectly understands the psychology of Nigerian media. Since there is an atmosphere of Obasanjo bashing anyone that comes up to attack Obasanjo even if the person is a thief, the media will transfer the person to a saint, a gentleman and a democrat who is being haunted by a supposed dictator.

But, the point is not the letter per se but the issues chief Ogbeh raised...

(Cuts in) That is not of any material importance because the letter as far as I am concerned is diversionary, it is not as

important as the issues raised by the NEC members of the party.

Many Nigerians believe the face-off between President Obasanjo and Chief Audu Ogbeh is really all about who succeeds Obasanjo in 2007. Do you also see it that way?

Well, there must be such consideration. But to me, that is not the issue and I think it is important that we examine the real issue the NEC members have raised. Members of the party executive have said that Mr. Ogbeh cannot account for about N5 billion. They have exhibited vouchers and financial instruments that have been signed by Mr. Ogbeh alone in contravention of the party financial guidelines that require two other signatories.

Members of the NEC accused Mr. Ogbeh of appropriating powers of the whole NEC to himself. Let me tell you, the PDP was formed by profound democrats who made sure that powers given to the various organs are commensurate with the level of representation in such organs. So, care has been taken in making the NEC a broad body. In the PDP National Executive Committee you have the President, National Assembly representatives, Governors, National Officers, State Chairmen and



Mr. Gbenga Olawepo

so on. The NEC is given power over policy decision like discipline of officers of the party, guidelines for nomination of candidates and the conduct of party primaries, establishment of committee preparation of budget and recruitment of the secretariat staff. But now what you find is that in the last three years all these powers of the NEC have been performed by Mr. Ogbeh alone. And you see these are serious issues because the NEC is the party. For instance during our tenure the NEC established standing committees because that is where the experience of the party leaders who were not members of NEC are utilized. We had establishment committee which deal with recruitment and deployment of staff. We had a monitoring committee that monitors governments and their policies. We had finance committee. We had women mobilization committee, security and welfare

I think Mr. Ogbeh was just being smart. I am aware that prior to the letter, Mr. Ogbeh has been facing challenges from both the National Executive Council (NEC) and the National Working Committee NWC of the party on charges of financial impropriety and breach of the party constitution. They are building up to challenge him. For instance, some times in March, I understand even members of the national Working Committee have confronted him, that they are going to raise the issue before the National Executive Council. Seeing that he was going to be put on the spot light on questions of integrity he quickly found a convenient distraction by leaking the letter he wrote to President Olusegun Obasanjo.

attack on Obasanjo has become an immunity for crimes?

Considering the protracted crises in Anambra state some will say Ogbeh is making a point?

I insist Anambra is diversionary. The crisis has been on for years. So why is it suddenly the issue. Anambra is not the only state where Ogbeh refused to show principled leadership. In Kwara state, local government chairmen were duly elected but the state government and the party chairman manufactured by Mr. Ogbeh changed to nomination and put people who did not even contest. The NEC suspended that chairman but Mr. Ogbeh unilaterally pardoned that chairman twice and the decision of the NEC has not been implemented because governors are seeing him. He did the same in Abia. NEC took a decision but he reversed it. So despite these misdeeds any person that abused Obasanjo is seen as a good man. You people are not being fair to this country and are not being fair to journalism and you are no longer journalists but politicians.

Now what is the way forward for the party?

Any advice I have for President Obasanjo will be sent to him because I am a senior member of the party. I don't need to advise him on the pages of newspapers. For Mr. Ogbeh, he does not need any advice because for three years he has closed down all the avenues, that is the committee system through which party faithfuls can offer and advice party administration.

Why are these allegations against Mr. Ogbeh coming only now?

I'm not a member of the party National

Executive Committee and in fact they have been warning up to challenge chief Ogbeh before these diversionary tactics.

Don't you think the current crisis is only the beginning of the battle for control of soul of the PDP between the president and his vice?

I think you people should be fair to President Obasanjo. He has been benevolent to his Vice because in his first tenure, he said look I was sitting in Otta when people say I should come and be president. People like General Babangida went to draft him. In fact they organized pardon for him through General Abdulsalam Abubakar. Vice President Atiku Abubakar was just a governor-elect like any other. He was placed above people like Professor Jibril Aminu, Bamanga Tukur, Adamu Ciroma and Abubakar Rimi. He was made Vice President - a position he did not contest for and I think he should thank God. The President said to him, you are the politician, you know those who are party men more than me. So, I will allow you to take care of the party men. He gave him boards and parastatals to handle, allowed him control of a number of key appointments which made him the most powerful vice President in the world and the most powerful in the history of Nigeria. But don't forget that these were powers delegated or trust. So when you begin to talk about Atiku and Obasanjo 2007 you are actually insulting Mr. President and I think Islam teaches us to respect those high authority. So what I expect from the Vice President, whatever his action, he should wait on his boss especially a boss who has been most benevolent to him in terms of delegation of authority. You see all these things between Obasanjo and Atiku who about controls the party is actually sickening to me. In which state in this country do you have a contest for control of the party between Governor and his deputy or where the party chairman has as much an opinion contrary to its Governor not even to talk of fighting. Whatever limitations of President Obasanjo has as a human being as we all have our inadequacies as mortals, we should be fair to the old man and not seek to humiliate him, because if we do so we will be humiliating our country and ourselves.

SPORTS

Earlier this month Wanderley Luxemburgo coached Santos to the Brazilian title.

He has now won the championship five times with four different clubs.

A nondescript full-back in his playing days,

Luxemburgo's test of character

Luxemburgo the coach is a phenomenon of Brazilian football.

The question now, as he takes over at Real Madrid, is

can he become a phenomenon of global football?

"The force of his will to win is striking," is the verdict

of current Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira.

He should know. A few weeks ago Parreira helped organize a forum for Brazilian coaches.

Luxemburgo gave a lecture which built up to an extraordinary climax.

At the time, Santos were involved in a two-horse race for the title against Atletico Paranaense. "I want my opponent to die," he yelled. "I want Atletico to die."

It left a nauseating taste in the mouth. Two Brazilian players had just dropped dead on the field.

Luxemburgo's words were monumentally ill-judged.

But that is the man. He throws his whole being into the quest for victory. His total commitment and attention to detail are the reasons behind his success.

But his lack of limits makes him vulnerable for a fall. In his playing days he knocked three years off his age and appeared for a Brazil Under-20 side when he was really 22.

A Congressional Commission of Inquiry

revealed that he had more than 20 bank accounts stuffed with millions of dollars whose origin he could not convincingly explain.

And, of course, there is his chaotic two-year spell in charge of the Brazilian national team.

Luxemburgo took over after France 98 and his first words in charge were: "I come with the certainty that I will be successful."

He talked about his "macro plan." And he gave the impression of an ego on the loose, trying too hard to impress.

Although he won the 1999 Copa America, he never looked happy in a job that tests the character of the man more than the quality of the coach.

Some of his selections were craven attempts to get the press on his side.

Even at his worst, though, he was usually capable of improving the side with shrewd substitutions.

Luxemburgo claims that he is a calmer, more mature figure these days.

And, in domestic Brazilian

football at least, he has a consistent record of producing teams that win in style.

He has got the best out of the likes of Rivaldo and Edmundo (at Palmeiras), Freddy Rincon (Corinthians), Alex at Cruzeiro and Robinho at Santos.

His time with Flamengo and the national team was somewhat overshadowed by his fall out with Romario, but Luxemburgo is far from the only coach who found the little man too hot to handle.

Handling the stars of European football, though, is new territory. Brazilian club sides are not the multilingual, multicultural melting pot of contemporary European football.

Adjustments will have to be made to the methods of motivation and team building that Luxemburgo has used so far.

There will be no lack of effort on his part, and no lack of talent. But it will be fascinating to see whether he can stand up to the test of character.



Luxemburgo: Can he become a phenomenon of global football?

Tennis: Ones to watch in 2005

From those players, looking to be number one in the world to those aiming for a place in the top 100, BBC Sport highlights the players to watch in 2005.

THE CONTENDERS
J O A C H I M JOHANSSON: The man charged with saving Swedish tennis made a pretty good start in 2004 and has the way to threaten the very best in the next 12 months.

As interest in tennis declines in his home country with the golden years of Borg, Wilander and Edberg long gone, Johansson has proved a shot in the arm for the sport with his ultra-modern game.

The man previously best known for going out with Lleyton Hewitt's sister Jaalyn

made headlines of his own in 2004, climbing 101 places in the rankings to number 11 and claiming his first title in Memphis.

And with the third best service stats on tour and a huge forehand, he pulled off the remarkable feat of overpowering defending champion Andy Roddick on his way to the US Open semifinals.

S V E T L A N A KUZNETSOVA: To mark the world number five and US Open champion out as one to watch may not require great powers of foresight, but Kuznetsova looks to have the qualities to go even further.

Her progression has been impressive, from world junior champion in 2001 to WTA

newcomer of the year in 2002 and world number 35 by the end of 2003.

However, in the year Russian players took over the women's game, Kuznetsova made her mark, reaching six finals and winning two titles, including Flushing Meadows.

The power she displayed in thrashing Elena Dementieva to win the US Open was awesome and, provided she can control it better than in her Fed Cup final defeats, Kuznetsova has the cool temperament to challenge for the top spot.

THE PRODIGES
G A E L M O N F I L S: There have been more junior world number ones to disappear off the radar than make the breakthrough at the top of the game, but Monfils looks set to buck the trend.

He has dominated the junior circuit, winning all four Grand Slam titles, and has already made inroads on the senior circuit.

At 6ft 3ins tall and with a huge serve, Monfils is not exactly struggling to keep up with his senior counterparts, as Thomas Enqvist and particularly Olivier Rochus can testify after losing to the teenager this year.

And even Lleyton Hewitt struggled to contain Monfils when he edged past him at

the Paris Masters.

TATIANA GOLOVIN: Golovin is almost typical of the modern female tennis player in that she was born in Moscow, raised in Lyon and learned her tennis in Florida.

And she displays the qualities expected of all products of the Bolletieri Academy, in that she is relentlessly aggressive from the baseline, a superb athlete, and rarely ventures to the net.

Like Maria Sharapova - the star of 2004 - Golovin has an indomitable spirit and will to win that has already made the usual "glamour girl" talk redundant.

And after storming from 365 in the world to number 27 in just 12 months, reaching the last 16 at two Grand Slams

on the way, it looks like there is plenty more to come.

ON THE VERGE?: While every tournament seems to throw up a new Russian woman with world-beating potential, the men's side has been less fruitful.

But following in the footsteps of Marat Safin from the Russian number one's home Spartak club in Moscow has been the equally hard-hitting Andreev.

Like Safin, Andreev moved to Spain at the age of 15 to develop his baseline game and, if power is the key to the modern game, Andreev is on the right track.

He made the breakthrough with a fourth-round place at Roland Garros, blasted his hero Andre Agassi off the court at Queen's and made two finals on his way to a first top-50 finish.

JELENA JANKOVIC: The 19-year-old has proved infuriatingly hard to predict but showed enough in the last 12 months to suggest she could threaten the top 10 in the year to come.

And despite failing to make it past the second round of a Grand Slam, Jankovic managed to move up the rankings every month in 2004, rising from 81 in January to her current place of 28.

As another product of the Bolletieri production line, Jankovic hits the ball hard and flat from the baseline, especially on the backhand, and can run all day.

The next step is to repeat the kind of performance that saw her beat Elena Dementieva in the first round of the 2004 Australian Open.



Golovin



Jankovic



Johansson



Kuznetsova



Monfils

Sports

Dame Kelly - an annus mirabilis

Kelly Holmes has waited a long time for the titles and trophies she won this year - but it was worth the wait.

The 34-year-old middle-distance runner won an amazing Olympic double with two gold medals, and has been made a Dame in the New Year Honours List.

"I'm extremely honoured. I can't believe how it turned out for me after all the low

years I had and now I am as happy as I could ever be.

"This year will be one I will never forget as long as live," said Holmes.

The 34-year-old enjoyed a dazzling six days at the Athens Olympics when she won both the 800m and 1500m titles.

"This has been an extraordinary year for me, fulfilling my lifetime dreams of becoming Olympic champion - not just once but twice," added the BBC Sports Personality of the Year winner.

Of her latest honour, she said it was amazing that "a girl brought up in a humble council house could be made Dame Kelly Holmes".

Despite her modesty, such awards and acclaim are worthy reward for a rollercoaster ride of a career on the track.

Having won the English Schools 1500m title, Holmes turned her back on athletics at the age of 18, opting instead for a life in the army.

It took the encouragement of an army coach to rekindle the fire of competition in the aspiring athlete, who admits to having been "army barmy" at the time.

She returned to the track in 1992, making an impact almost immediately.

Within 12 months she was the 800m national champion, adding the 1500m title to her collection in 1994.

However, her 10-year journey from national to Olympic champion has been tortuous at times.

Holmes had to contend with a host of injuries that affected her form and afflicted her Olympic hopes.

At Atlanta in 1996, she finished outside the medals in

fourth place while running the 800m with a stress fracture. She spent the next seven weeks in plaster.

At the Sydney Games she went one better, picking up bronze in the 800m, a result made all the more impressive by the fact her preparation was limited to just six weeks of training after being laid low by a virus.

And her previous visit to Athens had ended in disaster on the track.

A ruptured Achilles tendon and torn calf muscle in the 1500m heats at the 1997 World Championships destroyed her hopes of a first major title.

It is impossible to guard against such unknowns, but on her return to the Greek capital seven years later, Holmes ensured that, injury permitting, she would be in the best shape of her life.

Two years prior to the Olympics she based herself in South Africa and spent

time training with Mozambique's Maria Mutola, the world's premier 800m runner.

The hours on the track with Mutola inspired her to aspire to greater heights, and the months they spent apart before the Olympics helped Holmes realise she could turn the tables on her former training partner, as she proved in Athens.

A home-straight burst helped the Briton secure the narrowest of wins in the 800m, with Mutola trailing in fourth.

Six days later, imbued by the confidence that victory brings, she surged to gold in the 1500m having bided her time towards the back of the field until the bell.

Her decision to go for the double was a last-minute one, but as the clock ticks on through the autumn of her career, the laurels and the memories will last a lifetime.



Kelly Holmes

HOLMES' RISE TO STARDOM

- Born:** 19/4/1970
- 1993:** Wins AAA and UK titles
- 1994:** European 800m silver; Commonwealth 800m gold
- 1995:** World Championship 800m bronze
- 1996:** Suffers stress fracture at Atlanta Olympics
- 1997:** Suffers Achilles injury for World Championships
- 1998:** Commonwealth 800m silver
- 2000:** Olympic 800m bronze
- 2001:** Illness scuppers worlds
- 2002:** Commonwealth 1500 gold; European 800m bronze
- 2003:** World Championship 800m silver
- 2004:** Double Olympic gold - 1500m/800m

Boxing: 2005 Preview

'More of the same please'

That should be the message to America's promoters after some encouraging progress in 2004.

While their British counterparts struggled to make an impact, some genuinely-pulsating matchups were made across the pond.

And there is every chance more will follow in 2005.

At the centre of much of the excitement is the great Bernard Hopkins, owner of the undisputed middleweight

title and the biggest reputation in boxing.

Briton Howard Eastman heads the queue for a shot, but the line goes round the block and some of the alternatives are also mouth-watering and eminently possible.

Foremost among them are US light middleweight champion Ronald "Winky" Wright and Puerto Rican comeback kid Felix Trinidad, who may fight-off for the right to take on Hopkins.

BIG FIGHTS TO HOPE FOR:

- Wright v Trinidad
- Hopkins v Wright/Trinidad
- Toney v Byrd/Ruiz
- Mayweather v Tszyu
- Corrales v Juan Diaz

Stepping down a division, Cory Spinks reigns as king of the welterweights and looks short of real challengers.

Mayweather (USA), with Kostya Tszyu (Australia), Vivian Harris (Guyana), Arturo Gatti (Canada), Miguel Angel Cotto (Puerto Rico), Ricky Hatton and Junior Witter (England) adding to the flavour.

Mayweather, in particular, will be hungry for success, having left behind his world titles at lightweight.

There are plenty of American "contenders" at heavyweight as well, but quality is lacking.

Established pros Chris Byrd (IBF) and John Ruiz (WBA) have yet to convince the public that they are champions in anything but name.

And there appears to be a shortage of young talent coming through to challenge them.

It may yet fall to "Lights Out" James Toney to shake the division out of its lethargy in 2005 - he at least can be relied on for excitement, big crowds and value for money.

ONE TO WATCH

Juan Diaz has plugged the gap left by Floyd Mayweather at lightweight and has caused a big stir.

At 21, he became the youngest world title holder by beating Mongolian WBA champion Lavka Sim by unanimous decision.

And 2005 could be the year he makes the division his own, although compatriot Diego Corrales, Joel Casamayor (Cuba), Jose Luis Castillo (Mexico) and Acelino Freitas (Brazil) will have something to say about that.



Hopkins



Trinidad

But below him is the global melting pot that is the light welterweight division.

In the mix are Sharranga Mitchell and Floyd

Adere's sets sights on indoor season

The women's race was nearly entirely an African affair. Berhane Adere took her fourth Bolzano win in 16:14 with a three-second gap over Edith Masai. The first laps were a slow and tactical race. Masai

went to the lead briefly although none of the leading contenders really took the initiative in the early stages of the race.

The race reached its climax with two laps to go when the Italian Silvia Weissteiner, a

local favourite, pushed the pace closely followed by Masai, Denboba and Adere. Weissteiner had returned to competition after being forced to miss the European Cross Country Championships due to a bout of flu.

The Africans increased the pace and the leaders clocked a 4:06 split for the second lap and 4:00 for the third lap.

With about 600 metres to go Adere opened a decisive gap over Masai and went to win in 16:14, with the greatest ease from Masai. Adere is another "local favourite" of the fans in Bolzano because she had already won here in 1997, 2002 and 2003.

"I am preparing very well back home, so I expected to win today. Tomorrow I will fly back to Ethiopia to prepare for the indoor season. I am planning my first race on 29 January in Stuttgart where I will run the 3000 metres," said Adere.



Adere

Results

Men (10 km):

- 1 Sergiy Lebid (Ukraine) 28:23
- 2 Stefano Baldini (Italy) 28:23
- 3 Dathan Ritzenhein (USA) 28:24
- 4 Joud Gharib (Morocco) 28:54
- 5 Ronald Kipchumba (Kenya) 29:02
- 6 Meba Tadesse (Ethiopia) 29:02
- 7 Pedro Rui Silva (Portugal) 29:22
- 8 Gabriele De Nard (Italy) 29:24

Women (5 km):

- 1 Berhane Adere (Ethiopia) 16:14
- 2 Edith Masai (Kenya) 16:17
- 3 Merima Denboba (Ethiopia) 16:25
- 4 Justina Bak (Poland) 16:29
- 5 Renate Rungger (Italy) 16:35
- 6 Rosita Rota Gelpi (Italy) 16:38
- 7 Anna Incerti (Italy) 16:42
- 8 Silvia Weissteiner (Italy) 16:42

Sports

Depleted Chelsea have look of champions - Mourinho

Chelsea have the look of champions after Saturday's victory over Liverpool, coach Jose Mourinho says, but his depleted squad face another test of their title credentials when they complete their holiday programme at home to Middlesbrough on Tuesday.

Seeking to win England's top division for the first time since 1955, Chelsea hold a

five-point lead over champions Arsenal going into the second half of the Premier League season.

Manchester United are breathing down the necks of the top two, Alex Ferguson's in-form side having won eight of their last nine games to sit nine points adrift of the leaders.

A late deflected goal from substitute Joe Cole handed Chelsea a lucky victory at

Anfield on Saturday and the significance of the win was not lost on Mourinho or his players.

"You have to chase the luck but normally the luck is around champions at the right moment, in the right place," said Mourinho.

"When you score a goal in the last 10 minutes of a game where the draw is the fair result then I think it is the symbol of something."

Playing four games in a nine-day period has taken its toll on a Chelsea squad ravaged by illness.

"We have a new player amongst us called virus. It is the flu virus, it is the stomach virus, it is the throat virus. Everybody is full of it — me, my assistant, John Terry, Wayne Bridge is in bed, (Alexei) Smertin is in bed," added Mourinho.

"Geremi was on the bench

but he wasn't ready to play because he had a temperature of almost 40 degrees. For the next game against Middlesbrough, if the virus doesn't wake up strong we have the same 15 players. If he attacks again then I don't know how many."

Arsenal, after their dip in form in November, have bounced back with five wins from their last six. Arsene Wenger's side host

Manchester City at Highbury on Tuesday and the Frenchman is only concerned that the champions keep winning.

"We are getting better and better with every game. And we are making the title race more interesting for the public," Wenger said after Arsenal's 3-1 win at Charlton on Saturday.

"I am not worried about Chelsea's results — if they are still five points ahead with six games to go then I will look at their results."

United, like Chelsea and Arsenal, have won three out of three games over the holiday period to give the Premier League standings a familiar feel at the start of the year.

Free-scoring Tottenham Hotspur, like United in a rich vein of form, are the visitors to Old Trafford on Tuesday.

United, still without the suspended Wayne Rooney who is serving the second of a three-match ban, have fitness worries over Portuguese winger Cristiano Ronaldo who hobbled off late in the 2-0 win at Middlesbrough on New Year's Day.

Wenger confident as Gunners maintain pressure on Chelsea

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has warned Chelsea that the champions are getting back to their best after they maintained their five point deficit behind the Premiership leaders with a 3-1 win away to Charlton Athletic.

Sweden midfielder Freddie Ljungberg put his recent migraine problems behind him by scoring twice while the Gunners' other goal came from Dutch forward Robin van Persie.

Talal El Karkouri equalised Ljungbergs first goal at The Valley in this all-London affair but, after taking a maximum nine points so far over the festive period, the Gunners are looking in ominous form.

"Our last three away games have been like cup games but were getting better and better in every game," said Wenger.

"If we are consistent, I believe we have a good chance and we were very strong today (Saturday)," the Frenchman added.

"We needed to dig deep. That is the toughest Charlton



Wenger side I have faced since I have been in England and they were very difficult to beat."

Wenger also praised van Persie after he scored his second Premiership goal of the season.

The former Feyenoord striker has been criticised since arriving at Highbury with reports in the English press suggesting he was on the verge of being sold after failing to make a substantial impact.

But van Persies neat

volley ended Charlton's resistance and Wenger believes the forward and his other young charges will prove their quality as the season develops.

"I always give my players six months to adapt and Van Persie has shown today that he can be dangerous," said Wenger.

"He started at Portsmouth which would have been a shock to the system for a player coming from Holland because of the lack of space, and then he played at Newcastle. He is getting better all the time."

"We finished the game with six or seven players between 18 and 21 years of age and they will all learn. They all played very well but in March, they will be stronger because they will have so much more experience."

Wenger started the game with Justin Hoyte at right-back in place of the injured Lauren and Gael Clichy

replacing Robert Pires on the left side of midfield, with neither youngster letting him down.

With Jermain Pennant getting a rare cameo late on and Philippe Senderos replacing Sol Campbell towards the end, Wenger demonstrated again his belief in his younger players.

Wenger will not risk the unfit Pascal Cygan so Senderos may be forced into his full Premiership debut against Manchester City on

Tuesday after England international Campbell hobbled off.

Arsenal took the lead against the run of play when van Persies clever pass found Patrick Vieira in the penalty area and the Arsenal captain fed the ball to Ljungberg, who spun and fired low past Dean Kiely.

Charlton were level on the stroke of half time when El Karkouri fired an unstoppable 35-yard shot beyond Manuel Almunia from Matt Hollands short free-kick, the first goal Arsenal had conceded in 359 minutes of Premiership football.

Trust Classified

WOMEN'S GUILD DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Notice is hereby given to the general public that the above named Foundation has applied for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.

The trustees are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Prof. Olu Jegede | 2. Prof. Jerry Ona |
| 3. Dr (Mrs) Elsie Samaila | 4. Dr. Uriak Angulu |
| 5. Mrs. Comfort A. Fearon | 6. Mrs Rhoda H. Kwashi |

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5, P.M.B.198 Garki Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:

Mrs Rhoda H. Kwashi,
No.1 Bida Road, Kaduna

LOSS OF CERTIFICATE COMPUTER ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA

The above named body has lost its original certificate and has applied for the certified true copy of the certificate under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.

The trustees are:

1. Prof. Olu Langer
2. Mr. Tunde Njoku
3. Mr. Timothy Akande
4. Mallam Hafiz Wali

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5, P.M.B.198 Garki Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:

Secretary

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public that Allocation Document covering Plot No. 1305 of 1000m² and Plot No. 1304 of 1000m² at Karu FHA Layout belonging to Mr. Prick Kaura and Felix Monday respectively are missing.

Whoever found it, Should Please return to the nearest Police Station or the above address.

Signed:

Jude Orhaga
Federal Housing Karu, Abuja

Change of Names.

I, MUHAMMAD ADAMU, now wish to be addressed as SHU'AIBU GARBA.NCAC Abuja please take note.

I, formerly AISHA USMAN, now MRS AISHA UMAR. Former documents remain valid. General public to note.

I, formerly known as FATIMA ABDULLAHI KASSIM, now wish to be known as MRS FATIMA ABDULLAHI KASSIM. All former documents remain valid. Usman Danfodio University Sokoto and general public should please take note.

Gazza seriously ill in hospital

Former England football international Paul Gascoigne was gravely ill in hospital suffering from pneumonia and a possible collapsed lung, Britain's News of the World tabloid said.

Gascoigne, the 37-year-old former midfield dynamo



Gazza

popularly known as Gazza, collapsed at home on Saturday night and was rushed to London's Princess Grace hospital, Britain's best-selling tabloid reported.

"Paul began feeling very unwell two or three days ago. He has pneumonia and a possible collapsed lung. They're testing for other problems," his agent, Alex Armitage, told the newspaper.

"He's serious. It's a possibility he's got 101 thing wrongs with him," Armitage was quoted as saying.

"It's bloody awful, pneumonia. But he's in hospital and being very well looked after with his loved ones all around him," he added.

The report came the day after speculation that the former England midfielder had applied for a coaching job

in Australia's newly-formed A-league.

Sydney's Daily Telegraph reported that Gazza had put his hand up to be coach of the Newcastle Jets.

Gascoigne announced earlier this year he wanted to be known as G8 in a bid to distance himself from his reputation as an alcoholic hellraiser who had squandered his talent.

He also quit as player-coach at League Two side Boston saying he intended to study for a coaching qualification.

Gascoigne enjoyed a colourful career with Newcastle, Tottenham, Lazio and Rangers and played 57 times for England.

He had a brief stint as a player-coach in China before a failed attempt at reviving his player career in England with Wolves.

Sports

Galadima gets executive powers

NFA Chairman Ibrahim Galadima will in the new week be conferred with executive powers as part of the ongoing reforms at the Nigeria Football Association (NFA).

A top official told KICK OFF on Saturday that Galadima will emerge as Chief Executive Officer of the NFA on Monday while former international Segun 'Mathematical' Odegbami as Secretary-general will be the Chief Accounting Officer.

These are part of the reforms to do away with the contentious Decree 101 which makes the Secretary-general the Chief executive and the NFA chairman a mere figure head. Galadima will now head a "small and manageable" board made up of 13 members.

This board will be made up of representatives of the country's eight football zones, two from the Pro League board, a representative from the Women's Pro League.

The secretary-general and a representative of the Sports Ministry are also on this board but both will have no voting rights.

The board's life span is till 29 November after which fresh elections will be conducted for a new board that will run the standard four-

year term as prescribed by world soccer governing body FIFA.

Meanwhile, the executive secretary of the Pro League board, Salihu Abubakar, has taken receipt of the keys to

the office he will be moving to Monday.

The league board office is the Team Nigeria office in Wuse Zone 1 in Abuja.

The board plans a stakeholders' forum later this month to come up with a blue print for the Premier and Pro Leagues.

Disu joins Lobi

Former national team coach Tunde Disu has pitched tent with Premier League club Lobi Stars for the coming season.

A top source close to Lobi boss Dominic Iorfa told KICK OFF that Disu, who most recently handled Pro League outfit NITEL FC of Lagos, has signed a year's deal and replaces Belgian coach Maurice Cooremans, whose contract was not renewed.

Iorfa himself was not available for comments as he is presently away in England on holidays with his family.

Disu has been involved in the national team set-up for over two decades, handling the Eagles, Flying Eagles as well as the Golden Eaglets.

He is best remembered for what is now referred to as 'The Damman Miracle' as the national Under-20 team fought back from four goals

down to defeat Soviet Union in the FIFA World Youth Championship in Saudi Arabia in 1989.

The Flying Eagles went all the way to play in the championship game against Portugal, who paraded such stars like Figo.



Segun Odegbami, the new NFA secretary general, left, discussing with Super Eagles forward Nwankwo Kanu during the Peak Milk 50th Anniversary Raffle draw in Lagos, recently. *Pic: Oludapo Odunewa*

NFA REFORMS

Board petitions Obasanjo, NASS

By Patrick Andrew

The NFA board has petitioned President Olusegun Obasanjo and the National Assembly over the recent reforms in the NFA by the Sports Minister, Col. Musa Mohammed.

The board, which held an emergency meeting last Wednesday to deliberate on

the purge of the NFA management and the withdrawal of government nominees and non-elected members in the NFA board, consigned the petition to the President and NASS on Thursday.

The chairman of the board, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima, had led some selected members to present the position of the board on aspects of the reforms, members felt were objectionable.

"We presented our position and equally listened to the minister. He gave reasons for the changes and also insisted on our positions," Galadima said stressing that members hope the minister would rescind his decisions on the reforms.

But the minister was adamant and insisted those reforms have presidential blessings. "I have the mandate of the president to sanitise the system," he had said while hosting the sporting press to end of year dinner on Thursday.

However same Thursday, the board consigned its petition to the president and the sports committees of the House of Representative and senate respectively.

The petition was equally

copied FIFA for effect even as the board vowed to challenge the minister to a logical conclusion.

Trustsports recalls that two Thursdays ago, the minister sacked the management of the NFA, pruned down the membership of the board by a dozen and set up an interim management board for the pro-league, which was given semi-autonomy.



Galadima

Odegbami steps into Ogunjobi's shoes

Former International Striker, Chief Segun Odegbami (MON) will today resume as the new NFA secretary-general in place of Chief Taiwo

Ogunjobi, who was eased out of office penultimate Thursday.

Odegbami, a former member of the NFA board comes in with a new

management on ad hoc basis till November this year a new board of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

Elias Gora, (national competitions), Bassey Ekpo

(public relations), Mahmud Maharaja, (international), Musa Ahmadu (Marketing), Henrietta Ukaigwe, (female) and the HOD of the finance and accounts, who would be appointed by the office of the Accountant General of the Federation.

These will hold forte pending the appointments of substantive officers by the new NFF board to reflect the new Act, which will be promulgated soon.

Similarly the new management will assume the functions of fashioning out modalities for the semi autonomous league and would equally serve an ad hoc basis.

Sports Minister Musa Mohammed had announced that the board will function in lieu of an elected board by club owners probably until November, this year.

Alhaji Sani Lulu Abdullahi, Felix Owolabi, Amanze Uchegbulem, Ibrahim Abubakar, M. G. Umar, Ade Ojeikere and Aisha Falode constitute the new board, with Salihu Abubakar as the secretary.

The board is expected not only to lay a solid base for the take-off of the semi autonomous league but vigorously market the league and procure sponsorship for its activities.

Poor form troubles Okocha

Bolton captain Austin 'Jay Jay' Okocha has admitted that the club's slump has caused him many sleepless nights. Bolton's slide from the top four to the edge of the

relegation zone has been as surprising as it has been swift.

Talk of European qualification, even Champions League football, has now been replaced by a

fear of a return to the bad old days of relegation battles.

For Okocha, who acknowledges that his loss of form has coincided with Bolton's slump, the worrying run, and his part in it, has led to bouts of insomnia.

Okocha said: "I never thought that our bad run would last this long and I am having sleepless nights because of it. I know that my form has been poor during this losing run and that is why I have not been sleeping well because it is always in my thoughts.

"I am an honest person and have to admit that I have not been at my best. I look at myself first before criticising others but, as a team, we have also not been at our best."

He added: "I think other teams now understand how we play and they are learning to match us. Our big challenge is to show that we deserved to be where we were earlier this season and we have to start winning again to do that. "I am very confident that we will get out of this situation and climb the table again."



Okocha

NFA owes late Enemuo N1.2m

The family of the late Innocent Edozie Enemuo is reeling in pains over N1.2m owed the former Head of Department, Marketing.

The debt is accumulated salary arrears and allowances and expenses incurred in the execution of certain functions for the NFA.

Trustsports learnt that the NFA is yet to pay Enemuo's salary even for the month of July, which was his last as head of marketing department.

Enemuo met untimely death in a ghastly motor accident along the Aba-Port

Harcourt way while on official service.

Ever since, Christie Enemuo, wife of the deceased has made several efforts to get her late husband's entitlements to no avail.

A member of the family, who prefers anonymity, said they have decided to leave matters for posterity to judge the management of the NFA, which blocked and rebuffed efforts to get Enemuo's legitimate money.

Neither Ogunjobi nor the former head of Finance and Accounts, Olubode Oke, were available for comments.

This Space is
for Sale

EDITORIAL

The Tsunami disaster

The wrath of the December 26th, 2004 water quake in the Indian Ocean, has destroyed hundreds of thousands of lives in several countries: Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, islands which belong to India, the eastern coast of Southern India (particularly the state of Tamil Nadu), Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania. Because the epicenter of the under-ocean quake was close to Aceh Province in northern Sumatra, that area suffered the most devastation. Satellite pictures broadcast on television showed whole towns and villages totally wiped out in some parts. As one BBC correspondent put it from a worst hit part of Thailand: "there is death everywhere". Banda Aceh, in Indonesia and Mullattivu in Sri Lanka were described as having been "swept clean" of human beings and property.

To measure the losses we must go beyond bodies counted and bodies uncounted; economic structures destroyed (including family shelters, shops, hotels, cafes), and also assess the valuable invisibles.

In areas of Sri Lanka controlled by the Tamil Tigers and in Indonesia, the rapid decomposition of bodies due to tropical heat urged quick resort to using burials in mass graves and cremations. For a people used to the hazards of travel and long distance fishing on the sea, it is perhaps not new that the sea seizes, kills and carries away as it did to thousands who were holidaying on beaches, on cruise boats or sailing.

Also lost was the myth of the moral and human decency of the leadership of the United States. For President Bush who had traveled to the region soon after his surprise election, his silence about the tragedy three days after television pictures had opened hearts and minds all around the world, merely confirmed a suspected moral bareness in his person; a defect which had made many leaders around the globe wish for his fall in the November 2, 2004 elections. For a country which routinely spends trillions of dollars on a single space flight, his first offer of fifteen million dollars as relief support, was a pathetic and frightening contrast to the "outpouring of the heart" which western journalists saw the ordinary people of Thailand showering on their injured and anxious European and American visitors even as they mourned their own huge torment. Australia's leaders did so much better even in the bitter shadows of citizens they lost in the Bali bombing. A Democratic Party member of the American Senate was clearly not merely taking a cheap partisan shot at President Bush when he wondered how Bush could be so miserly when, as he put it, "we spend 35 million dollars before breakfast everyday in Iraq".

But there have also been gains. The tragic loss of over two thousand five hundred Swedish tourists (a country of only nine million), has shown the horrendous cost of the South being shut out from the miracle of scientific and economic development of the North; for it became evident that strongly built houses and other shelters were better able to protect man against angry waters. Despite their terrible loss, however, the people and government of Sweden, like the British public who also suffered severely, rose with most admirable outpourings of spontaneous generosity in support of South Asia. This is good for building that sense of a global moral community which the post-Cold War world needs so desperately.

We must, however, worry about the coincidence between the failure of American officials to warn leaders in the region about an impending under-water earthquake they had detected. Such concern is not frivolous considering that at the peak of the Cold War, the United States built and heavily equipped a military base on Diego Garcia Island which is located in the Indian Ocean. It is most alarming that they did not express concern to peoples in the areas that an earthquake could explode weapons on that naval base, let alone an independently triggered tsunami.

This paper sends its deepest condolences to the peoples of the affected countries, and urges the governments and peoples of Africa to also show moral and material support for the long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction of their societies and economies.

DAILY TRUST

MONDAY COLUMN

Monday, January 3, 2004

Of development and the 'decadent' West

By Crispin Oduobuk

Mallam Kabiru Yusuf, the Editor-in-Chief of the *Trust* papers, is my boss. That's more a reminder for me than information for you, dear reader, because I need the reminder more than you need the information. Like any other man who works under another and wishes to keep his job, I have to endeavour not to displease him too often else I would quit understandably in need of new employment. Thankfully though, in the years I have worked with him, I have found him to be slow to anger and ready to be reasoned with. Also, though he runs the two titles with the firmness they require, he has never barred expression of views that do not coincide with his.

It is with this background in mind that I wish to contribute to a couple of issues he raised in his Monday Column of 27th December 2004. In the said article, titled 'In praise of poverty', Mallam Kabiru asked the very important question, "What constitutes 'development' as against 'underdevelopment' or poverty?" I agree with him that this question requires serious contemplation by people among us who are best equipped to provide an answer, or answers, that would cease to confuse us that trying to ape the West is where the solution lies.

To my mind, the issue of 'development' ought to be approached—at least in one of various perspectives—from the angle of adequacy. To illustrate, in politics for instance, the theory of democracy—if not the practice, which is varied and blotchy—is widely accepted as adequate for people to decide who they entrust with running their government.

In seeking an understanding of 'development' that would perhaps be more suitable to us, rather than one of merely trying to catch up with the Western individual, I would ask for instance: what quantity and quality of food is adequate to guarantee that a child grows up healthy? What level and quality of education is adequate to ensure that a young man can fend for himself? What sort of policies should government implement to provide reasonable (if not adequate in this case) security? What level of infrastructure is adequate to enable citizens to pursue their personal and communal growth? These are some of the questions of adequacy I feel ought to be addressed in redefining our understanding of 'development'.

The second issue I wish to comment on this morning is the material quest of the Western individual and the decadence that seemingly follows the attainment of this goal. I regret that though I read 'In praise of poverty' over and over, I couldn't readily see the link between success, spiritual hollowness and decadence as represented by the suicides resulting from guilt over paedophilia. Before I go further, I want to state categorically that I deplore paedophilia and would support the death penalty for all who are found guilty of this heinous crime. Also, I do not, through this exercise, seek to exculpate the West for their numerous excesses or crimes.

To return to the subject at hand, I am concerned that we may be boxing ourselves into a rather mistaken corner of piety by often singling out the moral corruption of the West while implicitly or explicitly failing to acknowledge that we have moral corruption in our midst too. If Mallam Kabiru wasn't the very influential person he is, I would not have bothered to revisit this matter. But I'm afraid we all seem to be buying into what I feel is merely a myth of Western decadence in comparison to our piety, a view which Mallam Kabiru's column did not contradict. I think we all need to probe deeper into this.

Let this be clear: I am not disputing that the West is foul. What I question is our readiness to accept this position without asking whether we ourselves might be guilty of this same foulness regardless of the disparity in our material fortunes. To get to grips with what I'm talking about, I urge everyone to soberly reflect on how this image of the West as a cesspit was conveyed to us. Personal experiences? Accounts of travellers? Books by Westerners themselves? The mass media? Perhaps all of these and other sources played a part, but I am convinced that image, as accurate as it may be, was largely conveyed to us by the mass media. We read, see and hear about all manner of debaucheries—paedophilia not necessarily the worst among them—in the West. One need not dwell on how effective the media can be over time in putting across a certain picture, especially given the saturated coverage the Western individual/community receives. However, we should ask ourselves, are we covered in the same detailed way over here?

As someone who has paid dues in the print media, beginning with a part-time stint at the *Sunday Standard* of Jos

in the early '90s, I offer my humble opinion that our lives, individually and communally, do not receive any way near the coverage that the lives of Westerners do. At the click of a mouse, I may easily learn where the Haiti-born but US-based musician Wyclef Jean may be performing in the near future. If I am so inclined, I can request to be alerted through email any time Wyclef Jean does (or does not do) anything newsworthy. Should Wyclef Jean decide to get himself into some trouble of any sort, you can be sure so much information (including what he had for breakfast that morning) would be thrown at me that I certainly would be forced to ask the news provider to delist me.

I have gone to this extent to show how the West generates (and consumes, I may add) news about individuals and communities to the extent that nothing or very little is considered sacrosanct. But over here, even our public officers, of whom we have some right to know a reasonable bit about since we entrust our affairs to them, are very often enigmatically until something untoward happens or is speculated about them. As I write this, I do not know how many wives and children our president has and I'm not at all bothered about the matter as I do not think it is any business of mine. But I doubt if there are many Americans that do not know the name(s) of the pet(s) of the Bush household.

And here's another point to consider; over here we have a rather lackadaisical attitude towards reporting crimes, even when we are the victims. I believe every Nigerian has an armed robbery story. If it does not concern you directly, then it's your relative or friend that was involved. But how many of us bother to report to the police? Right here in Abuja, I have been robbed twice at gunpoint. These robberies happened within a few months of one another, one along the Giri stretch of Airport Road and the other in my then home in Gwagwalada. The men of the night who came calling at Gwagwalada expressly warned that if they saw me at the police station they would come back and "finish me." Since I had no way of knowing whether they were bluffing I did what I considered the wise thing and stayed away from the police. In any case I'm not sure it ever occurred to me to report the matter. And I know full well many victims do not bother to report robberies either, not to talk of crimes such as that involving a neighbour known to be in the appalling habit of seducing little girls.

I mention this last bit because when I lived in Gwagwalada, I had a friend who had just such a neighbour. In fact the fellow did not reside permanently in the residence. He kept the place purely for this nefarious deed and though my friend and I knew what he got up to, we never reported the matter to the police. For one, he was a 'Big Man'. Even if we had reported him, certainly nothing would have come of it. Worse, one phone call and my friend and I would be in jail on a trumped up charge.

Some may say this is an isolated case. I think not. Speculative talk does little good but I believe if we all search our consciences we would find that we know of—or have reliably heard of—some pretty terrible deeds, paedophilia among them, going on around us.

Traditionally, for stories of such nature to have credence and make it into the mainstream media that command some measure of respect—and thereby begin to challenge our perception of self-piety as against Western decadence—an editor, such as Mallam Kabiru himself, would demand corroboration from the police or evidence of prosecution in a court of law. When this is lacking, no reporter with his head screwed on right would dare turn in such copy unless he writes for the junk trade.

Further to this point, out there in the West, we know credibly of Michael Jackson's child molestation problems because it is a matter before a court of law being prosecuted by the authorities. Whether he is innocent or guilty is what remains to be seen. The paedophiles who committed suicide in Britain were arrested by the police. Naturally, reporters covering these beats would have had official accounts or reactions, even if it is "no comment," to buttress their stories.

Finally, though I am not persuaded that poverty is a prerequisite for piety or happiness, I readily concede Mallam Kabiru's position "That indeed the happiest of human beings may not be the rich who hanker for more, but the poor who are content with less." However, I must reiterate that I believe the rich are no more sinful than the poor nor are the poor more pious than the rich. It seems to me that in the politics of media exposure, the rich simply get more coverage than the poor. And through this slant, we rather unfairly form the idea that the rich (the West in this case) must be steeped in iniquity while the poor (that being us) epitomize righteousness. The truth, I suspect, is lurking somewhere between these two extremes.

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