

Vice President briefs FEC, PDP governors on Yar'adua



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Grand jury indicts Farouk for bomb plot



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Yar'adua's absence:

15 new Perm Secs can't be sworn in

By Francis Okeke

FIFTEEN new Federal permanent secretaries who were appointed by President Umaru Musa Yar'adua in October last year have been cooling their heels for nearly three months because his absence from the country has stalled their swearing-in ceremony and assignment of portfolios. One of them actually died last month while waiting to be sworn-in.

On October 26, last year, Yar'adua approved the appointment of the new permanent secretaries to replace the 10 federal perm secs who retired earlier that month due to the new service tenure system, which required that anyone who had been a permanent secretary or director in a Federal ministry for eight years should immediately retire from the service.

The new permanent secretaries who are yet to be sworn-in include Umar Faruk Baba from Bauchi State, Sheik Goni Musa [Borno], Josephine Ajorisedere Awosika [Delta], Mohammed Sani Lawal [Jigawa] and Abdulkadir Tijjani Ahmed, from Kaduna. The latter is now deceased.

Also waiting to be sworn in are Willoughby Stephen Olukorede from

Lagos, Odusote Ibukun Abimbola [Ogun], Mohammed Sambo Bashar [Sokoto] and Aliyu Salihu Gusau [Zamfara].

Other perm secs still cooling their heels are Daudu Ibrahim Jalo, who will represent the North East geopolitical zone; Olorunfemi Biodun Nathaniel for the North-Central, Mahe Ibrahim Gaya for the North-West, Ozodinobi Anthony Zikora for the South-East, Ene-Ita Anne Nkese for the South-South and Fatima Binta Bamidele, for the South-West.

“The perm secs must be assigned their portfolios, which requires presidential approval

Daily Trust learnt that even though the Oaths Act 2004 provided that perm secs can be sworn-in by either the president or the Chief Justice, the Presidency refrained from applying the Kutigi-Katsina Alu formula here because, apart from swearing-in, the perm secs must be assigned their portfolios, which requires presidential approval. A senior government source said Vice President Goodluck Jonathan was not willing to approve such a sensitive matter without Yar'adua's approval.

The former permanent secretaries stopped going to work on October 1, last year and handed over to the most senior directors in their ministries. Though their

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Winnie Mandela, Samia Nkrumah for Trust Dialogue



MRS. Winnie Madhikizela Mandela.

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

LEGENDARY South African anti-apartheid fighter Mrs. Winnie Madhikizela Mandela and daughter of the first President of Ghana Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and herself a Member of the Ghanaian Parliament, Mrs. Samia Nkrumah are among the dignitaries who have confirmed their intention to grace the 7th Annual Trust Dialogue, which comes up in Abuja on Thursday, January 21.

This year's Trust Dialogue with the theme 'The African Woman and Politics' is to focus on the participation and contribution of women towards improvement of good

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FROM left: National Security Adviser to the President, General Sarki Muktar, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Alhaji Yayaie Ahmed and Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, at the Federal Executive Council meeting in Abuja yesterday.

Gowon condemns US listing of Nigeria

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

FOLLOWING moves by the United States of America to include Nigeria as a country whose citizens will undergo extra security checks, former Head of State retired General Yakubu Gowon has condemned the United States for taking such action.

He advised the American government to tender an unreserved apology to Nigeria, maintaining that the move was ill-conceived and lacked justification as Nigeria and America had always had good relationship.

Gowon who spoke in Minna yesterday during a condolence

visit to retired General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida over the death of his wife Maryam, said Faruk's action was not enough to place Nigeria on the list of terrorist countries.

"I was angry at the thought that America could blacklist Nigeria because of the action of a misguided Nigerian who was not misled here in Nigeria but in the first place got his ill-gotten motives from outside the country.

His father, family and Nigeria as a country did not endorse the action of the young man and it is rather very unfortunate for America to make such categorization of Nigeria because we have always had

good relationship with the United States", he said. He suggested that America must have other reasons to have hastily arrived at such a conclusion as the bomb attempt alone was not enough to earn the country which has maintained the position of propagating peace in Africa and the world such a bad reputation.

"As a former leader of this great country Nigeria, I think we deserve unreserved apologies from the United States of America as it is an insult to us and an unreasonable action as Nigeria has always been at peace with its neighbours", he said.

General Gowon therefore called on America to reverse its decision for the common good of

both countries as he maintained that it amounts to gross misdirection of action which he said was far too grave for Nigeria since the offence was committed by a single individual.

He advised Nigerians not to relent in praying for the country, saying it is the only country we have and must continue to advance ways to protect it no matter the forces that try to work against it.

His wife, Mrs Victoria Gowon, who was expressing her feelings on the death of Maryam Babangida, maintained that she would always be remembered as a foremost woman activist to have ever come out of Nigeria.

3 policemen remanded in prison over Ilorin shooting

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

AN Ilorin Chief Magistrate's Court yesterday remanded at the Federal Prisons yard, Oke-Kura, Ilorin, the Kwara State capital, three police officers who allegedly shot at passengers in a taxi, hitting an 8month old baby and the mother who later died Sunday.

The police suspects include Olatunji Tajudeen, Adams Akcem and Sunday Balogun.

The Kwara State police command had arraigned the suspects in court for criminal conspiracy and culpable homicide.

It would be recalled that four policemen on patrol along New Yidi Road in Ilorin Sunday shot at the taxi cab when the driver allegedly failed to stop for search.

Obasanjo returns from Togo peace mission

From Nahimah Ajikanle, Lagos

FORMER President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday returned to the country aboard a Ghanaian presidential aircraft at about 5:45pm after a brief trip to Togo where mediated on the country's political crisis.

Obasanjo who was received by newsmen and protocol personnel shortly after disembarking from the aircraft with registration number G530, refused to respond to questions from journalists.

When asked on the current situation in the country due to the absence of President Musa Yar'adua, Obasanjo responded by clapping.

On what he felt on the recent listing of Nigeria among countries whose citizens are to undergo extra security screening by United States, he also responded with a clap.

Pensions board worker steals pensioner's N1.9m benefit

From Auwalu Umar, Kano

POLICE have begun full investigation to unravel how a casual worker with the Kano State Pension Trustees Board managed to steal a N1.9 million retirement benefit belonging to a junior government worker who retired recently after 35 years of service.

The board's temporary staff, Bello Salim (jnr) is the nephew of a former head of a federal government agency. *Daily Trust* learnt that the boy was said to have been employed by his uncle as a temporary employee of the board on a N4,000 salary per month.

Salim, it was gathered, was said to have taken away the pensioner's file with his Unity

Bank's N1.9 million retirement cheque inside when the board's chief accountant went on a casual leave following the death of his mother. A source close to the board said the boy took the cheque to another bank and opened an account with it in his name since he could not cash it at the Unity Bank because it was a crossed cheque.

An official letter of introduction to the bank where he opened the new account dully endorsed by a senior employee of the board facilitated the opening of the account where the cheque was eventually lodged, it was also learnt. The source said the cheque was paid into the boy's new account by Unity Bank after its clearance.

Our correspondent reports

that the fraud was blown open last week when the owner of the cheque turned up for collection of his retirement benefits. The pensioner's file and cheque were found missing when the accountant asked for them and investigation started, it was learnt.

Some accounts officials of the board eventually traced the cheque at Unity Bank where the bulk of the board's pension funds are being kept, according to the source. It was there they also traced the other bank where the money was paid into. The boy, it was learnt, disappeared as soon as the fraud was uncovered, but was later arrested by the police. He was however released along with other accomplices when the board's chairman was said to have paid the money back on the

suspect's behalf.

It was gathered that the chairman paid the money when the board's Permanent Secretary Alhaji Garba Ali Gezawa insisted that the pensioner's retirement benefit must be returned. The pensioner was later paid his retirement benefits upon return of the money, it was learnt.

When contacted, the uncle neither denied or confirmed the scam. "For now I will not say anything and you are free to go and write whatever you want to write in your newspaper. All I know is that there are some people who are trying to get at me for the good work I have been doing since my appointment as chairman of the board", he said. He however said the board was get-

ting to the root of the matter as investigation was still on. The board's Permanent Secretary Alhaji Garba Ali Gezawa declined comment when contacted. He however dismissed the case as a "non issue". Unity Bank's Kano Regional Manager Danlami Abubakar confirmed the fraud. He however exonerated his bank of any blame.

He said his bank had to pay the money into the suspect's account in another different bank since the cheque was cleared at the clearing house. Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of Zone One Alhaji Abubakar Sardauna equally confirmed the incident, saying the zonal police headquarters where the case was taken to for investigation was still working on it.

Terror: Extra search threatens Nigeria-US ties

By AbdulFattah Olajide

INFORMATION and Communications Minister Professor Dora Akunyili yesterday said the relationship between Nigeria and the United States could take turn for the worst if the US insists on extra-search for Nigerian travellers.

The extra search by the US officials on Nigerians followed the alleged botched Christmas Day bombing attempt on a U.S. airliner 23 year old Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.

Speaking yesterday at the end of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting, the minister said Nigeria does not deserve

such treatment because Farouk has been educated and bred abroad, even though he was born in Nigeria, adding that he only transited through Nigeria for less than 30 minutes on the fateful day.

Akunyili said Nigeria is disturbed by the US profiling due to the fact that Nigeria is a signatory

to nine of the 16 United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) instruments on counter-terrorism.

While announcing new security measures being introduced by Nigeria, the minister said Nigeria has since December 25 expressed its deep sorrow and dismay over the incident which

it condemned in all its ramifications. "It is noteworthy that Mr. Farouk Abdulmutallab, though Nigerian-born, has been educated and bred outside Nigeria and only transited through Nigeria for less than 30 minutes on the fateful day where he underwent regular airport security," she said.

Ribadu's arrest warrant: Court summons CCT, IGP

By Atika Balal

THE arrest warrant issued for the former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu, has suffered a setback as an Abuja Federal High Court yesterday ordered that Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) which issued the warrant to appear before it on January 13.

The CCT had issued a warrant for Ribadu following his failure to appear before the tribunal to take a plea and face trial for failing to declare his assets as required by the public officers Code of Conduct laws of Nigeria.

Chairman of the CCT Justice Constance Momoh had in December last year said the warrant will be vacated if he appears before it on December 19 2009, but Ribadu is yet to do so.

The court has also asked the Inspector General of Police to appear before it on the same day.

Justice Garba Mohammed Umar said the CCT has been summoned to show the court why it cannot grant an order restraining the IGP from executing the arrest warrant which would culminate in apprehending and producing Ribadu before CCT pending the hearing and determination of the motion before the court.

Counsel to Ribadu, Femi Falana in a motion ex parte brought before the court is praying for an order of interim injunction restraining the 2nd respondent from executing the arrest warrant the 1st respondent from further hearing the case of Attorney General V. Nuhu Ribadu in charge No: FCT/ABJ/01/09 pending the hearing and final determination of the motion on notice herein.



CHIEF Michael Adejo, the Boloro of the Source (left) congratulates Governor Muazu Babangida Aliyu of Niger State, the Agbayewa of the Source after the chieftaincy title was conferred on the governor at Ile-Ife, Osun State, recently

Akingbola forfeits another home

By Boco Edet

SACKED Managing Director of Intercontinental Bank Erastus Akingbola forfeited another home of his in the interim to the Federal Government, bringing his seized properties in the custody of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to two.

The house is located at 2, Bedwell Street, Awolowo way, Ikoyi, Lagos. Akingbola who is worth over N346 billion is only entitled to N1.4m per month for living expenses as a Federal High Court

in Lagos also ordered the freezing of his bank accounts.

EFCC started action on the court order on Monday, sealing off a house on Ruxton Road also in Ikoyi and fifteen exotic cars belonging to the ex-bank chief.

EFCC's Spokesman Femi Babafemi told Daily Trust yesterday that Akingbola has been served court papers on his home at 26, Chester Terrace, London, England NW14ND where he is said to be currently residing.

The anti-graft agency jointly sought an order with Intercontinental Bank to seize Akingbola's

accounts and freeze his bank accounts after it was discovered he was allegedly siphoning money from Nigeria abroad to acquire property abroad.

Four top executives of the bank were arrested by EFCC for allegedly withdrawing N12 billion from the bank in favour of the former CEO which was wired abroad. The court order also restrains Akingbola, his family members, lawyers and associates from "removing, alienating, disposing of, dealing with or diminishing the value of his assets, whether held directly or indirectly

or for his benefit within the jurisdiction of this court."

He is also restrained from giving instruction for the sale or transfer of the shares and other forms of securities being held at the Central Security Clearing Systems (CSCS) or any custodian, stockbroker or registrar.

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) sacked Akingbola as MD, Intercontinental bank, on August 14, 2009 for issuing non-performing loans running into billions of naira but he left Nigeria to later institute legal cases against EFCC and CBN.

Budget: Reps reject NAPIMS' \$2.1bn request

By Nazidi A. Yahya

THE House of Representatives Committee on Gas Resources yesterday rejected the National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS) request for appropriation of the sum of \$2.1bn for gas projects in the 2010 fiscal year.

According to the committee which had a budget defence meeting with some agencies in the gas sector yesterday, appropriating such amount was not necessary, since only about 15 percent of the \$1.5bn earmarked as Federal Government's equity in the Joint Venture [JV] agreement with international oil

companies [IOCs] for similar projects in the 2009 Appropriation Act was accessed by stakeholders.

Chairman of the Committee Rep Igo Aguma said they were not satisfied with the presentation of NAPIMS which was made by its Manager [Gas], Mr. Paul Duro Ajisafe on behalf of

the Group General Manager of the organization, Dr. Ayo Balogun, and therefore ordered NAPIMS to go back and prepare a comprehensive account of its 2009 budget performance, and to make same available to the committee within one week.

The committee said if only about \$700m of the \$1.5 billion

appropriated for gas projects in 2009 was accessed, what NAPIMS ought to have asked for was the balance between the 2.1 billion it needed in 2010, and the 800 million still running, since according to the lawmakers, the 2009 supplementary budget would run until March, 2010.



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7TH ANNUAL TRUST DIALOGUE

Theme:

The African Woman and Politics

Venue: Congress Hall, Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja

Date: Thursday, 21 January, 2010

Time: 10.00 am

Guest Speakers



Mrs. Winnie M. Mandela
Former First Lady of South Africa



Hajiya Naja'atu Mohammed
First Female President of University Students' Union



Mrs. Kofu Bucknor-Akerele
Former Deputy Governor, Lagos State



Mrs Samia Nkrumah
Member of Parliament, Republic of Ghana

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15 new Perm Secs can't be sworn in

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retirements took effect from December 31, they were directed by the Head of Service to start a three-months pre-retirement leave from October 1.

Spokesman for the Office of Head of Civil Service of the Federation Tope Ajakaiye told Daily Trust last night that the reason for the delay could be because the

retired permanent secretaries "left office not quite long ago." He however refused to answer a question on whether the Vice President had the power to swear-in the already appointed permanent secretaries.

"I cannot answer that question now. All I know is that when they are sworn-in, they will take up posting immediately. Besides, you know they [the old perm secs] just left on December 31," he said.

The perm secs who left due to the new tenure system included Ammuna Lawan Ali, who was in the Ministry of Information and Communication, Dr. Haruna Usman Sanusi [Labour and Productivity], Nu'uman Barau Dambatta [Transport]; Mrs Safiya Muhammad [Environment]; Solomon Matankari [State House] as well as the embattled permanent secretary in the Ministry of Power,

Dr. Abdullahi Aliyu, who is standing trial over the multi-billion Naira rural electrification agency fraud. Other perm secs who retired were Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed of the General Services Office (GSO), Garba Buwai of the Economic Affairs Office (EAO) and Bello Usman Maitamari, all permanent secretaries in the office of the Secretary to Government of the Federation (SGF).

Winnie, Samia for Trust Dialogue

Continued from page 1

governance on the continent.

Both Mandela and Nkrumah are lined up to speak at the occasion. Other guest speakers expected at the occasion include former Lagos State Deputy Governor Mrs. Kofo Bucknor-Akerele and leading political activist Hajia Naja'atu Mohammed.

The event, which is expected to kick off at 10am at the Congress Hall of the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja will also have other top politicians, public office holders and captains of industry from across the continent in attendance. The Trust Dialogue began six years ago where participants brainstorm on key national and global issues. Mrs. Mandela was the wife of the foremost South Africa freedom fighter and first post-apartheid ruler, Dr. Nelson Mandela. She stood by her husband throughout the years of

struggle and continued with the agitation for abrogation of racial discrimination when Dr. Mandela was incarcerated for 27 years.

As President of the Women Group of South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC), Mrs. Mandela witnessed the highs and lows of political participation by a woman in one of Africa's fastest growing democracies.

On her part, Dr. Samia Nkrumah is daughter of one of Africa's foremost fighters for independence and the leading exponent of African unity, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and his Egyptian wife, Fathia. As one of the few female MPs in Africa she has a lot of experience on the challenges women face in political participation.

Mrs. Bucknor-Akerele was the only woman in Nigeria to win a seat to the Senate in 1992. She represented Lagos Central on the

platform of the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) and became deputy to former Lagos State Governor, Bola Tinubu in 1999. She later faced challenges of political intrigues within the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and fell out with her former boss.

For Hajia Naja'atu Mohammed, it was politics right from the cradle. Born into a family with rich political history, Hajia Naja'atu became the first female President of a University Student Union in the country when she became President of the Ahmadu Bello University Students Union in 1983.

As a vocal member of the opposition All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Nigeria, she is always fearless in expressing her stance on key national issues.

In the course of the past six years, several prominent speakers have attended the Annual Trust Dialogues. Some of the notable

speakers include former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, National Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Prof. Maurice Iwu, former Speaker of the House of Representatives Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari and former Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

Former Ghanaian President Flt. Lt. Jerry Rawlings (rtd) was the speaker at the 5th Annual Trust Dialogue held in 2008 with the theme 'Challenges of Democracy in Africa.'

Last year, several state governors and lawmakers in the country attended the 6th Annual Trust Dialogue with the theme 'Democracy: Restoring Faith in Politics.' The speakers included Anambra State Governor Mr. Peter Obi and Edo State Governor Adams Oshiomhole.

Banks' mass sack: Labour minister, CBN governor meet

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma

MINISTER of Labour and Productivity Prince Adetokunbo Kayode will today meet with the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Sunusi Lamido Sunusi and the chief executives of some commercial banks, *Daily Trust* learnt last night.

Some of the banks summoned for the meeting aimed at halting the current mass sack of workers in the banking industry include Union Bank, Intercontinental Bank and Oceanic Bank.

Daily Trust learnt that officials of the Nigeria Employers Association of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions (NEABI), the Association of Senior Staff of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions (ASSIBIFI) and the National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions Employees (NUBIFIE) were also invited.

Prince Kayode had a couple of weeks ago warned banks that the Federal Government will not tolerate retrenchment of workers by commercial banks in the country.

FG approves N2.2bn benefits for ex-Nigeria Airways staff

By AbdulFattah Olajide

THE Federal Government has approved the payment of N2.117 billion as severance package for former workers of the Nigeria Airways, eight years after the company folded up.

This was disclosed by Information minister Prof. Dora Akunyili at the end of FEC meeting in Abuja.

She said the amount is to be sourced from the issuance of Federal Government bonds through the Debt Management Office, adding that, "The amount shall be used as final payment to the staff of SAHCOL, the gratuity of the 2002 group of staff retired in 2002 and pay-off of deceased staff."

Bankole's wife gives birth in Ghana

WIFE of Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dr Olaitan Bankole, was yesterday delivered of a baby boy at a Ghanaian hospital.

Olaitan is a medical student in Ghana.

Speaker Dimeji Bankole flew into Ghana yesterday to be with the family, his special assistant on communications Kayode Odunaro said, adding that mother and child are in stable condition.



FROM left: Eritrean Ambassador to Nigeria Mr Mohammed Omaro, briefing newsmen on the UN Security Council sanctions imposed on the country in Abuja yesterday. With him is Mr Habte Asfah, consul.

PHOTO: NAN

Man attempts to kill mother over witchcraft

From Seun Joseph, Lagos

A 27 year old man is being held by the police in Lagos for attempting to kill his mother on December 30, 2009 over alleged witchcraft which he claimed had retarded the progress of the family.

The man, Nnamdi Mokoye, said he was told by his pastor that his mother who divorced his father 21 years ago, was the architect of the problems in his family. Recounting why he wanted to kill his 50 year old mother, Nnamdi said having experienced abject poverty and frustration for almost three decades, he started going to churches for deliverance and it was in the process that he and his older sister who was sacked by her husband were told that the demon troubling their family was being sponsored by their mother and that they could only experience peace if their mother was eliminated.

On getting to his mother's house on December 30th, Nnamdi asked why she had been bewitching them and that she would see hell if she did not give a satisfactory answer. Before neighbours could get wind of what was happening, 50 year old Mrs.

Abigail Nwaje was attacked and badly wounded by her son. Nnamdi took to his heels before neighbours could get to him but he was arrested barely 24 hours later.

Speaking with our reporter, the suspect maintained that he did not set out to kill his mother but to simply find out why she "sold the destiny of all her children to Satan".

"I did not set from Aje-gunle to kill my mother but just to find out from her whether she was the witch bedevilling all her children. I dreaded getting into the New Year to still experience all the unforgettable calamities I had experienced since I grew up. I just wanted to confirm our pastor's prophecy but when I got to her house she confronted me angrily.

"We started fighting and she was about to stab me with a scissors and I picked a knife from the table and cut her throat. I really regret my action", he said. Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer Frank Mba said the suspect would be charged to court after investigations had been concluded for attempted murder if his mother could survive the incident.

Nyako's opponent held over assault

From Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar, Yola

POLICE in Adamawa State yesterday arrested one of the opponents of Governor Murtala Nyako, the Chief Executive of AMG Communications Limited Alhasan Mohammed Goni, over alleged assault.

Goni was the events and publicity organiser of Governor Nyako, but he left the governor last month and pleaded with the people of the state to forgive him for misleading them into bringing Nyako to power.

He shifted his support to some of the governor's opponents and complained to police that there was a threat to his life.

But yesterday eight armed policemen stormed his office and arrested him when he was addressing journalists over his alleged quarrel with the governor's chief of staff Bello Tukur.

AMG general manager Abubakar Abbo told *Daily Trust* that Goni was arrested without an arrest warrant. He was taken to the police headquarters, stripped of all his handsets and detained, he said. Police spokesperson Alti-

ne Daniel however said Goni 'was invited' for allegedly assaulting one Mukhtari Yusuf he had earlier reported to the police on alleged robbery attempt. She said police discovered that there was no robbery attempt and that Yusuf, who is in his 20s, complained to the police that he was beaten up by Goni.

She said it was based on Yusuf's complaint that the AMG chief executive was invited by police to respond to the allegations. She insisted that his "invitation" had no link with his politics.

Goni had while addressing journalists before his arrest alleged that some people loyal to chief of staff Bello Tukur were threatening his life.

He showed journalists threatening text messages that he said were sent to him by them. One sentence in one of the texts written in Hausa says: "Za mu yi amfani da wasu daga cikin yaranka mu yi maka mummunar illa. Sai mun kona motocin ka, da gidan ka, za ka san ba wasa mukeyi ba" meaning, "We will use some of your aides to inflict serious damage on you. You will know we are serious, when we burn your cars and your house".



GOVERNOR Muhammad Danjuma Goje of Gombe State (right) with Emir of Gombe Usman Shehu Abubakar at a function in Gombe recently.

'Policeman' nabbed with robbery gang

From Yemi Bamidele, Ibadan

A gang of armed robbers led by a man suspected to be a policeman has been smashed at Moniya, headquarters of Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Investigations revealed that the robbery gangsters had trailed a female intern of one of the new generation banks to her residence in Moniya on the day in question where they terrorized all occupants of the building at gun point and urged them to surrender their belongings.

Luck, however ran against the gangsters as one of the occupants of the building was able to raise an alarm which attracted neighbours who were said to have mobilized in large numbers and surrounded the building. In the ensuing pandemonium, the leader of the gang who was alleged to be a policeman with

a gun in his hand, was overpowered and arrested at the scene of the robbery incident.

But rather than embarking on jungle justice by setting the arrested robbery gang leader ablaze as some members of the mob suggested, he was reportedly taken to a police station at International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) along Ibadan/Oyo Road from where he was later transferred to Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Dugbe, Ibadan.

Oyo State Commissioner of Police Mr. Baba Adisa Bolanta who confirmed the incident however told newsmen that the said policeman was a fake one and not a member of the state command.

The Commissioner of Police further said that one of the members of the gang had earlier been killed at Idi-Ayunre in Oluyole Local Government area of the state.

Police investigate Plateau pilgrims board officials

From Ahmed Mohammed, Jos

THE police in Plateau State are investigating officials of the state Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board on allegations that some intending pilgrims paid for the just concluded hajj exercise but their names were excluded.

Public Relations Officer ASP Mohammed Lerama confirmed the incident, saying the police invited officials of the board based on the petitions received from some people. He refused to give details. Our correspondent saw the chairman of the board Alhaji Awwalu Dankurma at the police headquarters undergoing interrogation by a team of police investigators.

The Executive Secretary of the board Alhaji Abubakar Dashe said, "What actually happened was that some pilgrims paid for hajj seats through the board but they did not get visa up till the time of airlift of pilgrims, and there were pilgrims whose seats were allocated to them by the state government but they did not get visa and were not able to travel for the hajj exercise".

Abubakar Dashe said presently, the board was returning the money collected from the people who paid for seats through the board and those allocated seats by the state government, saying they would forward their names for the next hajj exercise since government did not give cash to pay for their seats.

American jury indicts Farouk for bomb plot

A U.S. grand jury yesterday indicted Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab on six counts for trying to blow up an American airliner in a plot that exposed large breakdowns in U.S. security and intelligence.

The 23-year-old man, who has

told investigators that he was given an explosive device by al Qaeda in Yemen and trained there, had been previously charged with trying to blow up Northwest flight 253 on Christmas as it was approaching Detroit from Amsterdam.

A grand jury in Michigan

indicted him on six counts for the failed bombing, including attempted murder of the other 289 passengers and crew aboard the plane, and attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction.

The bomb, concealed in his clothing, contained the high explo-

sive Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate (PETN) and Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP), among other ingredients, and it was designed for Abdulmutallab to detonate it at a time of his choosing, the indictment said.

Abdulmutallab's attempt to blow up the aircraft was thwarted by

passengers and crew on the plane who extinguished the flames and restrained him.

A detention hearing was scheduled to be held on Friday in a Detroit courtroom. However it was not immediately clear whether that proceeding would occur.

No need for Yar'adua video, says Hong

By Habeeb I. Pindiga

CALLS by opposition politicians for a video proof of President Umaru Yar'adua's state of health are unnecessary since the council of ministers is convinced that the president is capable of discharging his duties, Minister of State for Health Aliyu Idi Hong has said.

Hong told newsmen in Abuja on Tuesday that the Federal Executive Council, which is empowered by the constitution to take action in the event the president is incapacitated, is convinced that Yar'adua is healthy enough to run the country.

Some top politicians have been agitation for video evidence on the claims by government officials that the president is getting better at a hospital in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He has been there for the past 42 days to treat an acute inflammation of the heart coverings, according to official information.

The minister said framers of the constitution had foreseen the danger of giving the responsibility of deciding the president's fate on organs other than the council, which is largely made up of his appointees. He said had those powers being given to a different organ, the nation would have been plunged into crisis.

"The wisdom in the constitution is that we have now come to a stage where mediocres or opposition people who have not been able to win election are now saying Mr. President should resign. So assuming the constitution had not been written this way, it would have been very easy to subvert the government," he said.



FROM left: Minister of Information and Communications Professor Dora Akunyili, Minister of Education Dr. Sam Egwu and Minister of State for Information and Communications Alhaji Ikra Aliyu Bilbis at the Federal Executive Council meeting in Abuja yesterday.

VP briefs FEC, PDP governors on Yar'adua

By AbdulFattah Olajide & Muideen Olaniyi

VICE President Goodluck Jonathan yesterday briefed members of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) and PDP governors about his conversation with President Umaru Yar'adua.

Minister of Information and Communications Prof. Dora Akunyili told State House correspondents at the end of the weekly FEC meeting that Jonathan told

members that he spoke briefly on phone with President Yar'adua at about 8pm Tuesday night.

Yar'adua also reportedly called Senate President David Mark and Speaker of House of Representatives Dimeji Bankole. But the details of their conversation remain secret.

The vice president was said to have also informed PDP governors at a closed-door meeting of his phone conversation with Yar'adua, where he told them that

the president is recuperating at the hospital in Saudi Arabia.

Bukola Saraki, chairman of the Governors' Forum, said their meeting with Jonathan "went very well," adding that the details of the meeting would be made public by the VP at the appropriate time.

Saraki had earlier told reporters at the end of their meeting at about 12 midnight that they were satisfied with reports on the health of the President.

Meanwhile, governors of the

36 states of the federation are expected to meet on Monday next week to decide on their response to the inclusion of Nigeria on the US terror list after the failed attempt by a Nigerian, Umar Farouk Mutallab, to blow up an aircraft in the United States of America.

Governor Bukola Saraki said this while reacting to questions from journalists yesterday after the meeting Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors' Forum.

AC asks Yar'adua to talk to Nigerians, 'not to select few'

By Muideen Olaniyi & Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

THE Action Congress (AC) yesterday said President Umaru Yar'adua should talk to all Nigerians through a live phone-in programme on NTA or Radio Nigeria to show that his health has improved.

The party was reacting to the story published in some national dailies that the president spoke with Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, Senate President David Mark and Speaker of House of representatives Dimeji Bankole.

AC said in a statement by its National Publicity Secretary Alhaji Lai Mohammed that the President should talk to Nigerians directly to assure them that he is indeed recovering.

"It is good that President Yar'adua has spoken to Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, Senate President David Mark and House Speaker Dimeji

Bankole. But these people do not constitute Nigeria, they are not the ones who voted him into office. The President must speak directly to the remaining 149,999,997 Nigerians, using the dated video recording format that we suggested in our earlier statement on Monday.

"Alternatively, the President could also do a live phone-in to the NTA or Radio Nigeria to enable him speak directly to his compatriots and convince them of his increasing well-being, instead of the current situation where the people have to depend on confused spin doctors to get an update on the health of their President, who has been away for over 44 days.

The party also said that some of the people the President was said to have spoken with are no longer credible in the eyes of Nigerians for giving 'a lot of inaccurate information' on the President's illness.

IGP: Nigeria not terrorists' incubator

By Misbahu Bashir

THE Inspector General of Police, Ogbonna Onovo, has said no terrorist's organization can operate in Nigeria.

Onovo said in a statement signed by the Police Force Public Relations Officer, Emmanuel Ojukwu, an Assistant Commissioner of Police, that Nigerians and Nigerian government cannot accept any act of terrorism or threat inimical to peace.

He said there was no terrorist group in Nigeria or their accomplices and that an Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) was established in the police

force to repel any threat.

The police dissociated the fact that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab has Nigerian associates saying he must have been brainwashed abroad, not here.

The police said Nigeria is a pluralistic society with law abiding people uniting peacefully.

It was in conformity with this philosophy that when Farouk's father, a respected banker and former public officer, noticed that his son had begun to behave in a queer manner, he promptly reported his observation to the appropriate security authorities.

Police arrest suspected killers of traditional ruler

From Vincent Egunyanga, Benin

EDO State Police Command has arrested five persons suspected to be involved in the recent murder of a first class chief in Benin.

Solomon Udobor, the head of Ugolo clan in Ovia South-West

Local Government Area of Edo State was shot dead in his bedroom on New Year day by gunmen who stormed his residence at about 7.21 pm.

The suspects whose names were not disclosed were arrested following a confessional statement

made by one of them earlier arrested by the Ugbowo Police Division after the killing. Appealing to members of the public and the family of the slain Enogie to furnish the command with useful information that would assist it in the investigation, the Edo

State Police spokesman, ASP Peter Ogboi, said the police would unmask those behind the killing. Ogboi also promised that the command would leave no stone unturned to track down other suspects behind the murder.

Newsmen in Benin gathered

that the plan to murder the Enogie was hatched in the house of a school principal who is currently at large.

The 55-year-old Enogie, many believe, was killed in connection with the kingship tussle in his domain.

PDP mourns dead journalist

From Adebola Akinola, Osogbo

THE chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Osun State Alhaji Ademola Rasag has described the death of Kayode Lawal popularly known as "Time Na Money", a journalist with the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) as a blow to responsible broadcast journalism in the state and Nigeria.

In a statement signed by the PDP Director of Publicity Mr Adeolu Adeyemo, the chairman, who noted that the OSBC had successfully projected itself as a true voice of the South west, added that Lawal was no doubt one of the rare gems that had contributed greatly to making the OSBC a front liner in entertainment.

Alhaji Ademola recalled that the deceased in his life time popularized one of the lively programmes of the OSBC, "Time na money", adding that Lawal creatively brought joy to many homes through his sense of humour which appealed to both the young and old.

The chairman commiserated with the family of Lawal as well as the management of OSBC on the death of the journalist and prayed to God to grant them the fortitude to bear the loss.

'No politics in Sokoto scholarship awards'

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Sokoto

THE Sokoto State government has assured that it would not politicize the scholarship awards to state indigenes for studies outside the country.

The Commissioner for Religious Affairs Professor Musa Garba Mai Tafsir stated this while commenting on preparations towards sponsoring some of the state's indigenes to study at the Sudan International University. 100 students are to be sponsored to the university.

The commissioner stressed that only qualified candidates would be sponsored. According to him, the submission of credentials was part of steps taken to ensure that only capable candidates are sent to Sudan. Prof Mai Tafsir said after the submission of the credentials, tests would be conducted on interested candidates before being enlisted among those to benefit from the scholarship.



A hawker of empty jerry cans making his rounds along Sebotimo Street, Agege, Lagos, yesterday.

PIC: OLADIPUPO ODUNEWU

Ondo oil communities get new c'ttee

From Leye Adewumi, Akure

GOVERNOR Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State has inaugurated the Ilaje Regional Development Committee (IRDC) headed by Prince Raphael Nomiye.

Mimiko while swearing in the committee members yesterday in Akure recognized the unique place of the oil producing communities in the economic survival of the state. The governor who was represented by the Chairman of the Ondo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (OSOPADEC) Prince Adebowale Ajimuda said the commission would address the challenges facing the people and synergise with the IRDC when necessary. Responding, the committee Chairman and former OSOPADEC Chairman, Raphael Nomiye, expressed appreciation to the governor, promising to work with him for the development of the state.

Uduaghan distributes tricycles

From Monday Osayande, Asaba

GOVERNOR Emmanuel Uduaghan yesterday gave out 114 tricycles popularly called 'Keke Napep'. Uduaghan at the launch of the first batch of the tricycles in Asaba said they were meant for easy transportation. He advised the beneficiaries to be careful on the roads and use them judiciously to empower themselves and not to sell them to make quick money. He also appealed to officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and other stakeholders in the transport sector to welcome and create conducive environment for the operators.

According to Uduaghan, the state would adopt a new name for the tricycles. He called on the FRSC to enforce the law on the use of safety helmets as many people had lost their lives in motorcycle accidents. Earlier, the state Co-ordinator of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) Mr. Austin Igbine expressed appreciation to the state government for its support in ensuring prompt delivery of the tricycles and approving the counterpart funding for various poverty reduction programmes of the Federal Government.



MINISTER of Women Affairs and Social Development Mrs. Salamatu Suleiman (left) with wife of Zamfara State Governor and daughter of late Mrs. Maryam Babangida, Mrs. A'isha Shinkafi during a condolence visit in Minna, Niger State, recently.

Papers use me to sell — Maduekwe

By Aisha Umar

FOREIGN affairs minister Ojo maduekwe said Nigerian newspapers used his name to sell their papers last two weeks over the Senate declaration that he spent N2.7 billion on foreign trips.

He said all the national dailies were sold immediately because people were eager to read how he used N2.7 billion on foreign trips.

At a press briefing at the Foreign Ministry in Abuja, he said he does not bother about media reports any more, but his only concern is that he should have been given something out of the prompt sales he contributed to the papers.

He said he was also worried because when he travelled to his village financial demand increased because of the N2.7 billion report.

He said the N2.7 billion was not used for foreign trips alone but for payments of international memberships like UN, AU, and Commonwealth and to update other diplomatic responsibilities.

Civil Defence rejects 120,000 senior cadre applications

By Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar

ABOUT 120,000 senior cadre applications were rejected by the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corp (NSCDC) in its ongoing recruitment exercise across the country.

The Director/Secretary of the Civil Defence, Immigration, and Prison Service

Board (CDIPB) Muhammad Abubakar said this yesterday in Gwagwalada, Abuja.

Responding to a situation where applicants troop to Gwagwalada, Abuja for interview, Abubakar said nobody ever asked any candidate to come for interview or any credential verification.

"The Board had not sent text message to any of the

candidate asking him to come to Gwagwalada for any interview of whatever kind," adding that "The board would soon publish those qualified for the interview on national dailies, and the list would be in accordance with 9 zones. We will not use e-mails nor to send any text message, so should people please stop coming for the interview."

Speaking with Daily Trust in Gwagwalada, some candidates who came for the interview said they received text message with the Civil Defence headquarters in Abuja asking them to appear for interview and verification of their original credentials.

But the board, according to Abubakar, was still marking the script of those who sat for the examination "We

so far marked only eleven states out of 36 states in the federation. But we wanted to finish between Saturday and Monday."

He said the only vacancy for both senior and junior carder is "4020" but the board had received the applications of "389,485" from both BSc and HND holders and even those with Master Degree.

Aliero disowns posters on VP

By Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

MINISTER Federal Capital Territory Senator Adamu Aliero yesterday disowned posters being pasted in some northern states that he wants to be Vice President in the event Goodluck Jonathan becomes president.

The posters carry the pictures of the minister and that of Vice President Goodluck Jonathan with an inscription indicating that he wants to be Jonathan's second in command.

Speaking through his spokesman Alhaji Abdullahi Zuru, the minister blamed some unpopular politicians for using such posters to create tension in the country.

He told the Hausa Service of the Radio France International (RFI) that those behind the posters are only out to tarnish his political image.

"There were similar jingles broadcasted in the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Kaduna sponsored by unidentified persons saying that the Minister Adamu Aliero was planning to be the president."

Izala group counsels journalists on fairness

By Nasiru L. Abubakar

JOURNALISTS have been urged to always consider the sensibilities of their audience in the course of discharging their duties.

The call was made by members of the Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa Ikamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS), Jos, Plateau State, who paid a courtesy visit to Media Trust Headquarters in Abuja to deliver the messages of the movement's leader Sheikh Sani Yahya Jingir.

Speaking on behalf of the delegation, the National Publicity Secretary of JIBWIS Malam Ahmad Muhammad said journalists have a strong influence on their audience through what they write and therefore should their work as a public trust.

He said members of the organization should not be equated with others because the Izala group is concerned with the propagation of Islam through peaceful and

convincing means.

"We organize seminars and preaching sessions from time to time all year round. We have schools teaching both western and Islamic knowledge, we have schools for the nomadic Fulani in Wase, Plateau State and we are building another one in Lokoja, Kogi State. We

are not confrontational," he added.

Others on the delegation are: Ustaz Nasiruddin Bayero, Chairman of JIBWIS council of Ulama, Abuja branch; Imam Yahuza Ishaq, the Imam of NYSC Junction Jumu'at Mosque Kubwa, Abuja; and Hafiz Yahya Hamza.

Sanction: Eritrea accuses U.S. of double standard

By Aisha Umar

ERITREAN ambassador to Nigeria Mohamed Ali Omaro has accused the United States of America of fabricating crisis to frustrate Eritrea's legal battle to reclaim its territories occupied by Ethiopia.

He made the statement at the Eritrean embassy in Abuja

yesterday. He said the United Nations Security Council has imposed sanctions on Eritrea's role in Somalia and its refusal to withdraw troops following dispute with Djibouti. The sanctions stipulate arms embargo, travel restrictions and asset freezes.

"Eritrea has not occupied an inch of Djiboutian territory and does not have any claim over any Djibouti territory, but

the whole issue is fabricated by U.S to cover its unlawful and unjustifiable full support for Ethiopia that is still occupying Eritrea's sovereign territories, despite the final and binding verdict by the EEBC," he stated.

"This double standard policy of the U.S in the world at large and in the Horn of Africa in particular is the main cause of conflicts, instability and human sufferings" he stated.

Group mobilises against Nigeria's terror listing

From Mahmud Lalo, Jos

A human rights group known as the League for Human Rights has called on civil society organizations in the country to fight against the inclusion of Nigeria on the list of nations with terrorist potentials by the United

States of America.

THE Director of the group Shamski Gad Peter who made the call yesterday in Jos said the inclusion of Nigeria was disturbing, shocking and least expected. He maintained that it was unfair for the United States to take such a decision based on

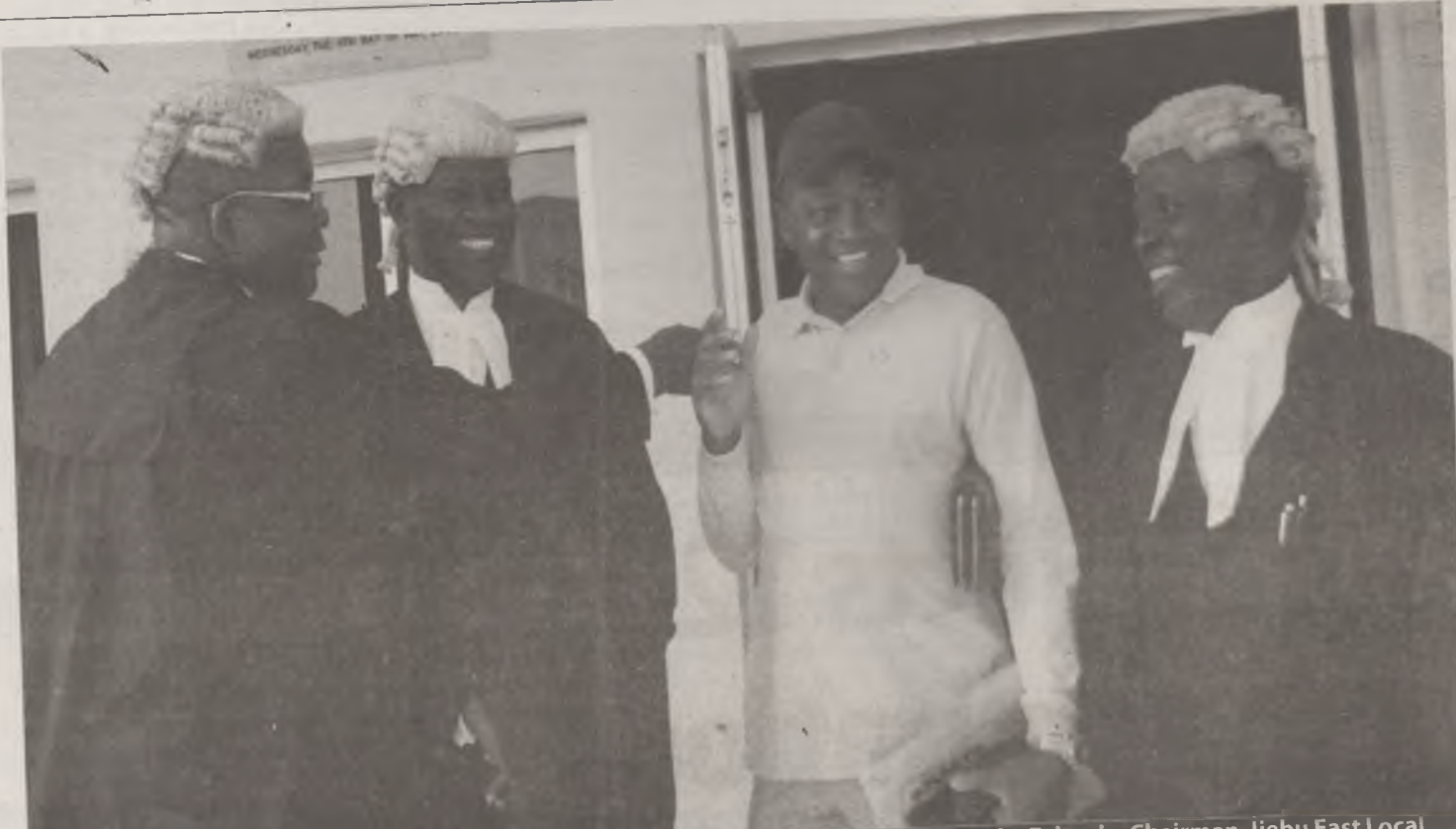
the action of an individual.

"I agree that the US government has do everything humanly possible to protect its citizens, but in doing that, they need not subject citizens of other countries to undue hardship", he said. He added that Nigerians were good people, had

respect for human rights as well as respect for human life, saying Faruk's action was because, "He spent a greater part of his adult life outside Nigeria. He is more a citizen of other countries than Nigeria. It is just that he had on him a Nigerian passport. I am sure if he had grown

up in Nigeria he wouldn't have attempted to do what he is being accused of".

Peter called on the Nigerian government to be more proactive in its actions, saying there was a need for the government to seek ECOWAS support, AU as well as the UN to condemn the action.



From left: Counsel to Ogun State Governor, Adegboyega Awomolo, lead counsel Olagoke Fakunle, Chairman, Ijebu East Local Government of Ogun State, Tunde Alodunjoye and President, African Bar Association Femi Falana during the hearing at the Federal High Court, Abuja on the recent Ijebu Ife crisis, yesterday.

Kano NIPR backs national body

From Hisham Habib, Kano

THE Kano State chapter of the National Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) has enlisted support for its national leadership under Alhaji Muhammad Ahmad Abdullahi. This followed an allegation by one Yusuf Muhammad in some newspapers that members' votes were influenced by certain people at the December 2 annual general meeting in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

At a news conference in Kano yesterday, the Chairman of the Kano chapter of the NIPR, Abubakar Usman Gotomo condemned the statement, saying it was aimed at tarnishing the image of the institute.

The chairman urged the council to set up an investigative panel and disciplinary tribunal to ensure discipline among its members and protect the reputation of the institute.

Sokoto Assembly seeks improved budget implementation

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, Sokoto

THE Sokoto State House of Assembly wants an improvement in the implementation of the state budget. The Speaker of the House Abdullahi Salame who spoke shortly after a meeting with commissioners, permanent secretaries and special advisers in the state said, "One of the issues we discussed is the budget implementation. We want this year's budget to be far better than the previous ones".

The Speaker said the meeting was to review the performance and relationship between the arms of government.

"The working relationship should be good and maintained. It can only be maintained when the arms of government come together to evaluate themselves and see how they can improve on their relationship for the overall good of the state", he said. The Commissioner for Education Alhaji Muhammad Arzika Tureta said there was a need for understanding between the executive and legislature.

Rep seeks explanation on Yar'adua's whereabouts

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

DEPUTY Minority Leader of the House of Representatives Alhaji Suleiman Kawu Sumaila yesterday in Kano said the Federal Executive Council (FEC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) ought to let Nigerians know the whereabouts of President Yar'adua.

Speaking with Daily Trust in Kano, Kawu said, "FEC and PDP owe Nigerians explanations on the whereabouts of the presi-

dent. Nigerians are aware that he was flown to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment, but now we read on the pages of newspapers that he is not in the Saudi hospital. There is need for an explanation from the authorities concerned".

He called on Federal Government officials to consider the feelings of Nigerians and come up with a concrete explanation on the situation. "Everything is at a standstill in the country owing to the absence of

the president. The swearing-in of the CJN and the budget have continued to dominate discuss," he said. He said though he was not in support of the call for the president's resignation, there was the need for the authorities to come up with a lasting solution.

"Resignation of President Yar'adua will not help matters as far as democracy is concerned. In fact, it will only create chaos in the nation's politics. Let due process be followed in arriving at a solution. Section 145 of the

nation's constitution has come up with a way out, but I don't know why FEC and the PDP are deliberately ignoring the provisions of this section. Since the President did not write to NASS for leave and he is still alive, the FEC and PDP should allow democracy to work for the good of all and the nation," he said.

On the electoral reform, Sumaila assured that the National Assembly would come up a new electoral act in the first quarter of the 2010.

Council boss tasks SSS on findings

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

CHAIRMAN of Ijebu-east Local Government Area of Ogun State Tunde Oladunjoye has urged the State Security Service (SSS) to make public what it found on his mobile phones which were seized about four weeks ago.

Oladunjoye who got back his phones Tuesday asked the SSS to make public some of the text

messages containing plans by some people in the state to eliminate him and exonerate him of all allegations against him by the state government.

The chairman spoke yesterday in Abeokuta shortly after his phones were released.

"I implore the SSS to in the spirit of transparency, make its findings on my phones public without delay so that the whole

world would know who is saying the truth between me and the governor," he said. The Ogun State Command of the State Security Service (SSS) handed over Oladunjoye's phones to his Personal Assistant, Kehinde Quadri, one month after the December 5, 2009, mayhem in Ijebu-Ife where lives and property worth millions of naira were lost.

At a security meeting in Abeokuta on December 6 2009, Oladunjoye's phones were seized after he and state Commissioner of Police Hashimu Argungu had an argument.

The SSS Director Mr. Obatoki who handed the phones back to Quadri, regretted that the council boss was deprived of his phones for almost a month, but said he was merely doing his job.

Police, sister agencies strategise against crime

From Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, Kano

KANO State command of the Nigeria Police is collaborating with other security agencies in the state on prevention and control of crime. They were brought together at a two day workshop organized by the state police command.

Delivering his welcome address at the opening session of

the workshop in Kano yesterday, the state's Police Commissioner Alhaji Mamman Ibrahim Tsafe said the aim was to bring together all security agents in the state to brainstorm on ways to improve security.

Tsafe said the workshop was necessary because Kano as the centre of international trade needed more effective security to

ensure that crimes are reduced to the barest minimum.

He stressed the importance of security in the development of any society. Also speaking, Kano State Governor Ibrahim Shekarau said Kano as one of the most populated states and the largest commercial centre faced a lot of challenges on security and maintenance of law and order.

Shekarau noted that the state had been stable and that peaceful atmosphere had to be maintained saying the agencies must strive to achieve that. He said the peaceful atmosphere was an indication of the good relationship between members of the public and security agencies in the state.

He urged participants to commit themselves to the objectives of

the workshop while he advised the state's police-public relationship committee to extend its activities by creating sub committees at the ward level to reach people at the grassroots.

The governor further called on security agencies in the state to always exhibit exemplary conduct in the discharge of their duties.

Aliyu advocates more pay for teachers

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

GOVERNOR Babangida Aliyu of Niger State has decried the poor salaries being paid teachers in the country and has called for an upward review.

He made the call Tuesday in Minna at the opening ceremony of a meeting of unity school principals in the country.

While describing teaching as a noble profession, he said teachers were expected to earn better salaries for their contributions towards shaping the society.

"The salary scale of teachers in the country is very discouraging," he said.

He maintained that they needed to be paid higher wages as what they were earning was far below the work they do.

Bauchi commissioner promises 75mw of electricity

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

BAUCHI State Commissioner for Special Duties Dr. Musa Mu'azu Badara has said that the state government is committed to generating 75 mega watts of electricity from its Yankari power project between now and 2011.

The commissioner who spoke to newsmen in Bauchi said the state required about 40 megawatts of electricity, adding that the remaining 35 megawatts would be sold to neighbouring states.

He maintained that the project was a joint venture of a Chinese company, a German company and the state government, adding that negotiations were on-going and that details would soon be made public.

Dr. Badara said the Bauchi State Environmental Protection Agency BASEPA in collaboration with Cosmopolitan Cleaners and the ad hoc committee setup by the state government were working together to ensure a cleaner environment.



PIC: NAN

GOVERNOR Emmanuel Uduaghan of Delta State cutting the tape to commission 114 tricycles popularly called "Keke NAPEP" in Asaba yesterday.

Group trains Fulani women on milk marketing

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

A group known as Pastoral Resolve has trained 200 Fulani women in Bauchi State on packaging and marketing of cow milk.

Addressing newsmen at the end of a four day training session at Liman Katagum Village

in Bauchi Local Government Area, the state Coordinator of the project Shuaibu Aliyu Kobi said within the two years of the programme in the state, 68 women had been trained on various income generating activities like soap, pomade, detergent and balm making.

He said 18 youths and

women cooperative societies were formed. Kobi added that 240 community leaders had been trained in conflict mediation to minimize clashes between nomads and farmers in the state.

The state Chairman of Samairu Fulbe, a forum for nomadic Fulanis, Alhaji Yakubu

Jibrin said the programme was timely considering the hardship being experienced by pastoral communities in the country as the training would enhance economic activities in the area.

Each benefiting community will be provided processing materials as well as N40,000 as take-off grant.

Niger appoints members of revenue board

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

NIGER State Governor Babangida Aliyu has approved the appointment of new members of the state revenue board. This

was contained in a statement

signed by the Secretary to the State Government Dr. Mohammed Yahaya Kuta yesterday in Minna.

The 11 member board is to be chaired by Mr. Musa Kaboji who is also expected to function

as the chief executive officer of the board.

Other members of the board include, Mohammed Tsado Kawu Agaie, Alhaji Jibrin Bawa, Mohammed Usman Huloti, Alhaji Ibrahim Etsu, Barrister

Tanko Beji and Gambo Ladan.

The governor urged them to distinguish themselves and work towards achieving the set objectives of the board.

The inauguration of the board takes place today in Minna.

Idang Alibi

idangalibi@dailytrust.com; 08036938729

These people do not know Nigerians

Immediately the identity of the lead actor in what has come to be known as the abortive Christmas Day Bombing of a United States of American airliner was known, many Nigerians expressed the fear that the unfortunate incident will give the USA and other countries the excuse to give hard time to Nigerians travellers. That fear has been vindicated by the decision of the USA Government to list Nigeria as one of the terrorist countries that require extra scrutiny of travelling nationals entering the USA.

The uproar that has greeted this decision by millions of Nigerians is justified. You can accuse Nigerians of some crimes like drug running, fraud and obtaining by false pretences otherwise known as 419. But to accuse of terrorism? No. The Americans are mistaken about us on that score. We Nigerians are not in that line of crime. We love life too much to be in such a high risk, often suicidal crime. The

“If ordinary Nigerians have no real passion for any ideological belief to want to die for its sake, our rich kids are even more so

Americans who want to label us as terrorists do not know us well enough. We love too much to want to risk in defence of any cause.

And that explains why Nigerians have been serially raped by successive leaders. Nigerians are such a fun-loving lot that very few will want to take any slightly risky action even in defence of such fundamental right as the right to vote and be voted for. It is only in Nigeria that what happened in 2007 in the name of election will take place and people will shrug of their shoulders and learn to live with that massive rape of what is supposed to be the mandate of the people. The truth about us Nigerians is that apart from a few 'crazy' persons like the late Gani Fawehinmi, Femi Falana, Joe Odumakin and a few other activists in the human rights community, very few Nigerians will feel sufficiently aggrieved over any matter whether politics, religion or a matter of honour, to go on the streets to protest about it.

None in Nigeria likes to suffer a little inconvenience like detention, not to talk of imprisonment, in order to make a statement that things should change for the better. We are a people who want others to use their head to crack the palm kernel so that we can live to eat the delicious nuts. Have the Americans forgotten that when Secretary Hillary Clinton was here last year, the unmistakable impression Nigerians gave her was that they want America or some other powerful nation to come down here in mighty chariots and drive away those who are rigging election and misruling them so that they can have life and have it more abundantly. Have the Americans forgotten that this is a land that literally flows with injustice, terrible mis-governance, lack of accountability and all forms of evil by leaders, yet the people do not

have a culture of protest. Nigerians are content with bemoaning their situation and grumbling and murmuring and complaining endlessly about their fate. This kind of people who can not protest their misrule, are they the kind of people who will want to engage in terrorism in solidarity with injustice against far away people?

If the USA intelligence machinery is good enough it should have been able to establish that the Abdul Faruk Mutallab incident is a completely an isolated one. The young man with a privileged background is not a typical Nigerian. As Information Minister Mrs. Dora Akunyili said, he is more of a Briton than a Nigerian. The case of Farouk is more or less one of failed parentage. Nigerian rich kids like Farouk love to live life to the hilt. Some of them are not fervent for God or country. They go to church or mosque because others go there; they have no real religious zeal. When they find themselves in worship places, they feel easily bored and want to get out of there fast enough to pursue their fancies. If ordinary Nigerians have no real passion for any ideological belief to want to die for its sake, our rich kids are even more so.

I see the mighty hand of God in the failed terrorism incident. And both the Americans and Nigerians have God to thank for different reasons. God possibly wants to tell the Americans that "Except the Lord keep the city the watchman watcheth in vain". Since the September 11 incident, the USA has tried to make life hellish for some people especially Muslims and Arabs. It has seized upon that excuse to commit horrendous crimes against millions of people all over the world who merely want to live their quiet, peaceful lives. Like now, America will want to use a clearly isolated case to punish millions of Nigerians.

By revealing the identity of the would-be bomber, God is saying further to America that their grievous hurt could come from the most unlikely of sources and not from the usual sources they choose to demonise. For who on earth could ever have imagined that it might be an upper class kid from a friendly and non-terrorist country like Nigeria that would want to re-enact a miniature version of September 11, right on American soil and on a Christmas day?

And rather than making friends, America builds more resentment against itself by saying it wants to protect herself. Today the USA will down in history as the most hated superpower that ever existed. God wants America to realize that in spite of her paranoid security consciousness, it is only He God who can protect that country or any other one else. How do I know this mind of God? The Christmas day bombing could easily have succeeded but for God's intervention.

For Nigeria, God is using Farouk to speak to our ruling elite. They are spending all their time amassing wealth and neglecting their primary responsibility of bringing up disciplined, loving and compassionate children. Money is essential but it is not everything. Mutallab senior and the mother of Farouk will now live the rest of their lives regretting that they did not do enough to groom Farouk to be a responsible child who will bring joy upon them in their old age. How sad.

By Hamisu Salihu Hadejia

Mutallab: Issa Aremu and his innuendoes

The piece by Issa Aremu (Monday 4th January 2010) with the title: "Faruk Mutallab: Issues and non-issues" looked like the craft of a coward, whom the late ace Hausa singer, Alhaji Mamman Shata observed to be someone who "never makes a hero" i.e. "matsoraci bashi zama gwani"! In fact, so wishy-washy the article was, that, the average reader could not tell whether it was a rejoinder to earlier writer/writers who has/have written "to attempt a denial of its imported terrorist (Faruk Mutallab) on the ground that he got his education largely abroad" or a Sheikh's sermon on the Mutallab family to imbibe "ideals of good parentage". If it was the former, why couldn't Issa Aremu so much as get 'the liver' to go at it directly without any "corner-corner"? If it was the later, then we are happy to acknowledge and, welcome the presence of a whole "sheikh" in the Media Trust stable. *Marhababika ya shehu!*

But not even a whole Grand Mufti (talk less of a mere, Lilliputian and lesser "sheikh") would, in actual fact, find fault with the actions of Mutallab Senior vis-avis the upbringing of Mutallab junior or, his (Faruk's) alleged attempted untoward tendency of late! This is particularly so if the Friday 1st Jan. 2010 article of that witty and foresighted writer (Mal. Adamu Adamu) can (in fact it should; going by the outstandingly un-rivalled and marked weight of the writer) be relied upon as a reference material for who the personality of Alh. Umaru Mutallab is. "A humble, descent, private man of easy

“It (Israel) bombed schools, hospitals and the UN building that sheltered hundreds of civilians and some members of the press

manners... Peaceful mien...(and) ...a strong believer in family values and strict disciplinarian."

Was what Mal. Adamu Adamu (*Daily Trust* of 1st January, 2010) had to offer in defining Umaru Mutallab; for the information and education of "Sheikh" Issa Aremu! But alas, there was no stopping a "sheikh" itching to pass a fatwa! Thus, the already distraught Alhaji Mutallab was furiously, but unnecessarily, harangued for his failure to "come to terms with the challenges of parentage" by the very "sheikh" who, ironically, "felt the pains and anguish of parents with strayed steward (sic)". In fact, even the effort of informing security operatives about the matter (by Alh. Mutallab) some months back, was cursed by the *Daily Trust's* "sheikh" when he disdainfully wrote: "The first policeman of a child is the father and not local and international intelligence agencies".

Further, I personally, was suspiciously stuck and stopped upon coming across the "sheikh's innuendo-laden charge thus: "How then on earth would anybody who rightly condemn (sic) the Israelis bombing of innocent children

in Gaza and yet be excited at the spectacular bombing of planes that carry the innocents?" Luckily enough, it was there that the "falcon" thoroughly sussed out the "falconer" and, I became convinced, devoid of any doubt (reasonable or otherwise), that "Sheikh" Issa Aremu was actually set on a mission of hitting back at me for, my rejoinder (*Daily Trust* of 1st January 2010 page 12) to his colleague, Sanusi Abubakar's earlier piece titled; "The Faruk Mutallab Saga: We must critically look at ourselves". Hence, by the immediate past quoted innuendo, "sheikh" Aremu referred to one article of mine published in the *Daily Trust* of Friday, March 13, 2009 (page 13), with the caption: "ICC's insult on our collective intelligence".

In the article alluded to by "Sheikh" Aremu, I of course (without owing anybody any apology!), "Condemned the Israelis bombing of innocent children in Gaza". Read me: "...on December 27 2008, Israel launched aerial, land and sea assault on Palestinians in Gaza Strip, killing more than 1,250 people including about 400 children. It (Israel) bombed schools, hospitals and the UN building that sheltered hundreds of civilians and some members of the press.

However, what I must contest with the "Sheikh" is, that near-slanderous part of his innuendo that depicted me as being: "...excited at the spectacular bombing of planes that carry the innocents". For goodness sake, did anything in my rejoinder to Sanusi (or my previous articles for that matter) give, even semblance of that feeling or emotion, if I may ask? But, why, then, drew such a menacingly "sharp knife" and, charged at me, in joining a "fight" on behalf of a colleague? That is not the sheikhs' way! But, by the way, let it be known to *Shehu* that, as a conscious Muslim, I cannot pretend to be un-disturbed by the myriads of obvious injustices meted out on my brothers and sisters across the globe (Iraq (e.g. the Black water murder charge acquittal by a US court, a couple of days back, on such insensitive ground as, the Prosecutor's basing of case on de-classified information that should have been classified!), Afghanistan, Chechnya etc) but that, I sincerely and religiously believe, is never a cogent enough reason under Islam for "bombing of planes that carry the innocents".

Finally, lest my rejoinder to Sanusi Abubakar (The Faruk Mutallab saga: Sanusi Abubakar misfieri) be (mis) understood to mean a glorification of "bombing of planes that carry the innocents", let me give the thrust of it all here in few lines: (1) I expressed disagreement with Sanusi Abubakar who, in his feeble attempt to "shafa kashin kaji" on the body of northern Nigeria Muslim faithful, resorted to whipping up *Izala, qadiriya and tariqa* equations to, analyse the Faruk Mutallab bombing palaver (2) Given certain happenings like the Lavon Affair, the 9/11 conspiracy perspective and of course lots of things of their ilk, I harbour and, hence, expressed, heavy suspicion of foul play in the Faruk Mutallab alleged attempted bombing of Delta Airline Flight 253.

Hadejia is of the Department of Economics, Bayero University, Kano (hamsal22@yahoo.com)



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By Abdulateef Tanko Abubakar

Assessing human rights groups' reports on Nigerian police

On 9 December, 2009, the BBC ran their regular programme; BBC Africa Have Your Say which was tagged 'Is Nigerian police out of control?' The topical issue was initiated after the release of Amnesty international reports accusing the Nigerian police of human rights abuses and brutal killings of innocent Nigerians.

The programme featured various interest groups among the panellists in the debate; the Nigerian police public relations officer, Emeka Ojukwu, the representative of Amnesty international, a human rights lawyer, and callers from different continents. And most of the callers expressed bad feelings, ill-treatment, and other forms of abuses the Nigerian police have carried out over the years.

However, this write-up was prompted by the experience we had with the police in our neighbourhood just two days after listening to the BBC programme, and at the time the Amnesty international's report was released. A team of police from Kogi state command came to arrest petrol vendors (black marketers), over a minor disagreement between environmental sanitation officials and the boys on burning of a refuse, in the process when the police could not arrest them, the next thing we heard was sporadic shooting, and on their way they stop one Suleiman Lawal within few minutes of interrogation a policeman shot him dead. It was cold blood murder.

What a coincidence! The new Amnesty international report says Nigerian police carry out hundreds of killings each year. They commit the killings with little or no fear of reprisal by authorities. The reports further mentioned; 'police don't only kill people by shooting them; they also torture them to death, often while they are in detention,' said Erwin van der Borcht, Director of Amnesty international's Africa programme. He added that the majority of the cases go un-investigated and the police officers responsible go unpunished. The report gives a shocking example of how a young teen was killed on the street. Emanuel Egbo, 15, was killed by a police officer in Enugu in September 2008. According to witnesses, he was playing with other children in front of his uncle's house when three police officers came up to them. One officer pulled out a gun and shot the boy, claiming he was an armed robber. He was unarmed.

During the programme it baffles me as I listen to the Nigerian police image maker trying to defend the police and to absolve them of all charges. But he suddenly somersaulted by admitting that the Nigerian police are not free from those allegations and that there are bad police officers from the rank and files.

I believe the report represents the feelings of many, and at the same time has spoken for the defenceless Nigerians who are unable to get justice. Mr. Emeka Ojukwu threw decorum to the wind when it came to speaking for the police, because the way he reacted to issues; he was not mindful of his utterances, instead of addressing the situation in order to convince us with facts that the Nigerian police were not guilty of those allegations, but he didn't; as they say, facts are sacred and comment is free. And also his views on the reports that Amnesty International did not give the police a fair hearing while compiling its reports, doesn't hold water and far from the truth. This report is a clear fact and the reality of what Nigerian are passing through in the hands of Nigerian police.

In a previous BBC report the example of the killings was seen in the town of Enugu. A hospital there had been inundated with high number of bodies' brought in by the police. And also in the Amnesty international report the human rights group says victims in the custody of police often disappear after being arrested. Family members are then told the person in question has been transferred or are simply told they do not know where they are.

And numerous international groups blasted the country's police force for impropriety and corruption; however attempts at reform have all failed.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the federal government and other stakeholders to bring about the needed reform in the police force; it should go beyond a mere pronouncement and let us see the implementation of the entire action plan on ground. The police service commission through the National assembly should enact a law that would empower the police force; in terms of provision of modern equipments, staff welfare, training and retraining of officers.

Abubakar can be reached at n(ayashi2001@yahoo.com)

Your Letters

CBN Governor Sanusi has won me over

When Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, Lamido Sanusi, uttered in the media that if one should consider the type of atrocities committed by the disgraced bank chief executives, they were worthy to be executed; I thought he was going too far. But with the present revelations, I think Sanusi is right. These corrupt practices are not limited to the banking industry but include some past and sitting political leaders especially the State governors. They continue to loot the State treasuries with recklessness and living unworthy

life-styles.

As I read the newspapers last week, I came across so many corrupt enrichments against the former chief executives of the Intercontinental Bank and (particularly) the Oceanic Bank, among others. I was pissed off with the alleged past activities of Mrs. Cecilia Ibru who allegedly acquired properties - 20 in Dubai and 18 in USA. Furthermore the EFCC alleged that she received N29billion (as rent) per annum from the bank; as it was revealed that most of the buildings occupied by the bank belonged to her. This rape of the banking industry is still being practiced by some current bank chiefs. Some connive with some political leaders in the looting sprees.

Yet some of these people are seen in churches and mosques as prayer warriors, preachers and

'near-to-God' kind of persons. Some governors go about getting anointing from supposed men of God, shrines and traditional rulers, believing that with that they were sure to elections. Some even publicize praying for Nigeria and turn out to be the most media hyped. I do not want to believe that Nigeria is cursed. But God cannot come down to help us as He has given us the freedom to make or mar.

The lifestyles of these persons continue to threaten our youths who are the future leaders. As the youths watch, they tend to look at the crooks as role models. I think for Nigeria to move forward, we need proper reorientation and possibly if the bad trend continues, a revolution as many have advocated.

Chief Pius Umukoro, Effurum Road, Warri, Delta State.

Text us on 08 131 8000 30

Nigeria on US terror watch?

WHEN US intelligence estimates predicted that Nigeria will disintegrate in 2015, Nigerian authorities failed to see that as an act of external aggression /interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation. Well, see the result unfolding now! CHRIS Nnoli, Esq., Kaduna, 08033325277.

What's the fuss?

WHY all the worries about US government blacklisting Nigeria? To hell with them; the US is the last country I would go to! ISA Mansur, Kano, 08099495893.

Serves us right!

IN fact, the US is right! Nigerians who take the US and Europe as paradises on earth, should now be conscious that first class humiliation awaits them. ALI El-Gad, Maiduguri, 08095103339.

Hey, look on the bright side

WHETHER the US bars all Nigerians from entering their country, we should not be worried, nor should we care. It would mean fewer havens for the looters and fraudsters of our treasuries to hide their

loot. ABDURRASHEED, Jos, 08037129882.

If not in Saudi, then where?

IT is very unfortunate that government officials keep on deceiving us Nigerians about our dear president's health and whereabouts. Where is he? KABIR Ibrahim, Gusau, 07033060737.

Gov Jonah Jang

WHAT about the promised construction of Garga Road? 07035638437.

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

No. 20 P.O.W. Mafemi Crescent, Off Solomon Lar Way,
Utako District, Abuja
09-6726241, 6715364

As battle for the Nations Cup begins

The 2010 African Cup of Nations championship kicks off in Angola this weekend. Already, reactions from millions of Nigerian soccer fans as to their expectation of the nation's senior team, the Super Eagles are that of mixed feelings. Perhaps this is a fallout from the tardy preparation on the part of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and Coach Amodu Shuaibu after the team qualified for the tournament in November last year.

Once one of the Africa's most formidable teams, the Super Eagles has over the years appear to have lost focus due to problems associated with coaching, maladministration, making it difficult for the country to lift the trophy since its 1994 victory in Tunisia. The Super Eagles qualified from Group B of the qualification round with three wins and three draws, ahead of Tunisia and Mozambique; a lackluster performance in the eyes of fans. In Angola, the Eagles will play in Group C based in Benguela against back-to-back champions Egypt, hardliners and ambitious Mozambique as well as Benin. These are opponents that analysts describe their play pattern as diverse and tricky.

Since qualifying for the tournament, the Eagles team has not engaged in friendly matches to hone the players' skill and establish cohesion for better team work. There was also the problem of late release and submission of the final list of 23-players to the Confederation of African Football (CAF) by Coach Shuaibu. Until last Sunday, when the Eagles managed to secure a lone-goal win in a friendly with a South African club side, Thanda Zulu Royals, Nigerians seem to be in the dark as far as preparation and fitness of the players are concerned.

The final list which exclude home based Eagles is widely considered not helpful to football development in the country. It clearly shows that Coach Shuaibu does not desire to experiment in building a more robust and focused team. Nigerians were further taken aback by the recent defeatist statement credited to the coach, when he reportedly told a press conference that his only target was to reach the semi-final, rather than lifting the trophy. This pessimism is condemnable and highlights the on-going debate on whether he has the commitment necessary to lead the country to the World Cup in South Africa in June this year.

However the players should not be discouraged by Coach Shuaibu's defeatist utterances, but go ahead with confidence to perform creditably at the tournament. We urge them to think Nigeria and make the nation proud by proving critics wrong as they did in the World Cup qualification when they trashed Kenya to snatch the ticket from Tunisia. They should also display the well-known Nigerian spirit of not giving up even when faced with intimidating challenges. This is important, given soccer's unifying factor in Nigerians' social life. When any of the nation's soccer teams is engaged in a game, Nigerians irrespective of tribe, region, religion or class unite in passionate patriotic zeal behind them.

While we are happy with the Eagles qualification for the World Cup in South Africa, we believe their performance at the Nations Cup will indeed provide them a well-needed psychological boost in their preparation for the world cup tournament. We hope the experienced hands in the team will use the Nations Cup to prove that their inclusion was not a mistake by Coach Shuaibu. However, we emphasize the need to inject some fresh and committed talents in the team for the World Cup event. Similarly, we recommend that another look be taken at the expertise of the technical crew to ensure that only those who are competent are put in charge of taking the team to South Africa.

As we wish the Eagles a fruitful outing, we consider it necessary to call on the NFA and all concerned to ensure that the team is well provisioned throughout the three weeks' tournament. Football loving Nigerians are weary of Eagles returning home with bronze medals; this time we demand of them the golden cup.

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Terrorism: Sleep no more

There is no art to find the mind's construction on the face; He was a gentleman in whom I built an absolute trust - Macbeth

A panicky colleague called at odd hours on Christmas day to inform us that the headline news on CNN was a failed bomb attempt on North West airline's flight 253 by a Nigerian youth, Umaru Faruk Mutallab. We were numb with shock. We are all at risk because it could happen to us! We have children studying abroad, exposed, alone and grappling with the conflicting ideologies of a troubled world and the permissive culture of contemporary societies. As parents we want to believe that we have done the best for our children but when something goes wrong and they "murder sleep", as William Shakespeare would say, not only their parents, but the whole country sleeps no more.

I reflected on the Shakespearean quote above and many stories of betrayal came to my mind. A schoolmate of mine married a kind hearted gentle man from the Caribbean who could pass for an angel. Then the terror attacks occurred in London on buses and trains and he disappeared. He was mentioned by the young men who were involved in the bombing and since he went underground, he has not called, sent an e mail or post a letter to his wife. She said after the mandatory five years period for missing persons she would seek relief from a Sharia court. In the year 2000, we were doing democracy and governance work with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance IDEA when one of the development partners and a participant from South Africa told us the story of betrayal in which she almost lost her life. "My husband and I were freedom fighters under the African National Congress and there was cause to believe that the apartheid regime had infiltrated our rank because of the many deaths that we could not explain.

An incident occurred that became our saving grace. I was going to the funeral of a fallen colleague and we had planned to hold a strategy meeting after the funeral. I printed some hand flyers to distribute and as we were passing through a bush path to link up with others, we sensed that security operatives were trailing us. As the team leader, I decided that the three of us should go in different directions to save lives and as the person carrying the incriminating material I should free others from taking the flak. That decision was what saved my life and that of a second colleague because one of the three was an agent of the enemy and they had given him a sensor which he carried on his body with which they tracked us to our meeting venues! I was dazed because of the close ties between me and the culprit. Before he became a traitor to our cause, he was shot in the leg

Civil Society Watch

By Hajiya Bilkisu (mni)

and he needed a hide out to heal and recuperate. I took him to the safety of our family house and left him under my mother's care until he fully recovered. Apart from her personal story, she also told us stories of betrayal that came to light during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in South Africa.

Since our own tragedy occurred, we have been subjected to all sorts of analyses about the why and how of international terrorism. Many commentators expressed surprise that

public coffers; where some of us think is the Promised Land. Think about it: what restrictive measure would the average Nigerian, who will never have the opportunity to board even a domestic flight be afraid of? Will the airport scanners scan him on his farm? Indeed, we are crying for ourselves, for our interests, not for Nigeria!

Others were more concerned about the various security measures that would follow the event and the extent to which these would constitute an irritation to habitual travellers, invasion of privacy, violation of rights, and unnecessary profiling of the citizens of some countries.

The information that unsettled me most has to do with the impact of using body scanner on travellers particularly if the equip-

Angry responses then came from those who said we are over reacting, after all Nigeria is not the first country to produce home bred or globally initiated terrorists

poverty and affluence could both be implicated as causal factors for the production of terrorists and why those from the upper class and the lower social economic strata should be so vulnerable. Angry responses then came from those who said we are over reacting, after all Nigeria is not the first country to produce home bred or globally initiated terrorists. "Why are we jittery about this singular act, heinous as it is? Are we the first terrorist country in the world? Dr Aliyu Tilde asked "Did we produce Carlos The Jackal, Al-Nag-rahi, Irish Republican Army (IRA), Timothy McVeigh, or the 911 bombers? Are we worse terrorists than Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, or Libya, countries where many terrorists lived and carried out their threats? Are we worse than Saudi Arabia, the country that produced Osama Bin Laden and 18 out of the 19 terrorists that bombed the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001?"

Apart from such defensive tactics we also apportioned blame and Dr Aliyu Tilde in his discourse which he sent to my box tongue lashed the elites for their hypocrisy, excesses and duplicity. He said the concern being expressed is self-serving. It has nothing to do with Nigeria and it is all about us and our interests. "I think the real reason why we elite are afraid of our newly acquired feather is because of the inconvenience that we will suffer from whenever we visit overseas or the opportunities we will miss in our hideout countries where we send our children to study after celebrating the collapse of our public schools at home; where we take our wives for delivery after we have allowed our hospitals to deteriorate; where we hide the billions we steal daily from

ment will not serve the purpose for which they are being installed which is to detect explosives. It will also strip us naked and invade our privacy.

The London based International Islamic Human Rights Commission (IIHRC) quoted Ben Wallace, Conservative a Member of Parliament involved in the project to test the scanner's effect who stated that the scanners would be unable to detect low density materials like the one used by Umar Faruk Abdulmutallab. IIHRC then questioned the rationale behind installing a new security measure that would not have halted the attempted attack in the first place. Installation of scanners, according to IIHRC is an attempt to mask the real issue at stake which is a gross failure to act on intelligence.

In Washington, United States officials announced Sunday that citizens of 14 countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria, who are flying to the United States will be subjected indefinitely to the intense screening at airports worldwide. Human rights activists are opposed to a global security system that treats people differently based on what country they are from. Nawar Shora, the Legal Director at the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, says the rule wrongly implies that all citizens of certain nations are suspect. "I understand there needs to be additional security in light of what was attempted on Christmas Day," Mr. Shora said, adding that he intended to file a formal protest on Monday. When sleep is murdered in one part of the world, we all stay awake agonising over our common failings.

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INTERNATIONAL

Zimbabwe, Botswana ink power generation deal

ZIMBABWE'S struggling power utility has signed an eight million dollar deal with Botswana to revive a shut-down thermal power station and ease national blackouts, state media reported yesterday. Under the deal, the Botswana Power Company will provide funds to the Zimbabwe

Power Company (ZPC) to refurbish the plant in the second city of Bulawayo and buy coal from the country's main colliery, the Herald newspaper said. Zimbabwe will export power to Gaborone in return, it added.

"The deal will see us reviving the Bulawayo Thermal Power

Station and enabling us to generate 90 megawatts and of this 40 megawatts will be exported to Botswana," ZPC managing director Noah Gwariro told the Herald newspaper. "This will go a long way in easing pressure on the national grid."

Bulawayo and other small

thermal power stations in the country were shut down in June 2008 due to Zimbabwe's financial crisis and ailing infrastructure.

Since February last year, industrial activity has been rising from a low of 10 percent to almost 55 percent by year end, but growth is limited by the scant power supply

—adding to the pressure for more coal or other energy sources.

The southern African country spends millions of dollars importing electricity from its neighbours, just to keep the lights on some of the time in parts of the country, which at times go for 15 to 20 hours without power.

Madagascar mediators in fresh peace bid

INTERNATIONAL mediators met yesterday in a fresh attempt to resolve Madagascar's long-running political crisis.

The meeting of the International Contact Group for Madagascar at the African Union headquarters follows several initiatives to end the crisis sparked by the March 2009 coup by then Antananarivo mayor Andry Rajoelina.

Disagreements between the country's four main political groups have scuttled efforts at ending the impasse, with de facto leader Rajoelina disregarding previous deals with rivals to form a unity government. "Our discussions should focus on defusing the situation and finding a way out of the crisis," said Jean Ping, the AU's commission chief, criticising Rajoelina's unilateral decisions.

The army-backed Rajoelina last month cancelled the appointment of a prime minister agreed on in a power-sharing deal with his rivals and named a new one.

None of the political foes including Rajoelina, the president he ousted Marc Ravalomanana and two former presidents were represented at yesterday's talks.

Along with Ping, chief mediator in the crisis Joaquim Chissano, French State Secretary for Cooperation Alain Joyandet and AU Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra were in the talks.

...as forces use tear gas on protesters

SECURITY forces have used tear gas to disperse protesters in Madagascar's capital near the presidential palace. The demonstrators, who are aligned with three of the country's previous presidents, went to present the country's military-backed leader with a letter yesterday.

Andry Rajoelina seized power on the Indian Ocean island last year. He recently declared that an internationally-mediated agreement to create a transitional coalition was null and void, and says he will hold elections in March.



FRIENDS and colleagues wait outside Lee Funeral Home in Nairobi, Kenya to attend funeral services yesterday for US teacher Sharon Brown, 39, and her daughter Margaux, 3, who were trampled to death by an elephant.

US mother, baby girl killed by elephant in Kenya

A lone elephant charged out of the bush as an American family was hiking near Mount Kenya and trampled to death a mother and the 1-year-old daughter she held in her arms, officials said yesterday.

Four adults and the baby were walking with an unarmed guide just outside Mount Kenya National Park on Monday morning when the elephant charged, said Kenya Wildlife Service official Michael Kipkeu.

The family was hiking on a nature trail about 1 mile (2 kil-

ometers) from the Castle Forest Lodge, where the family was vacationing, said the owner, Melia van Laar.

"The elephant emerged from the bush at full speed without any warning," van Laar said. "Everybody ran away, but the lady, burdened by the weight of the baby, perhaps, or in panic, was not able to run fast enough."

Officials identified the woman as Sharon Brown, 39, and said her daughter's name was Margaux. No hometown in the United States was given. Brown and

her husband are listed as faculty members at the International School of Kenya. Friends and colleagues at the American-curriculum K-12 school held a memorial service yesterday. A school official declined to comment on the incident, as did a representative of the family.

Walking tours of Kenya's many national parks are common, though hikers are advised to have an armed guard with them if the park is known to have elephants, said Kentice Tikolo, a spokeswoman for the Kenya Wildlife

Service. "It was a lone elephant and lone elephants can be quite dangerous," Tikolo said. "It probably felt quite threatened." Tikolo said deaths by charging elephants are rare in Kenya, though they happen about once a year.

Because the Castle Forest Lodge lies just outside the boundary of Mount Kenya National Park, the family was walking with a hotel guide, who is not allowed to carry a gun, said Tikolo. The national park is about 180 miles (300 kilometers) north of the capital, Nairobi.

Amnesty urges Malawi to free jailed gay couple

HUMAN rights watchdog Amnesty International yesterday called for the release of a Malawian gay couple jailed last week after holding a traditional wedding ceremony.

"The arrest of the two men

solely for their real or perceived sexual orientation amounts to discrimination and it is in violation of their rights to freedom of conscience, expression and privacy," the group said in a statement.

"Amnesty International con-

siders individuals imprisoned solely for their consensual sexual relationship in private as prisoners of conscience and calls for their immediate and unconditional release," it added.

Steven Monjeza, 26, and

Tiwonge Chimbalanga, 20, were arrested on December 28 in Malawi's commercial capital Blantyre for holding the country's first public same-sex wedding -- an act that landed them with three charges of "indecent practices".

SUNSET AT MID-DAY



Hajiya Maryam Babangida

Colonel Sani Bello (rtd), National President, Bida Old Student's Association (BOSA) on behalf of the National Executive Committee and entire members of BOSA commiserate with one of its great members, general Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida on the departure of his adorable wife, Hajiya Maryam Babangida.

Hajiya Maryam Babangida will be missed for her gracious

humility, nobility and her ability to empathize with the low and the high.

Hajiya, you departed too soon, when the young ones have gathered under the tree in the moon light to tap from your enormous wisdom.

An affectionate mother gone too early.

May Allah make *Aljanna Firdaus* Your Final Abode.

SALIHU IBRAHIM
Public Relations Officer



Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Raji'un

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE



LATE HAJIYA MARYAM BABANGIDA
Former First Lady

On behalf of myself, Board Members and the entire staff of Nasco Group of Companies, I wish to sincerely express my heartfelt condolence to the Former Military President, **General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida** and his entire, family members over the demise of his beloved wife and former First Lady, **Mrs. Maryam Ibrahim Babangida**, which sad event occurred on Sunday,

December 27th, 2009.

Her death is not only a loss to the Babangida family, but to the nation at large. She will certainly be remembered for the many giant strides she took in her life time which left her foot prints on the sands of time. We pray to Almighty Allah to forgive her and grant her **Aljannatu Firdausi** and to give the family the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

Signed
ATTIA A. NASREDDIN
CHAIRMAN/CEO

International

Farouk Mutallab: Passenger Haskell's testimony

By Aisha Umar Yusuf

KURT Haskell, an American lawyer, was returning from a Safari in Uganda with his wife Lori when they boarded NWA Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit on Friday December 25th 2009. Earlier they were seated somewhere near the boarding gate when Umar Farouk Mutallab, the alleged Christmas Day airline bomber approached the boarding gate with an unidentified man.

In an interview with MLive.com, the online edition of Detroit Metro Times, Haskell who practices law along with his wife in their firm, Haskell Law Firm in Taylor, Michigan, said while Mutallab was poorly dressed, his companion was dressed in an expensive suit. He added that the suited man asked ticket agents whether Mutallab could board the plane without a passport. According to Haskell, the well-dressed man said to the ticket agent, "He's from Sudan and we do this all the time." In her response, the ticket agent simply referred Mutallab and his companion to her superiors down the hall.

After this, Haskell had no idea what happened next nor did he see Farouk Mutallab again until he allegedly tried to detonate an explosive on the plane. According to him, it was soon after the pilot had announced that they were landing in Detroit in 10 minutes when he heard some commotion on the plane. In his words "I stood up and walked a couple of feet to get a closer look and that's when I saw the flames."

Kurt Haskell, who had earlier posted his personal account of the incident on the internet before being interviewed by Detroit Metro Times actually sent a picture of his boarding pass to the paper to prove he was really on that plane. He described the moment Mutallab was being arrested, "He did not fight back at all. This wasn't a big skirmish. A couple of guys jumped on him and hauled him away." Afterwards the pilot announced 'emergency landing' but it was not until Farouk Mutallab was being led out of the plane in handcuffs that Mr. Haskell recognised him as the man whose companion wanted to get on the plane without a passport. There was however no sign of his companion at that moment.

What this passenger's testimony proves is that there are many unanswered questions regarding Farouk Mutallab's alleged attempt to blow up an airline in mid-air just before landing. The most obvious question is: Who was that well-dressed man who wanted to get him on the plane without a passport? Why did he lie that Farouk was from Sudan? On what authority was he speaking when he said 'We do this all the time?' Why was Farouk Mutallab poorly dressed? What kind

of ID card was his companion carrying that he could make such an outrageous demand of wishing to get someone on an international flight without a passport without raising an alarm? Even more importantly why was Farouk himself not talking? A young man who spent years studying in England can not possibly have problem speaking English.

Another passenger, David Schike whose own testimony was published in The Nation of January 2, 2010 alluded to Farouk's lack of speech and resistance when he said 'I remember staring at him for long periods of time. I could very clearly see his face. He never moved, he never turned his head, he never spoke a word or moved his lips. He never struggled. He never stopped anybody from pouring water on him. His expression was completely emotionless.' Page 6, The Nation.

The picture that emerges after these two testimonies is of a young man totally unaware of what is going on around him. For sure a failed bomber with burning pants will shout with pain, if not for the pain of burning, then for the failed attempt to achieve his murderous martyrdom. But no one saw any such thing because Farouk was too drugged, quite beyond pain or emotion to behave naturally in the circumstances. My personal take on this is that Farouk was abducted and drugged, made to look like a Sudanese refugee, put on the plane by someone with an Identity authoritative enough to have got him on board without a passport, set on fire by this same guy who left his seat early enough to make sure the fire extinguishers were activated. The plane was never meant to be brought down. The real perpetrators of this incident only wanted to pursue their hidden hideous agenda and they had to stage it this way.

What about the Al-Qaida connection? You may wish to ask. Well the following story will let you know just how Al-Qaida came in. In October 2004, American aeronautics engineer Paul M Johnson was kidnapped in Iraq. The statement of claim was published on a website named www.ansarnet.com. It said a group called 'Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula' was the perpetrator of the act. The statement looked every inch a genuine claim, it read thus 'Our fighters of the Fallujah Brigade, in the Arabian Peninsula have kidnapped an American, a Christian, Paul Marshall Johnson Jr., born in 1955 and working as aeronautics engineer. ... He will be treated the same way US troops have treated Iraqi prisoners.' Mr Johnson was subsequently murdered and the act was recorded in the media - and in history - as an Al-Qaida terrorist act.

But another American took more than a passing interest in the claim. Jack Blood, a renowned radio journalist decided to embark



KURT Haskell and his wife Lori.

on a domain search for the claimants website www.ansarnet.com. His findings were interesting, the website was traced to an internet and a physical address in Dallas USA. Inspired by the interesting nature of this expose, the late Joe Vialls wrote an article he called 'Anyone can set up a website anyone can send anonymous emails.' The main thrust of his argument was that such website claims must never but trusted because they could have emanated from anywhere. In other words, there was no way of proving that they were genuine or false, unless someone was willing to do the painstaking domain search investigation undertaken by Jack Blood.

Interestingly, it is this same Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, which has proved to be a pen-name for a Dallas-based organisation that is claiming credit for Farouk Mutallab's alleged botched attempt. The lesson in all this is we have to be discerning viewers and listeners especially of international news these days. It hurts to hear otherwise discerning commentators busy regurgitating everything they hear on CNN or BBC World because they have no reason to doubt them. I thought after all we heard about non-existent Weapons of Mass Destruction and many other lies since then we have sufficient reason not to believe what these so-called international media have to say every time. But with Farouk Mutallab, no one even wants to doubt, everyone simply takes it for granted that he did it. Since this incident no one even saw it fit to show him to us even on his hospital bed, and even the Nigerian diplomats telling us that they had access to him are yet to tell anyone what they saw. Yet on the strength of a web-

site claim almost everyone seems ready to accept the attempted bombing as a Gospel truth, why?

Surely, after all that's been said about the false suicide hi-jack theory of 9/11, we have learnt enough to know that Americans and their allies can stage anything and sacrifice any number of lives if they believe the end justifies the means? Already Farouk Mutallab's alleged terrorism has proved most convenient towards a number of incidents both foreign and local regarding the United States.

President Obama has promised to close down Guantanamo Bay's Camp Delta, where hundreds of young Muslim men had been in detention since 2001 on charges of terrorism. His decision met with stiff opposition even from among his fellow Democrats when it was debated sometime last year. Obama struck a middle ground when he began to release the detainees batches later in the year. Now with his war time rhetoric since the Mutallab incident, all thoughts of closing Guantanamo must have been chased clear out of Obama's head.

Parts of the American PATRIOTS Act, a series of measures imposed on Americans after 9/11 which, according to journalist Grant Lawrence reduced US to a 'technological police state' were due to expire on New Years eve, and the new administration didn't seem keen to renew them. Now, with the Mutallab incident you know any plans not to renew them will have to be suspended. Another convenience theory is that Saudi Arabia has been bombarding Yemen for some months with fighter jets, the US itself has sent cruise missiles into Yemen ostensibly to hit so-called Al-Qaida sites, but the American

public is so war-weary that it is even questioning what the Obama administration is still doing in Afghanistan. With the alleged Christmas day terror attempt, any move by the US to openly attack Yemen will not be resisted.

Indeed there are such plans to invade Yemen, if Senator Joe Lieberman is to be believed. Again according to Grant Lawrence, Lieberman actually said on Fox News that 'Somebody in our government said to me in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen. Iraq was yesterday's war, Afghanistan is today's war. If we don't act PRE-EMPTIVELY (my emphasis) Yemen will be tomorrow's war.'

And we have all seen the result of America's pre-emptive wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Plus we also know that both were attacked on the strength of two Big Lies, the September 11th hoax and the pursuit of non-existent Weapons of Mass Destruction. With these antecedents could they not stage an attempt to blow an airline using a drugged young man whose circumstances favour the plot? Call me a conspiracy theorist, call me a denial brigade commander, one thing I have no doubt in is that there is more to Farouk Mutallab's terrorism than we are led to believe. In the light of passenger Haskell's testimony, we have every reason to believe that Farouk is entirely innocent of all he is accused of and that the whole thing was a false-flag operation staged to achieve and a full return to the war on terror.

The young man only fell victim of this evil plot because his father had gone to the wrong people to seek help. May Allah aid him to prove his innocence, and may He protect the rest of us, who are all potential victims of America's lies.

International

Hamas exchange fire on Gaza frontier, 1 dead

AN Egyptian soldier was killed and four Palestinians were wounded in a gun-battle yesterday during a protest against an anti-smuggling wall Cairo is building on the Gaza border.

The violence was the most serious between Egyptian and Hamas forces since Cairo began constructing the underground steel barrier a month ago. The project could choke off the movement of weapons and goods through tunnels into the Gaza Strip.

Israel and Egypt maintain a blockade of the territory, which is ruled by Hamas Islamists who oppose international efforts to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Weapons and a wide range of commercial products are smuggled into the territory through a network of tunnels crossing the border with Egypt. Cairo has come under U.S. and Israeli pressure to stop the trafficking.

On the Egyptian side of the frontier, security officials said a 21-year-old soldier was killed by gunfire from the Palestinian part of the divided town of Rafah. Witnesses on the Gaza side of the border said members of Hamas's police force fired at the Egyptians.

Hundreds of Palestinians had turned out to protest against the wall. Witnesses said dozens of demonstrators threw rocks at Egyptian soldiers, who then opened fire, wounding four Palestinians.

An Israeli military officer, who is briefed on Gaza intelligence, told Reuters last week the Egyptian wall could significantly stem Palestinian arms smuggling into the territory once it is completed

in several months.

Cairo has played down the scope of the dig on the 14km (eight mile) border. Hamas says the "wall of death" could choke off tunnels providing a commercial lifeline for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Egyptian officials have said

steel tubes were being placed at several points along the frontier to form a barrier, but have not elaborated on its purpose.

Tunnel-builders say some 3,000 underground passages were operational before Israel launched a three-week Gaza offensive a year ago, but only 150 were still func-

tional following the conflict and subsequent Israeli air raids.

Israel imposed the blockade in 2006 after one of its soldiers was seized by militants who tunneled under the Israel-Gaza border. It was tightened after Hamas wrested control of the Gaza Strip from forces loyal to Palestin-

ian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement.

The blockade has drawn international condemnation over hardships caused to Palestinians in the impoverished coastal enclave and its impact on efforts to rebuild homes and infrastructure after the Gaza war.



A wounded Palestinian is carried away during a gun battle near the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, yesterday.

Yemen opposes any direct US military intervention

YEMEN'S foreign minister says his country opposes any direct intervention by U.S. or other foreign troops in the fight against al-Qaida.

Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Qirbi tells The Associated Press in an interview yesterday that "there is a lot of sensitivity about foreign troops coming to Yemeni territory." U.S. military personnel are currently in Yemen training its counterterrorism forces, and al-Qirbi says Yemen would welcome more personnel as trainers. "But not in any other capacity." He says "direct intervention complicates things."

Washington has increased its counterterrorism aid to Yemen to fight al-Qaida, but has indicated it does not seek to put troops on the ground.

Israel army to seek legal advice during operations

“But the Palestinians have refused to return to the negotiating table, saying they want Netanyahu to freeze all construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem and take up negotiations where they broke off under his predecessor”

ISRAEL'S military will consult more closely with its legal advisers on future offensives, security officials said yesterday — a move motivated by war crimes accusations that followed last year's war in the Gaza Strip.

Officers are also receiving more intensive training in the rules of war and international law, the officials said.

Officials said military chief Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi has ordered the military to consult with its legal advisers in the course of operations, and not just in the planning stage, as was the case with the Gaza war. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the policy revision with

the media. The Israeli military spokesman's office had no immediate comment.

The new policy follows a U.N. panel's conclusion that Israel committed war crimes in connection with the Gaza operation. Both military and political officials have been forced to cancel trips to Britain because of efforts by Palestinian activists to bring them to trial under a war crimes law that breaks down jurisdictional barriers.

Israel embarked upon the Gaza offensive to stop militants from launching rockets into southern Israel. But the operation drew widespread international criticism over the high Palestinian civilian death toll: Gaza officials

and Palestinian human rights groups say more than 900 civilians were killed, out of an overall toll of more than 1,400. Thirteen Israelis also were killed.

Visiting British Attorney General Patricia Janet Scotland said in a speech at Jerusalem's Hebrew University on Tuesday that her government was "looking urgently at ways in which the U.K. system might be changed to avoid this situation arising again and is determined that Israel's leaders should always be able to travel freely to the U.K."

In other news, Israeli defense officials say Barak has received dozens of anonymous death threats since the government decided in November to slow con-

struction in Jewish West Bank settlements.

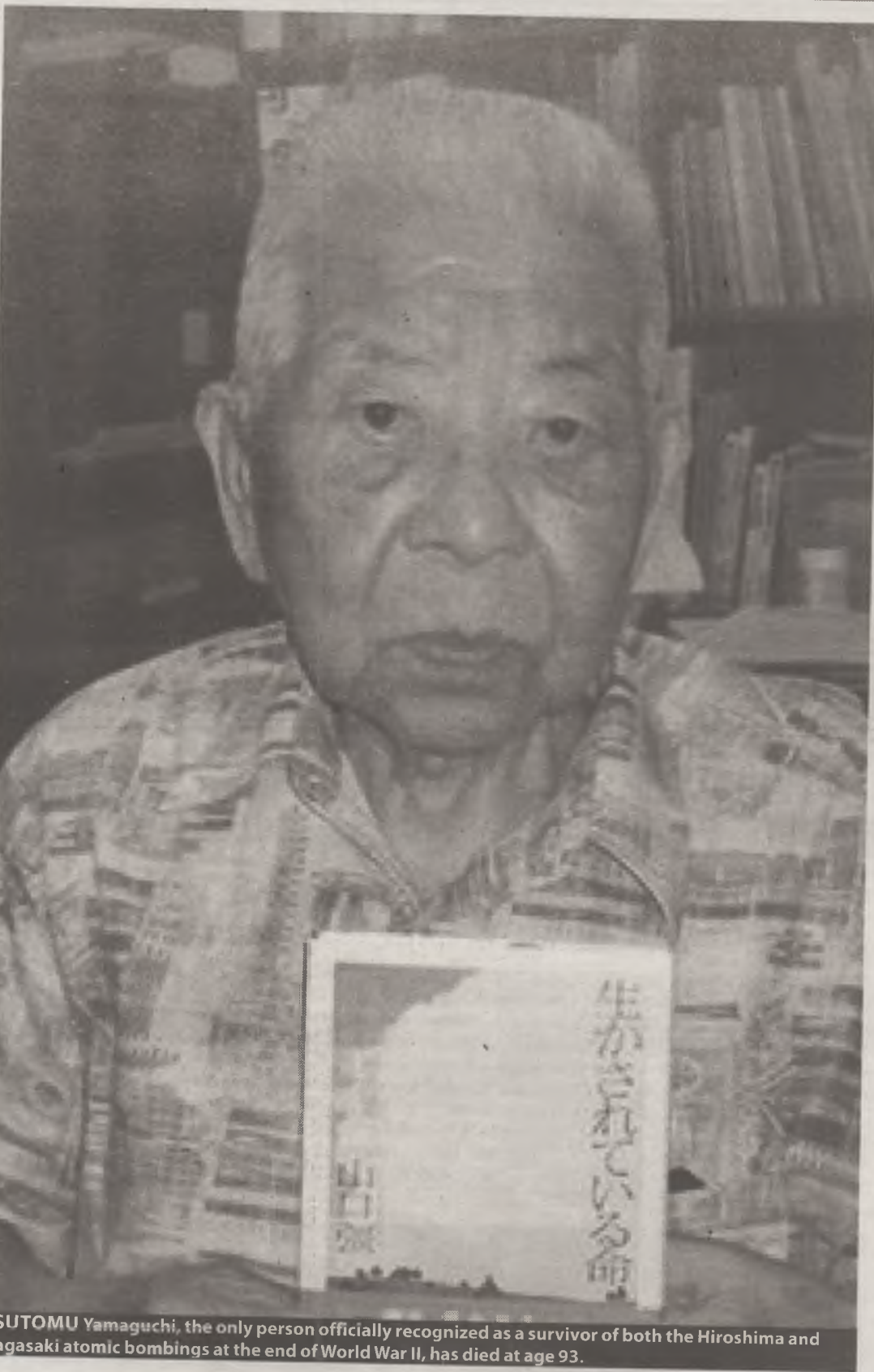
The slowdown has enraged settlers who fear it will be a first step toward dismantling some settlements as part of a still-elusive peace deal with the Palestinians.

Security officials said the internal security service, or Shin Bet, was investigating the threats and that Barak's security detail had been reinforced in recent weeks.

Such threats are taken seriously in Israel after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in 1995 by a Jewish extremist opposed to his peace moves with the Palestinians.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the slowdown in late November under pressure from Washington, which hopes to relaunch Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. But the Palestinians have refused to return to the negotiating table, saying they want Netanyahu to freeze all construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem and take up negotiations where they broke off under his predecessor.

International



TSUTOMU Yamaguchi, the only person officially recognized as a survivor of both the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings at the end of World War II, has died at age 93.

Japan's double atomic-bomb survivor dies

TSUTOMU Yamaguchi, who survived the US atomic bombings of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 to tell the world of the horrors, has succumbed to stomach cancer, his family said yesterday. Yamaguchi, 93, the only person officially recognised as a survivor of the two attacks, died on Monday at a hospital in Nagasaki.

"I thanked my father for leaving us with the treasure that was his effort to call for world peace," his daughter Toshiko Yamasaki, 61, told AFP by telephone. He is survived by a son, two daughters and five grandchildren.

"It is to our regret that we have lost a valuable story teller," Nagasaki mayor Tomihisa Taue said in a statement. "His painful experience of being bombed twice in Hiroshima and Nagasaki drew worldwide attention."

Yamaguchi, then an engineer at the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries shipyard in Nagasaki, was exposed to the first atomic blast in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, when he was there for a work assignment. He was on a street about two kilometres (1.3 miles) from ground zero. With severe burns to his arms, he returned to Nagasaki two days later to join his family.

Yamaguchi was exposed to the second atomic explosion the next day when he was reporting about the Hiroshima holocaust at his work place, about three kilometres (two miles) from the epicentre. "I thought the mushroom cloud had followed me there," he said later.

The atomic blasts killed an estimated 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 74,000 others in Nagasaki, leaving numerous others with ailments linked to radioactive irradiation. Yamaguchi started to publicly talk about his atomic-bomb experience only in 2005 when he lost his second son -- who survived the Nagasaki bombing as an infant -- to cancer.

In 2006, he was featured in a documentary film, entitled "Niju Hibaku (double irradiation)" with seven others who were known to have survived the two attacks. The documentary was screened at the United Nations headquarters in New York the same year, featuring Yamaguchi as a guest speaker.

He became the only person officially recognised as a double A-bomb survivor last year when the city of Nagasaki acknowledged he was also bombed in Hiroshima. Yamaguchi was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 2006 and he was hospitalised last August.

"I think this will be my last lecture. I hope the baton will be passed to other people," Yamaguchi told a seminar in Nagasaki last June, according to media reports. On December 22, US director James Cameron of the "Titanic" and "Avatar" fame called on him to outline his idea of shooting a film on atomic bombs, his daughter said. "My father had eagerly waited for the director to come. He seemed to gather strength after the meeting," Yamasaki said. "He was heard saying, 'My mission is over.'"

Child soldiers to be freed from camps in Nepal

HUNDREDS of former child soldiers who once fought for Nepal's Maoist rebels will finally be released from the U.N.-monitored detention camps they have called home for the past three years to begin new lives as civilians. Rather than joy at escaping the watch of the armed guards who monitor the barbed wire-lined fences of the camps, many of the young fighters were upset yesterday at the thought of having to turn in their green camouflage uniforms and leave their comrades behind.

"They are all very emotional at having to leave the camps, but they all realize it is something that is necessary to keep the peace process alive," said Gopal Pandey, the deputy commander of

the camp in Dudhauri, about 125 miles (200 kilometers) southwest of Katmandu.

Nearly 20,000 former rebel fighters — formally known as the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) — have lived in seven main camps since 2006, when they gave up their 10-year armed rebellion to join a peace process and enter mainstream politics. U.N. monitors found that 2,975 of the fighters were under 18.

As part of the peace process, the rebels were supposed to be integrated into Nepal's military. But the army chief's refusal to do so has led to a political scandal in which the Maoists — who won the most seats in elections last year — resigned from the government.

Sri Lankan Tamil party to back former general

SRI Lanka's main ethnic Tamil party said yesterday it is throwing its support in the upcoming presidential election behind a former general who led the battle against the Tamil Tiger rebels and has been labelled by some as an ethnic Sinhalese nationalist.

The unlikely support by the Tamil National Alliance, which was formed with the backing of the of the now-defeated rebels, is a reflection of how far the party is willing to go to see President Mahinda Rajapaksa unseated in the Jan. 26 vote.

Former army chief Sarath Fonseka, the opposition candidate, and Rajapaksa worked closely to crush the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam last May.

Both were accused of human rights violations, and a U.S. State Department report last October

accused the military of actions that could be described as war crimes.

The former allies, however, have since become bitter political enemies, contesting an election that has become something of a referendum on which politician ethnic Tamils dislike the least.

Tamil National Alliance leader Rajavarotheyam Sambanthan said his party could not back Rajapaksa because of the government's human rights abuses and its inability to achieve reconciliation between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil communities following the end of the country's 25-year civil war. "Mahinda Rajapaksa's performance in the last four years is totally unacceptable; we can't allow him to have another term," Sambanthan said at a news con-

ference. Rajapaksa's actions have been "detrimental to the preservation of the cultural and linguistic identity of the Tamil speaking people," he said.

Sambanthan did not comment on Fonseka's role in the alleged abuses or the fears among many in the mainly Hindu minority Tamil group that the former general is an ethnic nationalist seeking a Buddhist, Sinhalese state. Sambanthan said his party talked with both candidates about issues important to ethnic Tamils, such as the resettlement of some 300,000 civilians displaced by the war, rehabilitation of war-torn areas and dismantling the so-called high security zones in Tamil areas where private land and homes have been occupied by security forces for decades.

International

3 Democrats — 2 senators, 1 governor — to retire



FIRST left: Sens. Chris Dodd of Connecticut and Byron Dorgan of North Dakota (middle) as well as Colorado Governor Bill Ritter (right).

WITH the 2010 election year barely under way, two senators and one governor — all Democrats — ditched plans to run for re-election in the latest signs of trouble for President Barack Obama's party.

Taken together, the decisions by Sens. Chris Dodd of Connecticut and Byron Dorgan of North Dakota as well as Colorado Governor Bill Ritter caused another bout of heartburn for Democrats as they struggle to defend them-

selves in a sour political environment for incumbents, particularly the party in charge.

As 2009 ended, Democrats watched a string of their House members announce retirements and one congressman defect to the GOP.

Now, with Dodd, Dorgan and Ritter out, Republicans have even more to crow about, if not better opportunities to pick up Democratic-held seats.

Democrats, who have a 60-40

Senate majority that includes two independents who vote with them, now will have to defend four open seats in the Senate. The others are Delaware and Illinois, where Sens. Ted Kaufman, who replaced Vice President Joe Biden, and Roland Burris, who replaced Obama, aren't running for full terms.

Among governors, Democrats are seeking to maintain their 26-24 majority in a year when those elected will oversee

the redrawing of congressional and legislative districts for the next decade.

Republicans and Democrats alike say they now expect competitive races for the Senate seat in North Dakota, a GOP-tilting state, and the governor's seat in Colorado, a pivotal swing state that has trended toward Democrats in recent years but may be shifting back toward Republicans.

But in Democratic-leaning Connecticut, Dodd's retirement

may actually heighten the likelihood that the seat he's held for five terms will remain in Democratic hands. The party can now recruit a more popular candidate to run, bolstering the prospects of thwarting a Republican victory.

Longtime Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal told The Associated Press on Wednesday morning that he will run for Dodd's seat. Blumenthal, a Democrat, is seen as one of the state's most popular politicians.

2 former UK govt ministers challenge Brown

BRITISH Prime Minister Gordon Brown fought to defeat a leadership challenge yesterday from two senior figures in his Labour Party, months before a national election that disaffected Labour supporters believe the party is sure to lose.

Two former members of Brown's Cabinet sent a letter to fellow Labour lawmakers calling for a secret ballot on Brown's leadership. Geoff Hoon and Patricia Hewitt said in the letter that grumbling about Brown's performance was dividing the party at the worst possible time.

"Many colleagues have expressed their frustration at the way in which this question is affecting our political performance," they said in the letter, which they released to the media. "We have therefore come to the conclusion that the only way to resolve this issue would be to allow every member to express their view in a secret ballot," it said, referring to the Labour lawmakers.

Hewitt said the letter was "not

an attempted coup," but would not say whether she would back Brown if a vote were held.

Labour officials and Brown allies moved quickly to quash the rebellion. The Labour party said in a statement that "there is no provision for a secret ballot of MPs within the Labour Party constitution or rules."

Brown's supporters said a leadership vote would make the party look divided and dash any hopes of an election win. Former Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said the letter was "diversionary, it's stupid and I hope no one will pay any attention to it at all."

Tony Lloyd, who chairs the Parliamentary Labour Party, said there was "very little support" for Hoon and Hewitt's move.

Britain must hold an election by June, and opinion polls give the opposition Conservatives a big lead over Labour, which has been in power since 1997. Brown's opponents within Labour say his lackluster performance will



BRITAIN'S Prime Minister Gordon Brown is seen in this image taken from TV as he speaks during Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons, London.

ensure electoral defeat. Unseating Brown would mean a quick party leadership contest and send an untested leader into a national election. Brown replaced Tony Blair when he stepped down as prime minister in June 2007, and

Brown has never faced voters in an election as leader. Many within his party doubt the taciturn Brown has the popular appeal to win. Opponents say Brown is tainted by the economic crisis — he was Treasury chief for 10 years

until 2007 — and by a scandal over lawmakers' inflated expenses that outraged the public.

Brown already has faced a series of challenges to his authority from within a fractious Labour Party.

DR. JUNaidu MOHAMMED AND HIS VICIOUS ATTACK ON PRESIDENT UMAR MUSA YAR'ADUA

By Salmanu Bashir

Perhaps only a psychologist understands the state of mind of Dr. Junaidu Mohammed, a former Assistant Secretary of PRP and now PSP Chairman, who is based in Kano State. But for the time being, we can comfortably say that the man is politically blind, since he left PRP. He is no longer familiar with the dynamics of present day Nigerian Politics. This can be seen from his recent interview with the Voice of America Hausa Service Station on the 28th of December, 2009, in which he viciously attacked President Umaru Musa Yar'adua and Federal Government of Nigeria.

Dr. Junaidu's political blindness explains his barrage of attacks on a President who has done well within a limited period of time. From politics to the economy, Dr. Junaidu has only a chain of condemnations for our President, making it look as if the president has achieved nothing since he came to power.

Those who played politics during the days of PRP would readily admit that Dr. Junaidu is a politician who had always heavily criticized the political setting in Nigeria without suggesting the way forward. Indeed, these criticisms have so far been more of condemnation than genuine contributions to a change for the better. He is clearly a boxer fighting outside the ring.

It is amazing that the man could not see beyond his nose, in trying to condemn President Yar'adua, and in being deliberately uncompassionate about the fact that our President is in hospital.

Let us first jog the memory of a confused politician as to the few out of the unprecedented achievements of President Yar'adua. First, the president has broken the backbone of a cartel that has been manipulating the importation of petroleum products by setting in motion, a quick-fix strategy of reviving Nigerian refineries.

Secondly, Nigerians that have been considered untouchable have been legitimately compelled to refund the billions of naira that they gave their friends and cronies in the name of bank loans, thereby threatening national economic stability. This was immediately followed by cash-backing for the affected banks.

Thirdly, the biggest and probably the oldest threat to national security as exemplified by the Niger Delta violence has been effectively put on check. This is the first time in the nation's history that a President is imaginative enough and exceptionally courageous to do what his predecessors could not do for Nigeria. Niger Delta Militants in the interest of national stability and development willingly laid down their arms. The militants have chosen dialogue as against violence. The result is that crude oil production has risen from 1.6 million barrels per day to 2.4 million barrels per day and it is hoped that by the end of 2010 there will be an increase to 2.8 million barrels per day. No Nigerian President in the last forty years could have achieved this even though he

would have wanted to.

For 50 years, the agenda of Dredging of the Niger has been on the drawing board, but today it is a living reality under the President Yaradua administration. It is expected that by the end of 2010, 50% of the project would have been covered and it will be extended to Yawuri in Kebbi State.

In terms of the transport sector, there is the rehabilitation and modernization of Nigerian Railway from Lagos to Kano, the contract of which has already been awarded. The other one is the Abuja-Kaduna rail line project. There is also the Abuja light rail project. In addition, there is the extension of Zuba-Abuja and Abuja-Airport roads to Ten lanes, as against the existing four. The Airports runway project of the Yaradua administration has the potentials of enabling all foreign airline operators to be effectively taking-off directly from Abuja to other parts of the world. The Terminals are up for expansion too.

In terms of new infrastructure there is the construction of Jahi, Wuye Abuja North-West, and Maitama among the six Districts of the Federal Capital marked out by the Yaradua administration. Indeed, the Mabushi and Katampe aspect of this project is being handled by the FCTA under PPP. There is the liberalization of land business (which is part of 7-point Agenda). In this area too, the N25.5 billion got from international loans relief is now being ploughed back into Housing policy of the administration, for the benefit of all Nigerians. As complimentary effort to 300 roads maintenance and rehabilitation by FERMA nationwide, 26 new road contracts have been awarded with a target completion period of 2010.

There is the recent target of electricity supply rising to 5,800 megawatts, which is more than close to the initial 6000 megawatts. Before now, there was no focus on electricity at all and trillions of naira went down the drain. But what we have in Nigeria today is actually the big difference between yesterday and today. But politicians like Dr. Junaidu have conveniently forgotten all of these.

Similarly, for the first time in over forty (40) years, the price of petroleum product was cut down to N65 and from Lagos to Maiduguri and other Nigerian boarder towns one could drive in and buy the product in any filling station. In addition, the NNPC is presently working hard to augment the supply of the product by taking over some of the biggest petrol stations in the state capitals of Nigeria. The expected outcome is the abundance of petroleum product and the final back-breaking of greedy middlemen, who do not even see the President's magnanimity in terms of Federal Government's new subsidy regime.

Dr. Junaidu's vicious attack on the president smacks of political frustration since the communist politician has lost relevance. The dynamics of African and International politics indicate that communist sentiments as expressed by him are waning seriously. This makes Dr. Junaidu's Russian Communist tendencies irrelevant in the new world political order. It would have been much

better if the Russian-trained medical Doctor had been in practice rather than wandering in the political wilderness for nearly 50 years and having no single political victory to his credit.

The other big question about Dr. Junaidu's five minutes' attack against fellow compatriots on a foreign radio is his brand of patriotism. It is strange that he has now fallen into the class of less-patriotic Nigerians, who use the foreign media to dent their fatherland's image. This kind of politics is certainly treacherous and goes to confirm the popular view that Nigeria's international image has for long been threatened partly by people who are considered political traitors.

A second look at Dr. Junaidu's adventure in politics will only reveal his inconsistency of jumping from one political point of view to the other. In terms of party politics, the man lobbied for the Chairmanship of a relatively unknown political party, the PSP as the 2007 Elections approached. Before then, he joined The Buhari Organisation (TBO) and left. Today, he has abandoned the party and hanging on for another opportunity, which he is likely to dump in the long run. His sojourn at OMPADEC was equally disturbing to many observers because it did not take long before he left the place again. Famous Kano political bigwig, Dr. Abubakar Rimi once admitted at the lecture in Munbayya House that the man was suspended from PRP four times for anti-party activities namely the leakage of the party's plans to the ruling NPN national leadership. And when it comes to interview, the man has notoriety for direct attack on prominent Nigerians, using an unguarded language. Ask former President Shehu Shagari who did not make Dr. Junaidu one of his ministers 1983.

In all honesty, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed is a disappointment to the present and future generation of politicians, given his political culture of condemnation of any government in power, without identifying even one area in which the government has made a difference or suggesting any way out.

This is certainly a sad reminder to Nigerians, that certain elites within the nation's political class are truly the source of confusion that dovetails our democratic history. It is indeed sad that Dr. Junaidu has opted for a less-than-pragmatic approach to the issues of Nigerian democracy, a President on medical attention and the future of our beloved country. If this is the price of political frustration or crass opportunism, then it implies tears for Nigeria. We can only hope and pray that God in His infinite mercy saves all the Junaidus of this world, who are suffering from political blindness and enable them to separate the grain from the chaff. I rest my case for now.

**SALMANU BASHIR
MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC
GUIDANCE
KANO STATE, NIGERIA.**



KEBBI STATE OF NIGERIA
STATE GOVERNANCE & CAPACITY BUILDING
PROJECT II
(SG & CBP II)

The Government of Kebbi State (KBSG) seeks a Project Coordinator for an anticipated World Bank-funded capacity building project, according to the Terms of Reference below. Applications are invited from persons with the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities for the position of Project Coordinator. Applications for this position should be submitted together with a comprehensive CV by no later than 31st January 2010, to the office of the Commissioner of Finance of Kebbi State referring to this advertisement.

All candidates are kindly requested to specify their availability date in their cover letter and provide a CV.

The Project Coordinator is a local employment position and therefore does not entail any international or national recruitment considerations. Please note that only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Applicants who have not been contacted by 28 February 2010 must consider their applications as not being successful.

KBSG also reserves the discretion to appoint candidates from within the public service of Kebbi State or employees of World Bank supported programmes or projects operating in Kebbi State.

Duty post: Birnin Kebbi.

Type of appointment: two year contract, renewable.

Languages: Must be native Hausa speaker with proficient level of written and spoken English.

General Functions

Under the direct supervision of the State Project Steering Committee (SPSC), the successful candidate will lead a State Project Coordination Unit (SPCU) to implement programmes and activities that will build and strengthen the capacity of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as legislators and other stakeholders in Kebbi State. In particular, she/he will:

- (1) Assist the State Project Steering Committee (SPSC) in launching the project, developing and implementing strategies and activities aimed at meeting overall objectives of the project with relevant partners.
- (2) Manage a programme of activities to be carried out in accordance with the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) and an Annual Work Plan (AWP). Work with State Project Steering Committee (SPSC) and other project staff to develop criteria, implement and review progress, as well as monitor and evaluate MDAs performance.
- (3) Organize and facilitate multi-stakeholder forums and discussions for MDAs, civil society organizations, media outlets, independent agencies, youth organizations, policymakers, universities, and citizens.
- (4) Organize MDAs and NGO-based working groups to facilitate multi-sectoral discussions on critical policy issues.
- (5) Contribute to developing and maintaining strong partnerships with programme partners, including civil society partners, media partners, independent agencies, and government officials etc.
- (6) Assist senior staff in developing materials. Contribute to design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems. Coordinate communications and project activities. Facilitate project teamwork; engage in collaborative feedback.
- (7) Undertake duty trips on occasion to monitor and provide technical assistance to MDAs outside Birnin Kebbi.
- (8) Participate in seminars and other meetings related to project activities and objectives.
- (9) Perform other duties as may be assigned by SPSC.

Desirable Qualifications:

Education and Experience:

- (a) University degree, preferably in social sciences, international relations or development studies;
- (b) Experience in working on World Bank assisted/supported projects or similar programmes in Kebbi State, capacity building, including training and technical assistance; organizational development, human rights, and development work;
- (c) Eight years experience or equivalent in project development, implementation and evaluation, and/or programme coordination;
- (d) experience in working with civil society partners in a grants management and/or capacity building function;
- (e) Experience in working and managing staff;

Competencies:

- (i) Excellent communication and negotiation skills;
- (ii) excellent report writing skills.
- (iii) good knowledge of project formulation.
- (iv) administration and evaluation techniques and practices;
- (v) ability to supervise staff;
- (vi) effective resource management skills;
- (vii) strong strategic and creative thinking;
- (viii) good level of computer literacy, including database applications and knowledge of web portals;
- (ix) respect for diversity and ability to work effectively and harmoniously in a team and with colleagues from varied cultures and professional backgrounds; and
- (x) ability to meet deadlines highly desirable.

About State Governance & Capacity Building Project II (SG&CBP II):

SG&CBP II seeks to support reforms in Kebbi State and selected Local Government Councils towards improved fiscal, public finance management, personnel and payroll management systems, including public procurement, multi-year budgeting and fiscal planning, tax administration, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation of public service delivery as well as attainment of the project targets.

The Project Coordinator will work primarily on a four year programme, funded by the World Bank, for which KBSG would be a beneficiary in implementing the project. KBSG project implementation activities would seek to build the capacity of MDAs in Kebbi State in improving governance and putting in place sustainable capacity for public service delivery.

Application and contact details: Interested candidates should send their resume and cover letter to Commissioner of Finance, Kebbi State before 31st January 2010. Please insert "Project Coordinator" in the subject line. Only short-listed applicants will be contacted. Please no phone calls or personal inquiries would be allowed.

KBSG offers a supportive work environment, competitive salary, and an excellent benefits package. KBSG is committed to diversity in the workplace. KBSG endeavours to be an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer in line with the principles of Federal Character provided in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.

The Commissioner of Finance,
 Ministry of Finance
 1st Floor, Old Building,
 Gwadangwaji Secretariat,
 Birnin Kebbi
 KEBBI STATE.

Signed:
 Hon. Alhaji Muhammad Bello Tuga,
 Commissioner of Finance,
 Kebbi State



CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA

TENDER NOTICE

NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that the Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills of 91,182 and 364-day tenors amounting to N10,000,000,000, N30,000,000,000 and N30,000,000,000 respectively would be issued by Dutch auction on Thursday, 14/01/2010.

All Money Market Dealers should submit bids through the CBN TEMENOS INTERNET BANKING between 9.00a.m and 11.00a.m on Wednesday, 13/01/2010.

Each bid must be in multiple of N1,000 subject to a minimum of N10,000. Authorized Money Market Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids. A bid may be for authorized Money Market Dealers own account, Non-Money Market Dealers or interested members of the public. The result of the auction would be announced by 11.30a.m on Wednesday, 13/01/2010. The Bank reserves the right to reject any bid.

Allotment letters would be issued for successful bids on Thursday, 14/01/2010, while payment for the successful bids should be made to your account with Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 11.00am on Thursday, 14/01/2010.

*The Bank reserves the right to vary the amount on offer in line with market realities prevailing as at the period of auction of the Nigerian Treasury bills.

ISSUES OFFICE
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBU SQUARE
LAGOS.

VACANCIES

Our Client, a reputable accounting firm, invites applications from honest and suitably qualified candidates to fill the following vacancies.

1. i) **COMMERCIAL CONSULTANT**
 ii) **FINANCIAL CONSULTANT**
 knowledge requirements 6-10 years experience at management level in Utility Boards/Enterprises such as water or Electricity.
Qualification
 i. Bsc/HND Business Admin, Accounting, Marketing or MBA
 ii. Bsc Accounting, ACA, ACMA, ACCA, MBA would be added advantage.
 Computer knowledge and good communication skill.
2. **AUDIT MANAGER**
 Knowledge requirement 6-10 year experience in a reputable accounting firm.
Qualification Bsc/HND Accounting, Economics, Business admin, ACA, ACMA, ACCA, CPA.
 Computer knowledge and good communication skill.
3. **AUDIT SENIOR**
 Knowledge requirement- 4-6 years experience in a reputable Accounting firm.
Qualification: Bsc/HND Accounting or Economics and ACA
4. **SEMI SENIOR:** Post NYSC.
Qualification: Bsc/HND Accounting or Economics Admin with good communication skill.
5. **SECRETARY:**
 Knowledge requirements
 -4-5 years working experience as secretary in a medium size organization.
 - Ability to write shorthand and have good command of English Language.
Qualification: HND/Bsc Secretariat Studies
6. **COMPUTER OPERATOR**
 Knowledge requirement - 2 - 3years experience as Computer Operator with minimum of 45 words Per Minute
Qualification: HND/OND/RSA in Computer Science/Typing.

Remuneration- Very attractive but commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Interested applicants to forward their comprehensive CV indicating position and contact details not (P.O.Box) to: molatass@gmail.com within two weeks of this advertisement.

BUSINESS

0805 1000 536

Daily returns from stocks hit 1.4% at NSE

INVESTORS' cumulative daily returns from listed equities on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) on Wednesday hit a high of 1.4 per cent as market operators gradually regained confidence.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the new market-based confidence saw indices at the NSE rebounding significantly.

At the end of transactions, market capitalisation appreciated by N70 billion to close at N5.09 trillion, compared with the N5.02 trillion achieved on Tuesday.

The all-share index also grew by 289.53 points to close at 21,246.21 points, as against the 20,956.68 points recorded on Jan. 5.

Nigerian Breweries led the price gainers' chart, chalking up N2.60 to close at N55.70 per share.

Benue Cement Company gained N2.18 to close at N45.78 per share, while the share price of Julius Berger appreciated by N1.21.

Earlier, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI) led the price losers by shedding 50k to close at N14.50 per share.

Honeywell Flour lost 41k to close at N8.09 per share, while the share price of Vitafoam fell by 24k to close at N4.48.

An analysis of the sub-sector activities showed that banking shares remained the toast of investors, in spite of the huge debt overhang in the sector.

Even with the uncertainties of the banking sub-sector, investors bought

158.98 million banking shares worth N1.42 billion in 3,095 deals.

A further breakdown of activities in the sub-sector showed that First Bank accounted for the bulk of transactions, with 51.68 million shares valued at N738.23 million traded in 881 deals.

The Insurance sub-sector followed with 28.68 million shares valued at N28.27 million in 385 deals, while the Petroleum Marketing sub-sector accounted for N18.49 million committed on 694,900 shares in 146 deals.

In all, investors bought 293.49 million shares worth N2.17 billion which were traded in 6,156 deals. (NAN).



CBN Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi

N10m single withdrawals: CBN extends deadline by two weeks

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) said all cheques that were issued prior to the January 4, 2010 deadline on its rules on N10 million maximum limit on cheque payment should be re-presented for clearing within two weeks. CBN in a memo to all deposit money banks in the country, a follow-up to the one issued in December 11, 2009 said all classes of cheques that were issued prior to the take off date of the policy with value higher than N10 million but yet to be paid after January 4, 2010 should be represented for clearing.

"Thereafter, any cheque not presented should be recalled by the drawer or returned unpaid by the paying banks with the appropriate reason." The concerned drawers, according to the apex bank in a memo with reference no BOD/DIR/CIR/2010/GEN/01/107, should subsequently be enjoined to issue payment mandates to their bankers to do electronic transfers in favour of the payee.

The apex bank had in December 11 in a memo to all deposit money banks with reference BOD/Dir/Cir/Gen/01/106 sets a maximum limit on cheques at N10 million with effect from January 1, 2010. CBN also extended the policy to cover bank draft/manger cheques, in-house cheques drawn by all classes of account holders of the same bank and branch. CBN in a reminder to the banks said the rule also covers across-the-counter cash withdrawal with cheques by customers of banks, dividends/interest warrants, cash withdrawal by banks from CBN under cash drawing facility for their branches. The regulatory bank said the maximum limit serves a risk reduction measures in the clearing and settlement arrangement in line with international standard and practice.

FG says new projects will boost power

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

THE Federal Government has said that it has embarked on over 1,106 power projects to boost the delivery of electricity. Minister of Power, Dr. Lanre Babalola, who disclosed this at a media parley in Lagos yesterday, said out of these projects, 428 have been completed while 678 are now at various stages of completion. He explained that these projects will support about 2,740 MVA or 2,349MW in the national grid in addition to the existing distribution capacity.

According to him, the activities of his ministry have revolved around rehabilitation and reinforcement of existing facilities, adding that without adequate reinforcement and expansion in the network, whatever achievement that is recorded will not have the desired impact. He said with recent improvement in actual power generation to 3,700MW, government has intensified its effort to ensure that various projects in the Transmission and Distribution stages of the industry are vigorously pursued to boost electricity delivery to the final consumers. He stated that the task before the administrators of the power sector was enormous, stressing that it is however surmountable given the progress recorded in power generation presently.

"We are tackling the problems in the sector by improving our capacity which is currently over 5,600MW and we are also reinforcing both transmission and distribution networks so that we can



A power transformer

deliver this power to Nigerians. We have the capacity and with availability of gas more electricity will be delivered," he said. Babalola noted that activities in the sector is a continuous process as projects takes years.

CBN EXCHANGE RATES			BUREAU DE CHANGE RATES	
31/12/2009				
	Buying (NGN)	Central (NGN)	BUYING	
CFA	0.3048	0.3148	DOLLAR.....	N153
DANISH KRONER	28.4713	28.5681	EURO.....	N221
EURO	211.9711	212.6916	POUNDS.....	N255
POUNDS STERLING	238.3167	239.1268		
RIYAL	39.2267	39.36	SELLING	
SDR	230.6087	231.3926	DOLLAR.....	N154
SWISS FRANC	144.1592	144.6492	EURO.....	N223
US DOLLAR	147.1	147.6	POUNDS.....	N258
WAUA	230.0676	230.8496		
YEN	1.5916	1.5971		

Source: S&F Bureau de Change, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja.

Stock Market Index

Date: Wednesday, January 6, 2010

Index: 21,246.21

Deals: 6,156

Volume: 293,491,202

Value: N2,164,815,760.87

Cap.: N5,089,770,664,617.75

Business/Interview

FG should bailout Nigeria's aviation industry — Medview CEO

How did Medview Airline come into being?

Medview Airline came into existence sometimes in September 2000 but it became a fully registered company in 2005 as a travel and cargo agency. We also run Hajj and Umrah operations.

What are the challenges that confront your airline particularly the return journey exercise for pilgrims?

I will tell you that I have been involved in Hajj operations (airlifting of pilgrims) for close to 25 years consecutively. Some of my colleagues on board have involved in international travel since the 70's and 80's. But as years rolled by, we found ourselves in a business of our own. Honestly, challenges have been there since inception when we started Medview some years ago. We succeeded in airlifting 16,580 pilgrims from Nigeria to Saudi Arabia in 2008 and a total of 13,000 this year. However, one of the major challenges confronting us here was the slot given to the four airlines approved for this year hajj. For instance, the four airlines airlifted about 95,000 pilgrims through 12 gateways in Nigeria to this country. But now when it was time to take the pilgrims back to Nigeria, we were given just five slots. We would have airlifted almost all our pilgrims back home earlier than before if the Saudi authorities had given us more slots.

It was observed that some among the travel agencies approved by NAHCON for 2009 hajj did not have their own aircraft and that they bought their way through. This led some pilgrims stranded in the holy land. What do you have to say about this?

What actually happened was that there are some tour operators in Nigeria who provides their services on the pages of newspapers. For some time now, the affected tour operators have failed in their responsibility to their clients. We have found out that some of the operators brought innocent Nigerians to Saudi Arabia only to abandon them. We have come to the rescue of some of the affected operators in the past. The Saudi government has since talked to the Federal Government of Nigeria on the need to reorganize the tour operators. Thus, Medview have been appointed as the designated carrier for tour operators in Nigeria. All the tour operators that will be bringing pilgrims from Nigeria to Saudi Arabia are now under the umbrella of Medview Airline. Although, the challenges are there but we are trying our best.

How was the 2009 hajj operation for you?

The government encouraged us very well to airlift conventional pilgrim. Last year we were here and given about 17,000 pilgrims. After the exercise, we were able to do our best as we had been doing. The government changed pattern this year by throwing it open to state government to select carrier of their choice. Four carriers were selected; Kabo, Max-Air, Meridian and Medview for the conventional pilgrims. To us at this level, we're happy with the operation. 17 state governments and the Armed Forces selected Medview out of the 36 states. It's enormous seeing ourselves as a young airline. We always believe in prayers and Almighty Allah to tackle the challenges before us. We have taken on the challenges as they come and

Alhaji Munir Bankole is the Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director of Medview Airline, approved by the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) to airlift Nigerian pilgrims to and from Saudi Arabia for the just concluded 2009 hajj exercise. In this interview with FEMI AKINOLA in his office in Jeddah, he speaks on the challenges facing air operators in Nigeria and his experience airlifting Nigerian pilgrims.



ALHAJI Munir Bankole

I'm delighted so far. We came with 13,000 pilgrims. In one week of operation, we are able to return 6,000 pilgrims.

The Lagos State Muslims Pilgrims Welfare Board (LSMPWB) and pilgrims from Ogun, Osun and Lagos state alleged that airlift operation by your company was slow because you made available only one aircraft instead of two to take them back to Nigeria. What's your reaction to this?

We didn't bring one aircraft for the return journey as they alleged. The logistic was that when we were coming on board, the government estimate for Medview was to carry between 15,000 and 18,000 passengers. For every aircraft we used in this operation, it has 300 passenger capacities. If these aircrafts run 20 flights minimum, it would carry 6,000 pilgrims in 10 days to be precise. We made available two aircraft already meaning they will carry 12,000 pilgrims in 10 days where we have 13,000 pilgrims to carry. But the problem here is the slot allocated to Nigeria by the Saudi authority.

We had our back up aircraft stationed in Ilorin as I spoke with you. The problem that arose here is that we have more aircraft with fewer passengers to carry. In other words, it doesn't make business sense to bring the second aircraft from Ilorin in Nigeria to Jeddah here in Saudi Arabia where we have been

given the date to airlift pilgrims. It doesn't make financial, logistic and economical sense to bring the second aircraft because the Saudi authority had said this is what we are giving you.

The issue of Nigerian pilgrims getting stranded weeks after completion of hajj exercise has become a recurrent issue. Why has it not stop?

When we brought the pilgrims from Nigeria for this year's hajj, we came through 12 gateways as I said earlier to one particular point here in Saudi. Now, when we were returning, we went through just one gate. It means the four airlines that brought pilgrims had to go through one gate. To compound the problem, the Saudi government directed, which our Federal Government accepted wholeheartedly without asking questions, that Nigerians are not the only pilgrims visiting their country and that we should depart through just one gate. This is where the problem lies. We cannot help the situation; the pilgrims cannot help the situation they found themselves. Though the Amirul-Hajj kicked against the directive but the rule was not relaxed by the authority.

I am afraid if the rule by Saudi Arabia that carriers from Nigeria cannot increase their slots within the first 10 days after completion of hajj exercise, Nigerian pilgrims will

continue to be stranded here after subsequent hajj. On our part, if you have been following our trend, you will observe that the carriers have been keeping their aircraft idle because of this rule.

What are the preparations you have put in place to improve on the services subsequently?

What we focused much is quality service and assurance to deliver the goods. The issue of hajj is quite different to conventional travel. It has spiritual attachment between a pilgrim and his or her creator. Be that as it may, we don't default in our promise as some operators have been doing in the pilgrims. We have been rescuing the operators that disappoint their customers. We do our job as promised, at the end of the day, we still rescue some of our competitors. We are determined to offer quality service as quickly as the rules guiding our business permit us. We know Medview is a small company but we are grateful to Almighty Allah for being with us since we started. Nigerians have not seen the best of our service, in a couple of years to come, people will see the stuff we are made of.

How can aviation industry move forward in Nigeria?

You can see that in the recent past, so many airline operators in Nigeria have called for Federal Government's intervention and subvention for aviation industry in the country to move forward. It has happened in the United Kingdom, France and the US where the central government intervened to save their aviation industry. Nigeria should not be an exception in this regard. Aviation is a global business that is capital intensive.

An operator cannot manage anything in the industry because of the risk involved. You cannot cut corners, you must use original and the real equipment or else you won't last long in the business. There must be certain wavers for local airline operators in Nigeria. There are more local airline operators in our country than the foreign airline that are in the best position to compete favourably with the locals. The local airline operators ought to have some discount, they need encouragement.

For a good example, there exists NAMA that charge operators for overfly, the FAAN that charge for parking and the NCAA that they paid tax to. All these are federal agencies that local airline operators are crying out for to look at the grey areas where the Federal Government should give subvention. Another issue is the aviation fuel. It is unfortunate that our country produces oil in large quantity but local airline operators cannot get it at a price that is favourable. In Saudi Arabia, aviation fuel cost around equivalent of N18 per litre. There are so many areas where airline operators here enjoy better than their counterparts in Nigeria; whereas Saudi also produces oil. Our government needs to introduce some adjustment for the local airline operators in the country to grow.

What's your advice to the government on some pilgrims who misbehave while they are in Saudi Arabia?

I would advise the National Pilgrims Board (NAHCON) to do a proper orientation for pilgrims to know that they are Nigerian 'Ambassadors' while they are in Saudi Arabia irrespective of the part of Nigeria they are from.

Business

Nigeria's power failure

By Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai

MUCH has been said about the failure of leadership in Nigeria. In fact many have extensively written articles about this subject, especially with regards to the absence of the president. It certainly pains my heart that Nigerians who until now have had to accept mediocre and lackadaisical performance from its leadership are now being told that not only do we not deserve a government that works, we do not even deserve to have a government that is present.

When the Attorney General of the Federation can emphatically tell the country that the President can run the nation from Saudi Arabia indefinitely, then the question I ask myself is how has it become so easy to pull wool over the eyes of 150 million people? Why have we allowed ourselves to be taken for granted for so long?

But this piece is not about the lamentable failure of current political leadership, nor is it about the pronouncements of dodgy lawyers and desperate politicians. It is instead about the Nigerian people and the recent setback that the nation has suffered with regard to the Yar'Adua administration's stated goals for electricity supply – indeed, a power failure. This administration has informed the nation that Nigeria will NOT be able to meet its 6,000 MW target for electricity generation in 2009. It is now certain that this target has not been achieved, and our Vice President had the humility to apologize a few days ago.

It should be recalled that this administration, nearly 2 years



NASIR Ahmad El-Rufai

ago, not only revised downwards the Obasanjo plan of 10,000MW by the end of December 2007, but promised the delivery of only 6,000 MW within 18 months, and also an additional 11,000MW by 2011 – See: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL19357020080219>. Now, to put this reduced target in perspective, 6,000MW continuously generated and distributed for 150 million people, equally shared per person will only power a single 60W light bulb for about 58 minutes a day! The rest of the nearly 23 hours will be part dark, and part without any radio, TV, refrigerator or fan working. And forget about air-conditioning!

Given the current predictable trend of Yar'Adua administration's track record of disappointing out-

comes, it only goes to say that the latter promise of 11,000 MW will not be a reality either. To many Nigerians this does not come as a surprise, noting that just days after the Vice President promised that no Nigerian will use power generators in 2010, the Presidency itself proposed spending N542.4 million in the 2010 Federal budget to purchase and fuel its power generating plants. This government has delivered nothing but slogans; and the expected gains of our democracy, which saw real forward progress in many areas under the previous administration, have been completely stalled and all we now have are empty promises, lofty slogans and continuous threats to citizens that dare to demand change.

Without adequate power sup-

ply Nigeria cannot achieve its potential. To help put things in comparative perspective, Nigeria's power demand is estimated at about 15,000 MW but only about 3,400 MW is available at peak generation – less than 23% of our electricity need is currently being supplied! All the claims of generating "over 5,000MW" recently by the administration's officials are of course – the usual slogans, and a false one at that!

According to the World Bank, South Africa generates 40,000 MW of electricity for a population of nearly 50 million, while Nigeria with a population of over 150 million only generates 3,400 MW at peak.

As shown above, this translates to very disappointing levels of electricity consumption per capita, thereby leaving our industries to perform at epileptic levels, goods and services to be sold at prices that automatically adjust, during power outages, to account for the expensive cost of production via generating sets and a populace that is unable to take advantage of the latest advances in technology and appliances.

All this puts a painful strain on the already difficult situation of our citizens who must in addition to paying higher prices for goods and services, also invest hard earned Naira to buy, maintain and fuel power generating sets for their homes.

Nigeria's power failure is a debilitating problem that must be addressed. The envisioned growth of our economy cannot be achieved without improved electricity supplies, and there are crippling multiplier effects associated

with thousands of small businesses throughout the country not having access to uninterrupted power supply to run their flour mills, printing presses, restaurants, cyber cafes and clinics.

Putting any one of these businesses out of work at any given point in time, due to power failure, has a direct impact on the growth and expansion of the business, which in turn feeds unemployment, keeps wages low and negatively impacts workers' ability to provide financial support to their families. No nation can achieve economic development and industrialization without adequate and regular power supply.

Nigeria has what it takes and this government must rise to its responsibilities – as very clearly echoed in a statement by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, this morning:

Nigeria is among governments that are "able but unwilling to make the changes their citizens deserve." – Hillary Clinton – Guardian News, Thursday 12/17/2009

Nigerians must demand more from government, refuse to be intimidated by underhanded political tactics, and insist on our fundamental rights to a state with functioning utilities and infrastructure that is the bedrock of economic development.

Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai was a member of the Presidential Economic Team 1999-2007, Former Director General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (1999-2003) and Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (2003-2007). He chaired the Cabinet Committee on Power Supply Improvement between Jan-April 2007.

'How we brought Dangote Flour back to profitability'

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

THE managing director of Dangote Flour Mills Alhaji Shuaibu Abubakar Idris said the success recorded by the company in the last two years was as a result of changes in the management in 2007 where new hands were introduced into the business as well as commencement of strategic turn-around of the company.

With profit after taxation of N1.704 billion in 2008 against N290.335 million in 2007 and gross profit of N6.031 billion against N3.292 billion recorded in 2007, Idris said during the turnaround, the new management looks critically at the company's expenses, product lines and then diversified.

He said: "We look at our expenses, products lines, to cut cost and then we diversified, we went for market shares and then we also expanded our scope of businesses. Because of those strategic moves we

made, we were not only expanded the market but increased our volume in term of turnover and also made some profitability out of the transactions."

A former banker who took over the leadership of the company in late 2007 said the turn-around exercise as started yielding fruits.

"Basically, we have done three things: first we are expanding the capacity of our flour Mills operation from the average of about 4,000 metric tons to almost 8,000 tons per day, about 100 per cent daily milling capacity. Also, we have started new line of business in Ikorodu, Calabar and Kano and added product in the line of business, we have also opened new product- Alkama food which is a whole mill food targeted at those who might be suffering from diabetic. It helps because it has low carbohydrate, low starch. Also for Danvita which is semolina products we have not had sufficient in the market but we have added

some lines that would be producing in commercial quantities and we will be introducing small quantities such as 1kg, 2kg 10 kg bags into the market," he said.

Idris believed that the company is adequately prepared to whether the financial storm.

"I think we are strategically positioned and I sincerely believe that we have the capacity to whether any competition, any challenges as well financial meltdown in the market. I do not fore see any situation where we will be going to the market to raise fund this year. Usual money is from banks such as short term loans to fund business that is what we are going to be doing," he said.

At the recent annual general meeting held in Lagos the Dangote Group chairman, Alhaji Aliko Dangote had openly acknowledged the performance of the new of the Dangote Four Mills and described it as one of the best in the group.

"We believe in the manage-



ALHAJI Shuaibu Abubakar Idris

ment which have done extremely well. The management is one of the best we have in the Dangote group. They will definitely do better in 2010. Next year 2009 account will definitely be much more better than 2008 accounts," he said.

The company had offered N0.20 per shares as well as payment of an interim dividend of 30 kobo per ordinary share to all shareholders in its nine months audited 2009 account.

The group chairman said the Four Mills could not have done more than that as a result of recent economic meltdown as well as management's effort to retain certain percentage of the company's profit and rely less on

loans from banks.

"Although selling prices were increased, we were constrained by the market from passing on the entire increase on the customers, thus recouping the whole of the increased input cost. Management rather increased its focus on internal efficiency to cut down on other areas of costs, the effect of which made the company profit before taxation to increase from N376 million in 2007 to N1.8 billion in 2008," he said.

Dangote said the group profit in 2008 also leaped from N676 million in 2007 to N3.2 billion in 2008, implying N1.4 billion group attributable profit from the subsidiaries.

Star Feature

When love turns sour

Recently, the controversial sack of a staff of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has brought to the fore the need to integrate the nation's security concerns with fundamental human rights

By Tosin Omoniyi

In the classic love thriller, TITANIC, two love birds from entirely different social class and educational background met aboard a luxury ocean craft and fell instantly in love with each other. Braving all odds and challenges, they both clung to each other with the belief that time would ultimately display these daunting odds in their favor. For Abia state born Mrs Francisca Tochukwu Udeoji, the same scenario appears to be playing out for her in her love life, although in her case she is praying hard that she would be able to wake up from the horrific nightmare she is currently experiencing, for daring the status quo.

Her story hit the newsstands a few weeks ago. Apart from the leadership hiccups the nation was tottering under at the time in the absence of the president, and perhaps the passing away of the most powerful first lady Nigerians ever had, no other story held the attention of the nation so strongly that the hallowed chambers had to wade in to calm frayed nerves. From pieces gathered by news hounds from the principal gladiators in the script, the tale was a sordid one capable of arousing fiery emotions from everyone who heard. And it did. The central character in the unfolding saga, Francisca, who was until April 13 2006 a senior level staff of the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA commenced her trial in 2004 when she applied to her outfit for permission to get married to her heartthrob of many years, Mr Osondu Enwereuzor, a lower rank civil servant with the Niger Delta Development Commission's Abuja liaison office. Mr Osondu is a driver with the establishment. According to her the necessary investigations were carried out on her intended partner, and he was given a clean bill of health to go ahead with her marriage plans. Francisca, employed in May 2001 for the course 7ASN, says she was stunned when in April 2006, she was handed a letter entitled, 'Notice of Punishment' and subsequently told 'hand over all

agency property in her possession to the state commander and obtain clearance before you depart. Take notice that you have been found guilty of the following offence against discipline, unapproved single parenthood, contrary to and punishable under paragraph 12.8 of the regulation act of 2001.'

For Francisca the reasons adduced for the termination of her appointment even three years down the line are inane, and the only unshakeable conclusion she appears to have reached is that she is being victimized for marrying a lower level officer. Every other explanation given by the agency's authorities do not hold water for the ex officer. She says she is perfectly aware of the stipulations in the agency which forbids senior officers from marrying junior ones, and that she has not violated this as her husband is not a staff of the same organization she worked with. In the petition which she routed to the floor of the hallowed chambers some days back through her state's representative in the Senate, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, PDP, Abia South, the aggrieved lady simply states: 'I did not get married to anyone in the same organization. My husband works with the NDDC and I work with NDLEA.'

Although the Senate has subsequently ordered the committee on public complaints, headed by Senator Omar Hamgbada, to promptly launch a full investigation into the allegations bordering on abuse of human rights and gender discriminatory charges being leveled against the agency, the issue has opened up a plethora of hitherto controversial sub issues on regulations guiding nuptial concerns amongst the staff of government agencies, particularly the security related ones such as NDLEA.

Perhaps as a form of crisis management, the agency through its public relations office offered a terse statement concerning the issue. It said the officer was dismissed for, 'deliberately refusing to comply with the agency's regulations on marriage and single parenthood.' It further added that

her request to marry her partner was refused by the agency 'on security grounds', as the man in question was a deportee from Spain. It noted also that the officer was duly charged under the provisions of the Single Parent rule under paragraph 12.8(ii) of the NDLEA regulation 2001. Another reason given for the termination of her appointment was that she deliberately flouted the rule that says that no officer who had served the agency for less than 4 years, was allowed to be a single parent. Despite the stout defense reactions from the public have been overflowing, some not entirely complimentary.

A particularly irked legal practitioner, Irantiola Oladunni believes that the victim has not had a fair deal from the authorities. She notes with revulsion: 'What a cruel society! This is why I feel concerned about our fate in this country called Nigeria. There are entirely different sets of laws for men and women, as well as for the rich and the poor. We are talking about employment issues which are sensitive in other nations. It does not seem that Nigeria has any effective employment laws her citizens can fall back on when oppressed. Here, we have a woman that has been discriminated against and there are no obvious laws that protect her rights or anyone else for that matter, not to talk of remedying the situation.' She however adds that the victim can fight back on two grounds, discrimination on the grounds of gender and breach of the United Nations Human Rights International Convention Article 3 which most women with similar plight have used to defeat oppressive administrations in the past.

A source at the State Security Service, SSS says that the issue may have been blown out of proportion to achieve sensationalism status, which is a point of attraction for most Nigerians. He explains that every staff member of all security agencies in the country signed off their private life the very moment they were offered appointment in the various security outfits in the country. 'Due to the sensitive nature of these organizations, the authorities have to monitor the caliber of persons they are taking in which unfortunately includes their private affairs' he explains adding that such persons are periodically monitored in order to know if their lifestyle is still in tandem with the aspirations of the agencies.

'I remember when I wanted to get married, I was subjected to all forms of checks and scrutiny, not just me but my intended spouse. I was even told then to fill a spouse verification form, and equally my spouse was equally given some other forms too. The reasons for this according to them was in order to properly ascertain if the union would not pose a threat to the organization's objectives as a whole since I would be privy to a lot of in house information as a senior staff. I now appreciate why I had to go through all that stress. You can begin to imagine what would happen to national security if an officer who occupies a sensitive position in an outfit charged with national security, gets married to a spouse who has family links with a hostile nation. The same fear is replicated in virtually all other security outfits not just the NDLEA,' he explains.

He concedes however that the punitive measures such

NDLEA commenced her trial in 2004 when she applied for permission to get married to Mr Osondu Enwereuzor, a lower rank civil servant with the Niger Delta Development Commission's Abuja liaison office.

DG, NDLEA



Lanre Ipinmisho says the agency's decision is in order.

“ Perhaps as a form of crisis management, the agency through its public relations office offered a terse statement concerning the issue. It said the officer was dismissed for, ‘deliberately refusing to comply with the agency’s regulations on marriage and single parenthood.’ It further added that her request to marry her partner was refused by the ‘agency’ on security grounds, as the man in question was a deportee from Spain.

particularly a female, cannot marry a junior rank. However over the years it has been found out that nobody actually follows the rule. Many marriages have been contracted over the years between different ranks. But when a particular officer steps on the toes of the powers that be, at times his or her file can be scrutinized to find out issues like this, where he or she has erred in the past and such a person is made a scapegoat as a result of this. But cases like Francisca’s are rare.

On the fate of Francisca after being found guilty by the highest disciplinary body in security outfits, the Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee, which tries officers of grade levels 08-16, he says that she could still find reprieve by making a legal representation and appeal to the National Security Agencies Appeal Committee, NSAAC, a step he believes she should have taken before throwing the gauntlet at her former employers by approaching the National Assembly. The NSAAC, a subcommittee of the Joint Intelligence Board (comprising all security outfits in the nation) is headed by the National Security Adviser, NSA and has membership from virtually all security apparatuses which include the Special Service Office, SSO, the Directorate of Military Intelligence, DMI, the Attorney General of the Federation, the Police, Customs, Immigration, SSS, NIA, DIA and others. The Director General of NDLEA is also a crucial member of this formidable body. The decision of the board on any disciplinary matter, is assumed to be irreversible.

Many Nigerians are however calling on the authorities to review some of the regulations guiding the operations of

security organizations in Nigeria. Presently all the outfits are solely guided by the NSO regulations, that has its roots in the Code of Conduct for security outfits which was promulgated in 1979. It is believed in many quarters that the provisions of the NSO regulations, especially those relating to sensitive issues like marriage, ought to be remodeled to take cognizance of equally pertinent thorny issues such as fundamental human rights, gender sensitivity, and global standards employer-employee relations.

Meanwhile the spokesperson of the organization in the eye of the storm, Mitchell Ofoyeju asserts that the decision taken by NDLEA remains in force. He emphasizes the fact that the complainant acted contrary to the stipulation guiding her appointment for which an excuse is tenable. At the national assembly, the battle line has been drawn by Francisca who for now has to hope that her appeal does not suffer the fate similar entreaties she has undergone in the past in the hallowed chambers. May then she may yet have cause to smile once more in her life. Only time will tell!

“ I remember when I wanted to get married, I was subjected to all forms of checks and scrutiny, not just me but my intended spouse. I was even told then to fill a spouse verification form, and equally my spouse was equally given some other forms too. The reasons for this according to them was in order to properly ascertain if the union would not pose a threat to the organization’s objectives as a whole since I would be privy to a lot of in house information as a senior staff. I now appreciate why I had to go through all that stress.

as was utilized in Francisca’s case, is selectively used which can be regarded as witch hunting by some: ‘in most security establishments it is an accepted rule that a senior officer,

2004 when she applied to her out-
her heartthrob of many years, Mr
civil servant with the Niger Delta
liaison office. Mr Osondu is a driver

Business

UACN names Udo Udoma Chairman as Wushishi retires

By Jibrin Abubakar

UAC of Nigeria Plc now has a new Chairman for its Board of Directors. He is seasoned lawyer and administrator, Senator Udo Udoma, a statement said.

Senator Udoma, 56, who assumed office on January 2, 2010, steps into the shoes of Lt. General Mohammed Inuwa Wushishi (rtd) who voluntarily retired from office on January 1, 2010 having attained the age of 70.

The company also announced the elevation of Managing Directors of two of its subsidiaries – Abdul Akhor Bello of UACN Property Development Company (UPDC) Plc and Joseph Ibrahim Dada of the Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Limited (GCOML) – to its Board as Executive Directors, while former Director General of the Securities and Exchange Commission, (SEC) Dr Suleyman Abdu Ndanusa comes on board as non-executive director.

Mr Bello becomes Chief Financial Officer of the Company, while Mr Dada is the new Executive Director, Corporate Services and will take charge of Human Resources, Group Marketing Communications and Strategy. The statement said all the appointments are effective January 2, 2010.

The statement said: "A seasoned Board administrator, Senator Udoma had his secondary school education at King's Col-

lege, Lagos. He is a graduate of Oxford University, England. Senator Udoma served as the Special Adviser to the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources from September 1993 to March 1994.

He was a member of the Senate from 1999 to 2007, during which time he held various offices including serving as the Chief Whip of the Senate, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriation, and the Chairman of the Committee on National Planning, Economic Affairs and Poverty Alleviation.

"The Senior Partner of Udo Udoma & Belo-Osagie, a firm of Legal Practitioners, Senator Udoma is also a Director of Unilever Nigeria Plc.

"Mr Bello replaces Mr Layi Adetomiwa, the Head of Finance of UACN Plc, who is retiring from the Company after 31 years service. A fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Bello, who holds an HND degree in Accountancy from Yaba College of Technology, Lagos, joined GCOML on October 23, 1989 as Chief Accountant.

He served in various capacities in the UAC Group before his appointment as the Managing Director of CAP Plc and later UACN Property Development Company PLC. Bello, an Oxford Advanced Management and Leadership Programme (OAMLP) graduate of Said Business School, Oxford University, UK, has attended various local and overseas courses."



SENATOR Udo Udoma

NAICOM releases 2010 insurance policy guidelines

From Chris Agabi, Lagos

THE National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) has released the 2010 Insurance policy and operational guidelines to operators and it shall form part of the regulatory and supervisory tools for the year.

A statement signed by Lucky Fiakpa, Assistant Director, Corporate Affairs, NAICOM said what NAICOM has done is in accordance with the provisions of section 49 (1) of Insurance

Act of 1997.

Basically, "the guidelines, as issued by NAICOM, set out the business practice that would be strictly adhered to by every insurance operator in Nigeria effective January 1, 2010."

The handbook which contains guidelines on corporate governance issues, unethical practices issues, and other industry concerns has already been distributed to all Insurers, Reinsurers and Intermediaries in the country is among others.

The statement said the commission hopes the guidelines will strengthen the operational standards within the insurance industry.

"It is also aimed at improving the quality of performance of Insurers, Re-insurers and Insurance Intermediaries and, to ensure the institutionalisation of effective corporate governance structure for insurance companies; Re-insurance companies; Insurance Brokers, Loss Adjusters and Agents," he said.

He said: "Significantly, the

early release of the guidelines for 2010 underscores NAICOM's resolve to sanitise the industry and rid it of unethical practices. The Commission has also warned insurance operators to ensure compliance with the guidelines as failure shall attract varied sanctions."

As the Insurance Industry's regulatory body, NAICOM is empowered to develop and issue policy and operational guidelines to guide the practice of operators yearly.

Oceanic refutes reports of fresh staff disengagement

By Sunday Williams

THE Management of Oceanic Bank International plc has described recent media reports on fresh disengagement of staff as unfounded and a premeditated attempt by people out to derail the consistent progress being recorded by the Bank.

According to the Bank's Group Managing Director/CEO, John Aboh, the Bank had last December concluded the staff rationalisation exercise which was adopted to drive operational efficiency in the organisation. Noting that it had become imperative to alert customers and shareholders on sponsored negative reports against the Bank, Aboh assured that Oceanic would remain focused on the task of returning the Bank to profitability.

He said: "I urge our esteemed customers, shareholders, and the entire banking public to disregard such reports. Oceanic Bank is making steady progress with its recovery efforts and the trends before us show promising prospects and enhanced value creation for all stakeholders."

The Oceanic Bank boss explained that prior to the Bank's staff rationalization exercise, the Bank was expending over N4bn monthly on salaries and wages to a workforce of over 20,000 people.

Tariff reduction not automatic, says NCC

TARIFF reduction is not automatic in line with the reviewed interconnect rates, an official in the Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), has said.

The official of the commission, who pleaded anonymity, said on Wednesday in Lagos that the reduction would follow a logical process.

The official said the interconnect rate represented the amount paid by a telecoms operator to another operator on whose network a call was

terminated.

The official said the issuance of a review interconnect rates was a law from the regulatory body to the service providers, which they must abide by.

The official said telecoms operators had commenced the new rates since it started on Dec.31, 2009.

The official said the competition to retain and acquire more subscribers would make the operators to reduce the tariffs to conform to the new rates.

"If operator 'A' deems it worthwhile to reduce its tariffs to match the new interconnect rates, then others will surely follow," the official said.

NAN reports that the new rates which replace the earlier ones issued by the commission in Sept. 2006, present many features of improvement in the earlier interconnect rates determinations by NCC.

NCC said that the latest determination applied the Asymmetric Interconnect rate method.

It said with this, new mobile operators enjoy higher termination rates than the older operators as a result of the study which revealed that such operators expend higher cost of termination in their networks.

With this development, call terminations on new entrants' networks are graduated from N10.12 from Dec.31 to N8.20, 2012.

Call terminations on older operator's networks are fixed at N8.20 over the same period. (NAN).

342 sacked staff got full entitlements — Finbank

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

THE managing director of Finbank, Mrs. Suzanne Iroche said, that the 342 staff, representing 7 per cent of the bank's total staff strength affected in the restructuring exercise have been paid their 13th month and full entitlements in line with the existing policy of the bank.

He said: "The bank will continue to place great premium on its human resources and therefore has made adequate provisions to ensure that the 342 staff (representing 7 per cent of the bank's total staff complement) affected in the exercise were paid their 13th month and full entitlements in line with the existing policy of the bank."

Business



ONE of the GM car series.

Ford, General Motors and Chrysler see sales collapse

US car makers have reported plummeting car sales following a tough year for the industry. General Motors saw sales fall by 30% in 2009, while Chrysler reported its worst annual sales for 47 years.

Sales at Ford, which avoided bankruptcy last year, fell 15%, though it saw its first gain in market share since 1995.

Total US car sale in 2009 were at their lowest levels for nearly 30 years, according to figures from the research company Autodata. Sales figures for December have shown some signs of recovery in the market at the end of the year.

General Motors, which sought bankruptcy protection in June, saw a 6% fall in sales for December, but those falls were largely seen in the brands it intends to sell off.

Sales of Chevrolet, Cadillac, GMC and Buick brands - which it will keep - rose by 13%.

Ford also saw a rise in sales in December, with 33% more cars sold compared with a year ago.

Asian car makers fared better, however, with Toyota's US sales rising 23% in December. Even so, its full-year sales were down 20%, with Nissan and Honda seeing similar figures.

The year 2009 was a calamitous one for the US car industry, with both GM and Chrysler forced into bankruptcy.

But sales saw a boost from the government's "cash for clunkers" scheme, which offered subsidies for the purchase of new cars.

Analysts are optimistic at the prospects for the car market in the new year.

The Center for Automotive Research in Michigan is predicting a 19% rise in new car sales, citing improved credit availability and increased demand. *BBC.*

Nestle's Zimbabwe dairy reopens

SWISS food giant Nestle has reopened a dairy plant in Zimbabwe after ministers assured the firm its staff were safe. Nestle shut its operations last month after two of its managers were taken for questioning by police.

The firm said it had been forced to accept milk from "non-contracted suppliers", believed to be a farm owned by President Robert Mugabe's wife.

The farm was seized from white farmers and given to Grace Mugabe under controversial land-reform laws.

Nestle stopped taking milk from the farm in October after international criticism. Nestle's Nina Backes said normal business had no longer been possible and "the safety of employees could not be guaranteed".

"Since then, the local Nestle management has been in regular contact with the Zimbabwean authorities to find a solution," she said.

The company decided to reopen the factory on 31 December, she said, after receiving written assurances from the Minister of Industry and Commerce that their business would not be interfered with.

In October, Nestle said it would stop buying milk from Gushungo Dairy Estate and seven other farms after rights activists had called for a boycott of their products.

Mrs Mugabe is subject to international sanctions, along with her husband and dozens of other Zimbabwean officials.

But the measures cover assets held in foreign countries and travel - they do not restrict trade, except arms sales. *BBC.*

DP World to seek London listing

DP World, the container port business owned by troubled investment group Dubai World, is to seek a share listing on the London Stock Exchange.

The planned listing would be the second for DP World, which has been a member of the Dubai Stock Exchange since 2007.

The firm, which owns 49 ports around the world, has been disappointed with its valuation on that exchange. State-owned Dubai World made headlines in November when it sought to delay repayments on its \$26bn (£16bn) debt.

"Previously DP World's management had said it was not happy with the valuation the market was putting on the company and was looking at ways to unlock value for shareholders," said Rami Sidani, head of investment at Schroders Middle East.

"One of the concerns would have been the lack of liquidity on the Nasdaq Dubai, so a dual listing is a good idea. The company will be more visible to international investors," he said.

DP World said it aimed to float in London in the second quarter of 2010. *BBC.*

Egypt Govt. plans new \$2b stimulus package

EGYPT'S government will soon propose a third economic stimulus package totalling 11.2 billion Egyptian pounds to parliament, Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif said on Tuesday.

"After we consult with the Shura Council (upper house of parliament), we will present a third stimulus package worth 11.2 billion Egyptian pounds to the People's Assembly (lower house)," Nazif told parliament. (*Reuters/NAN*)

Cadbury shareholders reject Kraft's initial offer

CADBURY shareholders have overwhelmingly rejected the initial hostile takeover offer from Kraft Food. The US group said in a statement that it had gained support for its offer from investors holding just 1.5% of shares in the UK chocolate-maker.

Kraft had offered £3 plus 0.26 new Kraft shares for each Cadbury stock. The US firm now has until 19 January to announce a final, higher offer for Cadbury. If that is rejected, it will then have to wait another year.

Kraft's announcement came after one of its key shareholders revealed it had voted against the firm's plans to sell new shares to help fund the proposed Cadbury takeover.

Berkshire Hathaway, the holding firm of US billionaire

Warren Buffett, said it was concerned that the share sale would have wrongly given Kraft a blank cheque, allowing it to change its offer "in any way it wishes".

However, Hathaway, which owns 9.4% of Kraft, said it might change its vote if the final bid "does not destroy value for Kraft shareholders".

BBC business editor Robert Peston said that, as a result, Kraft's plans to buy Cadbury were now in jeopardy.

On Tuesday, Kraft announced that it had sold its North American pizza business - which sells brands including DiGiorno and California Pizza Kitchen in the US and Canada - to Nestle for \$3.7bn (£2.3bn).

It said it would use the money raised to increase the proportion of cash in its offer to Cadbury shareholders, in

order to make its bid more attractive.

The sale means Kraft will be able to offer an extra 60p per share in cash, though the overall value of the offer is not being increased.

Cadbury's board said this revised offer also remained "derisory", and that it also expected this to be rejected by its shareholders, who have until 2 February to decide on any final offer from Kraft.

Swiss food giant Nestle, which owns best-selling chocolate brands including KitKat, has ruled itself out of trying to buy Cadbury.

That means Kraft remains the only current bidder for Cadbury, although US confectioner Hershey has previously expressed its interest in a possible bid. *BBC.*

Business/Finance

Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE)

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

COMPANY Name	No of Deals	Quot. (N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares (N)
2ND-TIER SECURITIES				
CAPITAL OIL PLC	8	0.58	4,428,714	2,568,654.12
SECTOR Totals	8		4,428,714	2,568,654.12
AGRICULTURE				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC	3	0.86	1,774	1,525.64
FTN COCOA PROCES. PLC	18	0.56	1,650,577	923,723.12
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	2	0.64	76,202	48,769.28
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC	2	6.53	1,797	11,159.37
OKOMU OIL PALM COY PLC	1	22.75	148	3,199.76
PRESCO PLC	5	5.60	35,000	186,200.00
SECTOR Totals	31		1,765,498	1,174,577.17
AIR SERVICES				
AIRLINE/SERV. & LOG. PLC	1	2.65	10,000	25,200.00
NIG. AVIATION HAND. COY PLC	42	7.19	351,195	2,546,958.23
SECTOR Totals	43		361,195	2,572,158.23
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	32	0.50	13,959,720	6,979,860.00
INCAR NIGERIA PLC	2	3.73	56,500	210,745.00
R. T. BRISCOE (NIGERIA) PLC	23	5.70	410,405	2,362,766.31
SECTOR Totals	57		14,426,625	9,553,371.31
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	156	7.90	9,981,271	78,588,275.08
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	30	2.62	935,254	2,431,467.26
DIAMOND BANK PLC	85	7.30	4,307,208.3	1,193,807.96
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	8	10.10	5,461	52,425.60
FIRST CITY MON. BANK PLC	46	7.17	1,075,460	7,716,364.40
FIDELITY BANK PLC	174	2.37	16,475,126	38,505,876.31
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	881	14.40	51,678,582	738,227,689.43
FINBANK PLC	114	0.58	18,181,457	10,316,330.04
GTBANK PLC	399	15.82	13,471,028	213,457,099.04
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	44	7.50	1,965,510	14,415,007.90
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	107	1.85	6,311,021	11,675,388.85
OCEANIC BANK INTERN. PLC	55	1.94	2,359,655	4,577,730.70
BANK PHB PLC	29	1.51	341,971	516,376.21
SKYE BANK PLC	106	5.40	2,336,199	12,505,631.74
SPRING BANK PLC	10	0.70	56,458	39,587.44
STERLING BANK PLC	33	1.33	1,764,467	2,297,461.46
UNT. BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	172	10.99	1,862,232	20,388,966.82
UNION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	168	6.15	1,654,041	10,080,748.70
UNITY BANK PLC	43	0.91	6,947,103	5,879,673.42
WEMA BANK PLC	27	1.06	1,804,857	1,913,148.42
ZENITH BANK PLC	408	14.00	15,462,581	215,539,077.16
SECTOR Totals	3,095		158,976,942	1,420,318,131.92
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	45	12.18	609,585	7,331,285.34
BEN/CEMENT COY PLC	28	45.78	224,914	10,234,116.04
CEMENT CO. OF N. NIG. PLC	31	13.10	476,135	6,220,530.00
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	30	30.00	423,858	12,702,997.50
SECTOR Totals	134		1,734,492	36,888,928.88
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
CHEM. & ALLIED PROD. PLC	2	28.00	1,850	49,210.00
DN MEYER PLC	1	5.39	2,600	13,338.00
I. P. W. A. PLC	3	1.45	8,458	11,672.04
NIG-GERMAN CHEM. PLC	2	15.04	10,138	144,872.02
PREMIER PAINTS PLC	1	13.40	330	4,200.90
SECTOR Totals	9		23,376	223,292.96
COMP. & OFFICE EQUIP.				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC	4	8.51	6,473	53,402.25
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	11	0.52	411,000	206,500.00
THOMAS WYATT PLC	1	1.84	194	339.50
SECTOR Totals	16		411,667	260,241.75
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS (NIG.) PLC	7	2.35	163,273	387,291.55
JOHN HOLT PLC	1	9.28	216	1,905.12
PZ CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC	44	25.50	525,802	13,297,533.70
SCOA NIGERIA PLC	3	8.81	14,560	121,867.20
TRANS. CORP. OF NIG. PLC	83	0.56	12,160,599	6,685,804.63
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	28	36.75	67,705	2,531,829.56
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	50	20.10	721,167	14,176,455.95
SECTOR Totals	216		13,653,322	37,202,687.71
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	17	3.81	68,340	273,080.00
G. CAPPAL PLC	2	14.46	94	1,291.56
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	52	27.00	3,653,015	94,709,264.43
MULTIVERSE RESOURC. PLC	2	0.50	118,513	59,256.50
ROADS NIGERIA PLC	1	3.30	460	1,518.00
SECTOR Totals	74		3,840,422	95,044,410.49
ENGINEERING TECHN.				
CUTIX PLC	6	3.15	60,469	199,547.70
INTERLINKED TECHN. PLC	1	5.15	2,626	12,867.40
NIG. WIRE AND CABLE PLC	4	0.97	17,932	16,676.76
SECTOR Totals	11		81,027	229,091.86
FOOD/BEV. & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	10	29.40	8,906	252,566.05
BIG TREAT PLC	2	0.72	54,596	39,309.12
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	37	10.46	992,967	10,107,599.96
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	287	11.48	10,855,976	124,440,636.19
DANGOTE SUGAR REF. PLC	67	15.10	1,033,470	15,559,907.47
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	63	37.50	726,460	26,559,465.78

HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	23	8.09	239,247	1,968,751.50
NAT. SALT COY NIGERIA PLC	22	5.01	1,004,138	5,030,731.38
NIGERIAN BOTTL. COY PLC	33	22.52	227,750	5,174,407.21
NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	48	239.50	164,028	39,091,156.00
TANTALIZERS PLC	5	0.81	347,954	281,842.74
UTC NIGERIA PLC	9	0.86	49,735	42,950.90
SECTOR Totals	606		15,705,227	228,549,324.30
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	16	1.00	150,113	148,219.61
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	24	2.04	844,031	1,665,343.24
GLAXOSM. CONS. NIG. PLC	11	22.40	24,694	546,544.64
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	22	4.05	442,475	1,771,075.00
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	2	12.28	4,585	53,506.95
NEIMETH INT. PHARM. PLC	11	1.50	345,667	502,733.91
UN/DIAG. & CLIN. SERV. PLC	22	0.63	839,356	528,905.72
SECTOR Totals	108		2,650,921	5,216,329.07
IND./DOMESTIC PROD.				
ALUM. EXTRUSION IND. PLC	1	13.04	2,035	25,213.65
ALUMACO PLC	1	27.71	41	1,079.53
B. O. C. GASES NIGERIA PLC	1	13.48	607	7,775.67
FIRST ALUM. NIGERIA PLC	4	0.50	34,051	17,025.50
VITAFAM NIGERIA PLC	30	4.87	714,600	3,558,157.50
SECTOR Totals	37		751,334	3,609,251.85
INSURANCE				
AFRIC. ALLIANCE INS. PLC	2	0.87	11,000	9,130.00
AIICO INSURANCE PLC	148	0.89	4,343,532	3,786,159.08
CORNERSTONE INS. CO. PLC	11	0.54	3,158,138	1,705,094.52
CUST. AND ALLIED INS. PLC	11	2.72	759,450	2,098,544.00
EQUITY ASSURANCE PLC	5	0.50	400,000	200,000.00
GREAT NIG. INSUR. COY PLC	10	0.50	1,550,000	774,000.00
GUAR. TRUST ASSUR. PLC	29	2.10	5,812,710	12,161,536.00
GUINEA INSURANCE PLC	6	0.50	126,629	63,314.50
INV. & ALLIED ASSUR. PLC	3	0.50	85,498	42,749.00
INT. ENERGY INS. COY PLC	35	0.59	1,621,248	955,063.22
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	9	0.57	336,300	189,691.00
LAW UNION & ROCK INS. PLC	8	0.50	1,334,353	668,383.56
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.50	7,000	3,500.00
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASS. PLC	3	0.64	173,564	111,080.96
N.E.M. INS. CO. (NIG.) PLC	18	0.56	3,282,601	1,834,794.54
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	8	0.93	81,945	78,804.86
OASIS INSURANCE PLC	1	1.49	5,000	7,100.00
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	1	4.00	173	657.40
REG. ALLIA. INS. COY PLC	1	0.50	5,500	2,750.00
SOVEREIGN TRUST INS. PLC	13	0.50	2,084,000	1,042,000.00
STACO INSURANCE PLC	4	1.14	143,861	164,001.54
STAND. ALLIANCE INS. PLC	36	0.61	2,695,819	1,641,879.59
UNIC INSURANCE PLC	1	1.15	3	3.30
UNITY KAPITAL ASSUR. PLC	1	2.16	55,000	118,800.00
UNIVERSAL INSUR. COY PLC	4	0.50	93,200	46,600.00
INTERC. WAPIC INSUR. PLC	16	1.10	514,140	566,499.00
SECTOR Totals	385		28,680,664	28,272,136.07
MEDIA				
DAAR COMMUNIC. PLC	20	0.58	196,037	109,780.72
SECTOR Totals	20		196,037	109,780.72
OTHER FINANCIAL INST.				
CRUSADER NIGERIA PLC	1	1.50	5,000	7,150.00
D/CAPIT. MANAG. & TRUST PLC	1	2.02	3,000	6,060.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	1	0.66	47	29.61
SECTOR Totals	3		8,047	13,239.61
PACKAGING				
AVON C/CAPS & CONT. PLC	3	7.65	5,071	36,893.15
NIG. BAG MANUF. COY PLC	506	1.50	3,542,538	5,387,044.67
BETA GLASS CO. PLC	1	14.26	200	2,710.00
GREIF NIGERIA PLC	1	15.03	78	1,113.84
SECTOR Totals	511		3,547,887	5,427,761.66
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	42	33.51	240,154	7,947,300.94
BECO PETROL. PROD. PLC	3	2.53	7,850	18,918.50
CHEVRON OIL NIGERIA PLC	5	69.79	1,429	102,523.63
CONOIL PLC	13	27.63	13,808	381,648.58
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC	36	5.21	383,974	1,976,831.30
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC	15	99.95	8,573	852,629.69
OANDO PLC	9	93.99	8,464	795,531.36
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	23	149.00	30,648	4,415,284.25
SECTOR Totals	146		694,900	16,490,668.25
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
ACADEMY PRESS PLC	2	5.40	637	3,439.80
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	9	9.03	25,464	229,669.92
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	24	5.21	700,100	3,447,475.00
SECTOR Totals	35		726,201	3,680,584.72
ROAD TRANSPORTATION				
ASSOCIATED BUS COY PLC	3	0.70	35,000	24,200.00
SECTOR Totals	3		35,000	24,200.00
TEXTILES				
UNITED NIGERIA TEXT. PLC	1	1.90	1,000	1,900.00
SECTOR Totals	1		1,000	1,900.00
THE FOREIGN LISTINGS				
ECOBANK TRANSN. INCORP	23	14.50	763,344	11,368,875.70
SECTOR Totals	23		763,344	11,368,875.70
OVERALL Totals	6,156		293,491,202	2,164,815,760.87

What is
Changes in
Stock List

Any modification to the list of tradable issues of an exchange. These modifications include: new listings, supplemental security listings, substitutional listings, deletions, name changes, and stock symbol changes.

Google

GAINERS

NB	2.60
BCC	2.18
JBERGER	1.21
FLOURMILL	1.00

LOSERS

ETI	0.50
HONYFLOUR	0.41
VITAFAM	0.24
INCAR	0.19

Advertorial**RE-SAN LAMENTS NON-AUDIT OF PRESIDENCY, NASS ACCOUNTS**

The attention of the Acting Auditor-General for the Federation has been drawn to the above article which was published on page 6 of the Punch Newspaper of Tuesday, December 15, 2009. He has therefore directed that a rejoinder be issued to correct the misleading assertions contained in the publication so as to put the records straight.

In the publication, Prof. Taiwo Osipitan of Law Department of the University of Lagos among other things alleged that neither the accounts of the executive arm of government nor that of the National Assembly were audited and published from the inception to the end of the Obasanjo Administration.

For the avoidance of doubt the audited Accounts of the Federal Government are submitted annually to the National Assembly as one composite report in line with section 85 (5) of the Constitution of the Federal Government of Nigeria, 1999. The Constitution does not require the Auditor-General to submit separate reports in respect of each arms of government. The Audited Accounts of the various segments of the Federal Government, be it Ministries, Departments or Agencies, including the Presidency and the National Assembly are therefore not submitted in piecemeal to the National Assembly. However, the Annual Report of the Auditor-General contains comments and observations on the accounts of each arms of government including the Executives, Legislature and Judiciary and expression of his opinion on the financial statements of the Federal Government.

The Acting Auditor-General for the Federation has taken up very seriously the issue of timely submission of Audit Reports to the National Assembly since assuming office on May 18th, 2009. The 2007 Report was submitted in July 2009 by the retired Auditor-General while the 2008 Report was submitted in October 2009 by the Ag. Auditor-General for the Federation.

This represents the first time in 22 years that the Reports of the previous year accounts will be submitted within the following year precisely less than 10 months after the year ended which is in tandem with the provision of the Constitution that requires the Auditor-General for the Federation to submit the Audited Reports nine months after the end of the fiscal year. The Office is

therefore up to date in rendition of Annual Reports to the National Assembly.

The submission of 2008 Annual Report of the Auditor-General for the Federation was widely reported in the Dailies and one would have expected that an academician of Prof. Osipitan stature would have gotten access to such information.

The National Assembly is the representative of the people of Nigeria and once the Auditor-General for the Federation submits his Report to the National Assembly, it could be deduced that he has reported to the people and such reports from that moment becomes public document.

This timely submission of up to date Audited Accounts of the Federal Government to National Assembly is verifiable and questions on any aspect of the Audited Accounts of the Federation should be channeled to the National Assembly.

The Auditor-General for the Federation cannot hold brief for the Auditors-General of some States that according to the article "managed to publish a one or two-page summary of their audited accounts". But Prof. Osipitan has every right as a Nigerian to pick holes in the published audited accounts of such states and get clearance from those states.

We wish to state that this Office appreciates the growing interest of Prof. Osipitan and any other Nigerian or Organization in the Office of the Auditor-General for the Federation and the exercise of its constitutional duties.

A genuine interest in the Office of the Auditor-General for the Federation will deepen and promote the transparency policy of this Administration and engenders accountability in the Nation. Such genuine interest is demonstrated where comments are based on verified facts, and fair to all concerned. This is very important to avoid questionable conclusion and half-truths which have capacity of misinforming the wider Nigerian people to whom the Auditor-General for the Federation reports.

Florence Dibiazue-Eke (Mrs.)
Head of Press and public Relations Unit,
Office of the Auditor General for the Federation.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COLLEGE WARRI (FEGOCOWOSA)



Pro Unitate!

CLASS OF 68 - 72 (HSC 73 - 74) ANNUAL REUNION

All old students of FGC Warri in the set of 1968 -72 (HSC 73- 74) are invited to the

ANNUAL REUNION,

Holding at: Wellington Hotel Effurun, Warri Delta State.

Date: 15th - 17 th Janaury 2010.

Our teachers (Who taught this set) are also warmly invited to attend please contact the announcer:

Ifeoluwa Hilda Igun (Nee Ekperigin) Tel: 08023130443, 08053559418.

Under listed members of the class should also contact the announcer with their details please:

Kayode Abiodun
James Abiola
Godfrey Agbakoba
Amos Akinwale
Andrer Ataikiru
Grace Bello
Sunday Edet
Garba Umaru
Isaac Ikhioya
Joseph Iredia
Isiaka Ishola
Andren Ikpoma
Theresa Ezirim
Samuel Lawson
Richard Sadjere
Bello Teidi

Samuel Atikpe
James Adamu
Patric Akpomiemie
Folorunso Aturu
Godwin Lori
July Mega
Gabriel Obu
Matthew Ogunyanwo
Jacob Ojo
Emman Okome
June Okonwenze
Linda Okonwenze
Idowu Olusi
Christopher Otoide
Shade Sobowale

Re-uniting to God's glory and service to our ALMA MATER.
UP SCHOOL!!!

ANNOUNCER

DIGEST

Eating pomegranates may help prevent breast cancer

EATING pomegranates could reduce the risk of breast cancer, researchers have said.

Scientists have found chemicals in the fruit being hailed as a superfood after the launch of several juice drinks play a key role in blocking the growth of breast cancer.

The study may lead to new drugs to prevent cancer and in the meantime the researchers said eating more of the fruit may be beneficial.

Tests in the lab have found that the chemicals called ellagitannins block the production of oestrogen which can fuel the growth of cancer cells.

The study is published in Cancer Prevention Research, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Experts said it unclear how much of the chemicals would be required to have an effect in humans and it may not be possible to gain enough from diet alone.

Prof Gary Stoner, professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at Ohio State University, said that "relatively high lev-

els of ellagitannin compounds" were needed in the study to have an effect.

He added "It's not clear that these levels could be achieved in animals or in humans because the ellagitannins are not well absorbed into blood when provided in the diet."

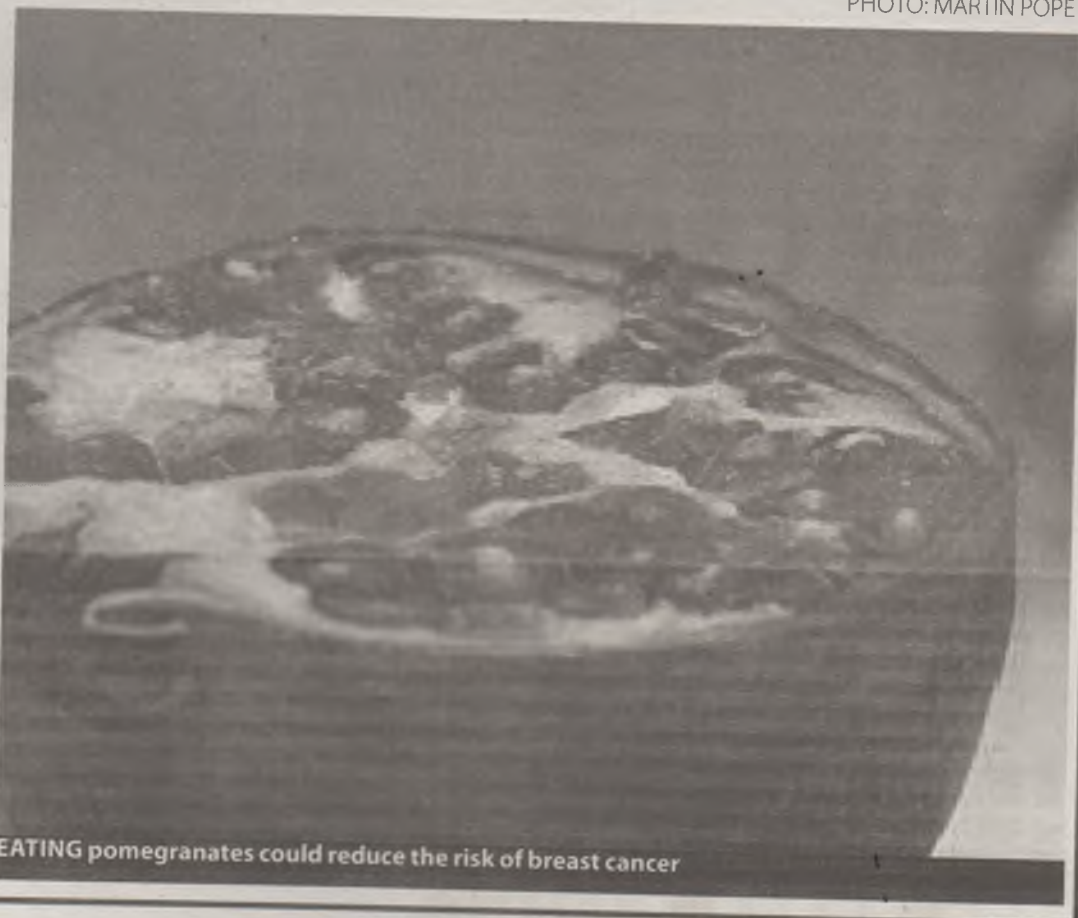
He said the findings were promising enough to warrant further studies with pomegranates.

Prof Stoner added people "might consider consuming more pomegranates to protect against cancer development in the breast and perhaps in other tissues and organs."

Dr Powel Brown, medical oncologist and chairman of the Clinical Cancer Prevention Department at the University of Texas M D Anderson Cancer Centre, said: "More research on the individual components and the combination of chemicals is needed to understand the potential risks and benefits of using pomegranate juice or isolated compounds for a health benefit or for cancer prevention."

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

PHOTO: MARTIN POPE



EATING pomegranates could reduce the risk of breast cancer

One third of world's population has tuberculosis bacterium



A patient with tuberculosis in south-eastern Sudan

It is one of the three diseases most closely linked to poverty, the other two being malaria and Aids.

More than two billion people, or a third of the world's total population, are infected with Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacteria that causes tuberculosis (TB). Tuberculosis is the world's seventh-leading cause of death.

It killed 1.8 million people worldwide last year, up from 1.77 million in 2007. It is one of three primary diseases that are closely

linked to poverty, the other two being Aids and malaria.

Some facts about tuberculosis:

* It is spread easily through the air. When infectious people cough, sneeze, talk or spit, they expel the bacteria. Just a small amount is enough for transmission. Someone in the world is newly infected with TB every second.

* Nearly all TB infections are latent, with carriers showing no symptoms and they are not infectious. However, one in 10 will

become sick with active TB in his or her lifetime due primarily to a weakened immune system.

* Of the 1.8 million deaths in 2008, or 4,930 deaths a day, half a million were Aids patients. TB affects mostly young adults in their most productive years. The vast majority of TB deaths are in the developing world. More than half occur in Asia.

* The World Health Organization estimates that 9.4 million people developed active TB in 2008, up from 9.27 million in 2007 and 9.24 million in 2006. Among the 15 countries with the highest TB incidence rates in 2007, 13 were in Africa, while half of all new cases were in six Asian countries - Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines.

* TB is the seventh-highest cause of mortality in poor countries.

* The average TB patient loses three to four months of work and up to 30 per cent of yearly household earnings. The World Bank estimates that the disease diminishes 4 per cent to 7 per cent of GDP in some of the worst-affected countries.

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

Mini-weighing scales which alert children if they are eating too fast 'could help fight obesity'

PORTABLE mini-weighing scales which alert children if they are eating too fast can help fight childhood obesity, expert believe. Researchers found that the machines helped youngsters to lose weight, realise sooner when they felt full and cut their portion sizes.

One in five children in England is now overweight or obese by the time they start primary school, official figures show, and experts predict that the problem will only get worse in coming decades.

However, there are few treatments which successfully help children lose weight in the long-term. Researchers in Sweden have invented a machine, called the Mandometer, which aims to retrain children to eat less and recognise more easily when they feel full.

The device plots a graph which shows children the rate at which food is disappearing from their plate and compares this to an ideal rate set by a food therapist. Tests on 106 obese children, aged between 9 and 17, carried out by researchers at Bristol University show that over the course of a year youngsters using the machine lost an average of between four and six pounds in weight, despite the fact that they were still growing. The researchers said that the machine helped the children to lose weight more quickly than other treatments and therapies, in their findings, published by the British Medical Journal.

As well as using the machines the children were encouraged to exercise for 60 minutes of exercise a day and eat a balanced diet.

Tests on the group six months after the end of the experiment showed that the weight loss was maintained, suggesting that the Mandometer could have a long-term effect on children's eating habits.

Sign Language



See what the economic crunch is doing.
Photo location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by George Meyers
Culled from www.signspotting.com

SUDOKU

The Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 square grid made up of smaller 3x3 square grids (regions). The numbers already present within the puzzle are "given" - these are there to start you off. The aim is to complete the puzzle by filling the empty cells. Every digit from 1-9 needs to fit in each row, column and region of 9 squares. Each row, column and region must contain just one instance of each number, 1-9.

59

		6		7	4			
		9	4	3	8			
	2	1			5	7		
	9			8				
			3	7	1			
				5			6	
		8	5			4	9	
			7	6	3	2		
	7		8					1

EASY CROSSWORDS

ACROSS

- 1. Buenos Aires's country (abbr.)
- 4. Hiding whips
- 9. ___-de-sac
- 12. Reaction to an IM joke
- 13. Host Winfrey
- 14. Big ___ house (2 wds.)
- 15. Summer in France
- 16. Parasols' kin
- 18. Tawdry
- 20. Effort
- 21. Glimpsed
- 24. Doc for soldiers
- 28. "SOS"
- 31. ___ Raton, Florida

DOWN

- 33. Opp. of WSW
- 34. Had a bite
- 35. Black bird
- 36. Meadow sound
- 37. Dearie
- 38. Looked over
- 39. Jewelry items
- 40. Chilean peaks
- 42. Not as much
- 44. Makeover locale
- 46. Miss of Muppet fame
- 50. Maryland city
- 55. ___ Rite
- 56. ___ to Pieces" (2 wds.)
- 57. Broadcast again

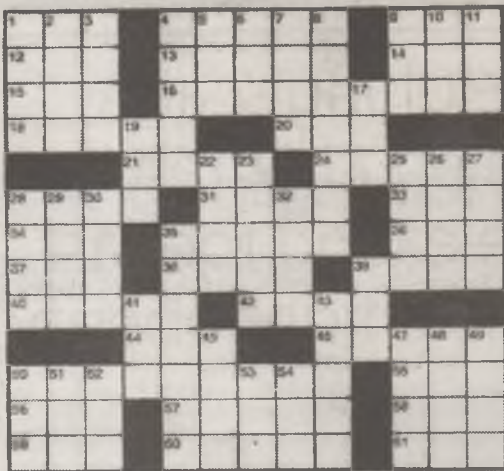
ACROSS

- 58. Detergent brand
- 59. Businesses (abbr.)
- 60. Made mistakes
- 61. Chatter

DOWN

- 1. Actor Guinness
- 2. Philip who wrote "Goodbye, Columbus"
- 3. Giddy delight
- 4. Automobile type
- 5. Dashboard abbr.
- 6. Spherical body
- 7. Segment
- 8. Georgia march
- 9. Coolidge's nickname
- 10. South of Can. ___ Cruces, New Mexico
- 17. Drain cleaning chemical
- 19. Egyptian cobra
- 22. On-line auction house
- 23. Work of fiction
- 25. Moore of "G.I. Jane"
- 26. Sharing a secret (2 wds.)
- 27. Corporate execs
- 28. Joke response (2 wds.)
- 29. Prince Harry's alma mater
- 30. ___ Lease Act
- 32. Give over
- 35. Breathe
- 39. Frat letter
- 41. Superlative suffix
- 43. Pay out
- 45. U.S. native (abbr.)
- 47. Dull color
- 48. River of Arizona
- 49. It makes an omelet yellow
- 50. Pen-making name
- 51. Historian's word
- 52. ___ Gatos
- 53. Hockey great Bobby
- 54. Feel regret

47



Solution to Easy Crosswords

46

R	E	P	O		U	R	I	S		P	B	S	
L	A	I	R		D	E	M	O		O	R	A	
S	T	A	N		D	E	A	L		L	I	L	
				A	C	E	D		E	R	E	C	T
R	E	N	T	E	R		H	M	O				
E	X	C	E	L		C	O	N	C	E	P	T	
B	A	A			D	O	G			Z	O	O	
A	M	A	D	E	U	S		B	A	R	E	R	
				O	N	O		P	O	T	A	T	O
S	H	I	E	R		B	L	A	H				
H	O	N			O	H	I	O		E	R	A	S
A	R	F			L	I	N	T		N	E	M	O
M	N	O			L	E	G	S		S	L	I	T

Solution to Sudoku 58

7	6	2	4	1	3	8	9	5
5	1	9	6	8	2	3	7	4
3	4	8	8	9	5	2	1	6
4	7	1	9	6	8	5	3	2
9	2	6	5	3	7	1	4	8
8	5	3	2	4	1	9	6	7
1	8	7	3	5	6	4	2	9
6	9	5	1	2	4	7	8	3
2	3	4	8	7	9	6	5	1

DAILY TRUST

EDUCATION

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HOTLINE: 08035910371

FCE to partner Army on soldiers' education

From Isa Liman, Zaria

THE Federal College of Education (FCE), Zaria, said it is determined to partner with the Nigerian Army in the area of educational development of the army's officers and men.

Provost of FCE Dr Mouktar Ibrahim Maccido, made this declaration when he received the Commandant of the Depot Nigerian Army, Chindit Cantonment, at his office.

"We are happy that you are here and I would like to assure you that our College is ready to give admission to your officers and men who want to further their education. Depot Nigerian Army and our Col-

lege are partners in progress therefore we are ready to give your soldiers and officers all the necessary support they need to further their education for the development of their career and the Nigerian Army in general," he said.

Dr Maccido stressed that the college is aware of the role which soldiers and officers of the Depot Nigerian Army are playing in keeping the peace which the college, Gyellesu town and the entire ancient city of Zaria is enjoying.

He therefore emphasized the readiness of FCE, Zaria in supporting the effort of the Commandant in uplifting and maintaining the glories and dignity of the Nigerian Army.

"FCE, Zaria is known for peace. Our students and staff always try to uphold the popular saying of 'Unity in Diversity'. On our part as management, we take the welfare of students and staff very serious and this is perhaps the secret of our success story as the College is now one of the most peaceful academic communities in the country. I would like to tell the commandant that we are often referred to as a 'Centre of Academic Excellence' and we hope to extend this academic excellence to the realms of the Nigerian Army," he said.

Earlier in his address, the Commandant of Depot Nigerian Army, Brigadier General Afandi Shehu Bukar Ngorgi said his team was at the college to rub minds

with its management on the ways to enhance the security of the college and Zaria as a whole.

"We want to appreciate the warm reception accorded us. The issue of security is everybody's business and FCE, Zaria is one of the areas we ought to pay attention to as a security outfits. I would like to also use this opportunity to appeal to the College to assist our men and officers who want to further their education. On our part, we give encouragement to our men and officers when it comes to development of their education as that would translate to the development of their careers. We hope that the College would augment our effort in that direction," he said.

Produce job providers not job seekers, registrar tells varsities

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

THE registrar of the newly established Kwara State University (KWASU) Alhaji Abiodun Olayiwola has urged Nigerian universities to produce graduates who will be job providers and not job seekers.

The registrar stated this at a two-day orientation workshop for non-academic staff of the state university organised in Malete, Kwara State.

He said institutions of higher learning in Nigeria must evolve ways of developing a knowledge-driven society that will record rapid development as it is the goal of the Kwara State University.

"KWASU," he said, "will be built to a world class standard and will be one of the foremost tools in advancing the frontiers of knowledge for human development."

Emphasizing the essence of organizing periodic orientation programmes as well as training and retraining of staff of institutions, Provost of College of Pure and Applied Sciences Professor Deboye Kolawole said that KWASU's main business is training of students in such a unique and progressive manner that will be a point of emulation for other universities world over.

He said the university will be a pivot of knowledge-driven society that will be a reference centre for job providers and not job seekers.



FCE, Zaria Provost, Dr Mouktar Maccido, in white gowns presenting the Depot Nigerian Army, Zaria best soldier of the year 2009.

'No politics in scholarship payment to Giwa students'

From Isa Liman, Zaria

THE chairman of Giwa Local Government Students Union (SUG) has described the recent comments linking the local government's scholarship scheme with politics as unjust and unfortunate development.

Comrade Garba Aliyu was reacting to publications credited to an indigene of the local government relating to the payment of scholarship allowance to the indigenes of the local government to political motives saying that those comments were sponsored by people who are against the progress of the students.

"Students of Giwa have no

problem with the LG's scholarship committee. This is contrary to an allegation of irregularities and politicization of the process in an article carried by the north's two major newspapers. We are the students and we are supposed to be the people to complain not people who are not registered students. We want to appeal to those people to keep away politics from our scholarship matters. We appreciate what the incumbent chairman, Alhaji Hamza Danmahawayi is doing to us because since his assumption of office he has increased our scholarship allowance by 100 percent and the payment is always regular and it is without discrimination," he said.

Military rule kills Nigeria's education system – VC

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

LONG military rule has contributed to the rot in the educational institutions of Nigeria, Vice Chancellor of Al-Hikmah University, Professor Abdulrasaq Deremi Abubakre, has said.

Professor Abubakre, who stated this while receiving a golden trophy won by the students of the institution during the Third Edition of the Private Universities Games in Yola, said military took over all the private schools and called them theirs but did not do anything to improve their standards.

"The spirit in those days was towards honesty, but the military

came and destroy everything and promote mediocrity, people only pursue money which does not bring anything except problem and frustration. The beginning of fighting corruption is for one to continue to tell the truth and nothing but the truth," he said.

He called on governments at all levels to continue to learn from the colonial regime who always allow the communities to set up private school for the training of the children and when it get to the level of writing examinations they take over payment of salaries and examination fees for the students in order to assist the community to grow.

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Plateau: Row over deduction of LG funds for education

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

AS primary schools prepare to resume in the following week to begin new term in Plateau State, one of the unresolved issues that would accompany academic programmes would remain the issue of deductions made by the Plateau State Universal Basic Education Board to fund education in the state.

Local government chairmen in the state have late last year complained about the deductions made from their statutory allocations to fund primary, adult and vocational education in the state. The chairmen led by the Chairman of Kanam local government Dr Saleh Kanam have expressed dissatisfaction with the extent of the deductions, stressing that the withdrawal under the first line charge is exerting a lot from their lean resources and it is illegal since it has overshot statutory provisions.

The chairmen said as far as they are concerned, the contribution they are required to make to fund education in the state as contained in the laws of the state should not exceed 15 percent but that the current deductions from their funds is a way above that.

"Local governments in Plateau state have continued to lose virtually half of their statutory allocations through direct deductions from source to the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) when by law the local governments are only required to provide 15 percent of the total emolument of teachers," spokesperson for the chairmen Dr Kanam, has said.

But as the local government groan with the pains occasioned by the deductions, the Plateau SUBEB said it has not done anything unlawful about the deductions. The board said also its action has been guided by what it understands to be the position of the law and that it would continue to deduct above the 15 percent to address the sorry state of education in the state.

Reacting to the remarks by the local government chairmen, Executive chairman of Plateau State Universal Basic Education Board (PSUBEB) Mrs Sarah Reng Ocheke said as far as she is concerned there is nowhere in the statute where it is stated that the contribution for primary education by the local governments in the state should be limited to 15 percent only.

Describing the assertion as



GOVERNOR Jonah Jang



DR Saleh Kanam, Chairman of Kanam local government

"wrong," Mrs Ocheke explained that having sought the interpretation of the relevant sections of the law with regards to contributions to the board, she discovered that the 15 percent deduction is not a ceiling to the contributions the local governments are supposed to make to SUBEB as the local government chairmen claimed.

She said there was no way the contribution of local government for educational services would have been limited to 15 percent when at the local level teachers are employees of the local government and are supposed to receive their emoluments from the local governments.

Our correspondent learnt that some of the local government chairmen are already threatening to go to court to seek the interpretation of the section if the deduction continues in 2010 because after such deductions they are often left with virtually nothing to handle the affairs of their various local governments.

Majority of the local government chairmen believe that the 15 percent they provide to SUBEB should suffice as their contributions while the state government should shoulder the major

responsibilities of funding education and not the other way round.

Investigation by our correspondent revealed that such controversies were also evident in some states where there was no clear distinction as to where the responsibilities of the local governments towards funding primary education end, and where that of the state or federal government begins. For instance, the Abia state government faced with a similar crisis had to take the matter to the court.

In a landmark judgment at the Supreme Court in 2002, the apex court ruled in the case between the Attorney General of the Federation vs the Attorney General of Abia State that the local government council only participates with the state government in the provision and maintenance of primary, adult and vocational education, and spelt out that the "function (of funding primary education) obviously remains with the state government."

Our correspondent discovered that the grouse of the local government chairmen in Plateau State is that the state government which should shoulder the bulk of the responsibilities towards fund-

ing of the education sector is subletting the burden to the councils through the excessive deduction from their coffers.

Section 99 of the Plateau State Local Government Laws No 1 of 2007 spells out the extent that the local government can go to fund primary education in the state, stating expressly under paragraph "d" that the "fifteen percent of total personal emolument of teachers to the universal basic education Board."

Section 17 (2) of the SUBEB laws has defined sources of funding for the board to include grants from the Universal Basic Education Commission, contribution from the state and local governments contributions from National Commission for Nomadic Education and donations from voluntary organizations, community or individuals and NGO's as well as from ETE, World bank, Unicef and other international development partners and others like persons or bodies or from the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education while Section 17 (3) of the SUBEB laws goes ahead to state specifically that all the funds realized from

section 17 (2) shall be disbursed from the funds "all expenses related to schools in the state."

Based on these provisions, the local government chairman disagreed with Mrs Ocheke that the 15 percent is only an addition to what they are supposed to contribute for the funding of education, stressing that the laws have made it clear on the various ways to source funds and the specific use such funds are to be put to.

The chairmen said as far as they are concerned the Plateau State Local Government Laws of 2007 has made it clear that they are only obliged to pay contribution to the tune of 15 percent of the total emolument of teachers and cannot pay above that.

Mid last year, the chairman of Kanam local government Dr Saleh Kanam was forced to write a protest letter to Governor Jonah Jang about the deductions supporting his argument with other relevant sections of the laws but investigations revealed that the state government is yet to respond to the issues he raised. Whether the state government would intervene to stop the local governments from going to court remains to be seen.

CAMPUS ROUNDUP

E-Mail: campusroundup@dailytrust.com

HOTLINE: 08035910371

Oyo law students appeal to Akala over scholarship

From Musliudeen Adebayo, UniJos

OYO State law students at the University of Jos under the aegis of National Association of Oyo State Law Students (NAOSLS) have called on Governor Adebayo Alao Akala to assist them with scholarship to ease their hardship.

The students also appealed to the members of Oyo State House of Assembly, the state Ministry of Education, traditional rulers and other stakeholders to assist in payment of the scholarship.

President of the association Comrade Olakulehin Yunus Oladede, who made the call in an interview with Campus

Roundup, said law school fees is increasingly becoming unaffordable for students, hence the need for assistance from the state government and other stakeholders.

He said several efforts have been made by the executive of the association to the previous administrations in the state but nothing positive came out of it.

Dean clamours for computer literacy

THE Dean of the Postgraduate School, Professor Isaac Abimbola, has challenged all Nigerians, particularly the educated ones, to acquire computer literacy given the imperative of Information Technology (IT) in the modern social existence.

Speaking in Ilorin, Professor Abimbola said "everyone one has to find a way to be computer literate or they will not be able to make payment or access information."

The Dean, who is a former Provost of Osun State College of Education, also urged postgraduate students to ensure they complete their registration, which has joined the university online platform this session.



A cross section of officials of the Nigerian Universities Staff Sports Association (NUSSA) at the closing ceremony of the 9th edition of the event over the week at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

DO you have a story?

ARE you a university or polytechnic student or lecturer? Do you have interesting stories about social, economic and political activities on the campuses? Then **CAMPUS ROUNDUP** is a platform for you to share your story with our readers.

WRITE to the Editor through campusroundup@dailytrust.com

Students shun school resumption in Umuahia

TWO days after public schools in Abia reopened for the second term, students and pupils were yet to report for academic activities.

Investigations by the *News Agency of Nigeria* in Umuahia revealed that many public schools were virtually empty.

NAN gathered that many of the students, who were still in festive mood, were not comfortable with the resumption date which they claimed was early.

A student from Amuzukwu Junior Girls' Secondary School, Umuahia, said that she was not yet ready for studies as she was still enjoying the New Year celebration.

"I am so sure that even our

teachers will not be in school and as such will not be ready for us," she said.

A teacher in Amuzukwu Senior Girls Secondary School, who pleaded for anonymity, said they were only idling away as students had refused to turn up for classes.

He blamed the development on the Education Ministry's insistence that public schools should resume on January 4 instead of the earlier date of January 11.

"January 11 is a more acceptable date because by this time, students who travelled to their homes for Christmas and New Year celebrations, would have been back," he said.

Olugbon donates land to Unilorin

IN appreciation of the enormous contributions of the University of Ilorin to the development of the country, the Olugbon of Orile-Igbon Oba Samuel Adegboyega Osunbade, has donated 100 plots of land to the university.

The monarch made this known in a letter addressed to the Vice-Chancellor Professor Ishaq Oloyede.

He said the plots of land should be allocated to the senior staff of the university at the dis-

cretion of the Vice-Chancellor.

"The land allocation will be in Oba Olugbon's domain especially from Orile-Igbon town to Alate near Otte. The place is very close to Ilorin where your university situates," the Oba Olugbon said, adding that additional plots could be obtained by an allottee at a concessional rate.

Apart from this, Oba Olugbon, who is also the Vice Chairman of the Oyo State Council of Obas and Chiefs, also informed the Vice-Chancellor that his

royal family is offering 20 industrial plots of land gratis "each of one acre size to business outfits which seek to establish industries. The place is at the Industrial Layout at Orile-Igbon which is already served with roads and electricity."

However, the monarch put a caveat that any land that is not developed within five years of allocation would revert to the royal family while an undeveloped parcel of land that had been allocated cannot be sold.

Governor Suswan storms UniJos main campus

From Thomas Biniyat, UniJos

IN a surprise visit, Governor Gabriel Suswan of Benue State last weekend stormed the Faculty

of Law of the University Jos, and on hearing the news of the presence of the governor on campus, students trooped to the faculty to see him.

The purpose of the visit was not disclosed but Campus Roundup learnt that the governor held a closed door meeting with key staff of the faculty.

News Extra

Obama blasts U.S. intelligence

...For failing to connect the dots over Christmas Day bomber

- Agencies knew al-Qaeda affiliate planned to strike U.S.
- Further security measures expected by the end of the week
- Obama: 'Make no mistake, we will close Guantanamo prison'
- No 10 angers U.S. by stating Britain supplied intel on bomber

President Barack Obama has angrily blasted the CIA and U.S. intelligence agencies over the failed Christmas Day terror attack on a transatlantic airliner.

Mr Obama told high-level officials in the White House Situation Room the failed bombing was 'a screw-up that could have been disastrous' and should have been avoided.

He then informed the U.S. public that the government had enough information to thwart the attack but that the intelligence agencies, though trained to do so, 'did not connect the dots.'

He said: 'That's not acceptable, and I will not tolerate it. It is clear that intelligence was not fully analysed or fully leveraged.'

He added: 'We will do better, and we have to do it quickly. American lives are on the line.'

Mr Obama said he expects to impose further security measures when reviews on airport screening and watch lists are completed by the end of the week.

But he insisted that his delayed plan to close down the Guantanamo Bay prison camp would go ahead.

Nearly half of the 198 terror suspect detainees held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba are from Yemen.

'Make no mistake, we will close Guantanamo prison,' he said, describing the camp as an 'explicit rationale for the formation of al-Qaeda operating in Yemen.'

Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab, the Nigerian suspect who allegedly tried to set off an explosive device aboard the plane as it came in for a landing in Detroit, has told U.S. investigators he received training and instructions from al-Qaida operatives in Yemen.

His father warned the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria that his son had drifted into extremism in the al-Qaida hotbed of Yemen, but that threat was never fully digested by the U.S. security apparatus.

He is accused of trying to ignite the explosives he brought on board the flight carrying nearly 300 people - thwarted only by a malfunction with the explosives and the quick action of fellow passengers and crew once his efforts resulted in a fire.

Mr Obama said: 'We dodged a bullet but just barely. It was averted by brave individuals, not because the system worked, and that is not acceptable.'

'The information was there.



PRESIDENT Barack Obama (centre, back) meets with his national security team charged with carrying out a review after the botched attack on an airplane

When a suspected terrorist is able to board a plane with explosives on Christmas Day, the system has failed in a potentially disastrous way.'

He also outlined more warnings that had been flagged up about Abdul Mutallab, including information that an al-Qaeda affiliate in the Arabian Peninsula planned to strike not only American targets in Yemen but the U.S. itself.

Abdul Mutallab's name was in a huge U.S. database of about 550,000 terror suspects, but was not on a list that would have subjected him to additional security screening or kept him from boarding the flight.

That omission prompted a review of the National Counterterrorism Centre's massive Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment database. His U.S. visa also remained intact despite his father's warnings.

And airport screening failed to detect the bomb-making material he brought on board with him.

It comes as Downing Street caused a major rift with the White House over combating terrorism Tuesday.

Gordon Brown's official spokesman infuriated U.S. officials by announcing that Britain had supplied intelligence on the syringe bomber's links to extremists before his attempt to blow up the Detroit-bound plane.

The gaffe threatened to undermine the special relationship

between British and American spies.

Government spokesmen do not usually comment on intelligence matters and are particularly careful not to damage relations with U.S. security services who supply them with huge amounts of information.

But Mr Brown's spokesman revealed that Abdul Mutallab's name was included in a dossier of people who made contact with known Islamist militants in the UK when he studied at University College London between 2005 and 2008.

'Clearly there was security information about this individual's activities, and that was infor-



UMAR Farouk Abdul Mutallab was passed to UK spy agencies, Downing Street has said

mation that was shared with the U.S. authorities,' the spokesman said. 'That is the key point.'

White House officials contacted Downing Street to demand a clarification as senior government officials expressed dismay at the gaffe. In a further statement, the spokesman said: 'There is absolutely no suggestion the UK passed any information to the U.S. which they did not act on.'

He then insisted that 'it goes without saying' that the White House and Downing Street 'enjoyed an excellent relationship.'

White House officials were barely able to conceal their irritation. A former CIA man with close links to the Obama administration said: 'So much for our closest ally. There are guys with their feet to the fire over here and you've got some blabbermouth making out that they ignored intelligence. It's not helpful.'

The failed bombing was 'a screw-up that could have been disastrous'

In London a senior official said of the 'schoolboy error' that: 'We don't comment on exchanges of intelligence. It's that simple.'

In an effort to assist Mr Obama, Home Secretary Alan Johnson told MPs: 'While we did provide information linked to the wider aspect of this case, none of the information we shared indicated that Abdul Mutallab was about to attempt an attack.'

Since the attack, the U.S. government has added dozens of names to its lists of suspected terrorists and those barred from flights bound for the U.S.

People on the watch list are subject to additional scrutiny before they are allowed to enter this country, while anyone on the no-fly list is barred from boarding aircraft in or headed for the U.S.

Airlines were directed give full-body, pat-down searches to U.S.-bound travellers from Yemen, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and 11 other countries from Monday.

News Extra

Bungled security test

... Passenger has explosives planted in his luggage and manages to fly to Dublin

A Slovakian man unwittingly carried hidden explosives on board a flight to Dublin after a botched security exercise, Irish officials revealed.

A furious Irish Government demanded that Slovakia explain its actions after the unsuspecting electrician was allowed to carry the explosives on the flight at Poprad-Tatry Airport on Saturday.

The diplomatic row erupted after Slovak airport police randomly planted powerful RDX in the 49-year-old's bag, but took three days to warn authorities he had unwittingly evaded scanning machines.

Real bomb components were hidden in the luggage of nine unwitting passengers. Eight were detected, but one bag containing around three ounces of RDX plastic explosive travelled undetected through security on to a Danube Wings aircraft.

The bewildered passenger did not find out about the explosives cache until Irish police, acting on

a Slovak tip-off, raided his apartment Tuesday morning.

A major Dublin crossroads was shut down and neighbouring buildings were evacuated as a precaution while Irish Army experts inspected the explosive.

The man was later released without charge after three hours' detention.

A source said: 'It seems his bag was picked randomly - he is not in any trouble with us.'

'We have verified the whole thing through proper police channels and security chiefs in the Slovak authorities.'

One security source said: 'If that much explosive was detonated, it would cause serious damage, it would kill if it went off in a plane - it's an unbelievable mistake.'

'It doesn't bear thinking about to put that kind of explosive on a plane, unaccounted for.'

Although the explosive would have been powerful enough to take down a plane, the plastic explosive on its own was considered stable and no detonators were discovered. Airport police in Bratislava contacted their coun-



DUBLIN airport. Inset: Irish Minister of Justice Dermot Ahern has demanded a full report from the Slovakian government

terparts in Dublin about the high-level breach Tuesday and police were then informed and raided an apartment in Dublin's north inner city.

The passenger, who it is understood has been living in Ireland for a number of years, knew nothing about it.

Roads around the Dorset Street apartment complex, close to Dublin's main thoroughfare O'Connell Street, were sealed off for about an hour and a half, with five buildings evacuated as a security cordon was maintained.

The passenger who carried the explosives on the four-hour

flight was travelling back to Ireland, where he has been working for three years, after a Christmas break at home.

An army bomb disposal team found the explosives still concealed in his luggage but described them as in a 'stable state'.

Irish security personnel also carry out airport tests, but use security personnel, not unwitting travellers. An Irish Government spokesman said: 'The Minister for Justice, Dermot Ahern, has ordered a full report into what has transpired.'

The Slovakian Embassy in Dublin declined to comment but Slovakian deputy prime minister

Robert Kallinak has conveyed his profound regret to Mr Ahern.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said it had also been contacted about the incident.

A spokeswoman said: 'It is awaiting a full report in the matter and will, as necessary, pursue the matter with the authorities of the country concerned.'

'Given that the terrorist threat is now global and that no nation or people are immune from that threat, this security breach and the fact that the breach went undetected are serious issues of concern.'

Bottles of honey trigger airport shutdown



FIREMEN remove the bottles of honey at Meadows Field airport in Bakersfield, California, after they were detected to contain TNT

A U.S. airport was shut down Tuesday night amid fears a passenger was carrying explosives on board a plane - but the material turned out to be five bottles of honey.

A passenger's suitcase tested positive for TNT at California's Meadows Field airport, 110 miles north of Los Angeles, during a routine test.

When security officials opened the bag, they found Gatorade bottles filled with an amber liquid.

Agents opened the bottles to test the contents, but were rushed to hospital when the fumes made them ill.

The airport was then shut down - only for further investigation to show that the mysterious amber liquid was in fact honey.

Donny Youngblood, Kern County Sheriff, said: 'Why in this day and age would someone take a chance carrying honey in Gatorade bottles?'

'That itself is an alarm. It's hard to understand.'

Investigators said the bag's owner, Francisco Ramirez, 31, is a gardener from Milwaukee who has been cooperating with authorities.

He flew to Meadows Field airport on December 23 to spend Christmas with his sister and was

returning Tuesday when the alarm sounded.

'It's encouraging that the system did work, because something is not right there,' Mr Youngblood said.

'The system worked the way it was supposed to, but it just takes time when you close an airport - and it costs a lot of money.'

All flights into and out of Meadows Field were cancelled for much of Tuesday as authorities searched the terminal for other potential explosives.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office bomb squad was expected to perform further tests on the honey to determine why a false positive was recorded.

Investigators want to know whether any chemical Ramirez uses in his gardening work could have left traces of potential explosives.

They will also run tests on the honey to see if the smoke beekeepers use to subdue the insects could have triggered the false positive test.

Ramirez was not arrested Tuesday, but his immigration status is in question, Mr Youngblood said.

'I suspect after this he won't want to eat honey again, ever,' he said.

News Extra

14-month-old boy survives after chopstick pierces his brain through his nostril

The family of a 14-month-old boy who survived after falling on a chopstick which pierced his brain through his nostril have credited doctors for giving him a 'second life.'

Li Jingchao, from the Shandong province in Eastern China, had been playing when he accidentally fell over, impaling himself on the chopstick which then lodged itself inside his skull.

His mother Zhao Guilu was in the kitchen washing dishes when she heard her son cry out in pain.

Zhao Guilu said: 'I rushed in and saw him lying on the ground. He couldn't stop crying and I noticed a chopstick stuck in his nose.'

The family took the little boy to a nearby surgery for medical attention, but doctors there

feared pulling the eating utensil out would cause mortal damage.

Instead, a relative offered to drive Li Jingchao, Zhao Guilu and father Li Guanglai 930 miles to the Boai Hospital in Beijing, a medical facility renowned for its treatment of head injuries.

Li Guanglai said he could barely contain himself during the drive, adding: 'I thought at that time, it is all over, my boy will die.'

'During the 10 hours of driving, I felt depressed, I could barely breathe. I looked at my boy and his right side was numb, he was paralysed.'

As soon as the family arrived at the Beijing hospital, neurosurgeons rushed Li Jingchao into the operating room, where they attempted to remove the chopstick from his brain.



LI Jingchao, pictured here with his parents, fell over onto a chopstick which pierced his brain through his nostril

Despite fears the utensil would rupture an artery when it was removed, it came out easily. However, experts explained if the chopstick had lodged itself just millimetres to either side, or further in his brain, it could have

caused permanent paralysis or death.

Doctor Sun Wei explained to CNN: 'It touched upon the deep area of his brain, four centimeters of the chopstick

was inside his skull. The position of the chopstick was very, very lucky for him.'

Father Li Guanglai added: 'I never thought it would be this successful. This hospital gave him a second life.'

Doctor Sun Wei warned the next three to five days will be criti-



DOCTORS operate on 14-month-old Li Jingchao

There is a chance the 14-month-old could develop epilepsy in the future as a result of the accident

cal as Li Jingchao could contract an infection following the surgery.

He also said there is a chance the 14-month-old could develop epilepsy in the future as a result of the accident.

ENVIRONMENT

property@dailytrust.com

HOTLINE: 07041632079



SNOW settles on a British Airways passenger plane at London's Gatwick Airport

Climate change scepticism set to surge in 2010

CLIMATE change scepticism is set to surge in 2010, the chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has predicted.

Following the failure of the recent Copenhagen summit to secure a meaningful international deal to limit carbon emissions, do you think he is right? Have your opinions on what is happening to

our climate changed? Is there cause for scepticism? Does this winter's cold weather have any bearing on the climate debate?

The left love the idea of global warming, tax consumption excessively, top-down government initiatives, hand money over to poor people and control how people live their lives - down to what light bulbs

they are allowed to buy - Marxism by stealth.

When the average volcanic eruption spews out more CO2 in the blink of an eye than man has produced in 100 years with no ill effects, it just goes to show what nonsense it all is. The biggest problem facing mankind is there are too many of us - but no one will touch

that sticky subject, so a proxy war is fought against a harmless gas that makes up just 0.038% of our atmosphere and man only contributes a tiny percentage of that - cars produce 2% of the tiny percentage of that that tiny percentage - you get the idea. An increase in CO2 in the atmosphere would be good for plants as they use it as food.

We should therefore look to see improved harvests, larger trees and faster growing grass.

By putting carbon that has been locked up in coal and oil back into the Carbon cycle, we are maybe preparing the planet for re-forestation of what are currently deserts. The plant kingdom must be very grateful.

Three assaults a week on UK binmen, new figures show

BINMEN suffered more than three attacks a week by householders angry at rubbish collection cutbacks, figures have revealed.

There were 160 assaults on dustmen, including three incidents in which guns were brandished at workers, and one which ended with a victim stabbed.

In another attack a rubbish collector was hit with one of his council's own wheelie bins. The shocking figures, which relate to a 12-month period to autumn this year, are thought to reflect widespread frustration over controversial fortnightly collections and complicated recycling rules. Most assaults happened when dustmen - following their local rules - refused to collect material left

out by residents. The attacks were revealed in response to Freedom of Information Act inquiries.

They included an incident in Worthing, East Sussex, in which binmen were abused after telling a householder that nuts and bolts should not have been put in with recycling. In Wakefield there were two assaults after recycling bins went uncollected because they contained the wrong kind of rubbish, while Great Yarmouth saw two incidents after 'unacceptable' recycling was removed.

A number of attacks involved homes judged by binmen to have left out too much rubbish in areas where councils have imposed strict limits on collections.

Sudden rainfall faults meteorologists in Lagos

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

TO most residents who reside in the Central part of Lagos, last Monday's downpour which seized the metropolis was nothing but a surprise coming at the first lunar month of the New Year.

It is a wide-held belief that the month of January is characterized by harmattan rather than rainfall in most part of the world and so a rainfall at this period is least expected.

Besides, meteorologists were taken to the cleaners on that fateful Monday when they predicted that it would rather be sunny in the central part of the centre of excellence.

The rain which started around 2:30pm lasted for about 15minutes

traversed such areas like Onipanu, Fadeyi, Surulere, Ojota, Ketu, Ikeja and environs. Although the rain did not disrupt commercial activities, observers told our correspondent that the downpour did more than a mere drizzling for the period that it lasted.

A commercial motorcycle operators, Soji Samuel who plied Onipanu area disclosed to our correspondent that when the rain started he had to drop his passengers in a safe harbour in order to contain its impact. "The rain was sudden and snappy. No one believed it would rain on that day. So when it first started I thought it was just a drizzle until I later discovered that my passengers and I were wet. I had to make a stopover at a nearby filling

station in order to contain further impact of the rain."

Similarly, a shop owner in Shomolu, Madam Aduke Kamson, disclosed that the snappy rain almost destroyed her wares but for the effort of her neighbours who came to her rescue.

According to her, she was out of the shop around afternoon time on that day only to notice that the environment was wet.

"My neighbours helped pack my things on that day because there was no sign that it would rain. I remembered vividly that on Monday, it was still sunny. How the sun suddenly changed to rain baffles me, especially at this period when harmattan is inevitable and even more pronounced in the North."

Katsina firewood vendors threaten afforestation programme

HEWERS of wood in Faskari and Sabuwa local governments in Katsina State are frustrating the afforestation of the state by the state government.

Investigations by NAN showed that trucks, motorcycles, bicycles and donkeys are being used to transport firewood from the areas to other places.

NAN gathered that trucks are transporting the firewood to Funtua and other towns while motorcycles, donkeys and bicycles are being used at Dandume and Faskari towns to move the product around for use by the residents.

It was learnt that a donkey load of firewood was being sold at

N600 while a motorcycle load sold for between N1,000 and N1,200.

Reacting to the situation, the Director of Agriculture in Faskari local government, Alhaji Idris Sanda, said a restriction order had been made and that the council's staff had been deployed to the area to ensure compliance.

Sanda explained that people

were only allowed to remove fallen trees, adding that measures were being taken by the council to ensure the preservation of its forests.

He said the council embarked on planting of trees at the beginning of the last rainy season as part of the efforts to revamp its forests. (NAN)

He said the council embarked on planting of trees at the beginning of the last rainy season as part of the efforts to revamp its forests

ENVIRONMENT

FG to implement National Afforestation Programme

By Nasir Imam

THE Federal Government has said it would step-up action on the implementation of the National Afforestation Program this year as part of the Federal Government's efforts at combating Climate Change impacts and creating wealth for Nigerians. Minister of Environment, Mr. John Odey, stated this during a meeting with

top officials of the Ministry in Abuja to review the 2009 performance.

He said two dedicated lines would be opened for all staff to reach him and brief him on activities and programmes of the ministry.

A statement signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Minister, Mr. Clement Egbema, said Odey has

directed all departments in the Ministry to submit information on all Foreign Assisted Projects in the ministry to pave way for proper coordination and implementation.

Egbema said the meeting dwelt on strategies to tackle the multifarious environmental challenges facing the country with the ultimate objective of ameliorating the plight of Nigerians.

He said Odey enjoined the staff of the ministry to be more productive this year in order to achieve the desired goals of sustainable environmental development.

The meeting with top officials of the Ministries and Heads of the Agencies in the ministry was also meant to properly streamline the ministry's activities and to make them more result-oriented.

He said that staff welfare, discipline and work environment will be key emphasis to the ministry this year.

The Minister commended the Nigerian media for the role it played in the just concluded United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting held in Copenhagen last December.

PIC: HIR JOSEPH

The world's most polluted places(6)

FROM lead in the soil to toxins in the water and radioactive fallout in the air, The Blacksmith Institute has created a list of the world's worst ecological disaster areas

Dzerzhinsk, Russia

NUMBER of people potentially affected: 300,000

Type of pollutant: Chemicals and toxic byproducts, including sarin and VX gas

Source of pollution: Cold War-era chemical weapons manufacturing

The legacy of Cold War weapons programs has left environmental blackspots throughout

the former Soviet Union, but Dzerzhinsk is by far the worst. The city's own environmental agency estimates that almost 300,000 tons of chemical waste — including some of the most dangerous neurotoxins known to man — were improperly dumped in Dzerzhinsk between 1930 and 1998. Parts of the city's water are infected with dioxins and phenol at levels that are reportedly 17 million times the safe limit. The Guinness Book of World Records named Dzerzhinsk the most chemically polluted city on Earth, and in 2003 its death rate exceeded its birth rate by 260%.



THE Kaprolaktam Plant of the Sibur-Neftekhim joint stock company in Dzerzhinsk, Russia



MEN of the Nasarawa State Urban Development Board (NSUDB) have been overwhelmed by the amount of refuse dotting the slummy metropolis of Lafia, forcing them into the burning option.

Authorities burn refuse on Lafia streets

From Hir Joseph, Lafia

IN a manner that has further worsened the sleazy environment in Lafia, the Nasarawa State capital, urban authorities have resorted to the desperate burning of the heaps of refuse along streets of the metropolis.

Daily Trust observations show that for sometime now, men of the Nasarawa State Urban Development Board (NSUDB) have been overwhelmed by the amount of refuse dotting the slummy metropolis of Lafia, forcing them into the burning option.

But the illicit practice, according to further observations, is unfriendly to the environment as it has further worsened public hygiene in the state capital. The burning usually takes place a week after street sweepers gather

up the refuse, since disposal vans hardly go round to collect them.

When our correspondent went round yesterday, the charred remains of burnt refuse heaps were still bellowing with smoke at major streets including Shandam Road which houses major government institutions, and UAC Road.

Shop owners and residents spoken to said this option was adopted by the urban law enforcement agency in the late days of 2009 as a desperate method of dealing with the ever present refuse heaps in the state capital. "We have severally complained because burning refuse on the streets is dangerous to our health but the officers have continued with the practice. It is most unfortunate that a government that budgets huge sums

for environmental sanitization yearly, can not tackle garbage in the metropolis of the state capital", a resident of Shendam Road, who gave his name only as Adamu said.

NSUDB General Manager, Jafaru Ango refused to comment when Daily Trust called his phone, but the state's Information Commissioner, Abdullahi Mustafa, confirmed our observations as "very critical", saying he will make contacts with NSUDB on the development. The commissioner, nevertheless, said NSUDB has "been doing its best", although he still added that "giving the circumstances with which the board operates", it will be difficult for it to achieve more than what is on the ground presently. He failed to explain "the circumstances", however.

Ogun council to give priority to environment

From Kehinde Akinyemi, Abeokuta

THE issue of environment and road maintenance are to top the focus of Abeokuta South local government area of Ogun state in the 2010 fiscal year, the council chairman, Prince Yanju Lipede, has said. He said about 200 personnel are to be engaged in the next couple of weeks

for evacuation of waste at various public places, including markets.

Lipede, who was responding to Daily Trust questions on plans by the administration for the 2010 fiscal year at an interactive session with media correspondents in Ogun state, on Tuesday, assured that environmental issues would be given all attention it deserves in the year.

He explained that the 200 personnel will work under an agency, as "sanitary inspectors. They will be working 24 hours in shifts to evacuate the dust bins that are to be distributed from next week in public places, including markets. The target is that no refuse would be in sight in the morning at the markets and other public places in

the council area." The chairman added that the council had procured sanitary wares and kits for the exercise, these he displayed before newsmen at the ceremony. He noted that after the exercise must have been well grounded and implemented, "offenders caught messing up the environment would be made to face sanction, which is corrective and affordable. A fine of N500

will serve as penalty on offenders." On roads, Lipede disclosed his administration would focus on maintenance of roads in the year, rather than embarking on new road projects. "We are not saying that we are not going to do new roads, but existing roads with potholes would have been done before March, as he recalled that about 200 roads were built or rehabilitated in 2009."

CITY NEWS



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PIC: KENNEDY EGBONODJE

RESIDENTS returning to work at Utako Park, Abuja at the weekend.

Abaji council to contribute for dam construction

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

IN order to boost water supply, the authorities of Abaji Area Council are to contribute about N150 million counterpart funds for the construction of a dam at the council.

Chairman of the council, Alhaji Yahaya Musa Mohammed, disclosed this on Tuesday, when he led a delegation from a Japanese construction firm to a river at Abaji in order to ascertain the volume of water for the dam's construction.

He said the council's decision to construct a dam was as a result of the frequent break down of some existing bore-holes that cost the council huge amount of money, adding that he immediately came up with a proposal and presented it to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) office and the FCTA for consideration.

"The construction of the dam was an arrangement between the council, the MDG's office and the FCT Administration, in which the minister of state has agreed to contribute N200 million, while the MDG office has also agreed to support the project with the sum of N150 million in order to make the project a viable one," he disclosed.

He said the concept of constructing a dam in the council was made since last year and will find a lasting solution to water problem in Abaji.

The chairman also revealed that the council is coming up with a plan to construct a mega petrol station, trailer park and a dry port to boost social and economic activities in the area as well as the council's revenue profile.

Man jailed for issuing dud cheque

By Lami Sadiq & Usman Bello

AN Upper Area Court Monday sentenced one Tahir Umar to six weeks imprisonment for criminal breach of trust and issuing a dud cheque.

Prosecutor Ambi told the court that the complainant, Uche Mana Ofodile reported at Garki Police Station that he gave N2,700,000 to the accused to help him secure a two-bedroom flat in July 2008.

He said the accused collected the money with the promise to get the flat for the complainant and

failed in fulfilling the promise.

"The accused neither gave him the stated amount nor secured the two-bedroom flat and later presented him with a dud cheque which bounced when the complainant presented it at the bank," the prosecutor added.

He said the offences committed are contrary to Sections 312 & 322 of the Penal Code Law and also the Dud Cheque Act of 1990.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded guilty and begged the court to give him more time to pay up the money.

Judge Umar Kagarko sentenced

him to six weeks imprisonment or to pay N3,000 fine option.

The judge also ordered the accused to pay back the N2,700,000 to the complainant.

In another case, James Ameh, a security guard was arraigned for criminal trespass, cheating, theft and impersonation, which are contrary to Sections 342, 322, 288 and 132 of the Penal Code of Law.

Prosecutor Muhammed Garuba told the court that the accused trespassed into the house of Mr Okoro Igwe Emmanuel and deceitfully collected the

sum of N2,500 from his seven-year old sister.

He said the accused also stole three gowns and four skirts, adding that during police investigation, he was found in possession of a police cardigan, two police belts, police key holder and a police cap labelled NPF.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded guilty and said he bought the police items to intimidate people so that they can be scared of him.

Judge Umar Kagarko sentenced him to a fine of N2,500 each on the four counts.

Kwali chairman urged to pick running mate

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah

THE campaign coordinator of former speaker of Kwali Area Council, Abubakar Usman, has called on the acting chairman of the council to pick the former speaker as his running mate in the area council election slated for April 10.

The ex-speaker had lost out to Mr. Danlami Saleh Yebu, the present acting chairman of the council during the recently held primaries of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Usman, who spoke his mind in a reconciliation meeting held in Kwali, said the only way the PDP can capture the council in the forth coming council's election, is for the incumbent chairman to pick the ex-speaker, Alhaji Usman Jiya as his vice.

According to him, the ex-speaker, who was also a PDP chairmanship aspirant, lost out to the incumbent chairman during the primaries and is in full control of Woko ward, where majority of people are always in his support.

He said other PDP chairman-

ship aspirants that emerged winners from Gwagwalada, AMAC and Bwari area councils picked their opponents as running mate, adding that Kwali council should not be an exception.

Also, an ex-officio of PDP at the council, Malam Abdullahi Y. Ashara, called for the zoning of councillorship positions at Ashara ward to Hausa/Fulani people, saying since the council was created, Ganagana and Bassa tribes have been controlling the chairmanship/councillorship positions.

In order not to allow any

opposition party capture Ashara ward, I suggest the councillorship position be zoned to the Hausa/Fulani because they have never been tested for the position before," he reasoned.

Earlier speaking, Adamu Sulaiman, councillor representing Dafa ward, said there was the need for the PDP to be transparent, especially during its primaries, adding that the manner at which some aspirants result were manipulated does not help situations.

He noted that the complaint

that trailed the PDP councillorship primaries in some wards ought to be addressed so that all the aggrieved aspirants can join hands together to see the success of the party in the forth coming council polls.

Responding on behalf of the seven-man reconciliation committee, Alhaji Hamza Liman, commended the party's stakeholders, elders and executives for their observation and promised to forward the issue before the FCT Minister, Alhaji Adamu Aliero for deliberation.

**FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
Headquarters, Mabushi, Abuja**



PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT.
MINISTERIAL TENDERS BOARD

**REMEDICATION OF SLUDGE PITS AT KADUNA REFINERY AND
PETROCHEMICAL COMPANY (KRPC) DUMPSITES AND THE
IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVES OF IMPACTED COMMUNITIES**

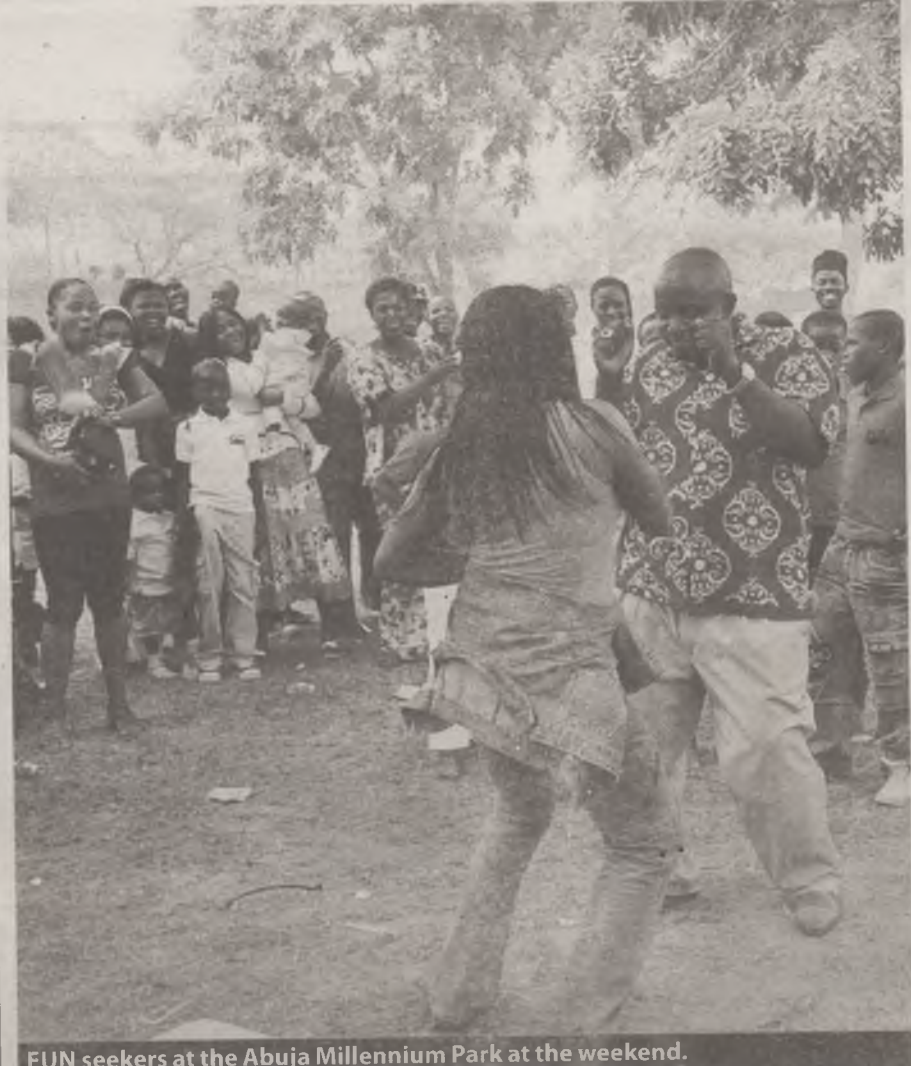
INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

1. **Introduction:** The Federal Ministry of Environment wishes to undertake a project on the Remediation of Sludge Pits at KRPC Dumpsites and the Improvement of the Lives of Impacted Communities. The project is to be funded through the Ecological Funds Office.
2. **Objective:** The project is intended to achieve the following broad objective(s)
 - Decontamination of sludge pits, clean-up and remediation of infected sites;
 - Improvement of the lives of impacted communities
3. **Scope of Project:** The project will involve;
 - Detailed sampling of sludge pit, comprehensive laboratory analysis and waste characterization before decontamination and remediation of dumpsites;
 - Selection and application of Best Technology and methods for determination, sludge treatment, clean-up and remediation of impacted sites including River Rano and / or River Gora;
 - Detailed sampling of Remediated sites and comprehensive laboratory analysis;
 - Provision of community-based improvement schemes/projects;
 - Community mobilization / community education and sensitization;
 - Capacity building and technology transfer for effective project supervision and sustainability
4. **Eligibility:** Interested, suitable and reputable companies or consultant are required to submit the following prequalification documents. Failure to submit any of the under-listed documents may result in the disqualification of the contractor.
 1. Full details of company profile, including memorandum of understanding. Form C07 and C02
 2. Evidence of incorporation as limited liability company in appropriate jurisdiction as well as evidence of registration to conduct business in Nigeria.
 3. Evidence of letter of partnership between contractors for a tendering consortium or alliance.
 4. Evidence of Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) registration certification in relevant area.
 5. Evidence of registration with Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in the relevant area.
 6. Evidence of Tax Clearance certificate for the past 3 years and VAT Registration Certificate.
 7. Evidence of Financial Capacity, Company's financial details and audited documents for past 3 years from a registered accounting firm.
 8. Organizational structure (populated chart), available manpower with CV of key professional staff, CV's must be those of staff that shall work on this project and bring about its overall success.
 9. Provide community relations management proposal showing how your company has successfully executed community related works in the past.
 10. Evidence of past relevant experience and successful performance in the provision of similar services.
 11. Provide flowchart of proposed equipment to be deployed in executing the contract, and a brief description of the proposed plant / equipment processes.
5. **Submission Deadline:** The completed pre-qualification document must be forwarded in sealed envelop marked on the top left hand corner "Confidential" and boldly written "PRE-QUALIFICATION: REMEDIATION OF SLUDGE PITS AT KRPC DUMPSITES AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVES OF IMPACTED COMMUNITIES" to reach

The Secretary,
Ministerial Tenders Board
Federal Ministry of Environment,
Room B301 (3rd Floor) Mabushi, Abuja
Not later than 12.00 Four(4) weeks from date of this publication
6. **Formal Opening of Bids:** Opening of all bids is scheduled for 12 noon at the conference room, Federal Ministry of Environment, Mabushi, Abuja

Signed
Director (Procurement)
For: Honourable Minister

PIC: NASIR IMAM



FUN seekers at the Abuja Millennium Park at the weekend.

PUBLIC NOTICE / CLARIFICATION

African Independent Television (AIT), a subsidiary of DAAR Communications Plc wishes to clarify and correctly state its position on a News Story it aired on the 4th Day of November 2006. The News Story among other issues contained a statement made by the Immediate Past Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), alleging that "Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu duped one Mr. Joseph Lopez Tapia and a Foreign Shipping Company to the tune of 15,000,000 US Dollars (Fifteen Million Dollars) and asked a Federal High Court Judge to make an Order restraining the EFCC from prosecuting him".

As a responsible Nigerian, the said Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu has since 5th February 2007, while Mallam Nuhu Ribadu was the Chairman of EFCC sued the latter (Mallam Nuhu Ribadu) for Defamation of Character.

From available facts, the said allegation is still being contested by Alhaji Dalhatu and it appears that AIT aired the alleged Defamatory Statement as a News Item made by the former EFCC boss, without giving Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu sufficient opportunity to be heard.

DAAR Communications Plc hereby apologises to Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu.

This information serves as notice to the General Public, particularly Family, Friends and Associates of Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu in whose estimation the said News Story had demeaned him.

Signed
MANAGEMENT
DAAR COMMUNICATIONS PLC

labour report

"We must take people off the streets by giving them jobs and keeping them there"

In this interview, Minister of Labour and Productivity Adetokunbo Kayode talks to journalists about his ministry's activities in the past year and his plans for the new year.

Francis Okeke

HOW would you appraise the year 2009 vis-a-vis your ministry and the performance of its responsibilities?

The year 2009 had been very busy for this ministry. At the onset we decided that we were going to focus on four core mandates of the ministry. The first and important one is employment generation and unemployment reduction. Second is social security and the third is productivity and efficiency in the workplace and the last is ensuring peaceful industrial relations in the sector. I think among the four mandates, we have done a lot of work across the board in these sectors and I can give you a breakdown of what we are able to achieve.

First of all is the National Employment Policy. We launched and commenced the implementation of the policy and this has been groundbreaking because the programme had been on ground for seven years without anything being done on it. We inaugurated a National Employment Council, and under the auspices of this council we were able to organize a National Employment Summit with the support of ILO, and all this culminated into us keying into the Global Employment Job Pact programme of the ILO, especially the Africa part of it.

We are at the moment going to be implementing the brand new National Employment Action Plan already approved by Mr. President within the framework of the Global Job Pact for Africa and also ILO has committed itself to give us both financial and technical support to implement our plans. This is the fundamental achievement for this country and the sector. What we also achieved was that unemployment has been brought into the front burner because in the past the assumption is that if the economic is improving, then there will be jobs but now a World Bank report of 2009 has shown that we can have jobless growth. That is, we could have growth without development and so government has been in the fore front to correct this impression. Employment must be targeted as a matter of deliberate government policy; it should no longer be seen as something that is expected to happen when the economic is improving. How we intend to do this is through all the sectors but the most critical sector



LABOUR Minister Adetokunbo Kayode with NLC President Omar Abdulwahed at a meeting in Abuja recently.

is the ICT which I have started.

We are working with the Ministry of Information and Communication and the Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC), to enable us train and generate a million jobs beginning from January this year and this has been approved by government. We are also working with the ministry of culture to exploit the cultural and creative industry to create also a million job, we can do more than this but the whole idea is to set a bench mark so we can struggle to meet up with the bench mark. We are looking at agriculture, jobs have always been there, but it is just now that the ministry of agric is positioning itself to employ people.

It is creating new agric centres all over the country which are integrated commercial agricultural centres which can take farmers and people who can handle transportation and storage as well as building silos that will handle storage and also commercialization of agricultural activities and hydro processing in addition to the opportunity that will be created by the extension services which can absorb a lot of Nigerians. In addition, we will be partnering with them to put up agric skills training centres which is under our NDE programmes (ASTC).

This will enable us to train people immediately. We are not only going to train people who read agric but also someone who read Biology, English, or Hausa to do specific jobs, like to operate tractors for instance or to be an extension worker, adviser, marketing, handling storage etc. The government has approved a pilot programme on the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

(REGS). This is under the Ministry of Agriculture and the ministry has to work very closely with us because rural development is under them. This is why they have to work with us.

It is an Indian Model which idea is to have some funding that can be used to secure employment for people who key into that scheme and who will undergo some training and can be deployed to do all kinds of work at the rural level. I can go on to read out the plans we have and what we planned to do but the most important thing is that we have a plan, the most important thing is that we have commitment by government, we have the go-ahead by the government and I believe the government will put enough money in the budget this year to have this programme take-off. I know that immediately we start this and the private sector sees how effective it is, they see how profitable it is and they see the opportunities contain there-in, they will key into it and invariably take it off the hands of government.

The whole idea is not for the government to do this alone, the idea is for government to incubate it to act as catalyst, to take it off the ground so everybody can key into it and move on. I am very excited about the new prospect for employment, I am very excited about opportunities we will create for our people and the fact that we will begin to take people off the streets, we must take people off the streets and the only way we can do that is to take them into places of work and to keep them there.

What is the situation on the issue of minimum wage and should Nigerian anticipate a pay rise in the New Year?

We all know and I think that the issue of minimum wage is settled. There is a Justice Belgore Committee. The committee has not rounded up its works, it is when it completes its works that the matter will be presented to the government and the government will take its decision and forward the decision to the National Assembly. But all these can be done very quickly because this is an issue we need to tackle and conclude as quickly as we can. It is when the Justice Belgore Committee finished its job and the issue is taken to government for approval we can know whatever figures are being recommended. It is not fair or correct for anybody to start saying that a certain figure has been determined; no such thing has been done. Justice Belgore Committee is the tripartite multi-party committee which capture the interest of everybody and all stakeholders involved. I am a member, government officials are members, labour at the highest level, both TUC and NLC are members, NECA and other stakeholders are members. State governments are represented. So, everybody that would be affected by any salary or wage review is co-opted into that committee and it is only fair to allow them to do their job. Right now they are broken into sub-committees and they are working. They have not concluded their work, and no figure should be brandished around for the moment.

It is good to allow them to work and in the New Year, hopefully, we can have a report from them and we move forward.

Are you assuring Nigerian workers of a salary increase in the new year?

What I can say, because it

would be contemptuous of the committee if I start to pre-empt what they would suggest or what they would decide but I know they would come up with a good decision agreeable to all stakeholders. Look at the calibre of the chairman and it is deliberate. It is for that reason that he has been chosen to head that committee. He is a man of high integrity, a person who cares about the people and cares for the government and also cares about the country. So, we believe that he definitely will proffer a solution to the issue which will be satisfactory to all sides. I think it is better to leave it like that.

Threats of strike actions and actual strike actions have become part of our daily existence as a country; as we start another working year, how will you approach this issue?

One of the strong foundations we have achieved this year is that we have been able to emphasise social dialoguing. We have been able to put in strong structures to institutionalise discussion and I will give you three examples. One, in the Oil and gas, NUPENG and PENGASSAN are renowned for strikes but in 2009, they have not had anything like that because immediately I came in to this office, I inaugurated the Federal Government Standing Committee on oil and gas in the labour sector and that has gone to capture virtually all problems. That is why you see that anytime you hear that NUPENG says this and PENGASSAN says that, I call them and say you have a committee and they go there and the matters are resolved.

So we have strengthened our ability to dialogue. We have closed the gap of communication and we have eliminated all the things that block our ability to talk together; that has helped. There is Government Standing Committee with Labour, which organised labour at the highest level is there. The secretary to the Federal Government is the chairman. That also, is a committee that has provided us a larger platform for social dialogue. Finally, look at the issue of deregulation, the issue of minimum wage. There was never any strike. These are the largest issues in the country today, rather than the issue of ASUU. There were never strikes because from the beginning, we began to engage labour and we were not afraid to talk to them and they were not afraid to talk to us and everybody knew they had to put their cards on the table as we continued to talk. So, I have eliminated or tried to eliminate all communication gaps and my door is open. From the first day, I have made it so clear that I will maintain an open door policy and I think have tried a little bit in doing that

Inside Politics

Prove that Yar'adua isn't incapacitated, CNPP tells govs

By Abdulmutallib A. Abubakar

CONFERENCE of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) yesterday challenged the Governors Forum to publicly address the nation and publish President Yar'adua's latest medical report to convince Nigerians that he is not incapacitated to rule the country.

CNPP's National Publicity Secretary Osita Okechukwu in a statement said the organisation was not impressed with the bland proclamation from the Governors' Forum that President Yar'adua spoke to the Vice President and others.

He stated that CNPP had expected the Governors Forum and the National Assembly, being elected representatives, unlike the Federal Executive Council

(FEC), to challenge President Yar'adua to avail himself of Section 145 of the Constitution for the overall good of the nation's fledgling democracy and speedy recovery of the President himself.

"We are outraged that the Governors Forum and the Senate met yesterday and wittingly or unwittingly drummed up deception, instead of prevailing on President Yar'adua to avail himself of Section 145 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria," the statement said.

Okechukwu also said those who deceive Nigerians with the enemy of the country's democracy which is dangerously sliding into quasi-dictatorship.



GOVERNOR Bukola Saraki

Jos North ANPP candidate decamps to PDP

By Andrew Agbese, Jos

CHAIRMANSHIP candidate of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in the violence ridden Jos North Local Government election of November, 2008 Alhaji Aminu Baba has decamped to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The former candidate of the ANPP who confirmed his movement to the PDP while talking to our correspondent in Jos said he took the decision because it will provide him a broader platform to actualize his ambition of serving his people.

It would be recalled that due to the protest over the suspected attempt to rig him out in the November 2008 local government elections in Plateau State that led to the the violence which claimed more than 600 lives in Jos North.

He said he has no regret leaving the party that gave him the platform to contest the election because according to him, the same electorate that voted him have approved his movement to the PDP where he can serve them better.

Alhaji Baba confirmed that he was following the footsteps of his boss, the former minister for information and communication, Dasuki Nakande, saying it was a collective decision taken to further the interest of his people.

Zamfara PDP marks one year of Shinkafi's cross-carpeting

From Sadeeq Aliyu, Gusau

LEADERS of Peoples Democratic Party [PDP] in Zamfara State have concluded arrangements to commemorate the first anniversary of the defection of Governor Mahmud Aliyu Shinkafi to the party along with some political stalwart beginning from today.

The state chairman of the party Alhaji Ibrahim Mallaha who disclosed this to newsmen said the decision to mark the event was taken after a meeting of the state working committee of the party.

Mallaha recalled that shortly after the governor had decamped, there was serious

division between the new and old members of the party, stressing however that the new executive committee which he heads has succeeded in resolving all the crises that trailed the decamping.

According to him, one of the biggest achievements is the ability of new party to capture all the 147 wards in the state for the PDP. This, he said, was made possible by the pragmatic leadership of Shinkafi and his team, party elders and supporters.

He announced that next week the entire leaders of the party would go round all the 14 local governments in the state to consolidate the support they have got and woo more supporters into

the party preparatory to 2011 election.

He also said that the meeting had resolved to field only popular candidates from every locality for any future election, stressing that the no candidate would be imposed on people.

Commenting on the speculation that former Governor of the state Ahmed Yarima is likely to join PDP, Mallaha said the party's umbrella is always willing accommodate anybody willing to come under it. He, however, noted that if Yarima wants to join PDP, he has to come home and do so and not elsewhere. He called on the people of the state to continue to pray for the success of the present administration and quick recovery of President Umar Musa Yar'adua.

I can't return to ANPP — Yuguda says

From Muhammad Abubakar, Bauchi

BAUCHI State governor, Malam Isa Yuguda, has dismissed speculations that he was contemplating returning to the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), the platform of which he won election in 2007 but which he dumped last year for the PDP. He described the speculations as the work of mischief makers.

There have been speculations in the state in the last few days that the governor was making moves to go back to the ANPP.

Speaking to our correspondent on phone through his Special Adviser on Assembly Matters, Alhaji Abdulmumini Kundak, the governor said he had never contemplated returning to ANPP.

"This is just a rumour

being peddled by mischief makers within the ANPP to distract the governor from delivering the much needed democracy dividend to the electorate. The rumours are baseless and unfounded and are only the figment of the imagination of their peddlers. The governor is not thinking of going to the ANPP. It is just a dream by some aggrieved ANPP members," Kundak said.

In his reaction to the rumour, the embattled state chairman of ANPP, Sani Shehu, denied knowledge of such a move, stressing that it is unthinkable for Governor Yuguda to return to the ANPP.

"When Isa Yuguda was rejected by the PDP in 2007, we accepted him without even collecting the money for his ticket form. No candidate contested with him

as we asked all interested candidates to withdraw from the race. But you all saw how Yuguda paid us back and you expect this party to forgive him? Time shall tell," he said.

When contacted on phone, Alhaji Muhammad Aminu Tukur, an ANPP member of the state House of Assembly who is among the four legislators that refused to abandon the ANPP along with the governor last year, said he is not aware that the governor is making moves to return to the ANPP.

"I am just coming back into the country; in fact I have not even reached Bauchi but from the phone calls I made there was no such move. All my contacts said they did not hear of the move so I can tell you it is not true," the lawmaker said.

ANPP to boycott Jigawa LG polls

From Yusha'u A Ibrahim, Dutse

ALL Nigeria Peoples Party stakeholders in Jigawa State yesterday said the party will not participate in forthcoming local government election slated for 13th February 2010, saying the political atmosphere is not conducive.

Representatives Alhaji Nasiru Garba Dantiye told *Daily Trust* yesterday that the decision was part of the outcome of a stakeholders' meeting held recently. He said the party will not give credibility to the election by participating.

Dantiye recalled that, "last year, 13 ANPP local government chairmanship aspirants and over 90 councillors were disqualified on the eve of election for reasons best known to the commission."

He said the party had realised that if it partakes in the forthcoming election history will repeat itself, hence, the decision to boycott it. According to him, so long as Dr. Alili Galadima is still heading the commission under the government of Alhaji Sule Lamido, no credible election will be held.

He sated further that, when Governor Sule Lamido swore with the Holy Qur'an that all political parties would be treated equally in last year's election, ANPP took

him by his words, but to its surprise, its candidates were finally disqualified for no reason.

"Only ANPP bought contest forms last year, only its candidates were screened and unfortunately only ANPP candidates were disqualified by the commission. Therefore, with the same Galadima as the chairman of the commission and Sule Lamido as governor, the ANPP will not waste its resources participating in the election," he said.

He further disputed a statement credited to the chairman, Dr. Galadima that the ANPP had collected forms and grants from the commission, saying the commission only gave the sum of N120, 000 to some members of the ANPP to buy rams during the last Eid-el Kabir festival.

He said the meeting was attended by the former Deputy Governor of Jigawa State, Alhaji Hassan Hadejia, Senator Dudu, the acting ANPP state chairman, Senator Muhammad Kirikasma among others.

But when contacted, chairman of the Jigawa State Independent Electoral Commission Dr. Alili Galadima said the ANPP did not communicate to the commission its decision to boycott election, saying "if the party notifies the commission then the commission will act according to the provision of the law."

Inside Politics

Anambra: Why Andy Uba is misconceived, by Nwanyanwu

NATIONAL Chairman of Labour Party (LP) Barrister Dan Nwanyanwu, in this interview, said the party's candidate for next month's election in Anambra State Dr Andy Uba is widely misconceived because of his association with former President Olusegun Obasanjo. He also explains why the party dumped Mr. Okechukwu Areh, erstwhile candidate of the LP. Excerpts:

By Abbas Jimoh

HOW far have you gone in addressing the problems raised by the state chapters at the last convection, especially on funding?

The issue of under-funding in political parties, particularly opposition parties is not new to us. When we started this struggle, we didn't get money from anywhere. It was individual efforts that moved us this far. These things will have to evolve gradually; we are aware that most of the state chapters, like the headquarters, are seriously underfunded. We have therefore encouraged state chapters to intensify efforts in getting their monthly subscription from members. That is the first way a political party makes its money. If you have committed party members and they pay N100 every month, if you have 500 members in a ward paying N100 every month, you know how much you will collect. In a local government, you can have up to 20 or 30 wards and you know how much that can give you.

This is what we encourage them to do since we don't have money bags and donors.

When we did a rough calculation at the convention, we found that we could make as much as N5 million every month and if a state chapter generates such amount of money, why wont the chapter organise functions and hold regular meetings? Members should be made to know that the subscription they pay gives them the right to speak, vote and be voted for in the party.

Will you say that you are fulfilled with the outcome of the convention?

No, we have not fulfilled anything, we are still working. I told the delegates when I was re-elected that they spurred us to work harder; we are working to get majority of the states, how then can we say we are fulfilled when we have only two or one and half, so to say. But by the time we have a shot at the presidency and we get it, one can express fulfilment. We are still far from reaching our target but in 2011, God willing, we will get there.

Why did you settle for Andy Uba for the Anambra governorship poll?

Well, Dr. Andy Uba was the best among the people that came. Unfortunately, Nigerians have terrible impression of somebody they don't know. A section of the media have decided to paint anybody that worked with former President Olusegun Obasanjo black, but it is not everybody that worked with him that is evil. Out of every 12, there must always be a Judas. Out of the people that worked with Obasanjo, there must be good men in them.

Here was a man that contributed positively during the petroleum pricing crisis with the federal government. Labour leaders have told me that he contributed immensely to some of the agreements they reached. When he was governor briefly, his first executive function was to increase workers salary in the state. That is verifiable. And even after the Supreme Court asked to go, he made up his mind to do things that positively affect people at various levels.

When he appeared before the National Working Committee (NWC) of our party, he showed prior knowledge and understanding of our manifesto, so we have no option than to grant the request of the Anambra State chapter of the Labour Party that he should be their candidate. That was how he became the candidate of our great party. Those criticising our action are those who had their own candidate in the election. They are afraid that the candidate that would win the election has come, that is why they are criticising us. They are asking why we should pick him when he came from the PDP. But didn't Mimiko come from the PDP? Today people who opposed Mimiko are telling me that Mimiko is more labour than even most labour people. So you can't sit in your bedroom and condemn someone you have not met...

Will he not be a hard sell to the Anambra electorate...?

...cuts in... No, no, no, Anambra people are happy, Labour Party people are happy and everyone is happy. By the time we hold our rally, you will see what I'm talking about; we are not deal-

ing with hired crowd; we are dealing with people that will vote and stand by their votes; most people in the state have nothing against him.

PEOPLE ask why we should take somebody that worked with Obasanjo for eight years. But I think that should be a plus to him and not a minus because for him to have worked for eight years with Obasanjo as a domestic servant without quarrelling with him means something good is in him. I say this because it is not easy to work with a person like Obasanjo for eight years without problems. How many people worked with him for eight years?

But CNPP has opposed his choice as your candidate...

...cuts in... The person that made the comment is a floating politician; he doesn't have a political party but he had a candidate he was supporting in that election. I'm talking of Osita Okechukwu, what do you expect him to say? In this issue, he is not an impartial arbiter. He was already committed to a candidate, so he was just talking rubbish. Besides, he is not a member of Labour Party. He doesn't know what we are doing. Let him go and support his candidate and we will support ours. I have no quarrel with his candidate therefore he shouldn't have quarrelled with me over my own candidate.

But he is known to be in ANPPP?

He can't be an ANPP member because his name is not in the register of the party. The National Secretary of ANPP said this not long ago, so he is not a member of any political party if that is the case, then why should he be talking about a candidate produced by the Labour Party? Let him talk about his own candidate which he has in Anambra.

There was an attempt to kill the Secretary General of the CNPP but up till now the man who comments on every issue, relevant and irrelevant, didn't comment on it. He didn't issue any statement and ever since that time but he has issued more than 20 press releases. But he didn't issue anyone on the attempt to assassinate the Secretary General of the CNPP. That explains why the police invited



BARRISTER Dan Nwanyanwu

him and he started sending texts everywhere that we should come and help him. Help you for what? You that speak on everything, and there was an attempt to kill your Secretary General yet you failed to issue any statement till Balarabe Musa did so. So why should he be talking about the candidate of Labour Party, a party he has no stake in. It is irresponsible on his part. When we meet at the polls, we will know who would be voted for by the Anambra people.

How would you cope with the challenges posed by Governor Peter Obi, Prof. Soludo and Chris Ngige?

Soludo is not an issue in the election. Ngige may also not be a problem. We have one candidate to contend with and I won't tell you who that person is but by the time we get into the field, you will see what happen.

What is your opinion about the three new parties that have been registered by INEC?

In Nigeria, we are free to register more parties, but my position as a politician who wants

to deepen this democracy is that proliferation of political parties cannot help matters. But the constitution allows it to be done, so they can register as many as possible. I believe they would enter briefcase like so many others registered before them.

Why is your party's presence not being felt in the North?

It is a growing party; we can't be everywhere the same day. We don't have the money that the PDP has so we are building slowly from bottom up. We will get there because ours is a party for the masses; we have our strategies and we are moving in line with our programmes.

What is your take on the logjam in the constitutional review and electoral reform?

Our position is that there must be electoral reform. If we don't have electoral reform before the 2011 elections, we are likely going to have problems. So we must have electoral reform so that we can have a free, fair and transparent election.

SPORT

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Eagles survive Chipolopolo forays

By Ismaila Lere, with Agency reports

ZAMBIA'S Chipolopolo displayed great team spirit and a wonderful flair of attacking football as they stretched the Super Eagles in a dress rehearsal yesterday for the 27th Orange Africa Cup of Nations kicking off in Angola at the weekend.

In a warm up-match played at the Absa stadium in Durban, both teams fielded their best squads as they sought to gauge their preparedness for the bi-annual African soccer show-piece.

However, the Zambians were quickly off the mark from the first whistle and dominated for long spells with midfield maestro Rainford Kalaba coming close to breaking the deadlock with a delicious free kick midway through the first half.

FC Utrecht top man Jacob Mulenga also came close with his solo effort that was thwarted by the Eagles defence anchored around Everton Joseph Yobo and goalie Vincent Enyeama. CHAN 2009 golden boot winner Given Singuluma also saw his chance go begging as the Chipolopolo pressed hard for a goal.

Amodu used the game to try out almost all the players he had in camp, although his starting line-up revealed precious little about what his intended line-up against Egypt will be in about a week's time.

By the second half, Amodu gradually changed the team, until virtually the entire eleven that started the game, had been taken off the park.

The second half was evenly bal-

anced as both sides sought the elusive goal.

Meanwhile, Amodu has declared that he has a squad that will not only beat the defending champions in their Group C clash on January 12, but also emerge as the eventual winners at the end of the tournament.

"That match will go a long way in putting things right for us," Amodu was quoted as saying in Filgoal.com.

"The Egyptians, as defending champions, will come out smoking but we will match them grit for grit."

Amodu also said that the absence of duo Mohamed Aboutrika and Amr Zaki will not have any effect on the result of the much-awaited clash because he has the "best Nigeria squad" which can handle any kind of squad Egyptian can parade.

"My optimism is not based on their injured players, but injury is part of the game and I feel sorry for them," he said.

"With or without Mohammed Aboutrika and other injured players, I have a squad that can cause upsets and go all the way to the final. I have raised the confidence of the team and they are equal to the task ahead."

"What I have chosen for Nigeria is the best squad capable of bringing the cup back home. Any player who finds his name in the squad got there by merit," he added.

Nigeria starting XI: Enyeama, Yusuf M, Taiwo, Shittu, Nwaneri, Etuhu, Mikel, Nsofor, Obasi, Yakubu, Martins.



ZAMBIA'S Jacob Mulenga was a thorn in the Eagles flesh during the friendly match.

Lulu arrives Durban, encourages Eagles

NFF President Sani Lulu, arrived in the Super Eagles camp in Durban, South Africa yesterday and immediately offered words of encouragement to the players.

Lulu left Lagos on Tuesday night for the Eagles Nations Cup training camp, Riverside Hotel and Spa.

"I am happy to be here with you. I bring words of encouragement and motivation from the Federal Government," Lulu said.

"You know how passionate our people are about the game of football; they are all expecting as we prepare to storm Angola."

The Cup of Nations is the first of two major championships

that you will be taking part in this year and Nigerians are anxious that we perform very well in Angola.

"That can give us great confidence going to the World Cup finals in June," Lulu told the players as he sat with them at the hotel.

NFF General Secretary, Dr.

Bolaji Ojo-Oba was also expected to arrive in Durban on Thursday before travelling to Angola for a meeting of the participating teams on Friday.

The Super Eagles will fly out of Durban for Angola on Friday and will play their first match of the 27th African Cup of Nations finals against Egypt on Jan. 12.



LULU

Pompey exit fears hit Kanu, Utaka

BARELY 24 hours after Portsmouth coach, Avram Grant spoke of a desire to keep all his major players into the coming month, another bolt of shock has shown that the futures of Nwankwo Kanu and John Chukwudi Utaka are in doubt at Fratton Park.

Before now, Utaka appeared as one of three Pompey stars headed for the exit, but Kanu's legs are also now shaky, as the latest report reveals that the top brass at Portsmouth are ready to listen to offers for every player they have on the books.

The report says the January fire sale of Kanu, Utaka and other top players is pending but is yet unlikely to raise even a fraction of the funds needed by the end of the month if the club is to be prevented from going into administration.

To this end, the revelation indicates that there is not a single squad member at Fratton Park who is not available in the transfer window with Younes Kaboul and Kevin-Prince Boateng the pair likely to generate the most cash.

Confirmations from Fratton Park stated further that the



NWANKWO Kanu and John Utaka are in doubt at Fratton Park

club is prepared to offload as many players as possible in a

desperate attempt to stave off further financial meltdown,

with Kanu and Utaka bound to come unscathed only if Pompey

gets up to 30 million pounds inside the next four weeks.

Victor Agali is innocent, says lawyer

MORE facts are emerging in the shocking news about the arrest of former Super Eagles lanky striker, Victor Okechukwu Agali in Holland.

Few hours after the report hit the international media and airwaves that the Levadiakos of Greece striker, who once played for Olympique Marseille and OGC Nice of France, had been arrested at Schiphol Airport near Amsterdam for carrying two fake passports, Agali's lawyer, Bob Kaarls has issued a statement protesting the star's innocence.

Kaarls said Agali, fondly called

Okey Banana during his early days in Lagos, was returning to Greece after visiting his wife and child in Nigeria, and disclosed that officials at the star's club had indicated that they are willing to pay the bail to secure their striker's freedom.

Dutch authorities claimed that the Schengen visa contained in the second document, issued by Cyprus, did not meet requisite standards, but Kaarls insists it was all a mix-up.

"The (first) passport judged problematic by officials was sent to him in this form by post by

Nigerian authorities in 2007," he said.

Additional reports indicated that the Dutch police have already made an official statement on the development and gendarmerie spokesman, Robert van Kapel explained that Agali was apprehended two days after Christmas.

"At passport control, on December 27, he (Agali) was found to be in possession of a fake passport," said Kapel.

Upon further investigation, the 31-year-old striker in transit at Schiphol on a voyage from Lagos

to Athens, turned out to have two sets of fake travel documents, said Van Kapel.

"In the one, the page with his personal particulars has been modified, in the other it was the visa," he said.

A judge will now decide whether to extend the footballer's provisional detention for further investigation.

During his itinerant professional career, Gangling Agali has also played for FC Toulon of France, Germany's Schalke 04 and Hansa Rostock, Xanthi Skoda of Greece and Rizespor of Turkey.

ESPN wins Mark's B'ball tourney

By Orkula Shaagee

ESPN at the weekend defeated Archers Basketball team 40-32 to emerge winners of the maiden edition of the basketball championship sponsored by the Senate President David Mark in Otukpo, Benue State.

The competition which was held under the auspices of "Mark the Ball Basketball Organization" also saw Experience taking home the third place trophy, beating Dreams by 39-20.

All the top finishers also went home with sports kits and cash prizes ranging from N100, 000, N75, 000 to N50, 000 with the winners taking the biggest prize.

In his remarks the Senate President who was represented by his Chief of Staff Hon. Agbo Ogah said the tournament is targeted at engaging the youths as well as help in resuscitating the game of basketball in the country.

Senator Mark also promised to make the competition an annual event and as part of his effort to encourage the mental and physical wellbeing of the masses.

Eight teams featured in the week-long tournament.

Handball: Nigeria eyes African Nations Cup

By Ismaila Lere

NIGERIA is seeking to extend its sub-regional dominance at the forthcoming 19th African Handball Championships for Men billed to hold in Cairo-Egypt from February 10 to February 21, 2010.

According to the Nigeria Handball Federation (NHF) the country's team will be handled by the Technical Adviser, Baba Isa Alabi, who will be assisted by the chief coach is Rafiu Salami,

a France based premier league coach, and FRSC Abuja coach, Bala Mohammed Khalifa.

Nigeria will play Tunisia, Libya and Republic of Congo in Group A of the preliminary round.

The following players have been invited to the national team camp in Kaduna.

They are Saka Salau (Road Safety); Emmanuel Ogbare (Kano Pyramid); Muktari Ibrahim (Road Safety); Tele Dada (Niger United); Shehu Aliyu (Niger United); Abdul-

lahi Mohammed (Niger United); Bala Mohammed (Road Safety); Tope Akande (Road Safety); Emma David (Road Safety) and Philip Kalu (Kano Pyramid).

Others are Jacob Ayuba (Kano Pyramid); Udale Joseph (Kano Pyramid); Emmanuel Omale (Plateau Vipers); Danjuma Mohammed (Sokoto Rima); Aliyu Usman (Road Safety); Edefe Ewerode (Delta); Samora Samuel (Nigerian Army); Friday Ejembi (Benue Buffaloes); Ayaka Ben (Benue Buffa-

loes) and Promise Ogbonnaya (Road Safety).

Meanwhile, six professional players called up from Israel namely, Babatunde Abdulrasheed and Femi Tunji (Ramat Hasaroon Handball Club of Israel); Chukwue-meka Ejike, John Onche and Shittu Adewumi (Maccabi Tel-aviv) and Obinna Theophilus (Kirila Sharet Handball club).

The top 3 teams will qualify for the World Championships in January, 2011 in Sweden.

Transfer Update...

Genoa, Milan follow Alex

GENOA and Milan are following Chelsea's Brazilian defender Alex with a view to landing him this January. Sportmediaset, it claims Enrico Preziosi and Gianpiero Gasperini are both admirers of the stopper who has been tipped to leave Stamford Bridge this winter. It is said a number of Chelsea observers have been in Genoa this week as they look at Sampdoria's Giampaolo Pazzini, but voices claim the Grifoni are also ready to open up dialogue with them for Alex. The report suggests Milan are also in the hunt for the Brazilian who was linked with Real Madrid last summer. Leonardo is eager to bolster his squad's defence as we begin to enter the second half of term. The Rossoneri's good relationship with Carlo Ancelotti could spark a move into life.

Adu joins Greek club Aris

AMERICAN forward Freddy Adu is joining the Greek club Aris on an 18-month loan deal from Benfica. The club announced the deal yesterday but did not disclose financial details. The 20-year-old Adu was seen as an emerging star as a teenager, but has failed to establish himself at Benfica and was loaned in September to the smaller Portuguese club Belenenses.



ADUGUAY

Benfica keen on Ronaldinho

MILAN star Ronaldinho has been tipped to join Portuguese giants Benfica, according to Il Corriere Dello Sport. The report claims former Rossoneri ace Rui Costa, current general director at the Estadio Da Luz, is keen on enticing the Brazilian to his club. It is said coach Jorge Jesus is a good friend of Ronaldinho's brother and agent Roberto De Assis, with a number of talks in the pipeline. As Aguias thus join the race which includes competition from Brazilian sides Botafogo and Corinthians. However, landing Ronaldinho with success is unlikely. The attacking play-maker earns around €6.5 million per season at Milan - a figure which voices claim is too steep for Benfica pockets.

Sporting CP eye Mendes



MENDES

ACCORDING to a report in the Daily Record, Portuguese powerhouse Sporting CP are on the verge of signing highly rated midfielder Pedro Mendes from Scottish table-toppers Rangers. The Liga Sagres outfit have been performing rather disappointingly in the first half of the season and head coach Carlos Carvalhal is desperate to add to his ranks in January. Sporting and Rangers have already agreed a transfer fee. However, Mendes has yet to agree personal terms with the Lisbon side.

Mourinho: I'll see out Inter contract

INTER boss Jose Mourinho was again drawn on his future during yesterday's press conference and the Portuguese maintained he remains committed to the Italian champions. The former Chelsea boss set the rumour mill ablaze last month after admitting to The Sun that his desire was to return to management in the Premier League. And the Italian media quickly alleged that 'Mou' was ready to turn his back on the Beneamata at the end of the current season. "I will say this one last time," Mourinho said yesterday. "I am in love with English football, with the English lifestyle and it's true I want to go back." "But I don't know when it will happen. And I will never leave a job half-done. It's fairly easy. I have a contract until 2012 and I love being here."

Ribery keeps Bayern Munich fans guessing

FRENCH international Franck Ribery has hinted he could make amends to fans and chiefs at Bayern Munich, left frustrated by his string of injuries, by seeking a contract extension with the club.

"Why not?" Ribery told the media when asked if he would consider extending his contract past 2011 when it expires.

Ribery, who is in Dubai on a team training camp, said however he wants his case settled before the start of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa this June.

"It's me who will decide. We'll sit around the table and come up with a solution but whatever it is it has to be settled before the World Cup."

Fans of the German giants, however, may not be getting their hopes up.

The highly-valued midfielder has been a target of top clubs since producing some scintillating performances for Bayern last season, notably Real Madrid, who failed to sign him last summer.

Bayern bosses have recently denied rumours they will cash in on Ribery next summer by selling him to the Spanish giants.

According to Bayern's sporting director, Christoph Nerlinger, talks will begin in the coming weeks.

"We want to keep Franck, but we have to come to an arrangement that is a win-win situation for both parties," he said.

"What matters most is that he gets back to playing regularly."

Ribery has been out of action since October 3 due to injury, a fact that Bild newspaper was keen to highlight Wednesday with a full page detailing Ribery's injury setbacks entitled "The French Patient - episode 601".

After suffering blisters on his foot in the summer, he was then sidelined with knee tendinitis. He



RIBERY may seek contract extension with Bayern Munich

was due to return in mid-December but then suffered an ankle injury in training.

Bayern return to Bundesliga

action against Hoffenheim on January 15, but Ribery - who has played only six of 17 league matches all season - is still uncertain.

Why I reject Man. City move - Veron

JUAN Veron has revealed that he rejected a move from Estudiantes to Manchester City because he feels he should stick by the decision he took to return to Argentine football.

He also maintained that staying put was better for his family and money was not a consideration at this stage of his career.

"I talked to [Manchester City boss Roberto] Mancini, but it's not possible now," he told Argentinian radio station La Red.

"It's not about money. First comes my family and second it's

because I made a decision and I want to respect it.

"This is what I feel and this is the place in which I am comfortable.

"To accept it would be going against my convictions, against myself and against the people."

And Veron, for whom City reportedly offered £7 million, did not take long to consider the offer.

"I presented the offer to the club directors so they could analyse it," he added.

"But on my part there wasn't a lot to think about. My response was instant."



JUAN Veron



2010 AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS

Underdogs eye African Crown

ALL over Africa talks are on about who will eventually be crowned the African football kings. Defending champions Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast and the hosts Angola are tipped as favourites.

Aside from the usual suspects vying for the title in Angola, there will be a select few who may have what it takes to upset a favourite on their day, and these teams create further excitement in a tournament that will already have the entire continent glued to their television sets and radios on match days.

Malawi, who are making a return to the African Cup finals after a 26-year absence, will definitely be one team capable of pulling a few surprises. They are in Group A, which is a tricky one to progress from, as it features the host Angola, Mali and the 2010 World Cup bound Algeria.

Able to play well away from home at times, the Flames of Malawi will be hoping that Angola 2010 gives them the opportunity to make a mark on the African stage. The Kinshasa Phiri coached side might not be a star studied side like Ivory Coast or Ghana but they have a big match temperament and with nothing to lose they will be underestimated at their opponents' peril.

Zambia is another team capable of getting tongues wagging at this year's tournament; led by the South African PSL record goal scorer, Collins Mbesuma, and the talented Chris Katongo up front, opposition defenders will have a nightmare trying to keep this partnership at bay.

Anything is possible in this continental showpiece and Zambia is one of the teams with their hands itching for the crown.

Mozambique find themselves in Group C at the African Cup of Nations in Angola together with Nigeria, Benin and defending champions Egypt, but the former Portuguese colony could be another surprise package. Coached by the experienced Viktor Bondarenko, Mozambique have a talented new generation of players that includes Mamelodi Sundowns' Elias Pelembe, who has an eye for goal.

Above all the youngster's pace and skill will remind many of Ronaldinho's early days at Camp Nou. Up front they will be banking on their experienced senior citizen Tico-Tico, who has a wealth of experience, to pass onto the African side a typically South American playing style.

Mali are at the tournament this year with one thing in mind, go as far as possible and aim for the title. The Malians have a strong group of players on paper, but they have disappointed in the last few tournaments,



FREDI Kanoute of Mali... the west Africans will aim for the title this time around

while missing out on qualifying for the World Cup. With stars like Fredi Kanoute, Souleymane Diamoutene, Mohamed Sissoko and Seydou Keita at their disposal, they will aim for the final with a generation of players hungry to impress on the continental stage.

Tunisia, whose clubs often do well in the African championships, are possibly the team with the most potential out of the underdog category. The North African side have a point prove in this year's tournament. After Cameroon hauled them out 3-2 in the quarter-finals of the 2008 competition, the Eagles of Carthage have a chance to avenge that defeat as early as the group stages this time.

They last tasted success in the African Nations Cup back in 2004, for the first time in their history, when they hosted and won the tournament. Ever since, lady luck seems to have deserted them but this time the Faouzi Benzarti coached outfit will be out in full force.

Brazilian-born Francileudo dos Santos' magical samba style often proves too difficult for most defenders to handle and this year he will definitely be in the running for the golden boot if injuries keep their distance. The Tunisian side has great promise, and they narrowly missed out on a place in South Africa at the World Cup later this year. This means that they are even more desperate to win the title along with the

respect of their fans and the continent in Angola.

This year's tournament will be a tense one as everyone who failed to make it for the trip to South Africa in June will be out vent out their frustrations. While those who qualified for World cup will be out to prove that they are the continent's crème de la crème.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to talk about minnows and favourites on the African continent, as teams are constantly improving and the gap between the best and the chasing pack continues to diminish. Perhaps this is the year of the underdogs, and the neutral supporter will have a tournament to savour in Angola.

CAF snubs Nigerian refs

CAF continued the tradition of overlooking Nigerian referees for major tournaments by failing to list a single one as centre referee for this month's Africa Cup of Nations in Angola.

Only one Nigerian was listed, as an assistant referee,



while there were three South Africans in total; two referees and one assistant referee.

Three officials were picked from Asia; Alghamdi Khalil Ibrahim from Saudi Arabia as centre referee, his compatriot Al Ghamdi Mohammed and Iran's Hassan Kamranifar as assistant referees.

The development will come as a further black eye for Nigerian referees, who continue to suffer criticism at home for their handling of matches in the domestic Premier League.

Referees

Martins de C. Helder - Angola
Maillet Eddy - Seychelles
Coulibaly Koman - Mali
Damon Jerome - South Africa
Benouza Mohamed - Algeria
Codjia Koffi - Benin
Essam AbdelFatah - Egypt
Badara Diatta - Senegal
Djaoupe Kokou - Togo
S. Rajindraparsad - Mauritius
Bennaceur Kacem - Tunisia
Ssegonga Muhmed - Uganda
Bennett Daniel - S. Africa
Abdel Rahman Khalid - Sudan
Doue N. Desire - Ivory Coast
Alghamdi K. Ibrahim - S. Arabia

Assistant Referees

Manuel C. Inancio - Angola
Ntagungira Celestin - Rwanda
Menkouande Evarist - Cameroun
Molefe Enock - S. Africa
Abdel Naby Nasser - Egypt
Achik Redouane - Morocco
Ogbamariam Angessom - Eritrea
Hassani Bechir - Tunisia
Chichenga Kenneth - Zambia
Gahungu Desire - Burundi
Haruna Ayuba - Ghana
Champiti Moffat - Malawi
Edibe Peter - Nigeria
El Maghrabi Foad - Libya
Alghamdi Mohammed - S. Arabia
Hassan Kamranifar - Iran



GROUP A PREVIEW



GROUP A at the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations will be one of the most keenly watched, not least because it has the hosts Angola as its top seeds, a side who are looking to prove their doubters wrong.

Palancas Negras will do battle with Mali, Malawi and World Cup finalists Algeria for a place in the quarterfinals, and will open the tournament with a match-up against the Malians on January 10.

They have an experienced coach in Manuel Jose, the Portuguese national having enjoyed remarkable success while in charge of Egyptian side Al Ahly, and a tactician who knows how to win on the African continent.

He is trying to turn around the fortunes of the side, who did expertly to qualify for the 2006 World Cup in Germany, but since then have been disappointing, at one stage slipping out of the top 100 in the FIFA World Rankings.

His influence is such that striker Mantorras admitted this week that the coach was the 'star man' of the side, describing him as a "clever coach who can get the best out of his players".

Recent form has been sketchy for the Angolans. They beat Malta (2-1) and drew with Cameroon (0-0) in October, and followed that up with draws against Congo (1-1) and Ghana (0-0) in November, before losing 1-0 to Estonia last week.

What those result do show is that they don't conceded many, but having scored just one goal in their last three matches, that could be their problem.

Mali have been able to include key man Seydou Keita from Spanish giants Barcelona in their squad, with coach Stephen Keshi suggesting the player will be fit after their were initial fears he may be ruled out of the



THE Palancas Negras will like to prove their doubters wrong

tournament with a thigh problem.

The likes of Frederic Kanoute (Sevilla, Spain), Mahamadou Diarra (Real Madrid, Spain) and Abdoul Traore (Girondins Bordeaux, France) have all also been included, meaning it is a full-strength selection.

Keshi believes his side have the ability to go all the way, despite their underdog status.

"I know we are not among the favourites, but we are optimistic that this team can go as far as the final," Keshi told BBC Sport.

"You only need to look at the calibre of players in this team, the body language, attitude and spirit, so I'm not totally ruling us out of the trophy."

The Malians lost 1-0 to Egypt on Monday in their final warm-up fixture.

Algeria did brilliantly to qualify for their first World Cup finals in 24 years and much will be expected of the side in Angola.

Coach Rabah Saadane says his side are still mentally tired after their qualification campaign that included a one-off play-off against Egypt for a place in South Africa.

He says the side has simply set

an objective to get out of the group stages in Angola, starting with a win in their first game against Malawi.

"Our objective is to go through to the second round and then we'll make every effort to go as far as possible in the competition," Saadane explained.

"We feel tired after the 2010 African Cup of Nations and the World Cup joint qualifiers. We're still going to play to win. I prefer to remain realistic, it will be difficult even against Malawi. We are going to play match after match."

The Malawians are most certainly the minnows of the pool, and will be the team each side expects to beat.

Ten of their players ply their trade in South Africa, with nine of those in the country's First Division, certainly not a high level of skilled competition.

Coach Kinnah Phiri says prepa-

rations have gone well however, and that the side are hoping for an upset in Angola.

"We started our preparations for this tournament on December 2 and had only the local players, where we played a friendly match against a local side.

"We were joined by the professionals on December 20 for five days before we went to Egypt for a friendly and managed a 1-1 draw. We also played Mozambique last month and won 1-0.

"So, I can say preparations have been going well and playing Ghana [tonight] in our last preparatory game is the icing on top of the cake because this game would help us gauge our preparedness for AFCON.

"This game is also good in the sense that it would also help Ghana because they would be travelling to Angola for the same tournament," he said.

Angola

COACH WILL LOOK TO FORMER CLUB CHARGES

They will rely on left winger Gilberto and striker Flavio - who both played under Jose in Congo - to provide impetus. Gilberto missed out on the 2006 World Cup because of injury, but it is his ability to position attack quickly together with the finishing prowess of Flavio, that will be the core of the hosts' attacking play.



Algeria

NOT TO BE UNDERESTIMATED

Strength and power are the key with the likes of Abdul Bougherra and Ziani bringing an aggressive touch to Algeria's play plan. However, frailties are not to be seen in without stability and they should not be underestimated.



Mali

KANOUTE AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING

Speed and power will be up there with both sweeping forward to see an offensive strategy set in motion. In the attacking partner in Kallit Traore and winger Abdoulaye Traore. Formerly Ligue 1 West Ham, Traore is a proven scorer. Looking to prepared. Paris is an exciting prospect for Traore's side in the 2010 AFCON.



Malawi

NEVER A DULL MOMENT

With low defensive blocks are a key that will be hard to break, they will be looking to play on the counter. They will be looking to play on the counter. They will be looking to play on the counter. They will be looking to play on the counter.





GROUP B PREVIEW



IF there is a 'Group of Death' at the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations then it is undoubtedly Group B, where pre-tournament favourites Cote d'Ivoire, World Cup finalists Ghana, the tricky Togolese and Burkina Faso do battle.

The Ivorians and Ghanaians may feel they are the favourites for the pool, but neither of the other two sides should be easily dismissed, and both could be surprise quarterfinalists.

Ghana especially may not be at their best having had something of an injury crises in the lead-up to the competition.

Out are key defenders John Mensah and John Paintsil, and midfielders Stephen Appiah, Lar-yea Kingston and Sulley Muntari (this time for disciplinary reasons).

Coach Milovan Rajevac has also had to endure reports of a rift amongst the squad over the absence of Muntari, with star man Michael Essien said to be unhappy as he battles to be fit for the tournament.

But he remains optimistic of his side's chances.

"I know that a foreigner is yet to win the competition and I want to become that first coach to deliver the title, and it is possible," Rajevac says.

Cote d'Ivoire have no such problems and have been able to select a full-strength squad that has many people talking them up as winners.

There is no doubt they have the quality in the selection, but whether this glittering array of stars that includes the likes of Didier Drogba, the Toure brothers Yaya and Kolo, Didier Zokora, Salomon Kalou and Guy Demel, have the ability to fulfil their rich potential remains to be seen.

Coach Vahid Halilhodzic is therefore under pressure to deliver a tournament win and he has been forced to defend his position in the build-up to the finals, suggesting a large swath of luck is needed also.

"At this level of competition, a game is played with certain details and realities. A red card, injury, etc, can affect the final score," he says.

Togo have been quiet in their build-up to the event, but have a near full-strength selection on hand, including the talismanic Emmanuel Adebayor.

Coach Hubert Velud admits that having a player of Adebayor's quality, on and off the field, is a big bonus for him.



DIDIER Drogba will spearhead the Elephants attack

"What it does for the team is enormous. He makes them respect the training and discipline," Velud says. "For a trainer, it is happiness as I just have to prepare the side for matches [knowing the team will follow Adebayor]."

Burkina Faso will be considered the minnows of the group but they have some top individuals such as striker Moumouni Daganou, who finished top-scorer in African qualifying with 12 goals from 12 matches.

The Ivorians and Ghanaians may feel they are the favourites for the pool

ADEBAYOR LEADS FROM THE FRONT

With a player of Adebayor's quality it is only a matter of time that the game revolves around him and he will be as much of a target as available. The rest occasionally march along the front as a target man, but Velud will also need an effective Point B.



MUST KEEP IT TIGHT AT THE BACK

The aim of Kalou, Pittroca and Djigado will be control to Burkina Faso's attacking, with Belgium-based captain Moumouni Daganou of Diabolo the anchor. Daganou's control is 4-4-2 after disappointing qualifying results in June and defence has been a weakness. There is likely to be a lot of caution given their limited experience.



MIDFIELD IS A MATCH FOR ANYONE

Essien provides the pace while Essien is the engine and muscle in the midfield, a full midfielder. Essien is a major attacking force. Essien's well-timed passes, but he will play further up front to allow Matthew Amoah to operate just behind him, ready and willing to assist.



TALENT ALL OVER THE PITCH

Amoussou Gbete plays in such positions that all over the pitch where he is a target man for Cote d'Ivoire. He has long been a player in search of a club in the Premier League, but a move to back from being in the club proved a better bet. Yaya Toure and Zokora are the ball winners in midfield and Essien offers an option going forward.



THE THURSDAY COLUMN

Is'haq Modibbo Kawu

kawumodibbo@dailytrust.com 08059100368 (SMS only)

Jonathan's 6,000 megawatts of contrition

"At the inception of this administration, we promised to drastically improve access to electricity by the end of 2009... Our target, which was modest, was set at generating 6,000 megawatts of electricity by year end... I regret to mention that for a number of unforeseen and unavoidable reasons, this target could not be met. Millions of Nigerians are therefore still without power. For this, I tender on behalf of government very sincere regrets"
- Vice President Goodluck Jonathan

Let us congratulate Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria's vice president, for a display of humility, at the beginning of the New Year, with the statement quoted at the head of this article. It was an unusual act of contriteness and levelling up with the Nigerian people. The regime of the day had promised to deliver 6,000 megawatts of electricity; billions of dollars of Nigeria's money went into the sauce pot of electricity contracts (many of the boys would have become billionaires and millionaires, as usual); a propaganda onslaught was launched but at the end of the year, or just before it ended, it became clear that it was an elaborate charade, like most things in Nigeria since 1999. The media didn't make it easy for the regime by instituting a countdown to year's end, which caught a rudderless and incompetent regime in a self-inflicted crisis!

This was the background to Jonathan's uncommon act of humility. The PDP regimes, from Obasanjo do not apologize; it is not in the character of a party which makes a habit of "capturing" our states and country in massively rigged elections to find the modesty to admit it either got a decision wrong or its projections fell flat on the face. It is in democratic societies that parties and their governments defer to the people because they are a product of the votes of that people on the basis of programs and a manifesto canvassed with the people. Well, the PDP could not be caught alive a living manifesto or having canvassed a program with the Nigerian people. It "captured" Nigeria that is all, and as an afterthought, some programs are instituted for their money-spinning potentials. In the states, all-knowing "QGAS" milk the purse with PPP projects that often have little relevance to the lives of their people but at least, huge sums of money can safely be stolen by "OGA" (Tunde Fatunde once wrote a play titled *OGA NA TIEF MAN* and the title remains incredibly apt).

Are we now to conclude that through Goodluck Jonathan, the PDP regime of the day has suddenly discovered humility as an essential ingredient of behaviour or does the act in itself underline far deeper contradictions in our national political process? I think the latter is the far more plausible. Nigeria is in very deep rot and the regime is not better than a headless chicken at the moment. It was obviously beyond it to deliver on 6,000 megawatts of electricity; it was rather like asking a blind man to pilot a jet plane. Nigeria is now operating at the lowest common denominator and it is a situation which has no parallel in our history. We are saddled with an incompetent regime with a very corrupt, nepotistic core! Add to this the ill health of the president and its attendant controversy, and you will begin to get a true measure of Nigeria's desperation! Goodluck Jonathan has shown some remorse (what was missing was to canvass for concerted prayers by Muslims and Christians to help us achieve the 6,000 megawatts target!), but our situation remains very much like the tale of the witch in the African

story who continues to give birth to girls, thus multiplying the tribe of witches! If we do not exorcise the monster ravaging our land, we will all go down with it. It is that simple!

Obasanjo, the foreign investor

The story broke on the internet early this week, that Olusegun Obasanjo has procured thousands of hectares of land in the Debre Zeit area of Ethiopia to build a hotel and tourist resort. The story was similarly carried by DAILY TRUST, yesterday, Wednesday, January 6th, 2009. During his eight year disastrous rule of our country, the old despot spent years flying around the world in search of foreign investors and his style became the template for Nigerian governors. They systematically fleeced our country on the altar of search for investors. As we noted on this page two weeks ago, we now know better, that our thieving leaders are actually THE FOREIGN INVESTORS in different destinations around the world: Dubai, Singapore, the off-shore tax havens of the Caribbean, South Africa, just anywhere, and now Obasanjo has added Ethiopia!

In 2006, Kabiru Yusuf and I went to report from Darfur;

we had stopped over at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for three days and one morning we hired a taxi to see sights outside of Addis and as it turned out, we were taken to the town of Debre Zeit, with its eight beautiful lakes. It was a fascinating site of potential tourist development. That is where a certain foreign investor called Olusegun Obasanjo, from Nigeria, is planning to sink millions of dollars to build a hotel and tourist resort. The question to ask is where did the near-bankrupt old man of just over ten years ago get the money he is investing abroad? Why is the charity of Nigeria's thieving rulers located abroad? Let us be clear about it, the capitalist system is historically a system of theft and

banditry, but the capitalists of Europe and America stole and looted (they still do till today) the resources of other lands and brought the proceeds home to institute production, which in turn exploited the labour power of the working people (and continues to do so!). Our "Foreign Investors" leaders steal the resources of Nigeria to "invest" abroad. If you want capitalism why don't you make the stolen productive here? There is no honour or patriotism amongst Nigeria's thieving rulers and that is shameful!

When I grow up I want to travel N2.7billion a year, like Ojo Maduekwe

The direction-less, no-meaningful-results foreign policy junketing of Ojo Maduekwe, Nigeria's joke Foreign Minister cost our people the little sum of N2.7billion ONLY in 2009. Long may Ojo travel! At least he is no longer clowning on a palm wine tapper's bicycle as he did when minister of transport. Ojo Maduekwe, the unprincipled, anything-for-my-belle, politician who justified Abacha's tenure elongation during the infamous one-million-man-march a few years ago, is now living it large in a "democracy" he did everything to ensure we did not achieve! Travel on Ojo! The more the clown has travelled the less visible our country has become. Nigeria's rating as a global player is close to zero and on the continent, Nigeria is no longer reckoned with; even in our West African backyard, Mamadou Tandja of Niger told Ojo Maduekwe who took to Tandja a lesson note on democracy that Nigeria is not ruled by a democratically elected government. But travel on, Ojo! N2.7billion is chicken change! When I grow up, I will like to travel N2.7billion a year, like Ojo Maduekwe!

“The PDP regimes, from Obasanjo do not apologize; it is not in the character of a party which makes a habit of “capturing” our states and country in massively rigged elections to find the modesty to admit it either got a decision wrong or its projections fell flat on the face

SPORTS REPORT



AMODU Shuaibu

'No injuries in Eagles camp'

Team officials say that, contrary to reports, there are no injuries in the Super Eagles camp.

Most of the discussions in the local media have been focused on the injury situation of key members of the team, with some reports even going so far as to suggest that two players might be forced out and replaced with two

of the previously culled players.

But Team secretary Dayo Enebi dismissed the reports.

"There are no injuries in the camp. Please tell Nigerians not to listen to rumours and speculations of injuries and whatever being blared by a section of the media. All the players are okay and looking forward to the Cup of Nations," he said.



RAFAEL Nadal

Federer, Nadal on course for Dubai final

World number one Roger Federer made light of the chilly conditions to ease into the quarter-finals of the Qatar Open with a 6-2 6-4 win over Russian Evgeny Korolev on Wednesday.

"I was hitting the ball hard because the weather was quite chilly. Evgeny is a promising player, so I didn't want to take chances," said Federer.

World number two Rafael Nadal also breezed into the last eight with a 6-2 6-2 victory over Italian Potito Starace.

"I've been playing well lately. Today's victory underlines that I'm in very good form," said the Spaniard. "Potito has always been a tough opponent for me."

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