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INSIDE



S/Africa drops Zuma graft charges

Prosecutors in South Africa have announced they are dropping corruption charges against African National Congress (ANC) leader Jacob Zuma.

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As at Monday, April 6

TOP GAINERS

Symbol	Price(N)	Gain
AP	75.83	+3.61
Oando	70.50	+1.30
Guinness	89.55	+1.05

TOP LOSERS

Symbol	Price(N)	Loss
NB	36.40	-0.50
ETI	9.25	-0.48
Unilever	8.10	-0.40

Cap. N4, 515, 986, 929, 192.17

NAIRA EXCHANGE RATE

	Selling	Buying
EURO	212	210
POUND	240	238
DOLLAR	171	169

Source: B.A.T Bureau de Change, Lagos



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Mystery prince of the graveyard

- PAGES 28&29



Atiku is a drowning man

- PDP declares

By Muideen Olaniyi

The ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) slammed its door shut against former Vice President Atiku Abubakar yesterday, describing him as a "hopeless, drowning and unreliable politician."

The PDP's unusually hard knock on one of its founding fathers and Action Congress (AC) presidential candidate in April 2007 general elections came in reaction to media reports credited to Atiku yesterday, in which he castigated President Umaru Musa Yar'adua and the PDP.

The party's statement in Abuja, signed by its National Publicity Secretary Prof. Rufai Ahmed Alkali said PDP can no longer tolerate verbal assaults from the former Vice President.

The statement said, "The attention of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has been drawn to the statement credited to the former Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and widely published in Nigerian newspapers of April 6th 2009, in which he made uncomplimentary remarks against

Cont. on Pg. 5

Okiro blames police for recent crises

Some of the crises that took place in the country in recent months could have been averted if not for some lapses in the Nigeria Police Force, its Inspector General Mike Okiro said in Maiduguri yesterday.

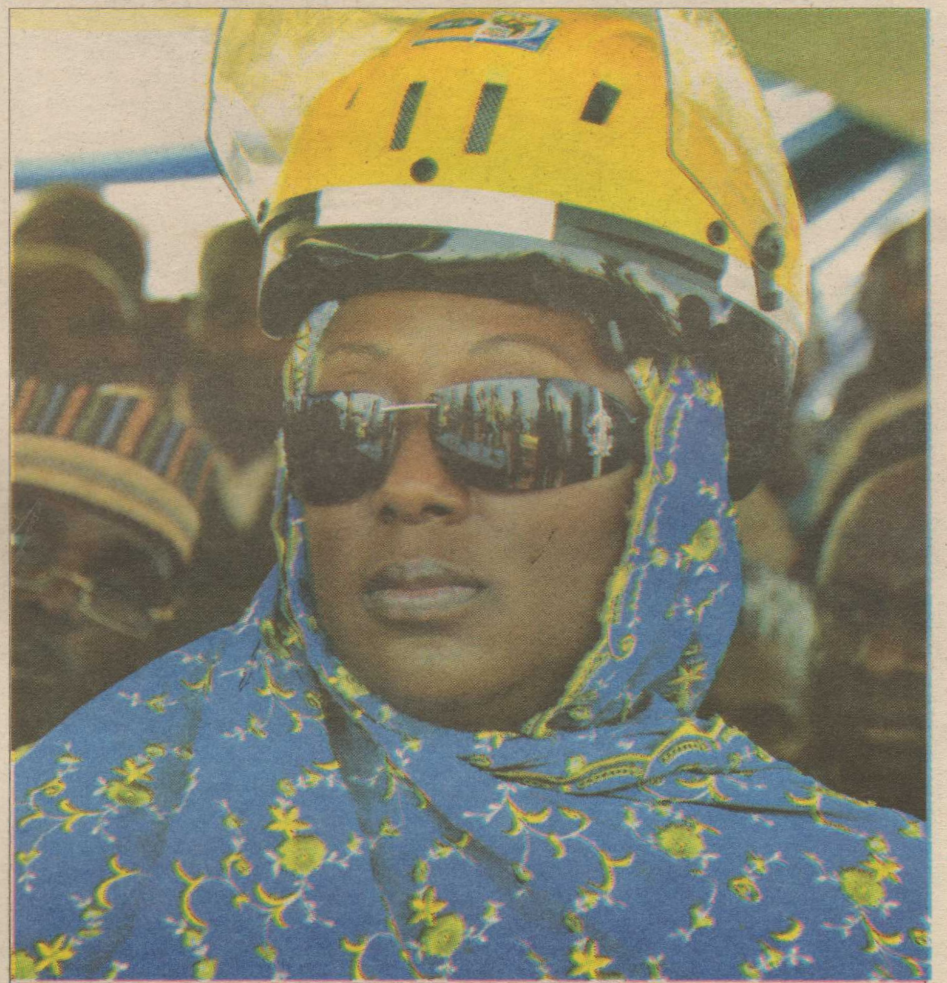
Okiro spoke at the opening of the monthly conference with senior police officers comprising commis-

From Isa Umar Gusau & Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Maiduguri

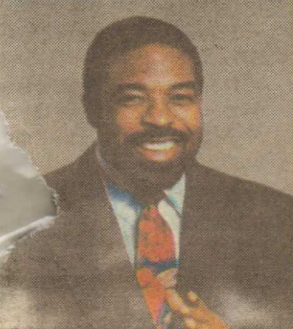
sioners of police, AIGs and DIGs which began yesterday and is scheduled to last till tomorrow.

He blamed senior police officers for their laxity in forwarding intelligence reports

Cont. on Pg. 5



House of Reps member Hajiya Khadijat Bukar Abba Ibrahim at the presentation of crash helmets by MTN to motorcyclists in Abuja yesterday. Photo: Afolabi Sotunde



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NEWS

Suswam, Mark, Bishops mourn Makurdi auto crash victims

Benue State Governor Gabriel Suswam and the Senate President David Mark have joined the Catholic community in the state in mourning the 19 passengers of the ill fated St. Peter and Paul Catholic Community 18-seater bus which collided with an oil tanker early Sunday in Makurdi.

Also, the Catholic Bishops of Makurdi and Otuokpo Dioceses, Bishops

From Hir Joseph, Makurdi

Atule Usuh and Michael Aporchi have urged the families of the deceased to have faith in God that the lives of the deceased while on earth would not be in vain.

Director of Communications for the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, Reverend Father Dominic Wanker told *Daily Trust* on phone yesterday

that the church had already planned a burial programme which would include a requiem mass to be held at the Holy Ghost Parish in Makurdi before the corpses are handed to the respective families for onward burial.

Suswam in a statement by his Special adviser on Media and Public Affairs, Mr. Cletus Akwaya, commiserated with the families of the deceased,

saying the unfortunate losses were for the entire state. He prayed for the repose of the souls of the deceased and for the families to have the fortitude to bear the losses.

The Senate President's condolence message which was contained in a statement by his Special Assistant on Benue Liaison, Mr. Adakole Elijah quoted Mark as expressed deep grief over the news of the tragedy, saying "it came to him (Mark) as a rude shock especially at this time when Christians are celebrating the Holy week".

He consoled families of the 19 passengers and described the accident as the worst fatal automobile accident within Makurdi metropolis in recent times.

The Senate President described the incident as devastating, not just to Benue state, but the nation at large, as he prayed God to grant the victims' eternal rest and the families of the deceased the fortitude to bear the losses.

He also commiserated with the Bishop of Makurdi Diocese, Atule Usuh and the entire Idoma catholic community over the untimely demise of the Christian faithful.

The accident occurred at about 7am of Sunday when the 18-seater bus conveying the women collided with the tanker while attempting to overtake another vehicle at the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) Junction along Makurdi-Enugu Road in Makurdi. The 17 passengers on board the bus as well as the driver and the conductor of the tanker died in the crash.



Nigerian Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran with concurrent accreditation to Republic of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, Ambassador Abubakar Cika, with His Excellency President Ilham Aliyev of Republic of Azerbaijan after presentation of letter of credence recently.

New Gbong Gwom receives letter of recognition

The new Gbong Gwom Jos Jacob Gyang Buba has received a letter of recognition from the Plateau State government.

Gyang pledged to support Governor, Jonah Jang to ensure peace and stability in the state.

He gave the pledge while receiving the letter from the Secretary to the State government, Mr. Samson Dimka.

The new Gbong Gwom while receiving the letter thanked God Almighty for making it possible for him to be so recognised and stressed that God had a purpose for creating every human being, while each person awaits his destiny.

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

He said, "God has a purpose for all that He chose; we must work together for peace, progress and stability of not only Jos North, but the state in

general".

He appealed to all to surrender to the will of God and ensure peaceful co-existence in Plateau State and further urged the government to be resolute in its effort of restoring

peace in the state.

Jang later paid the new Gbong Gwom homage and reiterated his respect for the traditional institution, even as he commended the traditional king makers for selecting Buba immediately after the demise of the late Da. Victor Pam, the late Gbong Gwom.

Militants attack DAEWOO boat house in Bayelsa

The Joint military Task Force (JTF) yesterday confirmed that militants attacked a house boat belonging to DAEWOO Nigeria Ltd. at Igbomatoru, Southern Ijaw Local Government of Bayelsa. Col. Rabe Abubakar, Coordinator, Media Campaign Centre of the task force, told newsmen in Warri, Delta State, that the militants carried out the attack

at 1.30 a.m. on Sunday. "The DAEWOO house boat was in Igbomatoru to lay pipelines belonging to the Italian oil company, AGIP Nigeria Ltd., when it was attacked and destroyed by some suspected militants," he said. Abubakar said in spite of the amnesty promised by the Federal Government, some miscreants were bent on creating unnecessary tension aimed at

thwarting government's efforts to develop the Niger Delta area.

"The JTF will pursue and arrest those responsible for this attack on the facilities. There is no basis for this and similar aggression against such facilities or any other economic facilities for that matter, because relevant agencies are addressing the problems of the area," he said.

The media coordinator said the task force would not fold its arms and allow this kind of sabotage to continue. He warned that the JTF should not be blamed for any action against such "criminals" who want to destabilise the region.

Abubakar said it would no longer be business as usual for the militants and their collaborators in the region because the task force was

fully prepared to clear the area of such elements.

He also confirmed the arrest of two suspected oil thieves at Alepo area of Effurun Delta State. He said they recovered from them and pumping machinery of wooden boats containing substances suspected to be diesel (AGO) and one 33,000 litre tanker with registration number AR 720 PHC. (NAN)

UNIBEN Council sacks Acting VC

From Vincent Egunyanga in Benin

The crisis rocking the University of Benin over the appointment of an acting Vice Chancellor took a new dimension yesterday when the Governing Council sacked the former acting VC, Prof Uche Gbinedio and appointed a new Acting VC for the university. The new VC is Prof. Emmanuel Kubeinje, the Provost of College of Medicine of the university. The appointment was made at a Senate meeting of the university yesterday. Gbinedio was appointed through a letter signed by the Minister of Education, Dr. Sam Egwu two weeks before the expiration of the tenure of former VC, Prof Emmanuel Nwanze. There were however cries from members of the university community that the appointment of Prof Gbinedio did not follow due process. Chairman of the Academic Staff Union of Universities UNIBEN chapter, Dr. Kenneth Ilavbarhe said in an interview that the Governing Council only ratified the decision of the Senate last week to appoint Prof Emmanuel Kubeinje as the acting VC of UNIBEN.

Police arrest serial rapist in Mubi

The police in Mubi, Adamawa, have arrested a man, Ali Buba, suspected of raping seven teenage girls. The Divisional Police Officer for Mubi South Police Station, Mr Jacob Nwaja, who confirmed the arrest in Mubi, said the suspect was arrested in Wuro-Patuje ward in the town. Jacob said Buba had lured and raped seven teenage girls on different occasions. "We received complaints from parents of the affected teenagers and had to move in and arrest him," the DPO said. He also confirmed the arrest of two cattle rustlers, Baba Alura and Yahaya Ahmadu. "Baba Alura is a transborder cattle thief and had been on the police wanted for the past two years", the DPO noted. (NAN)

... alert on kidnappers in Oyo

The Oyo State Police Command yesterday called for vigilance among parents, guardians and educational institutions to check the resurgence in the activities of kidnappers. The State Commissioner of Police, Mr Baba Bolanta, said this yesterday in a statement made available to newsmen in Ibadan. According to the statement signed by the Police spokesperson, Olabisi Okuwobi, suspected kidnappers over the weekend ritually plucked the eyes of two children. The corpses of the children, both aged four, were found at Sanyo area of Ibadan. He said the report, which reached the Command, indicated that the suspected perpetrators were sighted at Felele area of Ibadan and Jobele, requesting for where human heads could be bought. Bolanta also called on parents to warn their children to be wary of people who accost them for anything. He said the Command would ensure that the suspects were apprehended and made to face the wrath of the law. (NAN)

11 die on Benin-Lagos road

From Vincent Egunyanga, Benin

Eleven persons were feared dead Sunday in an accident along the Benin Lagos road on the Ovia River bridge when a Tanker with registration number XP 763 GGE collided with a luxury bus prompting the tanker to plunge into the river. Seven dead bodies floating on the river have so far been recovered while four persons were believed to be trapped in the tanker that was submerged in the river. Five persons were also injured in the accident. Zonal Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) Mr. Zakari Nda said the injured persons have been taken to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital and the dead deposited on a mortuary in Benin City. Mr. Nda Zakari said that road safety corps were still making effort to remove the submerged Tanker from the river and the four remaining bodies trapped in the tanker.

NEWS

Fuel queues: NNPC accuses marketers of sabotage

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has blamed marketers for the recent queues in filling stations in Abuja and its environs in the last three days.

In an interview with *Daily Trust* yesterday in his office, Group General Manager, Group Public Affairs Division, NNPC, Dr Levi Ajuonuma said "there is no reason whatsoever for such build up of queues as the market is robust and adequately supplied with Premium Motor Spirit (PMS-Petrol)".

He said it was discovered that the marketers dispense fuel using just one or two pump heads thereby creating the current hardship in obtaining fuel.

He said as from last Saturday the NNPC had increased supply to Abuja and environs from 100 to 130 trucks in order to ease the situation but the marketers are still hoarding or diverting fuel for reasons best known to them.

"Our tour of the stations within Abuja metropolis reveals that the marketers are

By Hamisu Muhammad

deliberately strangulating the market as most of them are not selling while those selling are selling on only one pump", said Ajuonuma.

He said investigation conducted by the Corporation showed that several trucks were found parked at the stations but not discharging.

He warned that any marketer who was found to have run foul of the regulation, "we therefore wish to appeal to those marketers to immediately commence full sale of products already received from NNPC".

He called on the general public to desist from panic buying as adequate measures have been put in place to ensure that normalcy is restored.

When contacted a public affairs manager in Total downstream who pleaded anonymity said they are not aware of any fuel queues and no body inform them of that from Abuja.

He said the total operations are open to everyone and no reasons for hoarding

products at this moment.

When our reporter went round some of the filling stations in Abuja he noticed that most of the filling stations

have enough PMS with some trucks full with products parked.

None of the station man-

gers was willing to speak to our reporter as at yesterday on the issue.

But *Daily Trust* learnt

that the marketers are hoarding the fuel in anticipation of the high demand during the Easter holidays.



Representative of the First Lady, Women Affairs Minister Hajiya Salamatu Suleiman (2nd right), Borno State Governor Ali Sheriff, his deputy Alhaji Adamu Dibal and Sheriff's wife, Hajiya Fatima Ali Sheriff (right) at the opening of a 3-day workshop on reducing maternal mortality in Maiduguri yesterday. Photo: Isa Umar Gusau

Nigeria heads ECOWAS' new anti corruption body

Nigeria has been elected to chair a new regional anti-corruption body set up by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Countries in the West Africa sub-region have resolved to establish a Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in ECOWAS during a two-day workshop organized for the anti-graft agencies in West Africa by ECOWAS in conjunction with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Banjul, Gambia.

The Head Media and Publicity of the Economic and Financial Commission (EFCC) Femi Babafemi said Nigeria was elected to head the new body based on the country's successes in various anti-corruption efforts. The body will be responsible for ensuring inter-state cooperation in the fight against graft, to build capacity of member states that have already established anti-corruption institutions and encourage others who have not done so to follow suit.

Other aspects of the new body's function are harmonising legal, regulatory and administrative arrangement

By Misbahu Bashir

for the smooth running of the network; exchange of experiences and standardise tools, techniques and approaches in the fight against corruption in ECOWAS member states Babafemi said

The new body elected its Vice Chairperson from Republic of Benin, Secretary from Cape Verde and

Financial Secretary from Mali," he said.

He said the EFCC was represented at the workshop by its Secretary, Mr. Emmanuel Akomaye.

Member states were urged to abolish the impediments to the successful prosecution of the war against corruption during the workshop.

"These, include political interference, lack

of political and financial autonomy, weak operational procedure, archaic and outdated laws, banking secrecy, lack of power of prosecution, lack of security of tenure for commissioners, lack of protection for whistle blowers, and inadequate cross-border framework for coordination and cooperation," he said.

Member states were also told to exercise increased

amount of political will in the fight against corruption by ratifying and domesticating UN Convention Against Corruption, encouraging the establishment of independent anti graft

institutions, separate from the Ministry of Justice and ensure that such institutions enjoy financial and political autonomy and have the power to prosecute cases of corrupt practices without being answerable to political office holders for the day-to-day running of their institutions.

Test run of TRACO begins

Ten days to the April 15 date promised for the delivery of the Total Radar Coverage of Nigeria (TRACON) project, the test run of the facility has begun in Lagos and Abuja.

Mr Supo Atobatele, General Manager, Public Affairs, NAMA, said yesterday in Ikeja that they were working hard to ensure that the project was realised as soon as possible.

Minister of Aviation, Mr Babatunde Omotoba, in January promised that the multi million dollar project would be delivered in Lagos and Abuja within 90 days.

Omotoba, after a visit to France where the contracting firm handling the project is based, assured Nigerians that everything had been done to comply with a Presidential directive that the six-year old project should be delivered without delay.

The multi-million naira TRACON project, estimated at 66.5 million Euros, is aimed at modernising the Nigerian Air Traffic Management System.

Materials for other stations included in the project are expected in the country by June, preparatory to the total completion of the entire project by November.

The TRACON project comprises state of the art surveillance system, including,

Secondary Surveillance Radar, integrated Flight and Radar Processing System and other associated facilities for the airports in Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Port Harcourt.

It also covers locations in Talata-Mafara, Maiduguri, Numan, Obubra and Ilorin, among others.

The Federal Government in November last year said that it would not accept any delay in completing the Total radar Coverage of Nigeria (TRACON).

Many engineers have already been trained on the maintenance of the System, as well as 32 Area Radar Controllers trained in the US to effectively man the facilities. (NAN)

Power generation rises to 2900mw

The Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) says power generation has risen to 2,900mw after dropping by 700mw due to vandalism of the gas pipeline of the Nigerian Gas Company last week.

The General Manager, Public Affairs of the PHCN, Mrs Efuru Igbo, said in an interview yesterday in Lagos that the increase was due to the resumption of gas supply from the Otorogu Gas station in Delta.

Igbo said that the gas station was reopened at the weekend.

She, however, urged the Nigerian Gas Company (NGC) and Shell to ensure adequate gas supply to the

station to enable the PHCN supply power to its consumers.

She appealed to the customers for understanding, adding that the drop in the power supply was due to factors beyond its control.

Igbo said that power supply would soon be stable when all the power stations embarked upon by the government were completed.

"The attainment of the 6000mw generation capacity by December 2009 is not negotiable but achievable, and we are not paying lip service

to it.

"Nigeria is said to be a gas producing country but the situation on the ground is that the gas infrastructures are very weak.

"Besides, where gas is available, people vandalise the same weak infrastructure to steal condensate, but all that will soon be over," she added.

Minister of Power, Dr Olarenwaju Babalola, had said that the major challenge facing power supply was gas supply.

According to him, the sector requires one billion standard cubic feet of gas per day to run all the turbine plants. (NAN)

NEWS

Why Nigeria lacks good planning, by Shamsuddeen

Minister of National Planning Dr Shamsuddeen Usman has blamed the lack of good planning in Nigeria on the dormancy of department of Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) in the various ministries.

He said "over the years, planning functions have been relegated to the background. And you can see the price we are paying for it now as it is said that a nation fails to plan, in reality plan to fail."

He said this had impacted on the nation negatively. He was speaking at a forum for directors of PRS of federal ministries, departments and agencies held in Abuja. It was organised by the National Planning Commission.

Give government good technical advice, VP urges gas experts

By AbdulFattah Olajide

The Vice President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan has challenged members of the Nigerian Gas Association (NGA) to give the Federal Government technical advice that would drive sustainable development in the gas sector.

Vice President Jonathan gave the charge yesterday when the association's officers paid him a courtesy visit at the State House, Abuja. The NGA team was led by its president, Engineer Charles Osezua.

The vice president also charged the association to articulate a positive contribution that would be included in the National Gas Bill, saying "for Nigeria to achieve full gas utilization, there is need for the country's experts to contribute to policies and plans for the sector."

Earlier, Engr. Osezua had expressed his association's preparedness to partner with the Federal Government in the development of the gas sector.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Minister of Petroleum Resources, Dr. Rilwanu Lukman called for the review of the Gas Master Plan for better performance and the provision of necessary legislation that would be flexible enough to drive the development in the sector.

He noted that the revenue accruable to the country in the long term, from gas dwarfs oil, explaining that Nigeria probably has far larger gas reserves than crude oil.

By Yunus Abdulhamid

According to the minister, the PRS departments are supposed to be the pillar of planning for the nation but that in the present reality, government officials dread being posted to such departments because they think, they are not 'juicy'.

He said from now henceforth, the forum will be held on quarterly basis in the commission's renewed effort at "strengthening the coordination functions of the departments and as a veritable institutional framework for improving the quality of plan, policy programme formulation and implementation in the public sector, especially with respect to the annual budget and the seven-point agenda."

Usman said the preparation of the Vision 20:2020 and the medium term National Development Plan is going on. The second phase of the planning exercise is the

preparation of a comprehensive medium term National Development Plan (NDP) and is expected to cover the

federal, states, local governments as well as the private sector.

The minister said the pre-

vious edition of the graft NEEDS-2 has been harmonised with the 7 point agenda to form the draft National

Development Plan (NDP) covering 2009 to 2012. The NDP is expected to be completed within four months.



Governor Gabriel Suswan of Benue State and others in a wooden boat locally improvised to convey vehicles at the crossing point along River Katsina-Ala in Bururku, yesterday. Pix: Hir Joseph

Bakassi boundary issues to be concluded in 2010

By AbdulFattah Olajide

The delineation and demarcation of all boundaries with Bakassi and other territories ceded by Nigeria to Cameroun will be completed by 2010, the National Boundaries Commission (NBC) said yesterday in Abuja.

Addressing newsmen on the boundary matter, the Director General of NBC, Abubakar Sadiq Marafa-Diggi, said "we are thinking that by the middle of next year we should be able to conclude this exercise hopefully. The UN has given out the contract on the establishment of major controls which has taken place and now we are in the process of actual pillar establishment. That is what we have done so far."

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) had in October in 2002 ruled that the hitherto disputed Bakassi peninsula be ceded to Cameroun, basing its decision on a 1913 treaty between former colonial masters Germany and Britain. Sequel to the ICJ judgement, Nigeria and Cameroun set up the Nigeria-Cameroun Mixed Commission (NCMC) to handle all boundary issues related to the ICJ ruling on Bakassi.

The NBC boss said despite the successful delineation and demarcation of some of the boundaries, both Nigeria and Cameroun "have confidence building proposal which is the construction of roads from Manfe in Cameroun up to Abakaliki, in Enugu to join the Trans-Saharan Highway".

The NBC boss said "you know after the ICJ judgement, the government of Nigeria and Cameroun together with the United Nations organised a committee called the NCMC. In a nutshell, the NCMC has been overseeing the translation of the judgement on the ground; so far, we did the delineation of the boundary from Borno State to Cross River State but in the process of the delineation, we still realised that both Nigeria and Cameroun still have to come together to resolve the problem of some of the villages that continue to stray along the boundaries".

He explained further that "in some places, we have been able to successfully delineate the boundary but in some places where the boundary actually straddle some villages, we encounter problems with some of the villagers so but now we have resolved that wherever we have problem, we have to skip it and then come back to it later and give it special attention".

Speaking on the efforts of the NCMC on resolving the Bakassi issue, he said "In the Bakassi area, we don't have much problem because you know the government of Cross River States is doing some very significant things over there, trying to resettle the displaced. We don't have problems there. Nigeria, Cameroun and the UN

visit Bakassi from time to time and they have been coming up with very good reports concerning the situation of the displaced and those who decided to remain in Bakassi.

The NBC boss stated that besides the boundary issue, Nigeria and five other countries were making concerted efforts to reclaim the shrinking Lake Chad with a view to halting the migration along the Chad Basin. "The NCMC is trying its best to see that Lake Chad is also resuscitated because you know Lake Chad has been shrinking over and over and because of the shrinking that Nigerians crossed over to Cameroun and unfortunately we lost about 31 villages that found themselves in the

Cameroon territory, so Nigeria, Cameroun and about five other nations are doing their best to make sure that the lake is resuscitated to its original volume," he said.

Commenting on the efforts of both Nigeria and Cameroun in tackling the boundary issue, Diggi said "our government and that of Cameroun have tried their best and also the UN and they are doing everything possible to make sure that we utilize the resources available to us from the government for the demarcation exercise and also for other logistical services. We are hoping by May the Mixed Commission is able to meet in Abuja and then to discuss the progress so far made on the field".

Constitution review: Reps to call for memoranda

By Tashikalmah Hallah, Abdul-Rahman Abubakar & Nasidi A. Yahaya

The House of Representatives yesterday said it will soon call for submission of memoranda from Nigerians on sections of constitution they feel should be reviewed.

Deputy Minority Leader, Abdurrahman Kawu Sumaila (ANPP, Kano) who dropped this hint in an interaction session with newsmen in Abuja, said the House will pursue the review despite insinuations that the process may not be feasible.

Both arms have indicated that they may commence the process separately as quarrel over positions in the Joint Committee has stalled the commencement of the process.

According to Rep Kawu,

"We have resolved to pursue the constitution review to its logical conclusion. We are calling on Nigerians to submit memorandum on the sections of the constitution they think are better altered for the development of the country".

He said both Executive and Legislative arms of government should also propose sections in the constitution that if altered will reduce unnecessary administrative skirmishes and move the country forward.

On his part House of Representatives Spokesperson, Rep Esemey Eyiboh said at

the weekend that both chambers were in consultation on how the deadlock could be resolved.

But briefing newsmen recently, Senate Spokesperson, Senator Ayogu Eze (PDP, Enugu North) said the process may have hit the rocks as leadership of the two arms have failed to reach common grounds on the nomenclature matter.

He urged Nigerians not to be unduly optimistic over the amendment, saying that nothing much had been achieved in the negotiations between the leadership of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Senator Eze said, "Shortly after I spoke on the matter about three weeks ago, Deputy Speaker of the

House of Representatives, Bayero Nafada, said that the process would commence within a week after a committee under the leadership of the leader of the Senate conclude discussions.

"That one week was like a week or two ago when it was supposed to start and it has not started. You will not expect since they are still engaged in the process of negotiation, they will not come and say it has failed. But I am only trying to give a progress report so that Nigerians will not be unduly optimistic. My own is to give a progress report that that negotiation is ongoing but it has not really achieved much. What is being negotiated is to bring the exercise on track."

NEWS

Okiro blames police for recent crises

Continued from Page 1

to appropriate quarters, as a result of which, he said, the police was embarrassed by some happenings in recent times.

Okiro said, "In this era of advancement in telecommunications, late reporting of events or intelligence will not be tolerated. If appropriate steps were taken in forwarding intelligence reports, some of the major crises which embarrassed the force a couple of weeks ago could have been averted. We have lost some of our men and resources, including the people we are mandated to protect as a result of this lapse."

He also said "henceforth, command CPs and zonal AIGs will be answerable for any damage occasioned to the force and nation as a result of such lapses."

The IG did not say specifically which crises he was referring to as he neither linked his statement to the alleged stoning of the President in Jos, series of attacks by robbers against the police, the communal crises in Plateau and Bauchi states, nor did he refer to the bloody political crises that erupted in some parts of the south west in recent times.

The IG however regretted that in March 2009 alone,

17 policemen were killed. Four policemen, including a DPO were killed in Edo state; another DPO was killed in Ogun; 6 officers and men were also killed in Kano while 6 others were killed when the convoy of the Delta State CP was attacked in an ambush.

The IG said the developments speak volumes of police's "operational preparedness and capability" given the fact that the killings took place within the space of one month.

The IG also reminded the police of the critical job ahead in 2010 when electioneering campaigns will take off. He said, "In the face of the repeal of the Public Order Act whose objective was to regulate the conduct of electioneering campaigns amongst others, how prepared are we (the police) for the challenges of electioneering campaign come 2010?" He tasked the officers to rise to the challenges of ensuring the security of lives and property through proactive measures that are within their limits.

Borno State governor Ali Modu Sheriff, who was the special guest of honour at the opening ceremony, commended the police for securing the lives of people in Borno as well as those of other Nigerians.

AC alleges plans to invade Ekiti with fake security

The Action Congress (AC) in Ekiti State yesterday accused Osun State Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola of planning to invade the state with fake security men during the April 25 re-run governorship election. Chief Olajide Awe, Chairman of AC, made the allegation while briefing newsmen in Ado-Ekiti.

He said that the plan was hatched on Friday night at a meeting held at Jibowu hall between Oyinlola and the 16 Council Chairmen on the need for the PDP to win the election. At the meeting, Awe alleged that the Osun governor promised to also supply Military uniforms, arms and ammunitions, which he alleged would be distributed to PDP thugs on the day of the election.

"At the meeting, they discussed how the thugs in army uniform would then prevent voters from coming out to vote," he alleged. The PDP in a swift reaction — through its Director of Communication and strategy — Mr Jackson Adebayo, described the allegation as "fabricated lies" aimed at "insulting the intelligence" of the people.

"It is rather unfortunate that the leadership of the AC would start to allege a plan by our great party to use fake police or soldiers in the forthcoming re-run election. The problem of the AC is that they don't know the workings of the government at the Federal or state level," he said.

In his reaction, the Chief Press Secretary to Oyinlola, Mr Lasisi Olagun, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on phone that the allegation was "cheap blackmail" that should be ignored by all reasonable people.

"The allegation is not true and it is in the character of the AC to raise false alarms whenever failure stares it in the face. The AC leaders should have spoken more intelligently. The allegation is a cheap blackmail to scare PDP governors from supporting their party in the rerun election as promised openly at the Saturday rally by Gov. Oyinlola," he said. (NAN)

Atiku is a drowning man

Continued from Page 1

our party and President Umaru Yar'Adua-led Federal government. Our instinct has always been to ignore Alhaji Atiku Abubakar whose overtly selfish ambition has left a hopeless politician, susceptible to all forms of miscalculations and misjudgments. However, it appears that the PDP tolerance of him and his cohorts is daily being taken for granted; hence we wish to state as follows:

That the former Vice President be reminded that but for the PDP which gave him a platform to emerge first as Governor-elect of Adamawa State and then as the Vice President of Nigeria for eight years, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar would have remained an inconsequential political quantity, whose influence would not have gone beyond his Jada ward in Adamawa State. The former Vice President should therefore be eternally grateful to the PDP and not be consumed in the sojourn of ill fate to disparage a platform without which he would have remained irrelevant."

The party said it is an irony that the former Vice President has suddenly woken up to the realisation that Nigeria does not have a system that can bring brilliant people to leadership when the same system elevated him to the nation's number two position.

PDP wondered if Atiku "deliberately and selfishly slumbered away while he enjoyed the same system,"

saying "what a paradox that the same man who sang Hosanna yesterday is today singing crucifixe eis —crucify him—at top of his voice."

The statement added that "his attack on the genuine efforts and commitment of the Federal Government on electoral reforms is clearly opportunistic as Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as Vice President of Nigeria for good eight years cannot today be credited with even a single suggestion he made on how to reform the electoral system."

"If the PDP cannot bequeath a good electoral system as Atoka said, is it the AC with its barrage of demigods and cult personalities that will? Is it the AC that is bereft of internal democracy? Where is Atiku if we may ask? Is he in the opposition? Which opposition? Is inconsistency a mettle of opposition politics?" The party said it was not surprised that "Atiku now has his eyes in the so-called nebulous mega party having lost grip of the AC with his self serving antics."

"No doubt, it is a simple admission that even as tattered as the AC is today, the party has slipped off Atiku's hands," it added. It stated that Nigerians have come to know Alhaji Atiku Abubakar more than he thinks, adding that "for all his pretences, he is definitely not one of the champions of democracy."

According to the statement, Atiku's "recent desperation to repair a battered image and bounce back to

reckoning has fallen flat in his face, hence his latest remarks which are symptomatic of a drowning man latching unto every available straw for survival." The party said it is reassuring Nigerians that it is as formidable as ever to withstand any gang-up in any electoral contest.

It therefore urged Nigerians "to also beware of the sermons of those who while in position of authority and had the opportunity to reposition Nigeria and its electoral system, abandoned such a noble cause while saddling themselves with selfish political pursuits. Nigerians know whom to trust. Certainly, Atiku Abubakar is not one of them."

However, reacting swiftly to PDP's attack, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar said yesterday he has no regrets for condemning the PDP and the incumbent government for denying the country much-needed electoral reform.

In a statement released by his media office in Abuja, Atiku said the attack on his person for calling on the PDP and government to respect the wishes of Nigerians for electoral reforms is another confirmation that the PDP had derailed from the noble objectives of its founding fathers, including himself.

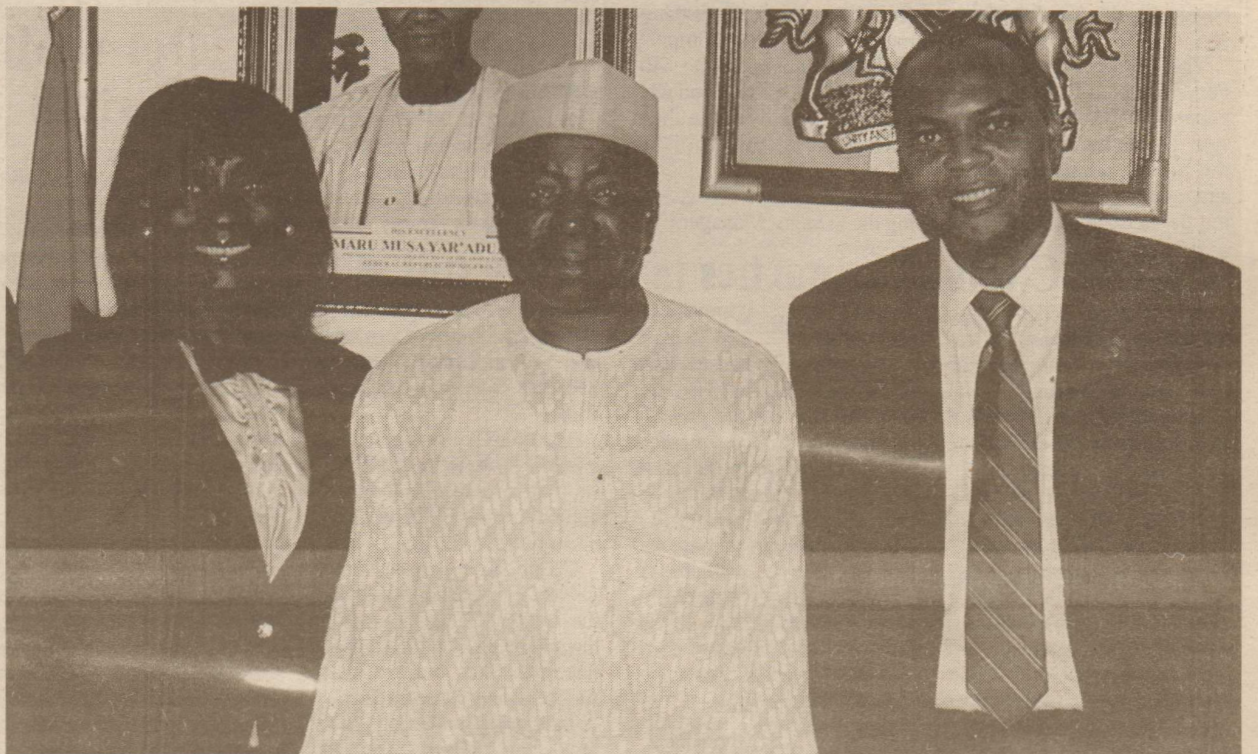
"There is no doubt that Nigeria needs electoral reform. The failure of government and frustration of our people over the lack of effective governance is a fall-out of the bad elections of

2007. The linkage between credible elections and performance in government is now very clear to Nigerians. It is a pity if some latter-day PDP joiners cannot see what every reasonable Nigerian sees clearly today."

Atiku said the minimum requirements for credible elections as contained in the Justice Uwais Panel Report have been jettisoned by the PDP because many of the politicians in the party are afraid of free and fair elections. "If these politicians are credible as they claim, why are they afraid of effecting electoral reforms that will guarantee the inalienable rights of Nigerians to choose their leaders?" the statement said.

Atiku said a credible electoral system in Nigeria must include the appointment of INEC Chairman and board by an impartial body like the National Judicial Council (NJC); prevention of the swearing-in of contestants declared winners by INEC until the completion of election petitions against them; a review of the Evidence Act to prevent domination of election petitions by technicalities and other reforms of the electoral process to protect the voting rights of Nigerians.

"These are critical reforms that will guarantee the credibility of the electoral system and ensure the emergence of credible and competent leadership at all levels of government," he said. The statement was signed on Atiku's behalf by Malam Garba Shehu.



From left: UBA's Deputy Managing Director, North, Ms Faith Tuedor-Matthews, Minister of FCT, Senator Adamu Aliero and UBA Group Head e-Banking, North Yomi Fabunmi during the UBA delegation's visit to the minister yesterday.

Photo: Felix Onigbinde

NEWS

Niger Delta landlords form monitoring group on government programs

The Oil Mineral Producing Areas Landlords Association of Nigeria (OMPALAN) has set up an independent committee to monitor the impact of Federal Government's development programmes in the region.

By Abbas Jimoh

General George Etukudo (Rtd.) as its chairman and Prince Jonathan Evbosaru as deputy is intended to pave way for a renewed peace initiative in the region.

While inaugurating the com-

mittee in Abuja at the weekend, the Chairman of OMPALAN's governing council, Bishop Udo Azogu said the task ahead of

the committee was enormous as it has to 'proffer ways of improving and consolidating the ongoing peace process in the Niger Delta.'

Azogu also stated that 'the President Yar'adua administration while working in concert with the National Assembly has, more than any other government in the post-indepen-

dence Nigeria, been committed to helping the common people in the Niger Delta.

"We believe that ambitious palliative programs must function with effective and practical monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to benchmark the targeted development goals. The absence of effective monitoring and evaluation mecha-

nisms rendered every sincere effort by government and development partners moribund thereby generating dangerous gaps that impinged on the much needed physical development of the region. OMPALAN has come to fill in the gap to prevent the region's impending collision course with anarchy,' Azogu stated.

Other prominent members who were in attendance at the meeting of OMPALAN include Senator J.K. Brambaifa, Hon. Remi Kuku, Chief Gad Harry, Ambassador Katuka Yaki and Dr. Esom Obodo. Prince Evbosaru was also appointed to lead the FCT Chapter of the association during the meeting.

NAF appoints new spokesman

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has appointed Group Captain Sadeeq Garba Shehu as its new Director of Public Relations and Information (DOPRI).

By Benjamin Auta

the F-7NI Chengdu fighter aircraft.

The release further added that the fleet of G-222 will also be refurbished for vital transport need.

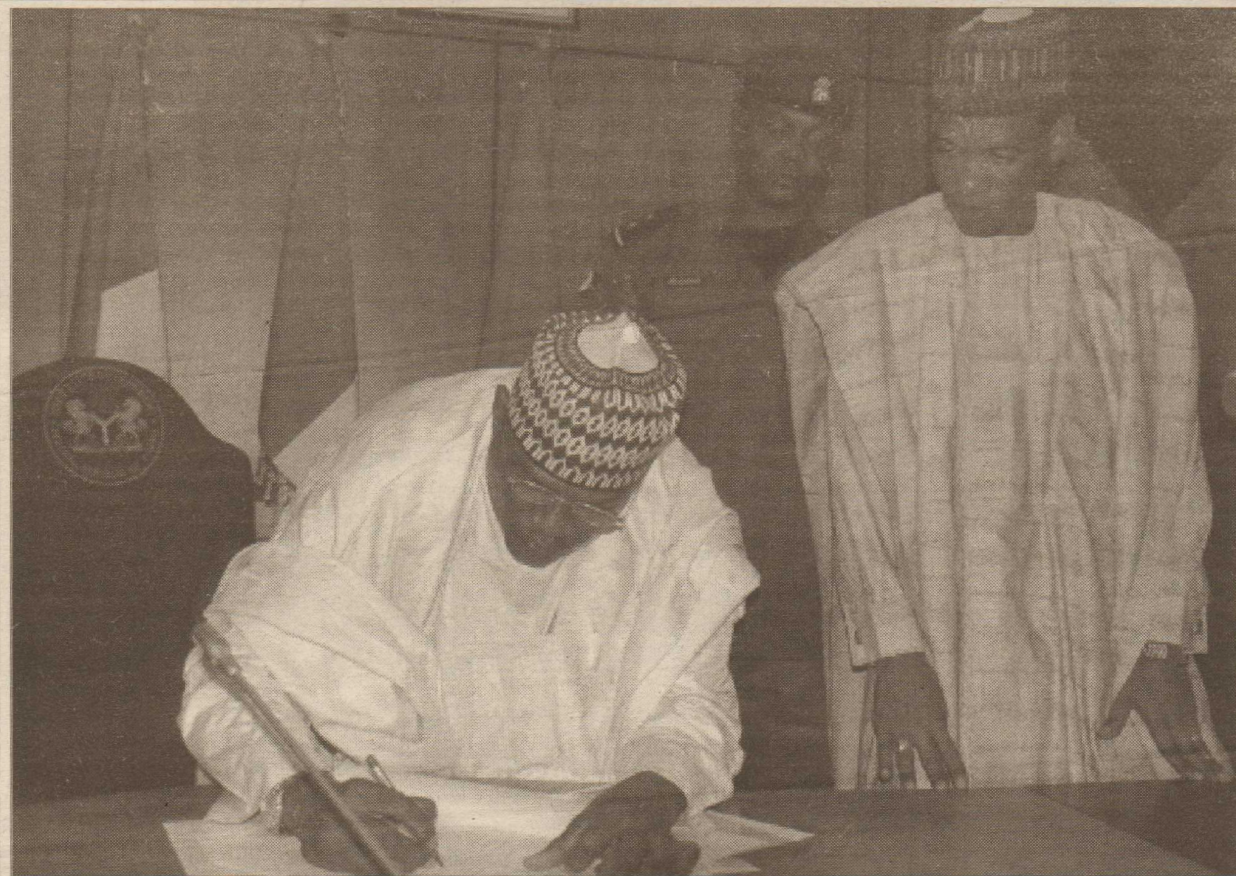
A press statement made available to *Daily Trust*, stated that the new DOPRI holds a BA in French/English from Bayero University Kano (BUK) as well as a masters degree in African peace and conflict studies from Bradford University UK, among other courses.

The statement further stated that the NAF will be holding its 2009 NAF conference from the 21-25 of April in Ada, Osun State.

According to the statement, the conference is part of effort to actualize the Chief of Air Staff (CAS) rebuilding the NAF operational effectiveness for effective and efficient instrument of national power.

"In line with this vision NAF has set itself some objective for 2009 which includes induction of three brand new platforms into the NAF inventory," it said.

The inventories include ATR-42 Maritime Patrol Aircraft, the Augusta A-109 light utility helicopter and



Governor Ibrahim Gaidam of Yobe State appending his signature to the 2009 budget passed by the state House of Assembly. With him is the Speaker of the Assembly, Alhaji Usman Adamu.

140 Nigerian deportees from Libya arrive home

The arrival of a large number of Nigerian deportees from Libya on Monday caused a stir at the Murtala Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Ikeja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the deportees, numbering about 140, arrived a few days after some illegal immigrants, including Nigerians, allegedly drowned off the Libyan coast en-route Europe.

The deportees, mostly young females, were conveyed to the MMIA aboard a chartered aircraft.

Shortly after they were screened and released, many airport workers and motorists swarmed around them, asking questions about their fate in Libya.

As they trooped out of the Hajj and Cargo terminal, many of the deportees who were cash-strapped, sought assistance to get to their various destinations.

There was also a traffic snarl around the airport as motorists slowed down to ascertain the identities of the large number of people they were seeing.

Seven ladies among the deportees, who spoke in Yoruba, claimed that they were deported after spending five months in detention camps in Libya.

"Just thank God we are back to this country. Help us out," one of the ladies told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

Some others, who loitered around the airport for hours, said that they were trying to connect those who would help them out of their travail.

NAN reports that the deportees were sent packing for immigration offences.

The House of Representatives expressed concern at the large number of Nigerians in deportation camps in Libya, urging that steps should be taken to ensure that they returned home. (NAN)

Motorcyclists disrupt crash helmet distribution exercise in Abuja

Hundreds of motorcyclists in Abuja yesterday disrupted the distribution of 500 safety helmets donated to them by the MTN Nigeria Communications Limited.

The Sector Commandant, Federal Capital Territory of the Federal Road Safety Commission, Nseobong Akpabio said the motorcyclists could not agree with the format of sharing the helmets and therefore

By Misbahu Bashir

refused to allow the officials to carry out the distribution. He said the FRSC arrangement was to hand over the 500 helmets donated by the company to the executives of the Motorcycle Transport Union who would eventually share them among the members of the union.

Officials of the MTN including the General Manager Cor-

porate Affairs, Fumi Omebonigo made efforts to convince the motorcyclists to agree with the suggestion but the motorcyclists insisted on receiving the

helmets from the FRSC and MTN officials directly.

However, while the MTN officials in conjunction with the FRSC officials and policemen

were trying to resolve the matter, some of the aggrieved motorcyclists began throwing pebbles at random, which forced everybody to take to their heels.

Court adjourns trial of Al-Mustapha, others till April 28

The absence of Major Hamza Al-Mustapha and others in court yesterday stalled the continuation of trial in the murder of the late Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, at an

Ikeja High Court.

No reason was given for the absence of the defendants in court but the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) learnt that the inability of prison authorities to convey them to court on time might have been responsible.

Al-Mustapha, former Chief Security Officer to late Gen. Sani Abacha; Chief Supt. of Police, Rabo Lawal and Alhaji Lateef Sofolahan, an aide to Kudirat, have been facing murder charges since 1999.

Kudirat Abiola was murdered on June 4, 1996.

Justice Mojisola Dada adjourned the case till April 28 following the absence of the defendants in court when the matter was called.

A State Counsel representing the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mrs. Bisi Ogungbesan, informed the court that their of-

ice had not received the written submissions of the defence on all applications as ordered by the court.

At the last sitting on March 17, defence counsel, Mr Olalekan Ojo had by an ex parte motion applied to join the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) in the suit, to enable them have access to documents seized from Al-Mustapha.

Ojo told the court that he learnt from the 3rd respondent in the suit, the State Security Service (SSS), that the materials seized from Al-Mustapha were transferred to the DMI.

Ojo, lead counsel for the defence, was also absent in court when the matter came up for hearing.

Justice Dada ordered the junior counsel from Ojo's chambers to ensure that parties in the matter were all served the written submissions on all the applications, before the next adjourned date. (NAN)

Iwu/INEC joined as parties in CNPP's suit

An Abuja Federal High Court has granted an application by Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Professor Maurice Iwu and INEC seeking to be joined as parties in the suit filed by the Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP).

In the suit filed by the CNPP Chairman, Alhaji Balarabe Musa and four others, they asked the court for an order of mandamus to compel the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), to prosecute Iwu over allegations of fraud, contract splitting, diversion of public funds and obtaining money under false pretence.

By Atika Balal

The plaintiffs had accused Iwu of awarding over N6.5 billion contract for the printing Presidential, National Assembly, governorship and House of Assembly elections to the Nigeria Security Printing and Minting Company, Abuja and that the contract was later re-awarded to some British and South African firm at a higher cost when the Nigerian company failed to deliver owing to logistics problems.

Other plaintiffs in the suit are Osita Okechukwu (CNPP Publicity Secretary), William Ezeugwu (CNPP Secretary)

Charles Nwodo (Chairman of Progressive Action Congress) and Yinusa Tanko (National Secretary National Conscience Party).

The court had on March 11, granted leave to the CNPP to seek an order of mandamus compelling the EFCC to investigate Iwu.

While stating that the suit was not instituted in good faith, they had at the resumed hearing sought to be joined as parties in the suit; but Presiding Judge, Justice Adamu Bello had ordered that they amend their briefs before June 9, (the adjourned date for adoption of written addresses).

NEWS

Bishop advises on child upbringing

From Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri

Bishop Alfred Nwaizuzu of the Anglican Diocese of Okigwe has advised parents to give their children proper upbringing to enable them live focused life. Nwaizuzu gave the advice while preaching at the 5th year memorial thanksgiving service of Chief Maxwell Nwachukwu Ohakim, late father of Governor Ikedi Ohakim at the St. Michael Anglican Church, Okohia in Isiala Mbano LGA of Imo State. The cleric pointed out that children who are not properly trained end up becoming problems to their parents and the society at large. The Bishop described late Pa Ohakim as a good disciplinarian who instilled discipline in his children and brought them up with the fear of God. Chief Ohakim died four years ago. The event witnessed by distinguished Nigerians including the CBN Governor, Charles Soludo, Senators Ike Nwachukwu and Osita Izunaso, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu and Governor Theodore Orji of Abia state, among others.

Group urges revival of child laws

The President, CONA Anosike Support Foundation (CONASULF INC), Chief Chinedu Asinu-Anosike has called for re-orientation of the public on the plight of the less privileged children in the society. Anosike while addressing newsmen in Owerri yesterday said this could only be achieved through the resuscitation of dormant child laws in the state and effective enforcement that would benefit all. He lamented the increasing number of people stricken by poverty, sicknesses, hunger, severe abuse and neglect in Imo State, adding that urgent measures should be taken to solve the problem before it gets out of hands.

Three die in collapsed building

From Bola Ojuola, Lagos

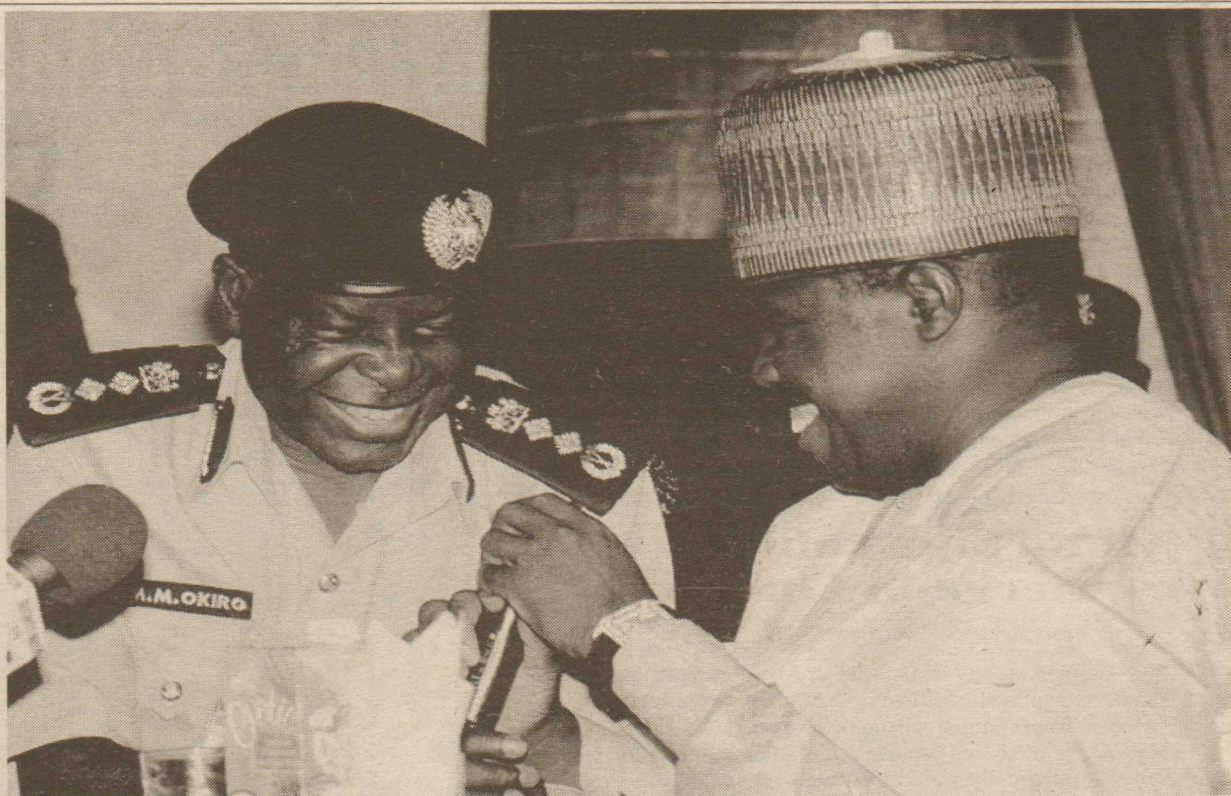
Barely a week after about 12 people were buried alive in a collapsed building in Lagos, three persons were killed at Ipaja area of the city Saturday when another residential building collapsed. Two of the victims were identified as Saidi Sulaiman and Nasiru, said to be working on the building which was partly under construction. The house, a residential bungalow located on Alhaji Kaka Ashipa street, Ipaja collapsed Saturday evening, falling on top of the two workers, the third person was said to be a resident of the house. Lagos State police spokesman, Frank Mba who confirmed the story to Daily Trust yesterday said the victims were rescued by neighbours and symphysers but later died on the way to hospital. He said the case was already being investigated by policemen attached to Ipaja police station.

...as Council boss gives quit notice to occupants of house

The chairman of Apapa Iganmu Local Council Development Area in Lagos State, Dr Adebayo Adesola has issued a 24 hour quit notice to occupants of a two storey building in Ijora Badiya area of the state to forestall another disaster of collapse. The building located on Odofin Street Ijora Badiya, Daily Trust learnt, is at the verge of collapse. It was said to have been constructed more than 20 years ago without approval from the state Ministry of Physical Planning. It would be recalled that more than 12 people died in Idi Araba area of the state last week when a house collapsed. More than 20 families who occupied the building at the time are still nursing injuries sustained during the incident.

Adamawa Emirate bicentenary celebration to hold April 10 to 12

The Adamawa Emirate Council said yesterday that it had goodwill messages from eminent Nigerian leaders and neighbouring Republic of Cameroon, Chad and Niger on its bicentenary celebration. A statement signed in Yola by the Emirate's Secretary, Alhaji Dahiru Musdafa, said activities lined up for the bicentenary celebration would still hold as from Friday, April 10 to Sunday 12, at the Lamido's Palace. The statement dismissed as "untrue and unfortunate" the reports in some quarters that the events lined up for the 200 years celebration had been cancelled. It said emphasised that already the emirate had received acknowledgments from many prominent leaders in the country and the neighbouring Republics of Cameroon, Chad and Niger on their intention to participate in the event. It further said that the two-day event would take off with a special Friday prayer at the Modibbo Adamawa Mosque in Yola while a Durbar and Horse racing would take place later in the day. Other activities lined up include anniversary lecture and the public presentation of a book on the life of the Lamido of Adamawa, Alhaji Aliyu Musdafa. It said that a committee for the successful celebration of the event had concluded arrangements to receive sons and daughters of the Emirate as well as friends and well wishers. Yola, the capital of Adamawa is wearing a new look as decorated horse riders could be seen around the city. (NAN)



Governor Ali Modu-Sheriff of Borno State (right) with the Inspector-General of Police Mike Okiro at a conference with senior police officers in Maiduguri, Borno State, yesterday. Pic: NAN

Association gives FG ultimatum on CONTISS

The Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Polytechnics (SSANIP) has given the Federal Government two weeks ultimatum to commence the implementation of the Consolidated Tertiary Institution Salary Structure (CONTISS) in polytechnics, monotronics and colleges of technology or face industrial action.

The association in a communiqué made available to Daily Trust in Kaduna after its 26th General Executive Council (GEC) meeting held at the Akamu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic in Unwana also tasked the Federal Government to immediately commence the payment of the 24 months arrears of monetisation benefits of its members.

The communiqué signed by Alhaji Ganiyu Akinleye and Mr Abraham Ndandok, National President and National Secretary of the association respectively decried the commissioning by government on CONTISS 15 and monetisation since it had already been captured in the

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

2009 budget.

SSANIP lamented that the Minister of Education, Dr Sam Egwu had failed to fulfil the pledge he made during a meeting between them on January 27, 2009 to ensure that the issue was resolved within two weeks.

"We also want the Federal Government to mobilise graduates of monofotechnics for the National Youth Service Corps scheme or face indefinite industrial strike action from its members across the country from April 17 when the ultimatum expires," it said.

It urged the Federal Government to enforce its position on the stoppage of disparity be-

tween Higher National Diploma (HND) holders and degree holders, adding that employers of labour including polytechnics still discriminate against HND holders.

The council decried the non-implementation of the Federal Government group life insurance policy for its employees in some polytechnics after coming into effect as part of the Pension Act 2004 and called for the immediate release of funds for the implementation of the policy.

Imo directs LGAs to open IGR accounts

Local government areas in Imo State have been directed to open separate accounts for Internally Generated Revenue (IGR). The state Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Barr. Kezie Ogaziechi gave the directive yesterday in Owerri while briefing newsmen on the outcome of the Joint Account Allocation meeting with chairmen of local government transition

From Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri

committees. Ogaziechi said the measure would assist to strengthen the machinery of revenue generation to boost revenue in the state.

The commissioner further noted that the step would help the chairmen to have proper monitoring of internally gen-

erated revenue, adding that a situation where local government accounts are lumped with internally generated ones created deceptive figures.

He said if local governments abide by the directive, it would be easier for the chairmen to also monitor performances and determine how the revenue of the LGAs are running.

Plateau PDP crisis: Mangni challenges Shown to debate

The PDP factional chairman in Plateau State, Chief Emmanuel Mangni has challenged Prof. Dakum Shown, the chairman of the other faction of the party in the state to a public debate to prove who is the actual leader of the PDP in the state.

Mangni, who threw the challenge while addressing supporters of the party from the Plateau North senatorial zone who were at the party secretariat in their thousands yesterday said he believed

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

Prof. Shown had nothing to tell the people as he does not enjoy the support of majority of the party members in the state.

He said that was why Prof. Shown had been shying away from the public as he could not explain how he came about calling himself the PDP chairman in Plateau State and how he ran the affairs of the party before his sack by the Mangni led exco.

Chief Mangni stressed that

if Prof. shown was sure he had any explanation to give to the people, he should take up the challenge and present himself for a public debate to prove to the people why he still parades himself as the PDP chairman in Plateau state.

The factional chairman added that it was not surprising that majority of the party members in the state for the past one and half years found it difficult to go to the PDP secretariat until the constitution of his exco which he said

had attracted a large followership within a short time.

Former secretary of the PDP in Plateau, Alhaji Saleh Bayeri, who spoke on behalf of the members from the northern zone, said the party under the leadership of Mangni had removed the secrecy surrounding the running of the affairs of the party by the Dakum Shown led exco, saying the people of the northern zone were happy with the development as they "had seen light at the end of the tunnel".

NEWS

Niger dissolves pilgrims' board

From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

The Niger State government has dissolved its pilgrim's welfare board. The dissolution was approved by governor Muazu Babangida Aliyu in Minna yesterday. The dissolution of the board is sequel to the establishment of the newly created Niger state pilgrims commission in place of the board as it is believed that the new commission would lead to the operational success of pilgrimages. Dr Aliyu observed that the new commission would have a better environment to function in, saying it would be more potent in service delivery as it had been legally packaged to overcome the limitations of the former board. While thanking the former pilgrims board chairman, the governor said they should make themselves ready at all times, adding that their wealth of knowledge would be of use in the new commission.

Motorbike robbers re-emerge in Onitsha

From Beatrice Onuchukwu, Awka

The commercial city of Onitsha in Anambra State is under siege again following a rampage by armed robbers from commercial motor bike operators. This is in spite of the increased presence of regular and mobile policemen strategically positioned all over major road junctions of the town. No fewer than six Okada robbery incidents have taken place in different parts of the commercial town from last weekend to yesterday Monday, April 6, 2009, increasing tension and fear among the residents and visiting traders. A middle aged woman was yesterday dispossessed of N100,000 she was carrying in her hand bag under gun point by two armed robbers operating on a motorcycle. The woman was said to have been given the money to give someone, but could not see the person, then decided to pay the money into her bank account. The woman who was on her way to the bank after branching to a cyber cafe was accosted by the two man robbery gang who brandished their gun before snatching the bag and took off at the popular post office along Old Market Road in Onitsha. In a similar incident, another two-man robbery gang which also operated on a motor bike attacked another woman at Oguta Road by Ojedi Junction but there was nothing to take as the woman was only carrying a Bible.

JAMB: Kano Civil Defence nabs 17 for malpractice

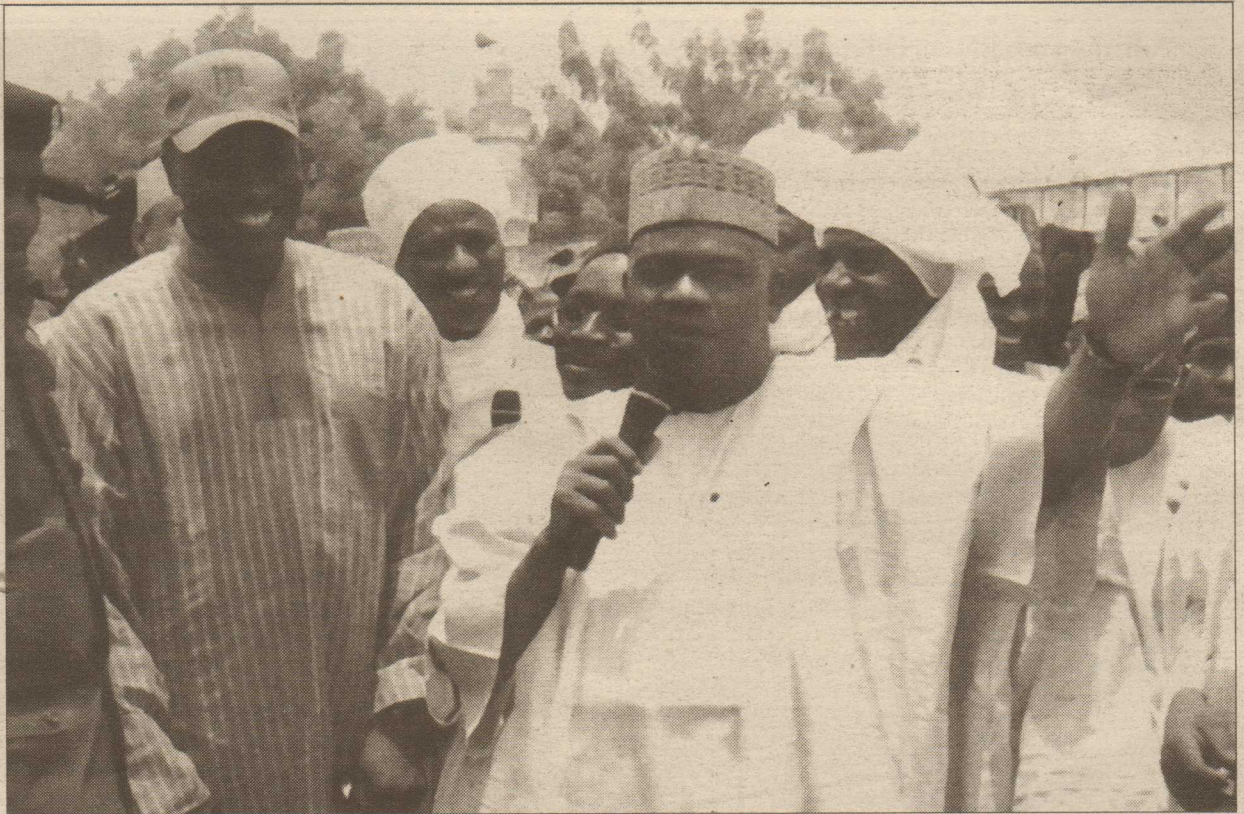
From Isa Sa'idu, Kano

The Kano command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) yesterday paraded 17 candidates in Saturday's Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) Examination who allegedly committed various forms of malpractices during the examination. Deputy Commandant of the Corps, Adekunle A. Paul, made this known at the command's Dawaki Road headquarters, saying all the suspects were apprehended with mobile phones which they used in storing alphabets that were answers to the examination questions. Paul said: "It is an indication that they got the question papers before the examination day, Saturday April 4. We can't say, for now, how they got the papers before the examination. The matter is still under investigation. It is the investigation that will reveal how they got the question papers. We have done our job of providing security at all the centers of the examination. It is in the course of carrying out our role during the examination we successfully arrested these suspects." According to Paul, when his command is done with the suspects, they would hand them over to the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) as it is the jurisdiction of the ICPC to handle offences of examination malpractices.

Idris restates commitment to lift Kogi

From Sam Egwu, Lokoja

Kogi State Governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris says his administration would lift Kogi State to an enviable position before the expiration of his tenure of office. He stated this shortly before leaving the shores of Malaysia to the Republic of Korea yesterday. Making this known to newsmen in Lokoja by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Public Communication and Strategy, Phrank Shaibu, the Governor on arrival at the Republic of Korea would have audience with the management of M.K. International Inc. to discuss the possibility of establishing a new Digital TV Station in the state. According to him, the Digital TV Station which is meant to provide a voice for the unheard people of the confluence state, would have the capacity to cover all the nooks and crannies of the state, thereby spreading government policies and programmes to the good people of Kogi State.



Governor Mohammed Danjuma Goje of Gombe State at a project inspection site along Ribadu-Zango, Funakaye Local Government Area of Gombe State. He is flanked by Alhaji Bala Tinka, Managing Director of Tinka Point

Bureaucracy delays take-off of Funtua inland depot

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

Inability of both the state and Federal Government to resolve some administrative bureaucracies is responsible for the delay in take off of the proposed Inland Container Depots (ICD) and Container Freight Station (CFS) in Funtua Local Government Area of Katsina State, Daily Trust has learnt. Since 2006, the state government has acquired lands and paid compensation to the affected farmers whose lands were taken over but a lingering dispute arose between the duo about some portions of the land which is yet to be settled to allow for the issuance of the certificate of occupancy (C of O).

Equally, the Nigerian Shippers Council has over the past 30 months screened one Equatorial Marine Company as the prepared concessioners to develop the site under the public and private partnership (PPP) but the inability to receive a letter of exchange remains a stumbling block to the continuation of the project.

The executive secretary of the Nigerian shippers council, Captain Adamu Bida while speaking to newsmen in Katsina recently said the Funtua freight station was one of the two projects lagging behind among the six approved depots to be established in

Ibadan, Jos, Maiduguri, Abia and Kano states.

Captain Adamu admitted some administrative lapses which he blamed on communication gap which was why the council embarked on a stakeholders' workshop in Katsina for everyone to understand his role with a view to hastening the process.

He described the Funtua freight station as strategic due to its economic potentials and a unique transport corridor with Niger Republic and other North-western states of Sokoto, Zamfara, and Kebbi.

He said the council called for a talk shop to discuss problematic areas that impinge on the progress

of the project, bridge the communication gap that exist between the key players and develop a blue print for successful implementation.

The state governor, Ibrahim Shema assured of his government's readiness to make the project work as the state and the zone had a lot of exportable agricultural products and well endowed with other mineral resources.

The governor who was represented by the state commissioner for commerce and industry, Abdul'aziz Mohammed described the forum as timely when most people are largely unaware of the projects and its potentials and how to fast-track it to maturity.

Financial meltdown: Nigerian hospitals move to reduce costs

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

The Institute of Health Services Administrators of Nigeria (IHSAN) has opened channels for the exchange of ideas that would address the problem of the global financial meltdown as it affects the health sector in Nigeria.

The aim of opening the forum according to the national president of IHSAN, Dr. Jude Osunwa is to see to the reduction of the cost of medical services in Nigerian hospitals through the judicious use of scarce resources.

The national president who made this known at the

health care resources", he said.

He stressed that the administrators were bound to benefit from the workshop in the areas of effective communication and organisation, team work in a hospital setting, total quality management to guarantee value for money, and information technology in modern hospital management.

The chairman of the local organising committee of the workshop, Mrs. Laitu Daspan in her welcome address stressed the need for good health care delivery worldwide but said in

Nigeria this had not been so. She said the professional development workshop was to impart knowledge to hospital administrators and update the skills of health managers while urging the participants to avail themselves of the opportunity to improve health care delivery in the country.

The Chief Medical Director of JUTH, Dr. Ishaya Pam, who was represented by the Dr. Patrick Daru welcomed the participants and emphasized on the need for training in the health sector.

NEWS

NCWD to re-activate women centres nationwide

By Akor Ojoma

The National Centre for Women Development (NCWD), Abuja is to reactivate the moribund women development centres in the country, especially at the local and sub-national levels. The NCWD Director-General, Hajiya Fatima Larai Hassan stated this yesterday in her address at a two day consultative forum for stakeholders on the activation of women development centres held at the centre. The Director said the forum which was organized by the centre in collaboration with the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) was aimed at designing strategies through the presentation and adoption of workable guidelines for the reactivation of the women centres across the country. She described the forum as a crucial arrangement which is in line with the third goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which has to do with promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The gender advisor of Japan International Agency, Ms Kiyomi Kaida said her agency is a governmental aid agency under the Japanese ministry of foreign affairs and has several projects throughout Nigeria. She said her agency would partner with NCWD as ever before to reactivate the women centres as it has done in six pilot sites in Kano State.

Oyo Police alert on kidnapers

The Oyo State Police Command on Monday called for vigilance among parents, guardians and educational institutions to check the resurgence in the activities of kidnapers. The State Commissioner of Police, Mr Baba Bolanta, said this on Monday in a statement made available to newsmen in Ibadan. According to the statement signed by the Police spokesperson, Olabisi Okuwobi, suspected kidnapers—over the weekend—ritually plucked the eyes of two children. The corpses of the children, both aged four, were found at Sanyo area of Ibadan. He said the report, which reached the Command, indicated that the suspected perpetrators were sighted at Felele area of Ibadan and Jobele, requesting for where human heads could be bought. Bolanta also called on parents to warn their children to be wary of people who accost them for anything. He said the Command would ensure that the suspects were apprehended and made to face the wrath of the law. (NAN)

Nigerian movie on trafficked women debuts in New York

A Nigerian movie titled "Ebuwa", depicting the ills of trafficking in women, at the weekend debuted in New York City. A correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), reports that the screening of the movie and its U.S. launching, took place at the auditorium of the Nigerian House in New York. Speaking on the movie, its producer, Lancelot Imasuen, said it was a "reality of our time", as well as "a tragedy of greed". He said the movie was produced to educate people on the negative effects of human trafficking, prostitution and HIV/AIDS. Imasuen said the film was produced in Edo language and given English subtitles. "The storyline is about Ebuwa, a pretty 18-year-old Edo girl trafficked abroad by her mother to engage in the business of prostitution," he said. He said that Ebuwa, in the process, contacted HIV/AIDS, while the proceeds from the prostitution was misused by her mother. He said that the movie was taken at some locations in Benin City. Imasuen thanked the former deputy governor of Edo State, Mr Lucky Imasuen (no relation) for supporting and funding the production of the movie. He said Imasuen supported the film as part of his efforts to enlighten Nigerians on the dangers of human trafficking. Responding, the deputy governor commended the producer for Projecting Nigeria's cultural values and traditions through numerous productions.



Workers rescue a man who was stuck inside a collapsed building in the centre of L'Aquila yesterday following a powerful earthquake north of Rome that has killed dozens of people. Pic: AFP

Electoral Reform: Youths demand implementation of Uwais report

By Abbas Jimoh

The Youth Action Initiative of Africa, University of Jos chapter, has demanded the full implementation of the report of the Justice Muhammed Lawal Uwais led Electoral Reform Committee (ERC).

Spokesman of the association, Samson Itodo, also said Nigeria was at a crossroad and her young people must be given the opportunity to take part in the governance and play their part in moving the nation forward.

"President Yar'adua on assumption of office in 2007 following the plethora of allegations of widespread fraud marring the April 14th and 21st elections constituted an Electoral Reform Committee to review our electoral process and make recommendations to the government for implementation. The 22 man committee led by retired Justice Lawal Uwais had its membership constituted by credible and well meaning Nigerians but no youth was appointed as a member of the committee," Itodo said.

He said, "It is beyond contention that Nigerian elections are mostly

perversion of democracy and youths have always been on the receiving end because we have yielded ourselves as tool and instruments used by the politicians to subvert electoral processes. As a

society, we are not good at encouraging young people to get active in political life. Our civil life cannot be complete if the ideas and opinions of young people are missing from campaigns and grassroots effort to change policy. Young people have been ignored

so much on matter concerning the electoral reform. We have come to a crossroads where we must determine our destiny as a nation and the youths must be carried along. We demand full implementation of the Electoral Reform Committee Recommendations."

Expert advocates accountability in university system

Ruby Rabi

If universities can account properly for the funds they get from both the public and the government, they will get more funds from international donor agencies which believe in transparency and accountability, the Special Advisor to the Accountant General of the Federation and a World Bank Consultant, Mr P. Omoregie has said.

Omoregie who was delivering the keynote address on, "accountability in higher institutions, bursars as drivers at the workshop for the committee of bursars of Nigerian universities, said, 'generally the mere of accountability evokes mistrust, emotion and more often misunderstanding'.

His words, 'critics argue that most universities have

not produced evidence of successful performance on most obligations and are unable to do so, they insist that statements about accomplishments by universities should be outcome oriented rather than process oriented. Most Nigerian universities have ceased to produce annual reports, an age long practice'.

He continued, 'immediately you mention the word accountability with reference to the university reactive and quick to label any external imposition an attack on academic freedom and institutional autonomy'.

'on the other hand,

universities view government and its officials as uninformed and unrealistic. government officials are seen as too impulsive about intervening in their eagerness to demonstrate to the public that only their timely intervention can assure quality and maintain attainable tuition fees.

Earlier, the Director General of the National Mathematical Council, Professor Sam Ale said most universities share the same funding problems.

He added that the workshop would assist bursars who advice their chief executives on the utilization of funds to acquire skills for performance better.

Nigeria loses N6.2bn annually to imported barytes

Nigeria loses over N6.2 billion annually to incessant granting of waivers for the importation of baryte into the country, the Association of Miners and Processors of Barytes has said.

Mr Veriatus Ams-Amahson, Secretary General of the association disclosed this in Lagos on Monday at a meeting of the technical committee on elaboration of standards for barytes.

Amahson said that such a development was a bane to the mining sector.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that barytes is a raw material used in oil exploration, drilling, construction, plastic, pharmaceutical industries, among others.

He expressed dismay over the persistent importation of the mineral through waivers in spite of the ban by the Federal Government. "Unscrupulous importers take advantage of the waiver to flood the country with imported barytes resulting to poor patronage of locally made baryte," he said.

He said that the government should protect the local industries because there was substantial deposit of baryte and bentonite in Nigeria. He said that the sector would soon collapse because it depended 90 per cent on oil industry for survival.

According to him, over the time the oil sector has refused to patronise the local manufacturers because they could still get the imported product through the back door.

However, the Director General, Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Dr John Akanya, said that the bane of local firms was how to meet the sector's acceptable standard.

"Its rejection and low pricing over the years have created a lot of trade disputes between the local miners and the consumers.

"The miners have always accused the purchasers of under valuation and down grading of the Nigeria baryte by raising the issue of quality.

"The standardisation of baryte will be a necessary step

up in furtherance to the Federal Government's initiative on local content on oil and gas policy," he said. He said that the technical committee final review of the specification for drilling fluid materials would take precedence, over other specifications in the country. He noted that the specification would also assist to check the influx of substandard baryte into the country.

Mr George Osahon, representative of the NNPC, Nigeria Content Division (NCD) suggested that there should be harmonisation of all international codes and standards on the minerals. "Currently, different operators in the industry use their own codes and standards for materials and services required in their operation. This is not good," he said.

Osahon said that the multiple standards have poised a major challenge for the locally produced goods and services and this had made the local product to succumb to the imported ones. (NAN)

NEWS

TUC backs amnesty deal for Niger Delta militants

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

The Trade Union Congress [TUC] has commended President Umaru Yar'adua's planned amnesty deal for militants in the Niger Delta. The union said the proposed deal was a right step in the right direction and came at a time when the region badly needed a paradigm shift. Peter Esiele, President of the union said in a chat with our correspondent yesterday that the gesture would go a long way in engendering a peaceful co-existence and meaningful development in the volatile region. He urged the militants to sheathe their swords and embrace the amnesty option being proposed by the Federal Government, saying the region could not grow on internecine war and violence. He further appealed to the sponsors of the militants to desist from such act and be part of change in the region. The Trade Union leader said his members supported the latest move by the Federal Government and urged it to avoid half-measures in the implementation of the drive.

Court denies IBB's cousin bail

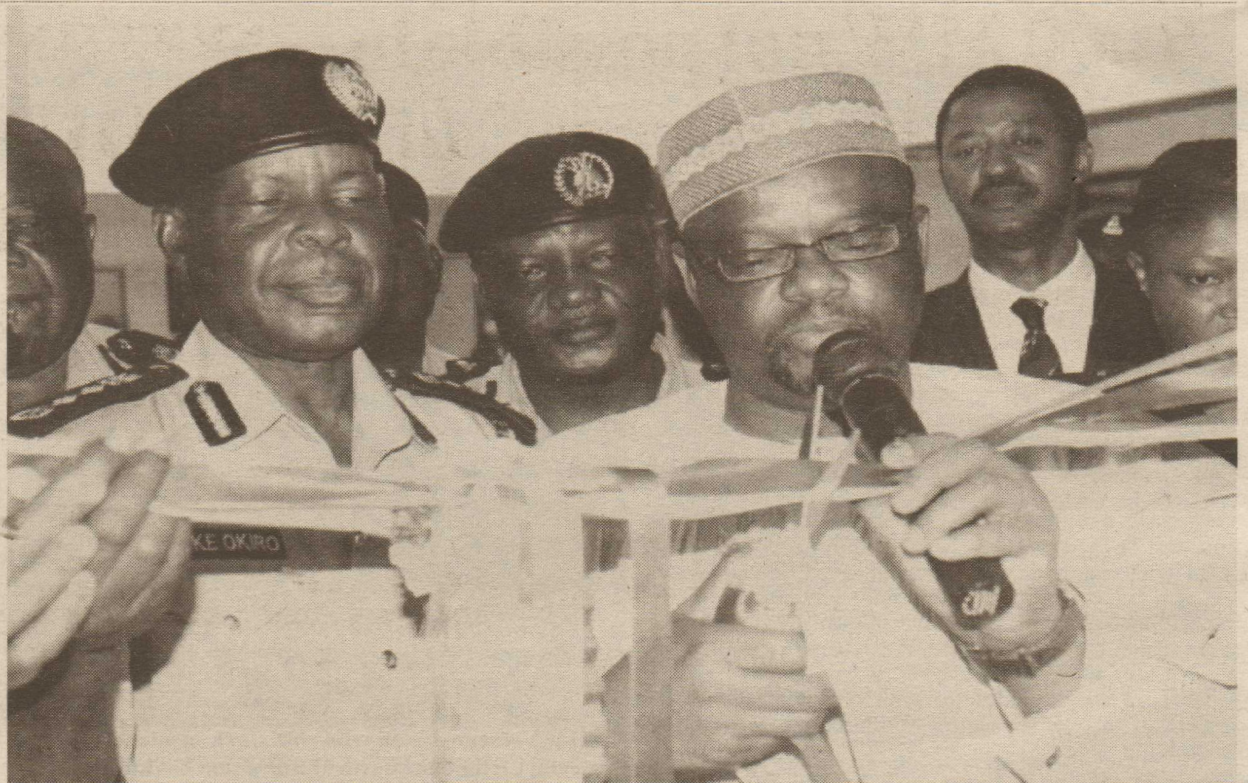
From Ayegba Israel Ebije, Minna

Detained Commissioner for Health under the administration of Abdulkadir Kure and cousin of former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, Alhaji Dattijo Aliyu was denied bail yesterday at the chief magistrate court in Minna. Chief Magistrate Ahmed Bima, while ruling against the bail application filed by counsel to Alhaji Dattijo Aliyu and Tanko Mohammed Rajab, Mohammed Ndayako, said after reviewing the argument of both sides he came to the conclusion that the duo would interfere with the outcome of investigation which is still ongoing in the case. The former commissioner is facing a joint charge of criminal conspiracy punishable under section 97 of the penal code, forgery: section 364-14 years imprisonment, falsehood section 393-2 years imprisonment and section 7 (1) of obtaining and circulating classified official document under official secrets law, cap 90 law of Niger state attracting 14 years.. Chief magistrate Bima noted that the court could only exercise its discretion of granting bail if their offence was carrying less than 3 years imprisonment, adding that the offence which they are standing trial for carry a maximum of fourteen years imprisonment. Among the argument was the fact that the former commissioner has the connection to meddle in the process of investigation if granted bail and to forestall that, he submitted that they should be remanded in prison custody pending the conclusion of police investigation to the matter.

Election: Court dismisses ex-Plateau Speaker's petition

From Mahmud Lalo, Jos

The Court of Appeal sitting in Jos has dismissed the appeal filed by the former Speaker of the state House of Assembly, Emmanuel Go'ar challenging the decision of the election petition tribunal that nullified his election. The election petition tribunal in Jos had last year nullified the election of the former Speaker on grounds of exclusion of the Democratic People's Party (DPP) logo and the name of the candidate from the ballot papers used in the Pankshin North House of Assembly state election which returned Go'ar as the winner. Go'ar who was until January this year the speaker of state House Assembly had challenged the ruling that the exclusion of the DPP logo on the ballot paper as well as the name of the candidate was not his making, hence he could not be held liable for it. But the Appeal Court in Jos in a judgment delivered by Justice Datti Yahaya had aligned itself with the ruling of the lower tribunal which held that the non inclusion of the DPP logo as well as the name of the candidate had unfairly excluded Kelvin Tongran Dasun, the DPP candidate and had ordered a fresh election in that constituency within 90 days. The Appeal Court also agreed that for all the candidates to be given equal chances, a fresh election should be held and ordered that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conduct a fresh election within 90 days and ensure that name and logo of the candidate be included. Reacting to the judgment, counsel to Dasun, S.S. Obende said they were happy with it as it is an opportunity for them to go back to the polls. On his part, the counsel to Go'ar, S. G. Odey said his client was ready to go back to the field. Go'ar was until recently the Speaker of the state House of Assembly where he was ousted out on the grounds of vote of no confidence by the members of the House.



Minister of Police Affairs Dr. Ibrahim Yakubu Lama cuts the tape to inaugurate the Astro/Apco-25 digital trunking radio communication system for Nigeria Police Force in Abuja on Thursday. With him are Inspector-General of Police Mike Ikoro (left) and Deputy Commissioner of Police, Force Headquarters Umaru Sule

Police arrest 11 over Kogi staff audit

From Sam Egwu, Lokoja

As efforts to sanitize the Kogi State civil service entered another week yesterday, no fewer than 11 members of staff of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology have been arrested for forcefully breaking into the open registry to tamper with vital documents.

The incident which occurred at about 12mid-night last Saturday when desperate civil servants who were ready to truncate the on go-

ing exercise broke into registry to distort the original documents was reported to the Ministry's security operatives but they failed to inform the police.

The special Adviser to Governor Idris on Public Communication and Strategy, Phrank Shaibu who spoke to reporters about the incident said the war had just begun, adding that the attempt was to distort the origi-

nal documents. He stated that the report from Ministry showed that deceased workers were still on the payroll. Phrank explained that despite the attempt to distort facts, there was a forensic machine to determine when a document was typed and placed on record.

He maintained that the state government was ready to get rid of ghost workers, stressing the state government had already started the war and the perpetrators of

the act would not go unpunished.

Among those arrested yesterday was the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, the head of security, security guards on duty, staff officer, accountant, accounting officers and the cashier who are now helping the police in their investigations.

Others arrested are Michael Okoli, Stephen Alfa, Abubakar Ibrahim, Omoyese James Hiwa Kabir and Frank David. Also in the police net over the allegation of burglary are Monday Akuh, Ijjah Haruna, Yusuf Fitau, Jones Iduh and Michael Friday. It would be recalled that since the commencement of the staff audit, many accountants and cashiers have been apprehended for their alleged role in over bloating of the monthly wage bill with ghost workers.

Daily Trust gathered that some of the workers have resorted to patronizing herbalists, pastors and Mallams to escape the wrath of law if caught. The on-going staff verification exercise has left the state government and the accounts staff on a collision course.

Impeached Taraba CNPP chairman opposes removal

From Fidelis Mac-Leva, Jalingo

Impeached chairman of the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties in Taraba State, Hamidu Suleiman, has refused to vacate the office, describing his removal as unconstitutional.

At a news conference in Jalingo yesterday, Suleiman described those who recently signed a document purportedly removing him from office as "unscrupulous group of party leaders whose political parties have no single structure in the state."

He said: "I therefore reiterate without going back that I am the incumbent Chairman of the CNPP in Taraba State because my removal must be by normal parliamentary means."

According to him, the Gambo Dan-Iya faction which signed for his impeachment lacked the grounds to initiate impeachment proceedings against him, saying: "I cannot be removed through dubious means or by proxy."

He said the group was asking for his removal because he refused to be used by them to pursue their selfish interests from the state PDP led government.

"May I categorically state that the allegations contained in the impeachment notice against me are fabricated, baseless and unfounded designed to mislead the public with the aim of tarnishing my image in order to achieve their

selfish desire."

Suleiman used the occasion to direct chairmen of opposition parties in the state who were given 18-seater buses each by the state's ruling PDP government to account for the donations within two weeks or face sanctions.

The donated buses which were accompanied with N500, 000 cash to each of the benefiting opposition parties were allegedly sold out by some of the party chairmen.

Owerri zone backs Ohakim on guber tussle

From Johnkennedy Uzoma, Owerri

The battle for Imo governorship seat yesterday took a different dimension with the people of Owerri zone publicly disassociating themselves from Chief Martin Agbaso over the court process against Governor Ikedi Ohakim. The people made their stand known when a delegation of the zone made up of nine local government areas led by

Chief I.D.Nwoga paid a solidarity visit to the governor in Owerri. The people contended that the continued court process against the governor had continued to distract government. Chief Nwoga used the forum to call on Agbaso to discontinue with his court process while

they assured the governor of their continued support to his administration. They argued that the zonal arrangement prevailing in Imo State ceded the governorship ticket to Okigwe zone, adding that they would not want to be part of any detractions that would truncate the noble arrangement that has brought peace and tranquility to the place.

NEWS

6,000 MW not possible in 8 months—Hameed Ali

The Federal Government's promise to increase the present power supply to 6,000 megawatts in the next eight months is not achievable and President Umaru Yar'adua should tell Nigerians the truth, retired Col Nameed Ibrahim Ali, former military administrator of Kaduna state has advised.

Retired Col Ali who is the immediate past Secretary General of Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), gave the advice on Saturday in Zaria, while contributing to Dr Usman Bugaje's paper, in a public lecture that was organised by the Movement for a better future.

According to him, president Yar'adua made the promise during the last National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which held in Abuja last Friday. In the same vein, Alhaji Ikra Aliyu Bilbis, the minister of state for Information echoed the president's promise while declaring open the Guild of Editors' meeting in Kaduna, he noted.

From Ibraheem Musa,
Kaduna

Col Ali said that according to experts, Nigerians can never get 6,000 megawatts of electricity in eight months because the nation doesn't have dry gas to power our thermal stations. "We do not have a refining industry to channel our liquefied gas into dry gas for those thermal stations," he said, adding that this can not be built in a short time.

The former governor also said that even if all our hydro and thermal stations combined have the 6,000 megawatts to distribute, the national grid can not carry the power load. "Our transformers for distribution (of power) are dead, they can not distribute more than four thousand megawatts," he said. For this reason, there is the need to change both the grid and transformers in order to distribute 6,000 megawatts assuming the hydro and thermal stations are functioning at full capacity, he added.

The ex ACF scribe said that an expert told him that

even if the complete amount is paid to the company that is producing transformers today, the earliest that they will be delivered is 12 months. "Yet our government is saying that in eight month's time, we will have 6,000 megawatts," he pointed out, adding that "that means that the government is making fool of us".

He also said that the entire re-branding project which is being undertaken by the federal government is unnecessary, arguing that the government just needs to do the right thing and the people will applaud it. Col Ali praised the recent Ghanaian election where the opposition won.

He decried the high incidence of corruption in the country, noting that "career politicians are our problem in this country". The former governor also said that so long as these crop of politicians hold sway, there can never be free and fair election in this country. "And if there will never be free and fair election in Nigeria, there will never be good governance in this country."

Government House Kaduna not a drain pipe—Special Assistant

It is not correct to refer to the building of more administrative blocks within Sir Kashim Ibrahim House as a white elephant project or a drain pipe because the project is aimed at housing key members of the executive arm of Kaduna state government under one roof for ease and proper coordination, Alhaji Habibu Dubbani, a Special Assistant to Governor Namadi Sambo has said.

The special assistant who came to the Kaduna bureau of Daily Trust, was reacting to a Sunday Trust cover story of March 29 edition, titled "New Government Houses as drain pipes: How governors use projects to waste billions of naira."

He further said that it is wrong for the publication to describe the building of a few office blocks as a "new Government House", giving the impression that a completely new edifice is being constructed. The truth of the matter, Dubbani said, is that the publication lumped the states that are building entirely new structures with Kaduna state, which is just making additions to the existing Government House.

The governor's aide also faulted the story, arguing that the cost of project was not given in the publication "and yet the writer concluded that it is a drain pipe." He described critics of the

From Ibraheem Musa,
Kaduna

project as idle politicians whose stock-in-trade is to parade themselves as members of the opposition but in actual fact they are just out to blackmail government in order to be "settled".

According to Dubbani, he deemed it necessary to react to the publication so as to erase the negative image that the story has portrayed of Kaduna state government amongst the teeming readers of *Sunday Trust*. The special assistant who praised all the publications in the stable of Media Trust for their objectivity, said that he wouldn't

have bordered to react to the story if it had been published in another medium.

He recalled that the decision of Col Abdullahi Sarki Muktar's administration to build a perimeter wall round Government House when he was governor of Kaduna state, was equally greeted with criticisms. Dubbani pointed out that several years after Muktar has left office, the fence is still standing and serving the purpose for which it was built. Likewise, he also argued, the structures that Governor Sambo is presently erecting in Government House will outlive him and serve the people of Kaduna state.

Appeal Court upholds election of Benue minority whip

An Appeal Court sitting in Jos has upheld the election of the Benue State House of Assembly minority whip Dr. Stephen Onmeje

The election of the minority whip had earlier been annulled by an Election Petition Tribunal sitting in Makurdi due to a petition filed by the PDP candidate in the election for the Agila, Ulayi, Izigan state constituency. Dr Onmeje had appealed the ruling of the election petition tribunal on grounds that the tribunal at the time it delivered its rul-

From Andrew Agbese, Jos

ing on the petition involving him, was not properly composed to deliver the judgment.

Presiding judge, Justice Datti Yahaya while delivering judgment on the appeal filed by Dr. Onmeje agreed that the election petition tribunal breached the constitutional right of the appellant when the Chairman of the tribunal solely sat in adopting the written addresses without the remaining members of the tribunal.

Advertorial

NIGERIANS CANNOT BE DECEIVED

I DID NOT WRITE THE POWER PROBE REPORT

My attention has been drawn to several publications in the media on the 3rd of April, 2009, particularly *The Guardian*, *Leadership*, the *Nigerian Compass* and also on the AIT discussion program *Focus Nigeria*, as well as THISDAY, The Sunday Newspaper of 5th April 2009, referring to my appearance on the 1st of April, 2009, before the 7-man ad-hoc committee of the House of Representatives charged with reviewing the recommendations of the report of the House Committee on Power, popularly referred to as the Power Probe Report.

In its front page report captioned "Consultant admits bias in power probe report" the writers of the *Guardian* report stated as follows: "a consultant and author of the document admitted that he was biased in its preparation".... "the expert, who wrote the report of the Ndudi Elumelu probe panel Said that he was subjective in packaging the over 200-page document for the Committee on Power & Steel". The *Guardian* piece further went on to say that "His confession seems to have corroborated earlier claims by some members of the committee that the consultant was prejudiced in writing the report". The piece then went on to say that "Ibekwe, who appeared before the new committee agreed to injecting prejudice in carrying out the assignment after losing bids to handle contracts with different company names", and that "Ibekwe said he was disheartened that none of the numerous companies he propped up for the contracts was chosen..."

I am also aware that similar news reports appeared in other print and electronic media, which from the near identity of the phraseology and content confirm them to have been authored, syndicated and planted by the same author(s), purveying in essence the same false claims as that of the *Guardian* report.

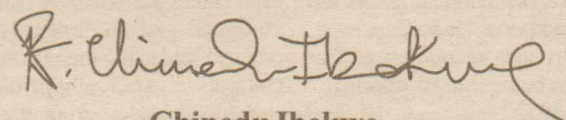
For the avoidance of doubt, and to set the record straight, I wish to state as follows:

1. At no time during my appearance, before the 7-man review committee on the 1st of April 2009, did I admit writing the report of the Elumelu probe panel.
2. While responding to a question by the committee chairman regarding my role in the power probe as well as in the preparation of the report, I stated that my firm, working in collaboration with four other consulting companies, acted as consultants to the Committee on Power, and that my firm's role was limited to carrying out technical and process audits of contracts and projects awarded between 1999 and 2007.
3. I also told the ad-hoc Committee that the role of my firm was limited to conducting forensic examination of records of oral testimony [verbatim reports], exhibits admitted during the public hearing, and written and/or electronic records of findings during the visits to numerous sites by the Committee. I also categorically told the review committee that neither my firm nor myself wrote the Power Probe Report, but made findings of fact from the investigation records, which were then passed on to the probe panel which made its own recommendations.
4. I deny categorically any statement or claim purporting that I confessed to have written the report, either single-handedly or in part, or admitting bias, or subjectivity in the preparation of any input(s) that went into the report. The reportage and claims in the said publications and electronic media have no basis in fact or truth, and do not in any way reflect my testimony before the 7-man ad-hoc Committee, and can only be the product of either jaundiced imaginations or unadulterated journalistic hackery!
5. There appears to be a well-funded, sponsored and orchestrated attempt to defame me, malign my person and discredit my professional integrity with a view to ultimately killing the report of the power probe panel, without proper examination of the facts contained therein and exhibited during the public hearings and site visits.
6. I have referred the reports of the various publications to my solicitors with a view to seeking redress through legal and legitimate means for the malicious libel and contrived falsehoods purveyed in the said publications.

I urge both the media and the generality of Nigerians not to be hoodwinked by the obvious desperate antics of the powerful and stupendously rich entities who are behind these obscene assaults on the sensibilities of discerning Nigerians, and who stand to benefit from the death of the power probe report.

The House of Representatives, in its wisdom, is at liberty to either succumb [against the facts established by the power probe] to the pressures of powerful and untouchable entities, or rise to the challenge of maintaining its integrity through a dispassionate examination of the findings of malfeasance and non-performance in the power sector. As the saying by the venerated Uthman Dan Fodio goes, "Conscience is an open wound only the truth can heal it".

Signed:



Chinedu Ibekwe
7, Udo Udoma Street
Asokoro, Abuja, Nigeria. April 5, 2009

OPINION

Government should take-over banks, etc (2)

Last week, we concluded our discourse by appealing to the Federal Government to take over the most strategic and commanding heights of our economy and invest heavily in order to tackle the global economic meltdown that has continued to ravage our stock market. According to latest reports, the market, which was the leading Africa's best performance during the past decade posted the biggest decline worldwide in the first quarter of this year as bad loans to speculators pushed bank valuation to an all-time low. The Nigerian Stock Exchange All Share Index, according to the report of Bloomberg, an American financial software news and data company, fell 37 per cent this year, the steepest quarterly decline in more than a decade and the worst of 89 benchmark indexes tracked by the Bloomberg Stocks in Africa's largest oil producing nation reached a five-year low recently.

From our call for the federal government to reacquire its sold shares in some of the big banks, we similarly appeal to the government to acquire shares in the textile industry, insurance, cement and other sectors strategic to our economic wellbeing as a nation. By way of illustration, we will take the Ashakacem Plc where so many things went wrong including how the original shareholders like Bauchi, Gombe and Borno States governments were short-changed. This company was established in 1974 and commenced production in 1979. Its original owners included the governments of the North Eastern states of Nigeria, some banks, the federal government as well as the Blue Circle

Ujudud Shariff

ON TUESDAY

ujushariff@dailytrust.com

Industries Plc as the foreign technical partner. But as the wind of the ill-fated privatization of the government blew across the country in 2002, so were the fortunes as well as the ownership of the company. The federal government sold off its shares to Blue Circles while the shares of the state governments were sold in some cases in a most questionable manner. In Borno state for instance, there was a Military Administrator at the time who virtually sold all the state government's shares to his relation who is not even from that state. Also take the case of Bauchi State where recent disclosures revealed the questionable manner in which a leading politician from Gombe State cornered and acquired a large chunk of the share. Virtually the story is the same whether in Yobe, Adamawa or Taraba states. But strangely in 2001, the French company, Lafarge Group acquired the Blue Circle Industries Plc worldwide there by inheriting the Ashakacem and made it its subsidiary. In case you don't know, Lafarge Group is a world leader in building materials and has 71,000 employees in 70 countries. To date, Lafarge Group holds 50 per cent shares of Ashakacem (731,250,000) shares of the issued ordinary Share Capital of the Company. Indeed, Lafarge (Nigeria) Limited, a Subsidiary of Lafarge SA also hold 0.16 per

cent (2,403,300) shares of the issued Ordinary Share Capital of the Company making Lafarge Group the undisputed owners of the company.

In this regard, our view is simply that the governments of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, Bauchi and Gombe states should be allowed and directed to acquire at least 40 per cent holding of the company. Their active participation in the company should ensure equity and transparency in the running of the company. To date, only God knows how much was transferred out of the company to France under different guises. The six North East states governments would also ensure the recruitment of their people and the distribution of cement in their areas.

The next sector that the Federal Government should take head-on is the textile sector where the plan of releasing a 70 Billion Naira stimulus package has been on the drawing board in the last three years, even before President Obama was voted into the White House. The time for action is now and the government should utilize the funds to acquire the shares of the big textile companies and allow the states governments to also acquire. The suffering by the workers and their dependents is beyond comprehension. Just drive to Kaduna and visit the Kakuri areas and see how many gallons of tears would come out of your eyes.

We will conclude this discourse on our recommendations on Nigeria's response to the global economic crisis especially how it is devastating our economy and social life especially the alarming loss the country is suffering at the stock market in spite of all the assurances given by the CBN Governor Chukuma Charles Soludo that the country is shielded from any serious threat. This alone is enough to demand for his immediate resignation to save the country from further calamity. The rumour going round that he is strongly lobbying for the renewal of his tenure for the second time as well as the alleged plan to wage a huge media relations campaign and propaganda by his ethnic brethren should be condemned and resisted by all. It is a great shame that all the so-called consolidation of our banks into 20 in the country has not shielded the country despite all the lies we were told. Government should please use the big stick and clear out the mess in the financial sector. This is a time of crisis and the use of kid gloves or sweet heart deals will not work. Only drastic measures will work one of which is for the federal Government to reacquire the shares of some of the leading banks in the country and not provide any stimulus or bailout packages. The embarrassment and lessons for not inviting to the recent G20 summit in London is very instructive. Our future for now lies on the faithful and relentless implementation of the 7-Point Agenda to achieve its lofty programmes and ideals. Our hope rests on Vision 20-20-20 and we must work extremely hard to reach there.

Ending the chaos in Ebiraland

By Buhari O. Sani

The Ebira people of the central senatorial district of Kogi State have an interesting history. They were known generally for good character which is indicative of their name. Such qualities as integrity, valour, gallantry, honesty and hard work were associated with them. Religion, culture and tradition were the bedrock of their integration as a distinct social group in Nigeria with a common history, language, and world view. Their love for one another and even more for strangers is legendary. History is replete with several instances where such deep affection for one another had united them to pursue a common course.

This is why it is difficult to understand or rationalize the seemingly unending chaos and killings in the area today. It is most disheartening that gun fights have become a daily routine in this homogenous community. A whole generation of children is growing up in Ebiraland who have known no other life than wanton killings and hooliganism.

Fuelled largely by ruthless political agenda and retrogressive clannish sentiments, violence in Ebiraland has become banal. Ebiraland is today as dangerous as the Niger Delta. It has, arguably, more guns per capita than anywhere else in Nigeria. Yet, the state government is ringing its hand as if it is powerless. Traditional institutions in the area have been compromised, commanding no respect from the rampaging young thugs. The state government sees political benefits in the turbulence in the most vocal section of the state. If they keep killing themselves, it is reasoned, they will not be in a position to complain about marginalization. As for the embattled traditional leadership, such unending hostility distracts attention from the questions currently being raised about its legitimacy and morality.

Everyone ought to be concerned about the mayhem in Ebiraland. The needless loss of human lives daily should stir our collective conscience. The Ebira killings dehumanize all

of us. Okene, for instance, is a strategic intercession between East/West and the North. Each time the town explodes, travellers experience a lot of hardship, taking tortuous detours to avoid the eye of the storm. The area is the nerve centre of commercial activities in the state. It contributes more than 70 per cent of internally generated revenue in the state.

One of the factors responsible for the continued political turmoil is its criminal neglect by both the Abubakar Audu and Ibrahim Idris administrations. Since 1999, there have been no major state government projects in the area that can engage the army of restive youths there. The Obehirah-Ihima Road and Ege Roads which the state government claimed to have spent a lot of money constructing are already falling apart. Local government allocations are allegedly heavily "audited" before they get the five local councils in the senatorial zone. What finally gets to the local government is spent on salaries and overheads. Nothing is left for public works projects that can generate mass employment for idle youths.

State and local governments in the areas must urgently provide resources for the engagement of idle and vulnerable young people in the area. This is one of the ways to stop the political unrest in Ebiraland. The state government can no longer continue to hide its head in the sand as if the problem does not exist. It is time to confront it with sincerity and an open mind. It says a lot about the quality of leadership in the state that the killings have gone on for so long without intervention. The police are outnumbered, under-equipped and confused over whether the political leadership in the state actually has the political will to tackle the problem.

Political leaders from the area also stand indicted. They have not offered true leadership. Most of the dysfunctional youth in the area today were allegedly recruited and armed by politicians in desperate quest for power. The

monster they created is threatening to consume them too as some of them can no longer go home because of the fear of molestation or being killed. It is unfortunate that Ebira is being represented or led by thugs who fought their way to power. The quality of representation is so low that Ebira people frequently compare their political leaders to the tenth eleven team of a soccer community.

Instead of mobilizing the people against economic and political injustices in the state, such as the lopsidedness in political appointments, in the state civil service and in the provision of amenities and social services, Ebira leaders are pursuing only their selfish interests. Calculations for 2011 or 2012 have been cited for renewed violence in Ebira recently. Instead of engaging youths in productive employment, some Ebira leaders are restocking their armouries with sophisticated weapons.

It is on record that in February 2007, the Special Anti-robbery Squad stormed Ebiraland and arrested some thugs found in possession of small arms and light weapons, but they were bailed out by their sponsors and the case has not been pursued again. This sort of thing breeds impunity and allows thuggery to flourish. Last month, one of the local governments in the area decided to dole out huge sums of money to these same hoodlums as part of its poverty alleviation programme. It led to more killings and mayhem as the beneficiaries fought themselves over the sharing formula. Needless to say that some of this money will go into the purchase of more weapons for more killings. By doling out such money, the impression is being created that criminality pays. Of course it is a well known fact that some of these thugs are millions who ride the best cars and live opulently. They have made thuggery attractive to thousands of young people.

The social dimension of the problem is to be found in the break down of the family system in Ebira. An average Ebira man marries many wives and still keeps plenty of concubines.

(Though Islam allows polygamy, i.e. a man marrying more than one wife, those who engage in it must be able to treat their wives fairly and train their children to become good human beings). But in our own case, a lot of wayward children are produced in the process because we only want to satisfy our urges, not take responsibility. These children are untrained, uneducated and left on the streets to fend for themselves. Such children often do not value either their own lives or other lives. They do not respect authority. They do not respect elders. They are anti-social. They need serious rehabilitation to be productive members of the society.

I would like to appeal to President Umar Musa Yar'adua and other leaders of this country to save Ebiraland from self-annihilation. It is obvious that our leaders have failed to disarm those they have armed. The state government is playing evil politics over the crisis. Ebira people should desist from taking politics as an occupation and imbibe the hard working spirit of their fore fathers. The must end to the violent clannish rivalries. Ebira is too small to be fragmented along clans. Continued obsession with clans is a sign of backwardness. All progressive societies have gone beyond such atomization.

Similarly, abusive songs by folk singers should no longer be encouraged. Such songs are the triggers of conflicts. We must rebuild our family system to be able to impact in our children the sacredness of human lives, respect for authority and age, the ethos of hard work and honesty. Parent must be more responsible. They should not bring children to this world if they are in no position to look after them.

I feel greatly pained by the bloodbath in Ebiraland. The actions of a few misdirected people have stigmatized a noble and proud people. My heart bleeds for Ebiraland. This should not be the case.

Buhari lives in Abuja.
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EDITORIAL

Talk of a mega party

A number of opposition figures recently had a meeting in Abuja where they announced an intent to set up what they called a mega political party in order to challenge the ruling Peoples Democratic Party at the next elections in 2011. Many Nigerians who are fed up with the growing arrogance of the ruling party whose leaders have been talking of ruling Nigeria for the next 60 years or even to eternity are likely to welcome any move that could make their votes count in the choice of who rules them. It may however be too early to say whether indeed this latest effort by the opposition will mean much or it is just more of the same incompetence that has seen Nigeria turn into a near one party state in spite of having about 50 registered political parties.

Daily Trust considers the announcement by the opposition figures as a welcome one especially if it will enrich the democratic space that seem to be getting increasingly limited since the return to civilian rule in 1999. Announcing the intent to float a mega party is however the easy part as events that followed the announcement have shown. So far at least one of the parties represented at the Abuja meeting the Progressive Peoples Alliance PPA, has since dissociated itself with the idea of a mega party. Many others are also unsure of what it means giving rise to the suggestion that the whole idea is at best work in progress.

A lot of effort need to be put into the idea of the mega party before it begins to look like a serious attempt to take on the PDP behemoth. The promoters of the new party will need to flesh out a lot of details that can provide the policy alternatives to what the ruling party stands for in order for the electorates to compare and contrast so as to make an informed choice when the time comes. In fact it is possible that at the end of the day it is not even a new party that is promoted but a kind of alliance that is formed by the opposition parties in order to present a common front to the ruling PDP. It should be sobering to those promoting a mega party now that Nigeria's political landscape has seen many of such brave attempts at alliances or big parties which have however not been successful in dislodging a ruling party from power.

As it is there seem to be just too many small parties that seem to have been set up just to benefit from the grant given to them by the electoral commission. This newspaper has had cause to decry the situation whereby in the books of INEC there are dozens of parties while the political space is dominated by just one huge party and 2-3 little ones. If Nigeria's opposition politicians are serious about displacing the ruling PDP it may well be good that they learn an important lesson from what happened in other African countries where the only time an opposition group ever get the chance to defeat a ruling party is when they come together and present a credible and formidable alternative. That will only be possible in Nigeria when the senior opposition politicians are able to rise above their big ambition of becoming presidents or governors and doing the hard work of building a platform that could be a rallying point for the majority of Nigerians who are eager for an alternative to the current ruling party. The promoters of the mega party should also be mindful that when such parties or alliances are just for getting to power they begin to unravel as soon as that is achieved.



Your Letters

Rebranding Nigeria and the drivers

In one of Daily Trust publications this past week someone briefly made mention of numerous messages the Nigeria film makers (Nollywood) is passing to the outside world as one of the major medium the Hon. Minister of Information and Communication can use in conveying messages to the outsiders in her campaign towards re-branding Nigeria.

It is obvious that some of the pictures these film producers are painting concerning this country are TRUE, but I can tell you there are a lot of GOOD and GREAT sides in every Nigerian just as our new

slogan implies. If we should take a good look at the average citizen of this country, we'll note that they have a very good heart, inspite of the harsh treatments we received from our so called leaders, courtesy of their economic, financial and resource mismanagements.

You will agree with me that if we are not GOOD and GREAT in this country some of our achievements in our neighboring countries and the world at large would have not been possible. Is it the peacekeeping mission in Liberia, and Sudan or welfare and shelter that are being given to refugees that have been brought into this

country. Nigerian's are accommodating, friendly and peaceful people even to foreigners that resides amongst us, compared to any other countries as far as I am concern.

My point is that there is no need of been politically or personally bias about this great idea of the Hon. Minister as re-branding or re-labeling our country from black to white, knowing fully well that nobody will do it for us, we can only do it for ourselves, either good or bad it is what we call or paint ourselves that the outsiders will call us.

I love Americans and Kenyan's for one thing, no matter how unfriendly and

wicked the American's are to the immigrants (non-citizens) in form of Racism, they will always say GOD BLESS AMERICA, and the Kenya's as underdeveloped they are, they called themselves PRIDE OF AFRICA.

Fellow Nigerian's this is our country; let us forget whatever selfish and devilish altitude of some of our leaders and begin to do what is right as our own individual sacrifice to our good and great nation. Let us support Dora Akuyili's policy of rebranding Nigeria. Nigeria... Good people, Great nation.

Kumuyi Shogo Benedict, Wuse Zone 1, Abuja.

Text us on 08059100257

Nigeria is independent

On Monday March 30, 2009 (page 2), Daily Trust carried a story titled "Nigeria is under our watch list" which was attributed to one American Mr. Leonard Leo. Let him know that Nigeria is an independent state with full sovereignty like theirs.

N. Dankane, 08035770832

To Mr President

Power supply in Nigeria is degenerating from worse to worst. President Yar'adua should do something about the darkness hovering all over the nation. You have a big responsibility to punish those who put us in this mess.

Sabo Shehu, URimi, Kaduna, 07039107332.

What is your government doing about unemployment in this country? We are waiting for your action on this problem. It is affecting the lives of the many unemployed people in Nigeria.

Charles Esthon Kundi Jen, Karim Lamido, Taraba State, 07066886066.

OBJ demeaned himself

It was demeaning for Obasanjo to make public what they discussed in secrecy with Atiku. After all there is nothing wrong with Atiku's move to reconcile. Obasanjo should be more thoughtful if he wants people to trust him.

Isa Musa Matori, 08066889900.

Well done PSC

I say kudos to the Police Service Commission (PSC) for looking into the case of Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Zakari Bui. The commission deserves commendation for doing the right thing.

Ahmadu Betara Aliyu, 08069567730

NABTEB, what's up?

The National Business and Technical Examination Board should release the 2007 labour trade test results. A lot of us need the result and we don't know what is holding it.

Christopher Sunday, 08066385318

To Gov Sule Lamido

Governor Sule lamido of Jigawa State should remember to start his recruitment bid of professors from PDP national secretariat, starting from Prof. Rufai Alkali. He doesn't have to go overseas.

Danjuma Muye, 08036616767

CBN, pay us our money

Please tell the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) should pay depositors of wonder bank since the money is in its custody. CBN should not sit on the money when the owners need it badly.

Isah Usman, 08059143814

GLO and our privacy

The National Communications Commission (NCC) should tell GLO telecommunications company to stop invading our privacy unnecessarily by its unsolicited advert text messages. It is irritating to be getting 2-3 messages almost on daily basis.

B. O. Obande, 08058433128

Abuja-Lokoja highway

The Federal Government should stop delaying the dualisation of Abuja-Lokoja high way. Many lives are being claimed daily through ghastly accidents. Dualising the highway will reduce accident on that busy route.

Musa Umar Angulu, Achara, Kogi State, 08032875631

Opinion

Homosexuality as transgression beyond limits

Gays and gay activist groups congregated at the National Assembly on the 11th of March, 2009 to protest a bill seeking to ban same sex marriages in Nigeria. What the groups and their activists want us to accept is that 'prejudice against homosexuals could be extinguished only if, as homosexuals, they were accepted as normal'. The sensationalist acts of these individuals and their supporters show that the face of Nigerian culture is changing – but only for the worse. The singular impact of the show of shame was to demonstrate that homosexuality is bold and here, that it is normal sexual orientation that is 'neither a defect, a disturbance, a sickness, nor a malfunction of any sort'. But the truth is that homosexuality is an illness, and can be anything but normal. A simple definition of normality offered more than 50 years ago is that it is 'that which functions in accordance with its design'. Homosexuality would quite obviously not follow that simple definition.

Those supporters of this global cancer who severely criticize every opponent of their pathology speak of realism and pragmatism. They argue that the vast majority of the citizens whose rights they seek to dispense must view their campaign as a humane, democratic and progressive act necessary to adapt in a fast changing world. They claim that their only concern is to see a nation where all its citizens shall be cherished and protected against discrimination by the law; that Nigeria and her citizens must not be left behind as societies progress into a world where prejudice against homosexuality is non-existent. Will these individuals and the groups that support them readily advance the same 'humane, democratic and progressive' argument to defend a condition such as paedophilia if it was simply declassified as an illness? It was not until December 15, 1973 that homosexuality itself was declassified as an illness from the official Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association due, not to any rigorous scientific or scholarly work, but to the furious campaign of the Washington, D.C., branch of the Mattachine Society – a

By Disu Kamor

gay lobby group. During this time, psychiatry allowed itself to be subdued by unrelenting lobbyists and severed itself from established clinical theory – particularly psychoanalytic theories of unconscious motivation – adopting instead a new 'adaptational' perspective of normality. Since 2001 when Netherlands became the first country to legalize this scourge, only six other countries and two US states have followed suit, and civil unions between same-sex couples, a different label of the same illness, are recognized in sixteen countries.

Although Rashidi Williams, leader of the Queer Alliance, one of the homosexual groups at the forefront of the agitation pleaded with the lawmakers at the public hearing organised by the House of Representatives Joint Committee on Human Rights, Women Affairs and Justice to set aside the bill because 'we believe that we are created by God and do not wish to be discriminated against', he or anyone in his camp failed to substantiate this wild and inaccurate claim that people are born gay. In fact, there is no single substantiated high-quality study to show a variety of innate and genetic foundations for homosexuality, nothing whatsoever in both reliable scientific studies and thousands of years of religious traditions and scriptural interpretations to show that people can be born gay. Interestingly most homosexuals and their supporters know this for a fact. Lesbian activist Camille Paglia offers the following observation: "Homosexuality is not 'normal'. On the contrary it is a challenge to the norm.... Nature exists whether academics like it or not. And in nature, procreation is the single relentless rule. That is the norm. Our sexual bodies were designed for reproduction.... No one is born gay. The idea is ridiculous...homosexuality is an adaptation, not an inborn trait.... We should be honest enough to consider whether homosexuality may not indeed be a pausing at the prepubescent stage where children anxiously band together by gender....current gays can't insist that

homosexuality is 'not a choice,' that no one would choose to be gay in a homophobic society. But there is an element of choice in all behaviour, sexual or otherwise. It takes an effort to deal with the opposite sex; it is safer with your own kind. The issue is one of challenge versus comfort.

So in reality, they not only encourage a sinful aberration of the norm, they are lobbying to condemn a whole nation to slow cultural and moral death. They seek to normalize the unthinkable through their loud shout of 'promotion and protection of minority rights' to be perverted. But wait, we need to ask this class of citizens: do the minority rights make the majority rights expendable? How about the rights of those with unwanted homosexuality to get psychological care and therapeutic treatment? How about the fact that normalizing homosexuality will prohibit preventive therapy for homosexuality, a science that is exact, effective and available?

In the West homosexuality has been turned into something acceptable by society. Not only that, political, cultural and legal (through the flimsy citation of sections of international treaties and conventions to which countries are signatories) landscapes of 'non-conforming nations' are being construed through well-oiled and well funded activist groups to campaign for the legalization of this depraved practice and many of the issues surrounding it. Of course, it is impossible to square the concept of a 'civilized world' that condemns, ridicules and in fact criminalizes the practice of polygyny, but at the same time legalizes the immorality of the sinful perversion called homosexuality which deprives those who practice it of decent taste, decent morals, and a decent manner of living.

Although faith groups' denunciation of the scourge of homosexuality has often been unwisely dismissed as religious intervention in politics, the tendency to restrict the debate to the exclusive realm of politics must be challenged. This is so more because homosexuality disrupts society's natural life pattern which is a major concern of religions and its devastating threat to the moral wellbeing of the country affects us all equally – politicians and faith practitioners.

For one to be sexually attracted to someone of the same sex is a deviation from the rule. All divine messages condemn homosexuality and relate the story and punishment of the People of Lot who were indulging in this major sin. In reference to these people the Holy Qur'an states: "Of all the creatures in the world, will ye approach males, and leave those whom Allah has created for you to be your mates? Nay, ye are a people transgressing all limits!" (26: 165-166). Allah thus considers such doings to be a transgression. Yet elsewhere we read, "For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds." (7:81). "And we rained down on them a shower of brimstone: Then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin and crime!" (7: 84). "He (Lot) said: "O my Lord! help Thou me against people who do mischief!" (29: 30).

Marriage and family setting traditionally consist of a male and female(s) as the foundation on which a society functions properly. God enshrined this rule when He created Adam and Eve – not Adam and Steve. There are sufficient scholarly findings on marriage from a variety of disciplines to show the crucial importance of marriage for society. These findings further show that children are the reason for public interest in marriage. These are the societal foundations which those engaged in political drive toward ever-greater equality campaign for the homosexuals are seeking to attack and dismantle. The imperatives are however clear. Our elected legislators must each decide their vote on the bill on the crucial issues of public good and public interest. They must follow their conscience and the overwhelming public opinion which favours total ban on same sex marriages in Nigeria. This is because the lewd debauchery called homosexuality is more dangerous to the moral wellbeing of the nation than a standing army. This is an interesting time for Nigerians according to an old Chinese curse and may God help us against people who do this mischief.

Kamor is Director of Media & Communications, Muslim Public Affairs Centre, MPAC, Nigeria. kamor.disu@mpac-ng.org

Sarkozy as King Leopold in Congo

Cont'd from yesterday's back page

Uganda and Rwanda were, however, poor imperialists. They reached Kinshasa with Kabila but forgot to lie low. Their military and political officers grabbed top jobs around Kabila, thereby arousing resentment in local people against black colonizers from two mini-countries in the east of that huge country. To keep his legitimacy, Kabila was forced to throw them out. Surprisingly, he even became an ally of the despicable Hutu genocide politicians and militias across from the Rwanda border. The counter-move by Rwanda and Uganda, probably animated by the historical scandal of a miserably tiny once Belgium ruling the vast Congo, led to a second invasion to grab power and overthrow Kabila. That 'new empire' search forced Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and far away Eritrea, to send in troops to fight on Kabila's side.

Both Rwanda and Uganda sent in their troops and also financed and armed local allies. Rwanda had the advantage of a historically resident kith and kin, the over 300,000 strong "Banyamulenge" (or Tutsi who are locally disputed natives of Congo, many of whom had been recruited into the RPF. Both invading armies and local allies would bring war and havoc into the Congo; and that land still bleeds across north-eastern and eastern sectors of that country in 2009.

Sarkozy's invitation to Kabila to share

By Okello Oculi

Congo's wealth with Rwanda was both cynical and contemptuous of Congolese life and memories considering that, by after 1996, Rwanda established a "Congo Desk" in the ministry of Defence charged with organizing the mining of coltan, diamond, gold and other minerals, in central and eastern Congo, for marketing in the illegal international minerals market. Coltan (used for making cell phones and computer chips), earned Rwanda 40 million dollars in 1999 alone. Rwanda's troops guarded mining operations, and aircrafts hired for exporting and importing goods into Congo. Unlike the more disciplined Rwanda operations, Uganda's military officers were reported by a United Nations study team to have looted and sold these resources for their own pockets rather than for the state's treasury. French nationals and companies were accused by the same United Nations report of taking part in this regime of looting the Congo, including selling guns to militias to ensure access to the minerals, timber and coffee.

A second feature of the tragedy of Congo was that these operations brought murders, death from malnutrition and disease, rape, constant harassment and internal displacement for the ordinary peoples of the Congo. Like King Leopold's regime that hacked off hands of over five million

Congolese, and Mobutu's corrupt regime, the new war regimes continued to deny the peoples and economy of the Congo internal growth, development and welfare. Like the Belgian invasion of Lumumba's Congo one week after independence on 30th June, 1960, France's engineered genocide and Rwanda/Uganda two-waves of invasions of Mobutu's and Kabila's Congo, would bring secessionist wars and destruction of hope and the road to promised road to development.

Sarkozy should be ignored and his sadistic sense of humour condemned. His ploy to bribe Rwanda's leaders by calling for what he calls a "re-foundation of the region" cannot take France off the hook of international responsibility for genocide. Israel and her supporters have taught the world the lesson of permanent responsibility for seeking to honour victims of genocide by demanding reparations and legal punishment for its perpetrators. So far only Hutu leaders have been accused. Sarkozy should be required to supply Kagame with the list of French nationals who are guilty of planning the Rwanda genocide. The rule of law against that crime cannot be discriminatory in its coverage; catching only Hutu victims. Rwanda and the African Union owe the world the duty of honouring the example that Israel and the international Jewish community has set.

Sarkozy should be congratulated for

calling for what he termed a "new momentum" in economic cooperation in the Great Lakes region. He must, however, also announce a French, European Union and United Nations Special Congo Fund for economic reconstruction as a vital form of reparations. They were soiled by the blood of genocide in Rwanda and the apparent plot to partition and paralyze the prospect of a renaissance in the Congo after the fall of Mobutu. Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad, Sudan, Eritrea, Uganda and Rwanda (who took into Kabila's Congo what would be called "Africa's First International War"), owe it to the blood of the tortured Congolese, and their looted natural resources, the honour of convening a conference at which the re-quilting and reconstruction of the Congo would be agreed upon. It would be a modernized form of traditional African "blood money". George Alagiah, the BBC correspondent who reported from Kinshasa Mobutu's last days in power, was only partially correct in seeing Mubutu's fall as an event whose planning and control was totally in the hands of African leaders. There is, however, now a window of opportunity for the African Union to assume major control for the re-making of development, hope and human dignity in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Concluded.

Oculi is Executive Director, Africa Vision 525 Initiative.

ENLISTMENT/RECRUITMENT OF PROFESSIONALS & SPECIALISTS THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE



The Nigeria Police is commencing the enlistment/recruitment of professionals and specialists into the officer, inspector and constable cadre.

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- 2 INSPECTORS - COMMUNICATIONS**
Qualification: OND/NCE Electronics/Electrical
- 3 CONSTABLE - TECHNICIANS**
Qualification: SSCE plus Evidence of Electronics or Electrical Proficiency
- 4 CONSTABLE - OPERATORS**
Qualification: SSCE/GCE 'O' Level

OTHER POSITIONS

Fingerprint Experts, Hand Writing Analysts, Ballisticians, Forensic Experts, Medical Pathologists, Marine Engineers, Pilot/Boat Experts, Air Pilots, Communications Engineers, Transport Engineers, Drivers, Mechanics Veterinary Doctors, Livestock Technologists.

Visit Website for Application Requirements



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Qualification: Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) / Higher National Diploma (HND) in related field of study.
- NYSC Discharge Certificate
- 3 INSPECTORS - WORKS**
Qualification: Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in related field of study
- NYSC Discharge Certificate

All applicants MUST be Nigerian Citizens and must be between the age of 21 and 28 at the time of application.

Male applicant's chest measurement of not less than .87m and height not less than 1.67m.

Female applicant's height not less than 1.63m.

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Qualification: MBSS or Equivalent (Registered with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria).
- NYSC Discharge Certificate
- Not above 30yrs of age at time of application
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Qualification: MBSS or Equivalent (Registered with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria).
- NYSC Discharge Certificate
- Must possess specialist qualifications in Medicine, Paediatrics, O & G, Surgery e.t.c registered with MDCN
- Not above 35yrs of age at time of application
- 3 NURSES**
Qualification: Must possess the RN or RN/Midwifery certificate and must be registered with the Nursing & Midwifery Council of Nigeria.
- Not above 28yrs of age at time of application
- 4 PHARMACISTS**
Qualification: Must possess the B.Sc. Pharmacy or B. Pharm. Degree.
- Must be registered with the PCN
- NYSC Discharge Certificate
- Not above 28yrs of age at time of application
- 5 MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS**
Qualification: Must possess BMLS or AIMS.
- Must be registered with the Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN)
- NYSC Discharge Certificate
- Not above 28yrs of age at time of application
- 6 RADIOGRAPHERS**
Qualification: Must possess a degree in Radiography.
- Must be registered with the appropriate Professional Registration Council/Board
- NYSC Discharge Certificate
- Not above 28yrs of age at time of application
- 7 PHYSIOTHERAPISTS**
Qualification: Must possess a degree in Physiotherapy
- Must be registered with the relevant professional body.
- NYSC Discharge Certificate
- Not above 28yrs of age at time of application
- 8 HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGERS**
Qualification: Must possess a HND in Health Information Management or equivalent registered qualification.
- Must be registered with the Health Officers Registration Board
- NYSC Discharge Certificate
- Not above 28yrs of age at time of application

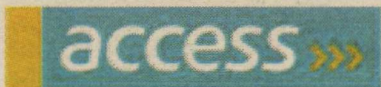
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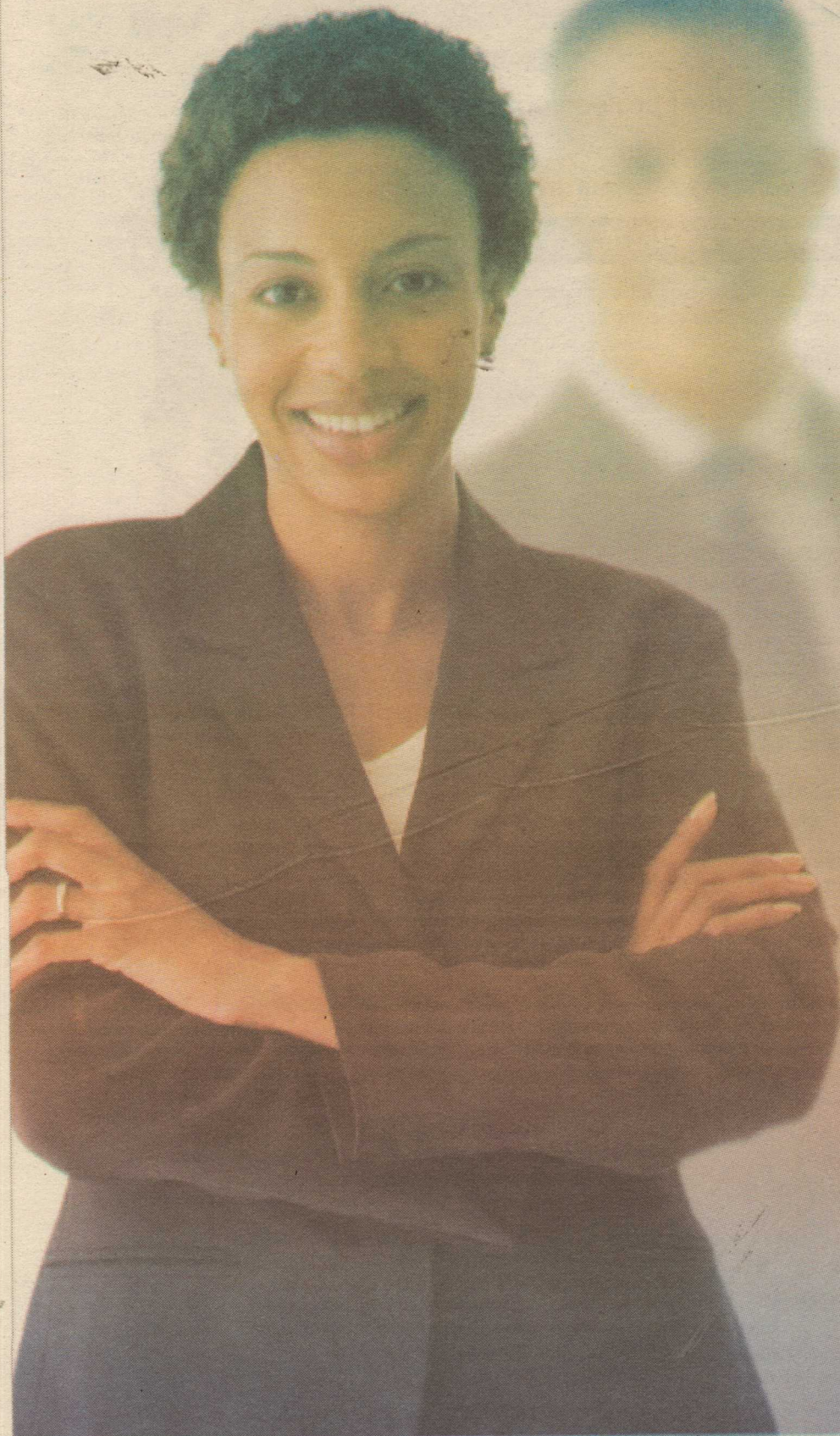
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Emmanuel C.S. Ojukwu, M.Sc.
Assistant Commissioner of Police
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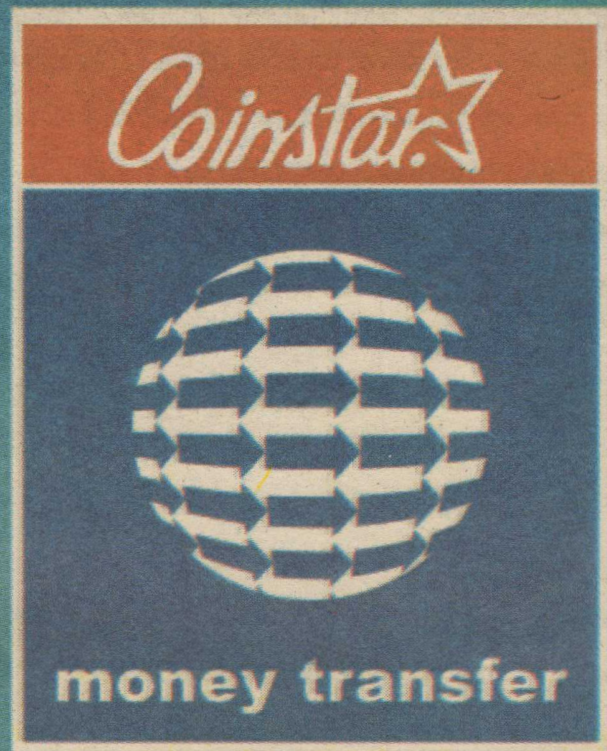
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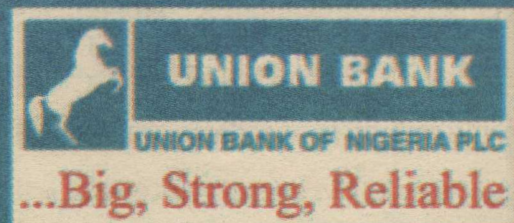
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ADVERTORIAL

NOVA FINANCE & SECURITIES VERSUS AP: MATTERS ARISING

We have observed with dismay that African Petroleum Plc (AP) has continued to carry misleading advertorials in the newspapers despite the pronouncement by the Nigeria Stock Exchange sanctioning AP for the advertorials and ordering immediate cessation of that publication. We have also watched as some faceless groups masquerading as stakeholders of AP have continued to carry on an orchestrated campaign of calumny against Nova Finance & Securities Limited (Nova). We as a group of concerned citizens are constrained to put out this statement to correct the impression being created by the misinformation that AP shares are being manipulated.

On Thursday March 26th 2009, the Council of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) officially sanctioned Nova Finance and Securities for "a breach of Articles 103 and 107 of our Rules and Regulations. The Council also sanctioned AP for 'contravening post listing requirements' by failing 'to inform The Exchange of any matters that affects their operations before going to the press.'"

The nature of the allegations that have been made and the subsequent action by the Council of the NSE deserves greater analysis, especially in the context of the overall performance of AP shares over the past 15 months.

Let's start at the beginning. Between January 2007 and March 2008 AP's share price experienced a phenomenal level of growth (627%) against an NSE increase of 198.7%. What could have accounted for this level of growth in the period? It certainly does not seem to have been supported by any fundamentals.

AP shares were placed on technical suspension following its public offer for an unusually long period of 9 months. During this time the global economic crisis struck and investors were unable to realise the substantial gains they made as the price was rising. Seeing the general and protracted bear market that began on the NSE, a significant number of investors placed sell orders on AP stock, like other stocks quoted on the Exchange which would be activated once the suspension was lifted. It is important to remember at this point

that first, significant volumes of sell orders drive down an equity's price and second, that the NSE has a cap on losses or gains in any one day of 5%. Therefore, as is normal on any market, when the suspension was lifted in January 2009, the price of AP shares began to fall on a day by day basis as the sell orders kicked in.

Between January 16 2009 and February 10 2009, AP shares fell from N293.98 to N216.13, a drop of N77.85 or over 26%. If you look carefully at the allegations made against Nova, you can see clearly that during this period Nova did not conduct any transactions involving AP shares. In effect, the price fell with no involvement or activity by Nova on the stock. Further analysis reveals that during the period in which Nova were actively trading AP stock, the price fell by a further 33%, from N105.45 to N69.99 and that there were a total of 132 transactions on AP shares during that period, most of which did not involve Nova.

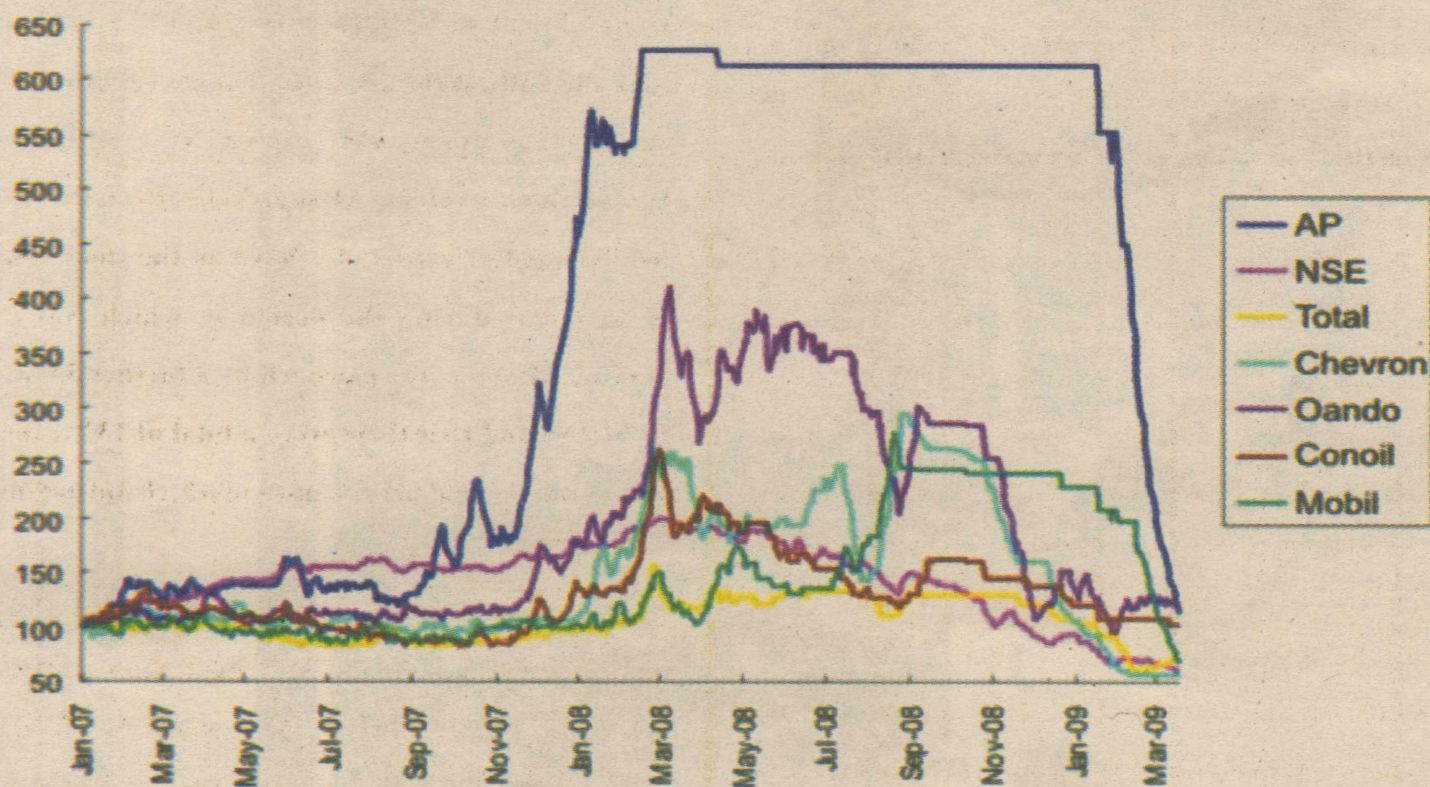
It is also educational to look at the performance of the entire oil marketing sub sector of the NSE over the past 15 months, in order to achieve a picture of how AP's share price has performed in comparison with the rest of the industry. Such an analysis reveals the following key points.

Since March 2008 AP's share price has declined by 82% and the average price drop of other oil marketing companies over the same period is 65% against an overall NSE index reduction of 53.2%. Chevron Oil's stock depreciated by 76.6% between March 08 and March 09, Oando's stock price dropped by 63.9% and Total's price dropped by 51.5%. These are companies with strong management teams, multinational links and a strong and proven track record, yet the price fell in line with the rest of the market. What is it therefore about AP that means the company feels it should be significantly out performing its peers? Has the management of AP brought in such significant added value to the company to justify this?

Let's not forget that the entire Nigerian Stock Exchange Index has performed poorly over the last 12 months. Every sector has declined significantly in value, including the banking sector which makes up a major proportion of the exchange's market capitalisation.

Graphic 1 - Performance Figures against share price for oil marketing industry (March 2008 – March 2009)

Companies	Latest FY Revenues	Latest FY PAT	Price (March 08)	Price (March 09)	Return (08/09)
Downstream Oil Majors	(N, m)	(N, m)	Naira	Naira	(%)
African Petroleum	102,026	5,702	300.98	54.18	-82.0%
Chevron Oil	72,628	1,959	367.18	86.00	-76.6%
Conoil	86,848	2,593	170.98	67.23	-60.7%
Mobil	54,542	1,131	217.60	96.90	-55.5%
Oando	185,892	5,480	184.65	66.60	-63.9%
Total	137,340	3,255	281.30	136.50	-51.5%
Other Blue-Chips	(N, m)	(N, m)	Naira	Naira	(%)
First Bank	155,290	36,540	40.00	15.70	-60.8%
GTBank	78,826	21,169	33.90	10.50	-69.0%
Guinness	69,172	11,860	129.00	88.59	-31.3%
NB	145,462	25,700	53.92	35.70	-33.8%
UAC	31,478	3,782	57.79	26.45	-54.2%
UBA	169,581	40,825	27.15	8.08	-70.2%
Zenith	208,293	51,992	50.01	12.87	-74.3%

Graphic 2 – Graph of share price for oil marketing industry equity performance

Given its operating performance AP have lost considerably less value during the current downturn than its industry peers and its share price remains above its valuation before the major price increase of 2007/08. Despite experiencing significantly more volatility than its peers due to the company's recent equity offering and change in free float, AP's performance from January 2007 to date is fundamentally in line with its peers. This can be clearly seen from the graphics below, which compare share price performance of AP and its industry peers. Note the extreme rise and extreme fall on the AP price, which, according to investigations by Financial Analysts was caused by AP manipulation of its own shares on the way up.

It is disingenuous of AP to 'cry wolf' when it feels it is the victim of stock decline, but to feel it is perfectly acceptable for its stock to rise astronomically.

is clear from the facts outlined in this note and from the graphic illustrations provided, that AP shares have experienced a correction fundamentally in line with the overall performance of the stock market

and that they in fact continue to perform broadly in line with the equity pricing of their industry peers. In other words, AP shares have performed in line with the market and the alleged manipulation that took place would have been counterproductive in the extreme if intended to wilfully force the fall in AP's share price, the market would have done the job on behalf of the alleged perpetrators, with or without illicit action.

The question therefore is; what was the motivation behind AP's decision to make public these allegations and to wilfully and knowingly violate NSE rules and regulations itself in the process? Has the Management of AP just woken to the realisation of its duty to always inform its shareholders about the true position of things relating to the Company? The answers to these questions lie within AP, the rest of us can only speculate. The Management of AP should desist from peddling half-truths.

COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF JUSTICE & ADVANCEMENT (CODJA)

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TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA REPORT

Zuma corruption charges dropped

Prosecutors in South Africa have announced they are dropping corruption charges against African National Congress (ANC) leader Jacob Zuma. Chief prosecutor Mokotedi Mpshe said phone-tap evidence suggested political interference in the investigation. Mr Zuma has always denied the allegations of graft, racketeering and money-laundering in connection to a multimillion dollar arms deal in 1999.

He is expected to become president after general elections on 22 April. The BBC's Alexis Akwagyiram says the ANC office in Polokwane greeted with jubilation the decision, which was broadcast live on radio and television. A party bus in the town turned up with a sound system, they cordoned off the road and people started dancing with banners.

The chief prosecutor said the National Prosecution Authority (NPA) had obtained recordings of phone conversations which suggested the timing of the decision to charge Mr Zuma in 2007 had been manipulated. Victory for Zuma's hardcore fans have come to the difficult conclusion that it is neither possible nor desirable for the NPA to continue with the prosecution of Mr Zuma, Mr Mpshe said.

"It is a difficult decision because the NPA has expended considerable resources on this matter, and it has been conducted by a committed and dedicated team of prosecutors and investigators who have handled a difficult case with utmost professionalism and who have not been implicated in any misconduct," added Mr Mpshe.

The chief prosecutor read out transcripts of recorded conversations between former NPA head Bulelani Ngcuka and Leonard McCarthy, the man who led the now disbanded anti-corruption unit known as the Scorpions. Mr Mpshe said the pair had discussed timing charges against Mr Zuma to cause political damage. "Mr McCarthy used the legal process for a purpose outside and extraneous to the prosecution itself," he said. "It was pure abuse of process," Mr Mpshe added.

Mr Zuma was first charged in 2005, but has never faced trial. The charges were dropped the following year, but he was recharged 10 days after he defeated former South African President Thabo Mbeki in elections to be the ANC's leader in December 2007. Last year a judge ruled that there had been political meddling in the case, but the NPA successfully appealed.

With only a few months to go to the elections, Mr Zuma then lodged a legal request for the charges to be reviewed.

The BBC's Africa analyst Martin Plaut says despite mountains of evidence, South African justice has proved incapable of dealing with a case that has been wrapped up in the internal workings of the governing party - the ANC.

The prosecutor provided evidence that his predecessor had manipulated the case to suite the ANC, yet said plainly that he had no evidence that this had been done at the behest of Mr Mbeki. Mr Plaut says the long saga has left more loose ends and damaged reputations than any in the country's recent history.

Kenya coalition minister resigns

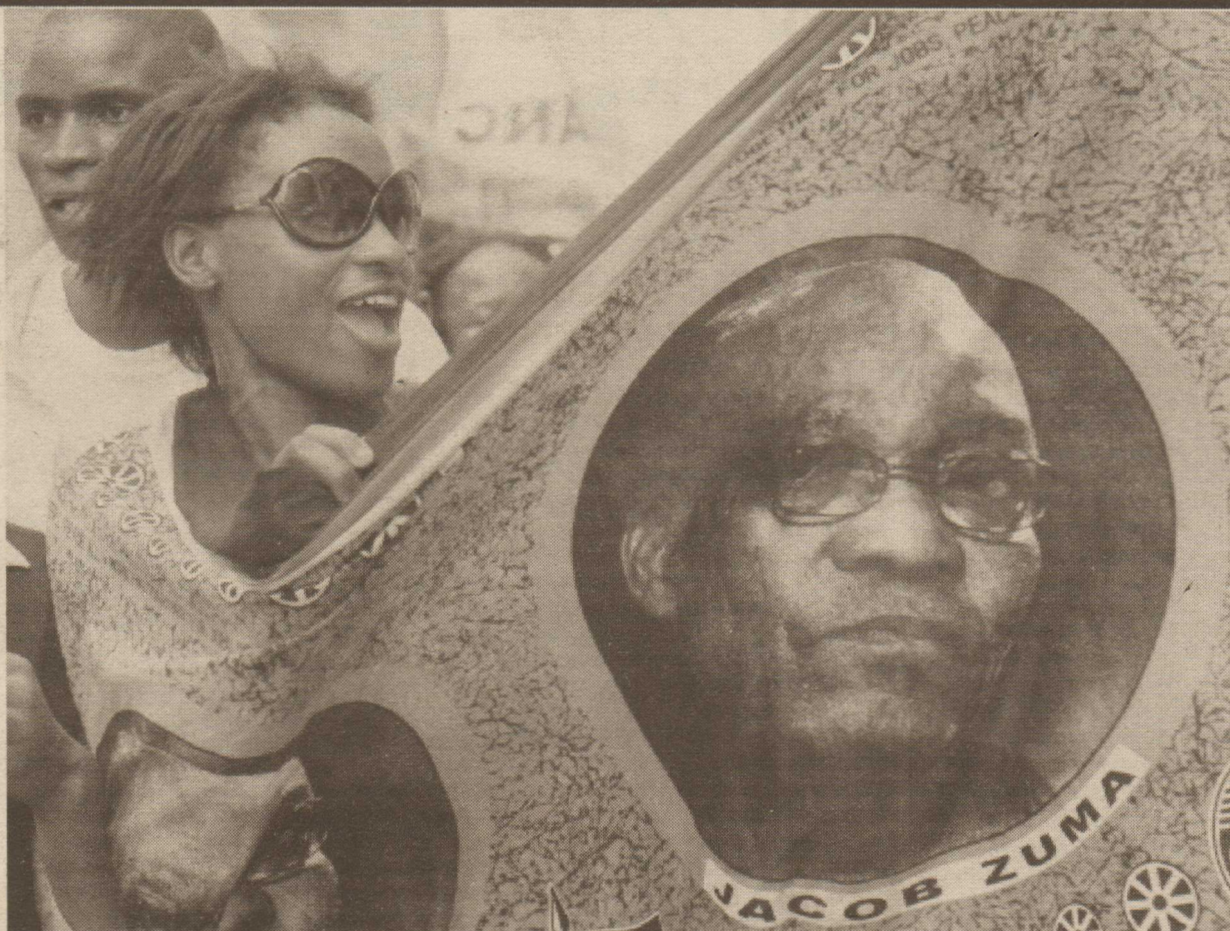
Kenya's Justice Minister Martha Karua has resigned from the coalition government, saying that her reform agenda was being undermined. She said judges were being appointed without her knowledge and her position as minister had become untenable.

Mrs Karua was a key ally of President Mwai Kibaki and was his negotiator for the power-sharing deal to end the bloodshed after disputed polls in 2007. Correspondents say it is the latest sign of tensions in the coalition. Over the weekend, Raila Odinga - the Orange Democratic Movement leader who became prime minister in the power-sharing deal - walked out of talks aimed at healing rifts.

He accused his coalition partners of attempting to change the agenda. The BBC's Noel Mwakugu in the capital, Nairobi, says in recent months Mrs Karua has been voicing her frustration at the government's attitude to reform.

The coalition has been criticised for its lack of progress over the last year and its failure to address corruption.

Last week, President Kibaki appointed seven new judges. "I realised I cannot institute reforms in my ministry as justice minister because I am being undermined," AFP news agency quotes her as saying. "Judges are being appointed without my knowledge and a lot more."



Hundreds of African National Congress (ANC) supporters took to the streets in Durban yesterday after South Africa's National Prosecution Authority (NPA) dropped corruption charges against ANC President Jacob Zuma, clearing the way for him to become the country's next president, free of the cloud that has hung over him for the past nine years.

Photo: AFP

Somali pirates seize more vessels

Somali pirates have seized a British-owned cargo ship and a Taiwanese ship, maritime officials say, after capturing three other vessels over the weekend.

The UK-owned Malaspina Castle was boarded in the Gulf of Aden, while the Taiwanese ship was seized near the Seychelles, according to reports.

A French yacht, a Yemeni tugboat and a German ship were also captured in the pirate-plagued waterway at the weekend. The region is heavily patrolled by a growing international naval coalition.

But correspondents say the pirates have been venturing further off coastal areas to evade the warships from more than a dozen nations patrolling the area in an attempt to deter the gangs. The 32,000-tonne Malaspina Castle, which was carrying a cargo of iron, was seized yesterday morning. The vessel, which flies a Panamanian flag, has a

crew of 24 - from Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine and Philippines.

Andrew Mwangura, of the Mombasa-based East African Seafarers' Assistance Programme, told Reuters news agency it is UK-owned but operated by Italians.

The Taiwanese fishing boat, with a crew of 29, was hijacked 260km (160 miles) from the Seychelles.

The French yacht, with four crew, was seized on Saturday off north-east Somalia.

It was being sailed by the pirates towards the Somali Puntland coast, said Kenya-based non-governmental organisation Ecoferra International, which monitors piracy.

The Yemeni tugboat was captured on Sunday, a day after the 20,000-tonne German container vessel, the Hansa Stavanger, was seized. More than 130 pirates attacks, including close to 50 successful hijackings, were reported in 2008, threatening one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

Sudan steps up efforts to free kidnapped aid workers

Sudan yesterday said it was trying to free two foreign aid workers kidnapped in the second abduction of international relief staff in its Darfur region in less than a month.

Unknown armed men took the French and Canadian workers for France's Aide Medicale Internationale from their compound in the south Darfur settlement of Ed el Fursan late on Saturday. Government officials said the workers were both women.

The kidnappings were another blow to the humanitarian effort in Sudan's violent west, already hit by a spike in bandit attacks on staff, the

abduction of four workers for Medecins Sans Frontieres in March and a government decision to close down 16 aid agencies. "The government is making every effort it can to free them," Foreign Ministry official Ali Youssef Ahmed.

Ahmed said he could not comment on whether Sudanese officials had managed to contact the kidnappers, or whether the kidnappers had made any demands, for fear of jeopardising efforts to free the women. Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission, which coordinates the work of aid groups in Sudan, declined to comment on the kidnapping, as did U.N. officials in the country.

Kidnappings of foreign aid workers were almost unheard of in Darfur before a group calling itself the Eagles of Bashir seized four employees of the Belgian arm of Medecins Sans Frontieres in North Darfur last month. The MSF workers were released unharmed three days later.

Sudanese government officials said the abductors in North Darfur had been protesting against the International Criminal Court's decision to issue an arrest warrant for President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

Aid workers told Reuters international aid groups had already started pulling their

foreign staff out of remote outposts following the kidnappings. "If this is the start of a new trend, international aid groups are going to have to consider whether they should keep their international staff outside Darfur's main region capitals, particularly in field locations where they are so vulnerable," said one aid official who asked not to be named.

Aid agencies have said they staff have faced growing antagonism in Darfur since President Bashir expelled 13 foreign aid groups, and shut three local organisations, accusing them of passing information to the International Criminal Court.

Trust International

WORLD REPORT

Obama reaches out to Muslim world

During his first visit to a mainly Muslim state, President Barack Obama has declared that the US "is not and will never be at war with Islam".

Addressing the Turkish parliament, Mr Obama called for a greater partnership with the Muslim world and said the US would soon launch outreach programmes.

"America's relationship with the Muslim world cannot and will not be based on opposition to al-Qaeda," he said.

Mr Obama also said Washington supported Turkey's efforts to join the EU. Earlier, at a news conference with his Turkish counterpart, Abdullah Gul, he urged Turkey to help bridge the gap between the Muslim and Western worlds.

He said his visit was a "statement about the importance of Turkey, not just to the United States, but to the world".

The US president began his visit to Turkey on Monday morning by laying a wreath at the tomb of the founder of modern Turkish state, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, whose "vision and courage" he praised.

He then travelled to the presidential palace in Ankara for talks with President Abdullah Gul, before giving an address to the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

Mr Obama devoted much of his speech to urging a greater bond between Americans and Muslims, admitting that "the trust that binds us has been strained".

"Let me say this as clearly as I can: the United States is not and will never be at war with Islam," he stated. "In fact, our partnership with the Muslim world is critical in rolling back a fringe ideology that people of all faiths reject."

He said: "The United States has been enriched by Muslim Americans. Many other Americans have Muslims in their family, or have lived in a Muslim-majority country - I know, because I am one of them."

"And when people look back on this time, let it be said of America that we extended the hand of friendship," he said. "There is an old Turkish proverb: 'You cannot put out fire with flames.'"

In his speech, Mr Obama said the US considered Turkey a "critical ally", despite the deterioration of their relations over the war in Iraq.



Cars are covered with debris and rubble following a strong earthquake, in the village of Onna, central Italy, yesterday. A powerful earthquake in mountainous central Italy knocked down whole blocks of buildings early yesterday as residents slept, killing at least 50 people and trapping many more, officials said.

Italy hunts for quake survivors

A desperate search for survivors is on in the mountain city of L'Aquila in central Italy after a quake killed at least 90 people and injured 1,500. Rescuers are picking through rubble in the walled medieval city and nearby towns and villages, some of which are said to have been virtually destroyed.

Tents are being put up in tennis courts and on football pitches to house some of the 30,000-40,000 homeless. Italy's PM Silvio Berlusconi promised a "record number of rescuers". Earlier, he declared a state of emergency in the region. Gianfranco Fini, speaker of the lower house of parliament, told MPs: "Some towns in the area have been virtually destroyed in their entirety."

The 6.3-magnitude quake struck at 0330 (0130 GMT) close to L'Aquila, 95km (60 miles) north-east of Rome. It lasted about 30 seconds, bringing down many Renaissance-era and Baroque buildings, including the dome on one of L'Aquila's churches. Between 3,000 and 10,000 buildings in the medieval city may have been damaged.

Boulders fell off mountain slopes, blocking roads. Houses were reduced to piles of rubble and cars crushed by raining debris. One resident, Antonio di Marco, recounted his experience for the BBC: "We escaped outside like madmen, we didn't understand what was happening, the whole building was moving under our feet, it is something that's impossible to describe..."

"It's a catastrophe and an immense shock," resident Renato Di Stefano told the Associated Press as he and his family headed for shelter in a tent camp outside L'Aquila. "It's struck in the heart of the city, we will never forget the pain." Firefighters aided by dogs worked feverishly to reach people trapped in fallen buildings in L'Aquila, including a student dormitory where several students were believed to be still inside. Here in the centre of the city, building after building has been left destroyed or half standing with cracks and holes.

We watched as rescue workers struggled to pull out survivors, crawling on their stomachs to try to reach those trapped inside. There is a stream of almost ghostly figures, local people caught up in the early hours this morning in this earthquake, who are pouring past us wearing blankets.

They are pulling suitcases and luggage past this collapsed building trying to get to safety. People are wandering around in a dazed state.

Earlier, residents and rescuers used their bare hands to clear the debris from collapsed buildings. Mr Berlusconi, who is in L'Aquila, said a field hospital was being set up to help local medical services. "I can assure you that there is no building that has fallen down without rescuers, without fire brigade being there," he told reporters after arriving in the city.

Italy, he said, had the resources it needed to deal with the disaster: "Financially, there are no problems. The government

has all the necessary funds at its disposal. We also have the EU catastrophe fund." Officials say 26 cities and towns have been damaged in the region, not including villages and hamlets.

The BBC's Duncan Kennedy in L'Aquila has described bemused and confused locals wrapped in blankets and carrying their personal belongings in suitcases walking, like a stream of refugees, through the devastation.

The rescue service is stretched to breaking point as it tries to reach all the devastated buildings and care for the survivors and the homeless. Survivors, some still in their night clothes, hugged each other as they waited for news of friends and relatives on Monday morning. Sniffer dogs were being used to check rubble in Onna, just outside L'Aquila.

Hundreds waited at the city's main hospital, where doctors were forced to treat people in the open air because only one operating room was functioning. Francesco Rocca of the Italian Red Cross warned of the difficulties ahead.

"The biggest problem will arrive in the night because there are thousands and thousands of people that we have to host in tents, in the hotels," he told the BBC. Deaths were reported in the surrounding towns and villages of Castelnuovo, Poggio Picenze, Tormintarte, Fossa, Totani and Villa Sant'Angelo.

In the small town of Onna, 10 people were killed, said a Reuters photographer who saw a mother and her infant daughter carried away in the same coffin. Phone and power lines have been down and some bridges and roads have been closed as a precaution against aftershocks.

Italy lies on two fault lines and has been hit by powerful earthquakes in the past, mainly in the south of the country.

World leaders have sent messages of condolence and Pope Benedict XVI offered prayers for the "victims, especially the children". The EU, Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Israel and Russia immediately stepped forward with offers of aid, if required. On the frontline of the G20 summit

Abolish money. Punish the looters. Eat the bankers.

Ageing 1960s hippies and their youthful anti-globalisation descendants joined in an angry anti-capitalist protest at the Bank of England on Wednesday, waving placards and shouting slogans reflecting a common fury at perceived corporate greed. With worldwide recession destroying jobs by the week, protesters at the G20 protest in the City of London demanded an end to what they see as a global, predatory system that robs the poor to benefit the privileged.

"Welcome to Pig City: One war — class war" was the placard held up by a masked man standing on the doorstep of the central bank. As hooded protesters scrawled "Peace and Love" on the walls of the Bank, Drogo, an elderly man in flowing multi-coloured robes and carrying an orb on a wooden stick, pointed at staff peering out of the Bank of England's windows and said:

S/Korea accused over 'poisoning'

North Korea has accused South Korea of poisoning its football players with "adulterated foodstuff" ahead of last week's World Cup qualifier match.

North Korea coach Kim Jong Hun made the allegation after his team lost 1-0 to South Korea on 1 April. Seoul has denied the claim.

The North's football association said the act was part of Seoul's "moves for confrontation" with Pyongyang. The match took place at a time of increasing political tension.

On Sunday, North Korea defied international warnings and pressed ahead with a controversial rocket launch. State media said a satellite had been put into orbit and was transmitting data and revolutionary songs.

But Western powers said the launch failed - and the US, Japan and South Korea suspect it was a cover for a long-range missile test.

In a statement about the match, the North's football association said: "It was beyond all doubt that the incident was a product of a deliberate act perpetrated by adulterated foodstuff as [the players] could not get up all of a sudden just before the match."

Coach Kim had asked for the match to be delayed and moved to a neutral venue, claiming three of his players had food poisoning, but FIFA rejected the request.

The Korea Football Association, the South's football federation, said a sports doctor had examined the North Korean players and found no serious problem.

The two teams have played each other a number of times in the past year, during the qualification stages for the 2010 World Cup.

But the worsening diplomatic relations between the two countries appears to have translated onto the football pitch.

North Korea's home matches have had to be played on neutral ground in Shanghai, because the North refuses to allow the playing of the South's national anthem or the waving of its flags.

Relations between the two governments have deteriorated since the new conservative President Lee Myung-bak took office in Seoul last year.



KOGI STATE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

THANK YOU ALL!

MY DEAR KOGI PEOPLE,

Three hundred and sixty five (365) days ago, you gave us the mandate to restore the lost glory of our great State. In spite of the enormous challenges that lay in the execution of that sacred trust, we went to work, inspired by Faith in the Almighty God, the promise of His grace and help, as well as the manifest assurance of your support and goodwill.

One year into this Journey of Restoration, we feel modestly proud and privileged to celebrate our heroic achievements in meeting the yearning and aspirations of our people.

To have come this far, our administration, mindful of the trust we hold as your servants have remained committed, responsive and accountable through frugal management of resources.

Our collective giant strides in infrastructural rehabilitation and concrete development, in the sectors of power generation, housing, health, transportation, education, water supply, sports and security. We truly feel the fulfillment of accomplished and appreciated servants as we see our dreams translated into smiles on the faces of our people.

When His Excellency, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris took over the mantle of leadership as Executive Governor of Kogi State, he promised that his administration would restore the dignity of the Kogi people. Just 365 days into the mandate for the second term in office, there is strong concurrence of opinion between the perception of the generality of Kogi people and the tangible dividends of democracy on the ground, that his promise has been kept.

Indeed, there are manifest achievements that cannot be wished away by even the worst critics this administration. From giant strides in education, and health to heroic breakthrough in housing, power generation and transportation, it is clear to even the worst cynics that what is happening in Kogi State is undoubtedly a quite Revolution of Restoration. It is a revolution that has remained relatively and largely unsung and uncelebrated by the Restoration army that is orchestrating it. Perhaps, this is a reflection of the patriotic, modest and self-effacing character of that army ably led by His Excellency, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris. It is an eloquent testimony to the dictum that *He who must conduct an orchestra successfully must turn his back on the crowd* and close his ears to the deafening and

potentially distractive applause of the audience however thunderous or sonorous.

A fitting and appropriate premise to describe the performances of Governor Idris interestingly finds place in the philosophical dictum on 'judgment' that **"There are three judgments; the Judgment of man; the Judgment posterity and the Judgment of God."** From the available indices, it is quite obvious that Governor Idris' administration has passed the judgment of man and if indeed the voice of the people be the voice of God, then it has also passed the judgment of God since as he himself said, "we have our conscience tied to God". Consequently, the judgment of posterity promises to be favorable too. However, the judgment of posterity is conditioned by time and could ultimately define the judgment of man and God. For Governor Idris, that time is the next three years of his second term mandate. In spite of all the laudable achievements therefore, eternal vigilance, which is the price of freedom, must be the watchword. This may explain why Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, like a successful orchestra conductor has chosen to turn his back on the crowd and close his ears to the tempting and sometimes distractive ovation arising from the Kogi audience.

Nevertheless, the orchestra goes on, churning out superlative performance of melodious music, to sustain the harmony of the quit Revolution and Restoration that has engulfed the confluence of the nation.

Let me state that the successes we have recorded so far, is a tribute to your patriotism, co-operation, hard work, and honesty, God fearing and disciplined followership, it is a tribute to the excellence and beauty of the Kogi spirit, which we seek to restore.

As we journey on to 2012, we are certainly out of the wilderness of neglect and decay, but not yet in the promised land of total restoration. And so, with God as our guide and his fear as our philosophy, let us march in harmony with hearts courageous to our goal; the restoration of the treasured Kogi dignity, which is our own Kogi dream.

History is waiting for us!

HON. MUSA IBRAHIM AHMADU
SECRETARY TO KOGI STATE GOVERNMENT

Trust International

WORLD REPORT



A 'Yankee Go Home' sign on Istiklal Avenue, as protesters staged a rally to oppose the arrival of US President Barack Obama yesterday in Istanbul, Turkey. Photo: AFP

'Death camp Nazi' can be deported

A US judge has revoked the stay of deportation for John Demjanjuk, who is accused of being an accessory to the murder of 29,000 Jews in a Nazi camp.

The judge's decision clears the way for Mr Demjanjuk, 89, to be sent to Germany to face trial over his alleged crimes.

Mr Demjanjuk, who moved to the US after World War II, is accused of being a death camp guard in occupied Poland. The Ukrainian had pleaded against deportation on grounds of ill health. He has denied any part in the killings.

On Friday, Mr Demjanjuk, who lives in Cleveland, Ohio, was given a reprieve from deportation after arguing that his case should be reopened. But the presiding judge, Judge Wayne R Iskra, reversed his initial decision on Monday, agreeing with a US Department of Justice comment that the US Board of Immigration Appeals should handle the case.

The board had previously ruled Mr Demjanjuk be sent to Germany to stand trial. In March, Germany issued an arrest warrant for the former car plant worker over the deaths of thousands of Jews at the Sobibor camp during World War II. German authorities had initially expected him in the country yesterday.

But Mr Demjanjuk, who came to the US in 1952, says he was a prisoner of war of the Nazis rather than a prison guard. In 2002, a US immigration judge ruled that there was enough evidence to prove Mr Demjanjuk had been a guard at several Nazi death camps and stripped him of his citizenship. German authorities now say they have new evidence linking him to the crimes of which he has been accused.

Egyptian police stifle protests

Police in Egypt have been deployed in large numbers to prevent a national strike by pro-democracy activists. Police had orders to arrest anyone taking part, and a number of activists have been held in recent days. Protests appear to have been small, but about 100 MPs, out of 454, walked out of parliament as part of the protest.

The organisers of yesterday's action had urged people to wear black and called for protests including sit-ins at places of work or study. The call to protest was circulated through SMS messages and social networking sites.

The campaigners are pressing the government to raise the national minimum wage and are calling for a new constitution to be drafted. Activists were hoping it would build on a protest demanding economic and political reform they held for the first time last year. Three people died in the protests in April 2008 and hundreds were arrested. Egypt is run under an emergency law that has been in place since the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981. The Muslim Brotherhood, believed to be the biggest opposition organisation in Egypt despite its being outlawed, has also backed the protest. Yesterday hundreds of riot police were stationed in city-centre squares and around universities to prevent demonstrators from gathering. About 100 protesters gathered at the journalists' association headquarters in Cairo and chanted anti-government slogans. Hundreds of students also demonstrated on university campuses in Cairo and the southern city of Assiut.

Ayman Nour, the leader of the opposition Ghad (Tomorrow) Party who has recently been released from jail, told the BBC Arabic Service that it was premature to judge the strike and that events were being organised throughout the day, across the country.

France finds 'Eta bomb factory'

French police have seized hundreds of kilos of bomb-making ingredients in a garage in the south-eastern city of Grenoble, officials have said.

Police suspect the cache of at least 300kg (660lb) of ammonium nitrate and other explosive substances may belong to the Basque separatist group, Eta.

The chemicals were

found by chance on Sunday by the owner of the garage.

Eta is blamed for the deaths of more than 820 people in its 40-year campaign for an independent Basque nation.

Last week, a court in Paris sentenced a Spanish woman to 14 years in prison after finding her guilty of running a cell based in France that identified targets

for the group.

The owner of the garage in Grenoble said he had decided to break open its lock at the weekend because he had not received any rent in three months.

"I found some bags, I opened one of them which contained white powder and straight away I informed the police," he told the AFP news agency.

He said he had advertised the garage on the internet and that he had met the tenant only once, when he signed the lease in December. Police said they believe the tenant gave a false name.

In 2007, a similar cache of potentially explosive substances were discovered in an Eta base in the southern French town of Cahors.

Charity chief held in arms probe

Security forces in Bangladesh have arrested the head of a UK-based charity who had been sought after weapons were found at a school it funded. Officials said Dr Faisal Mostafa, who runs the Manchester-based Green Crescent, was arrested with a local aide yesterday.

Security officials raided the Islamic school, or madrassa, last month in the southern district of Bhola.

A large cache of weapons and bomb making equipment was found, police say. The authorities presented Dr Mostafa, 45, at a press conference in Dhaka on Monday. He has not yet been charged with any offence.

Officials said he had been arrested in Gazipur, 40km (25 miles) north of Dhaka, on Monday, rejecting relatives' claims that he had been held for a number of days.

Dr Mostafa's father, Golam, had told Bangladesh's Daily Star he had been telephoned by relatives in Dhaka last Wednesday who told him that his son was in detention in the capital. Dr Mostafa's whereabouts have been unclear since 24 March, two days after the raid on the madrassa.

Col Rezaur Rahman Khan of the Rapid Action Battalion told the AFP news agency: "Faisal and the local co-ordinator of the charity were arrested early Monday morning. They are suspected of using the Green Crescent-owned madrassa for militant training and making bombs."

Bangladeshi officials say that the madrassa is located on a remote river island only accessible via a drawbridge.

They have described the premises as a "mini-ordnance factory". The BBC's Mark Dummett in Dhaka says the government fears that militant groups are rearming after two years of inactivity following the arrest and execution of their leaders. The UK's Charity Commission has formally suspended Dr Mostafa as a trustee and will later consider permanent removal. His family has said Dr Mostafa has done nothing wrong. The BBC contacted Green Crescent on Monday but there was no immediate response.

Newspaper reports in Britain say that Dr Mostafa has previously been tried and cleared of planning to cause terrorist acts by using high explosives.

Peru U-turn on war museum funds

Peruvian President Alan Garcia has accepted a \$2m (£1.4m) German donation for a museum to victims of Peru's civil conflict - weeks after rejecting it.

The about-face came at the request of Peru's most famous author, Mario Vargas Llosa, after he held a private meeting with Mr Garcia.

The president has now asked Mr Vargas Llosa to head up the project.

Some 70,000 people died

during the conflict between state forces and Maoist Shining Path guerrillas.

Mr Garcia's decision to reject the donation to build a museum in their memory was harshly criticised. Mr Vargas Llosa himself described the decision as "intolerant" and "obtuse". Although the two men were once bitter rivals and political opponents, they now have a cordial relationship.

Mr Vargas Llosa will now

head a committee to manage the design and construction of what has become known as the memory museum.

Mr Garcia's initial refusal to accept the donation brought into focus his own record on human rights dating back to his first presidency in the late 1980s - one of the worst periods in Peru's civil war between state forces and the Shining Path rebels.

A government-appointed truth and reconciliation com-

mission found that he was politically but not criminally responsible for several massacres carried out by the military during that period.

The new decision comes just days before the verdict is expected in the trial of former president Alberto Fujimori for alleged human rights abuses.

Germany originally offered the donation after one of its embassy officials visited a photographic exhibition chronicling the conflict.

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BUSINESS TRUST

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Stock Market Report —Page 31 & 32

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Flight Schedule

Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 10.00, 13.10, 15.30, 16.45
Lagos-Kad: 10.00
Lagos-Owrr: 08.00, 10.00, 14.30
Kad-Abj-Lagos: 10.30, 11.45
Abj-Lagos: 08.10, 13.40, 15.00

IRS Airlines

Lagos-Abj: 09.45, 11.45, 12.45, (Mon-Fri) 09.30, 12.45(Sat & Sun)
Lagos-Kano: 06.15(Mon-Fri), 16.30(Sat & Sun)
Kano-Lagos: 07.30(Mon-Fri), 10.30(Sat & Sun)

Aero Contractors

Lagos-Abj: 06.50; 13.30; 16.30; 19.45(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 12.30 (Sun) 16:45 (Sat).
Abj-Lagos: 07.30; 13.30; 19.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30; 14.30; 19.30 (Sun) 18.30(Sat).
Lagos-Ben: 07:45 ; 11:00 ; 15.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun) 12.30; (Sun); 15.30 (Sat).
Ben-Lagos: 09.15; 12.30; 17.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun); 17.00 (Sat); 14.00 (Sun)
Lagos-Cala: 13.15; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 08.30; 19.00 (Sun)
Cala-Lagos: 14.45; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 10.30 (Sun)
Lagos-Enu: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat); 15.00(Sun)
Enu-Lagos: 09.30; (Mon-Fri/Sat) 16.45 (Sun)
Lagos-PHC: 07.30; 09.30; 15.00(Mon-Fri/ Sat/ Sun)
PHC-Lagos: 11.15; 17.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat) 18.00 (Fri)
Lagos-Warri: 07.45; 16.00 (Mon-Fri/sat) 09.15 (Sun)
Warri-Lagos: 09.15; 17.30 (Mon-Fri/Sat) 10.45(Sun)

Virgin Nigeria

Lagos-Abj: 07.15, 09.00, 11.30, 14.00, 15.50, 17.00, 18.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Abj-Lagos: 07.00, 09.30, 10.15, 11.15, 13.35, 16.15 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-PHC: 07.40, 09.30, 10.00, 12.20, 13.30, 14.00, 16.00 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
PHC-Lagos: 10.50, 11.20, 12.45, 15.30, 16.15, 17.15 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Abj-Kano: 18.00 (Mon-Fri)
Kano-Abj: 08.20 (Mon-Fri)

Bellview Airlines

Lagos-Abj: 06.50, 12.55, 17.00(Mon-Fri) 16.40(Sat) 17.00 (Sun)
Abj-Lagos: 07.40, 14.50, 18.25 (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-Kano: 06.50(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Kano-Lagos: 10.10(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)

Arik Air

Lagos-Abj: 07.30, 10.20, 14.20, 16.45 17.45, 18.05(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Abj-Lagos: 09.20, 09.30, 10.30, 12.15, 16.20, 17.45, 20.05(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Abj-Cal: 10.25, 17.25(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Cal-Abj: 08.50, 15.50(Mon-Sat) 19.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Abj-Ben: 10.35(Mon-Fri)
Ben-Abj: 12.00(Tue-Fri)
Lagos-Ben: 08.00, 11.45, 15.30(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Ben-Lagos: 09.15, 13.35, 17.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-Cal: 07.00, 14.05(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Cal-Lagos: 12.00, 19.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-Enu: 07.30, 14.30, 16.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Enu-Lagos: 09.30, 18.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Lagos-Jos: 11.30, (Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
Jos-Lagos: 13.15(Mon-Fri)
Kano-Lagos: 15.30(Mon-Fri/Sun)
Lagos-PHC: 07.20, 07.50, 09.15, 11.30, 12.30, 15.10, 15.55, 16.45, 17.00(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)
PHC-Lagos: 07.00, 08.30, 09.15, 11.10, 13.40, 14.30, 15.00, 17.05, 17.50(Mon-Fri/Sat/Sun)

PEF to sue marketers over

The Petroleum Equalization Fund Management Board N13bn debt

PEF (MB) has threatened to take legal action in order to recover its N13 billion bridging allowance debt from different marketers in the country.

By Hamisu Muhammad

Fund had for several occasions sent them letters to pay the debt but no response".

settle most of the claims from the marketers.

He said: "We don't want to continue to rely on government to pay for the bridging claims, since the template has stated clearly that marketers are

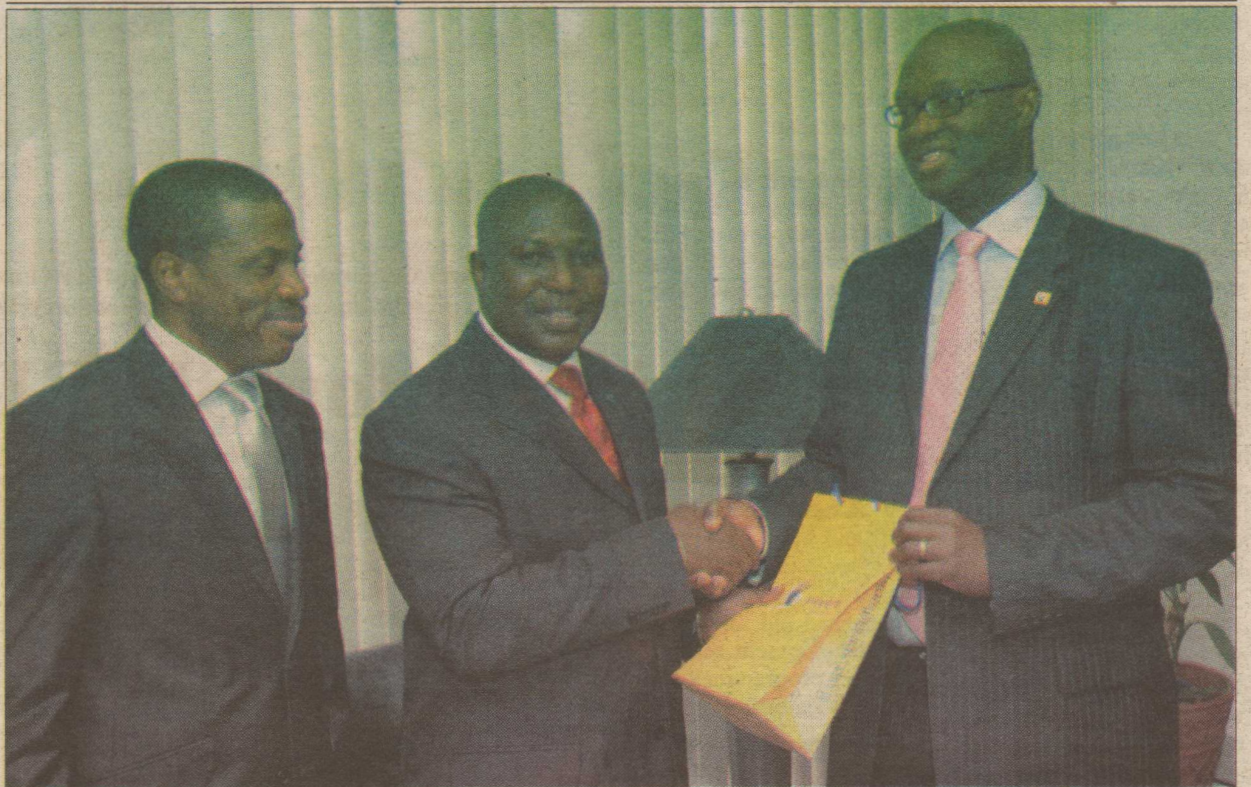
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with N1 billion and above include: Fola Wiyo, MRS, Rahamaniyya, Sigmund, Triquest and Zenon.

Others are: Obat Oil, Intergerated Oil, Imad,



L-R: Tunde Shofowora, 1st Vice President, Association of Corporate Affairs Managers of Banks (ACAMB); Eddy Ademosu, President ACAMB; receiving a souvenir from Charles Ojo, MD/CEO, Spring Bank during ACAMB's visit to the Bank recently.

The Fund issued the warning yesterday through its Manager, Public and Government Relations, PEF, Goddy Nnadi in an interview with Daily Trust, saying that the money accumulated within 2 years between 2006 and 2008.

He said the legal action become necessary since the marketers are not willing to settle the debt "because the

He said the money was the bridging allowance due for PEF and majority of the affected marketers are members of the Depot and Petroleum Products Marketers Association (DAPPMA).

He recalled that last year, government had to intervene through a bail out of about N17 billion for the agency to

responsible to pay for the allowance".

"For the major Marketers, we concluded that any marketer that settles our bridging allowance we will pay his claims. Last month we were able to pay Texaco about N800 million and next one to follow is AP", said Nnadi.

Some of the affected marketers that owe the PEF

NIPCO, NorthWest, Addax, AMG, Acorn, Capital Oil and Honey Well among others.

Mr. Nnadi said the total companies that owe the Fund are 48 excluding the major marketers, saying that already the Fund has briefed it lawyers about the debt and within this month they will meet in court.

CBN EXCHANGE RATES

Date	Currency	Buying(NGN)	Central(NGN)	Selling(NGN)
1/4/2009	CFA	0.2721	0.2821	0.2921
	DANISH KRONER	25.8089	25.898	25.9871
	EURO	192.3258	192.99	193.6542
	POUNDS STERLING	208.266	208.9853	209.7045
	RIYAL	38.608	38.7414	38.8747
	SDR	216.533	217.2808	218.0286
	SWISS FRANC	127.1227	127.5617	128.0007
	US DOLLAR	144.78	145.28	145.78
	WAUA	214.9494	215.6918	216.4341
	YEN	1.4701	1.4752	1.4803

BUSINESS TRUST

Stock market picks up again

All market indicators on the equities traded on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) surged higher yesterday with All share index appreciating by 0.04 per cent.

The All-share index rose by 0.6 per cent to close on Friday at 19,954.15 point level while the NSE-30 index also rose by 2.7 per cent to close at 645.05 per cent.

Yesterday's, however, All share-index closed on 19,962.57 points, about 0.04 per cent and increase of 8.42 points.

Market capitalisation, the market value of all equities in the market, surged to 4.515 trillion about N1.905 billion or 0.04 per cent gain against the last trading day of N4.51 trillion.

In all, a total of 155.144 million shares worth N1.224 trillion in 5,430 deals were transacted on Monday with banking sub sector led other sub sectors with 81.658 million shares valued at N671.676 million shares exchanged in 3,057 deals

Intercontinental bank shares drive the activities of the sub-sector with 19.727 million shares worth N128.867 million in 401 deals. This was followed by Guaranty Trust Bank equities with 17.277 million valued at N174.537 million in 307 deals

Insurance sub sector followed with a total of 24.281 million shares worth N23.906 million exchanged in 450 deals.

Activities in the shares of International Energy Services drive the sub sector with 9.096 million shares worth N9.548 million in 55 deals.

Meanwhile, African Petroleum continued to dominate the gainers' list with a

From Kayode Ekundayo,
Lagos

gain of N3.61 per share to close at N75.83 per share. The oil marketing company had last week alone gained N15.62 to close at N72.22 per share.

Oando also followed with N1.30 gain to close at N70.50. Last week the company added N9.20 per share to its price to close at N69.20 per share.

Other gainers were Guinness with N1.05 to close at N89.55 per share. Guinness lost N1.50 per share, BCC N1.03 to close at N21.63 per share.

On the losers chart, Nigerian Breweries led others with a slight loss of N0.50 to close at N36.40 per share, ETI N0.48 to close at N9.25 per share, Unilever N0.40 to close at N8.10 per share.



General Manager, Corporate Communication of MTN Funmi Omogbenigun making a presentation in Abuja during the company's presentation of crash helmets to motorcyclist yesterday. Pic: Mr. Afolabi Sotunde

Firms jostle for SMEDAN contracts

Many organisations trooped to the head office of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN) on Wednesday as it opened bid for enterprise development service providers programmes for 2009, MDG and other special

By Yunus Abdulhamid
projects to be executed by the Agency.

The opening and submission of the bids which was done in the presence of the applicants, had about six different categories namely; General Entrepreneurship

Development Programmes (GEDP), Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme (YEDP).

Others include Women Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (WEDP), Training of Trainers (TOT) and other Enterprises support service to micro, small

and medium enterprises.

In a short address, the Director General of SMEDAN, Alhaji Muhammad Nadada Umar said the bidding exercise was aimed at achieving transparency, objectivity and quality delivery of service.

He said organisations will be shortlisted based on the bid criteria, adding that SMEDAN is going to explain the reason for choosing or

rejecting any bid as the exercise progress.

Also Speaking, SMEDAN Group head, Administration, Malam Ibrahim Shehu said the agency deliberately did not charge any registration fee for the expression of interest in line with the public procurement act of 2007.

He added that the entire exercise was design to create a level playing ground for everyone without restriction.

KADCIMA on trade mission to Asia

As part of efforts to facilitate trade between Nigerians and countries in the Asian continent, an 18-man trade delegation of the Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (KADCIMA) would on 14th of this month depart for China.

Director General of KADCIMA, Malam Usman G. Saulawa in a statement made available to Daily Trust said the delegation

From Ismail Mudashir,
Kaduna

which would be led by the President of the Chamber, Hajiya Saratu I. Aliyu, would be in Japan and Taiwan.

During the visit to the countries, he said the delegation would be attending the canton fair in Guangzhou scheduled to hold from 15th to 19th of this month.

While in Japan, according to the statement, the trade delegation will be

meeting with the Japanese business federation, JETRO, Osaka chamber of commerce and export and importers of small scale machineries.

Saulawa reiterated the commitment of the chamber to uplift trades between Nigerian and the three countries stressing that Nigeria would benefit immensely from the mission which is one of the numerous activities lined up by the chamber for this year.

AP to market cooking gas in Ghana

African Petroleum (AP) Plc says it is planing to market its Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in Ghana as a way of boosting the sale of the product outside the shores of the country.

Tunde Falasinu, the Chief Operating Officer of the company, who announced this in Lagos when he received the delegation of the World LPG Association

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

in his office in Lagos said the company has done well in making LPG or cooking gas available in the country following its recent importation of 4,000 units of composite (transparent) cylinders from the United States of America.

He stated that the development will represent the formal introduction and marketing of the composite refill bottles in Nigeria.

Falasinu, who noted that sharp reduction in the consumption of LPG in the country, said to popularise the use of LP gas for the health of Nigerians and the

protection of the environment, there should be cooperation from all and sundry.

"To this end, we are looking forward to working closely with the government and association such as WIRGANINGANALGAMIRGG-LCCI etc, to raise the awareness levels on the environmental and health benefits of LP gas usage in Nigeria and Africa".

HJRBA to complete Hadejia-Valley irrigation project soon

From Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, Kano

Hadejia Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBA) has pledged to complete the first stage of phase 1 of Hadejia valley irrigation project by mid this year.

The Managing Director, HJRBA Mal. Sunusi Imran Abdullahi made the pledge while receiving the Senate ad-hoc committee on Food crisis which visited the irrigation project.

Mal. Imran added that 3,400 out of the total 6,105 hectares of the project have already been fully developed and handed over to farmers.

He reassured that when the project land is fully developed, farmers in the area will be able to produce 30,000 metric tonnes of both food and cash crops valued at over N2.5b annually. Mal. Imran added that the project has assisted in reduction of unemployment and poverty alleviation in the rural areas.

According to him, "the irrigation project has made significant impact on poverty alleviation by providing immediate employment and attracting productive labour force in the rural areas, all year round availability of water, provision of roads within and around the project as well as providing avenues for fisheries". On his part, the chairman of the senate ad-hoc committee Senator Idris Umar commended the management of HJRBA over the commitment and urged them not to relent in the effort.

The committee also inspected the completed 28 kilometers along north main canal and the completed 200 hectares at Mado sector as well as other projects under the authority.

NORTHERN BUSINESS



The dwindling fish market in Kano

The impact of the current global financial crisis has begun to manifest in the fish market in Kano. Wearing gloomy faces, the fish sellers in Abubakar Rimi market are going through a season of inactivity occasioned by low patronage by buyers. The number of people coming to the market to buy fish has reduced by almost 70% as discovered *Daily Trust*.

While the market continues to witness fall in sales, fish coming to the market from the many dams, spread across Kano State continue to flood the market. Apart from the dams independent fish farmers also take their fish to the market.

Daily Trust learnt that fresh fish is brought to the market from Hadejia in Jigawa state, Dambatta, Bagwai, Minjibir and Karaye in Kano state. When the market was lucrative fish were also brought to the market from Ibadan. But for smoked fish, the commodity is brought from Borno and Yobe states, as well as Chad and Niger Republics.

Alhaji Dahiru A. Baba, treasurer fish sellers Association of Nigeria, Kano state chapter in an interview with *Daily Trust* said the fish market in its present location has been operating for over 20 years. He revealed that patronage has reduced drastically despite the importance of fish to the nutritional need of human beings.

According to him starting the fish business does not require registration, "once a person comes to start a business here the only thing we do is to investigate his background to be sure of his good character. Once this is confirmed, we allow him to start his fish business," he said.

To start the business proper one needs a capital base of not less than N600, 000. Baba, however attested to the fact that such amount was too big for one person, saying they normally operate as a joint venture, where about six people would contribute N100, 000 to start the business.

He stated that even though they normally get their commodity within Kano state and the neighbouring Jigawa state, the fish sellers travelled as far as Ibadan to buy fish from fish farmers, adding that Ibadan was the major producer of fresh fish through fish farming.

"We normally select some people among us, we give them our money and they travel to Ibadan to make large purchase of the fresh fish. Sometimes we gathered

From Halima Musa, Kano

up to N600, 000 to travel with," he disclosed.

Asked how they transport fresh fish from Ibadan to Kano without the risk of it being destroyed, Baba said they make arrangement for ice block which could maintain its block for up to two and a half day.

He further explained that because December to January was the time the market witnessed scarcity of fresh fish, their journey to Ibadan falls within that time. He added that fish farming is fast gaining ground in Kano state, stating that everyday no

fewer than 28 large containers of fish were being brought to the market from fish farmers.

Further investigation at the fresh fish market revealed that over 2000 people conduct their fish business in the market. They range from big sellers with big business of over a hundred thousand to petty ones that have less than 20,000 businesses. Regarding patronage by customers the fish seller's treasurer said there is drastic fall in the business. He stated that their steady customers were the food sellers and restaurateurs. "Our steady customers are the food sellers and

restaurateurs who buy fish in large quantity. Sometimes they could buy as much as N150, 000 worth of fish," he said.

yourself, if the market is moving you would have seen many customers around. We are just waiting and we always wait in,

augment their business. Most of them were of the view that if government would assist them with fund,



Fresh fish waiting for buyers



Smoked fish on display at the market

As for other buyers, he said the market is not as brisk as it used to be before the financial crisis, "now only few people come to us for fish, the market has fallen so low but we still thank God," said Baba.

Also commenting on the market fall, a fish seller at the Abubakar Rimi market Malam Abdullahi Muhammad said the business was not moving as before, "you can see it

Muhammad lamenting the problem.

Asked why they could not change to another business, Muhammad said the problem has touched almost every business at the market. He stated that they were exercising patience pending when the trend would be reverse.

The fish sellers said before this financial crisis their main constraint was lack of enough capital to

they could boost fish business in the state.

Malam Baba said even with their meagre income some of them were able to start fish farming, saying if they could get assistance their association could embark on large scale fish farming in the state.

Fish which constitute a major source of protein will continue to be the reserve of only few people, unless the current trend is reversed.

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STAR FEATURE

Mystery prince of

Poverty and life in the graveyard weaved together in the story of a 'prince' called Wasiu

By Jibrin Abubakar

Poverty has given him a deadly kiss. It wouldn't let him be. But he wouldn't give up. He calls himself 'the poor prince'. People call him: Mystery prince of the graveyard. He has no home among the living, he says - no friend to trust and no family for company. He was born to go it alone.

Living with the dead is like a hope in sight. His bitter experiences perhaps left him with psychological impairment. The thoughts embossed on his mind. When poverty struck, he had gone to the river to end it all. He thought of living away from people -The graveyard and its serenity replaces his dashed wishes- It is a place of refuge.

Prince Wasiu Oshuolale, 39, had to relocate to the cemetery where, according to him, there is equality and harmony. He says there is peace in the graveyard. It used to be the safest place to live. But now it is no longer safe as the authorities are blowing the whistles on him, telling him the time is up. But quit he won't, for there is no home elsewhere.

He introduced himself as a Prince. His title betrays his person. He had left his ancestral village in Oyo State in search of greener pasture in Abuja. Instead, the pastures he found were not green. It was Abuja that turned him into the shadow of his old self; and it was here that his battle to stay afloat in the troubled waters of life began.

He found himself in the belly of Gauraka, a safe haven for him, and a cosmopolitan settlement in Niger State.

Here he battled poverty, but not to finality. He regressed to hunting and gathering when he left for Ilesha. Hunting worsened his economic status for the stronghold of the menace on him was firm.

He tells *Daily Trust* that he is a prince in his ancestral home because his father is a titled man.

Hear him: "I am a prince because my father has a traditional title. He is a Baale (A village head) in my village."

When *Daily Trust* visited his home in the graveyard, there is nothing to suggest that it is a place for humans, for there is no protection against the devils among men, neither is there any against the sun, rain, wind, nor against venomous animals.

The house, made of mud, is an uncompleted one-room apartment, its floor, sandy, without leather carpets or tiles. It has no roofing sheets, no ceilings, no doors, and no

windows. No security whatsoever against external invader. He covers a section with nylon during raining season. But he sleeps on a

cashew tree opposite the mud structure that has reached the lintel level. He erected the small structure and moulded the mud bricks himself. He does

everything without a helping hand. He is a loner. Some times, he says, he feels lonesome and wishes he were with his family.

"I put zink on the room but dey (Vandals and thieves) break and steal them when I

travelled," he says.

Asked to demonstrate how one can pass a night on a tree without losing his balance, he says: "This is where I sleep every day (While demonstrating to *Daily Trust's*

reporter). I arrange the wooden planks on this tree and sleep on them."

Asked if he was comfortable sleeping on a bed made of wooden planks, he says: "I enjoy it. This is how I do everyday," arranging his bed before our reporter.

The environment looks deserted and could be as dangerous as venomous reptiles like snakes and scorpions could prey on an unsuspecting human at night. At the foot of the tree surrounding Wasiu's house there is a semblance of a valley and a water path. Within the house is also a tree. This is where Wasiu washes his plates, spoons, clothes and spreads them on the tree to dry. He calls it his kitchen. He gets his firewood from the dry trees around and helps himself with a meal.

"I like to cook myself," he adds. His toilets and bathroom are inside the bush. The well in his house is his source of drinking water.

"Whenever they come to bury a dead person, they always come to me for buckets and water or for other assistance. This is what I enjoy doing, believing that God would reward me handsomely," he said.

Asked if he had ever visited the psychiatric hospital for a mental ailment, he says he has no reason to visit any hospital because he had been mentally and physically healthy. "I thank God for my health," he says.

Recounting how he had laboured to obscurity in the past, Prince Wasiu says: "I used to work for a construction company until 2001."

Asked why he decided to live in the graveyard, he replied in ungrammatical English: "Oga na sufferness, na friend had promised to help get a car, so he could start a tax business. As it turned out to be, he neither sees the money nor the car. His friend had lured him to Ilesha in Osun State where he promised to get him the car. After waiting for the car for two months, Wasiu's optimism of getting the car gradually waned. But he was not going to let go. He would demand for a refund since there was no car. At the end of the day, he got N6,000 of his N30,000. The experience devastated him."

His life started tumbling when his N30,000 life-saver in 1993 was trapped in the hands of a dubious friend who had promised to help get a car so he could start a tax business. As it turned out to be, he neither sees the money nor the car. His friend had lured him to Ilesha in Osun State where he promised to get him the car. After waiting for the car for two months, Wasiu's optimism of getting the car gradually waned. But he was not going to let go. He would demand for a refund since there was no car. At the end of the day, he got N6,000 of his N30,000. The experience devastated him.



Wasiu in his kitchen



Relaxing on a tree, eating mango

f the graveyard

Narrating his ordeal, he says: "If I asked them about the car, dem go say dem go go Oshogbo go bring am. I go expect expect, nothing nothing dem go say this, dem go say that. Dem say make I no tell anybody.

"When my friend duped me, I get no place to go again. I dey there for three months. When I returned, they don sell my property to pay my house rent. I no want make case with them. That my friend wey I say he dupped me, he is from Ilesha. He says if I collect the money, we go get the car fast for Ilesha. So dem give N20,000 inside the money na him I struggle get N10,000 join am, we com go Ilesha with that my friend go look for car. That time na 1994. Wen we reach Ilesha my friend say make I give am all the money, be a friend now, I come give am all the money. He keep am with him. We waka waka, for Ilesha nothing nothing. I ask dem, dey go say dey go go to Oshogbo go bring the car. I go expect expect, nothing nothing .

"Na so we come begin to do hunting inside forest. Only God dey help man because we go feed. We go go inside forest go look for food. The money no dey. Na one girl con say make I be careful. The people say make I go find N10,000 and television bring am come. I come tell dem say make we go to my father place for Ibadan that if we get there he go give us the money. As we reach my father place, my father just yab me, yab me, well well. My father come say which name dey inside the receipt for the money we pay. I come say na my friend name. Because when we reach there my friend say make dey put him name. Na him my father dey angry, he yab me, yab me. Na him we com go back make I try collect my money. Out of N30, 000 they paid N4, 000 and later N1,000 today next time they go give us another N1,000. I see say the thing no get head. I con come back to this place."

Asked about his family life, he says he is married and that the woman and his children are currently in Enugu where he worked before. His wife used to be with him. She hawked banana while she was with him but now he doesn't know how she is living with his 5 kids since she left. He says it was she who discouraged him from doing poultry farming, because that is his goal in life. He also speaks of his original family and his father's eight wives as a titled man. However, he does not know the number of children his father has. He says as traditional chief, he has the traditional permit to marry as

many wives as possible.

"I think my father get eight wives and I be the number four as a child. My mama na be the number three wive and I be her first child. We dey two, with my brother. My wife dey for

Enugu, she dey sell banana when she dey here. Now I no know wetin she dey do but I hear say she dey live with a friend," he adds.

Prince Wasiu had also practiced farming

unsuccessfully. He had planted cassava and had to return to his old trade of woodwork. He says he is a principled man and abhors going about begging people. He is also planning to bring his wife from Enugu.

"I dey plan to bring my wife from Enugu now that I dey get small small woodwork work. You know woodwork is my handwork," the Prince said.

Speaking on the scene in the cemetery, he said at night some

people used to come at night singing and dancing around graves, adding that they recite some incantations holding a big torchlight.

He also says the weather condition in the graveyard is breezy with beautiful vegetations around.

Hear him: "I am not sure but my year of birth should be between 1969 or 1970. I can't be precise because I don't have mother. She died while I was a kid. But I have a younger brother who was born in 1972. I attended Baiku Memorial primary school and that was what gave me courage. At a point here I was on my way to the Kantoma river in Suleja here to commit suicide when I remembered the name of my primary school- Baiku primary school, which means hope and that was what gave me the courage to come back not to commit suicide. When my mother died that time I remember the time in school I was in primary one or two. That was why I said if one is still alive, there is hope again." (edited the pigeon English).

He says he attended Oke Ibadan high school and passed out in 1987.

While he expresses optimism and hope that he could still live like normal people, he however calls on the authorities to help save his home from government, because he has been given a quit notice.

He says that although government promises to compensate him, was not sure of what becomes of him, if he is finally evicted.

Asked whether he feels the positive impact of democracy, he says: "Make I no lie to you Nigeria is bad. I pray that God will help us with good leaders. Yes I believe in democracy. I am a Muslim and I believe in prayer. Prayer is the key. I always thank God because it is only him that can help. Some times I find it difficult to pray because some times I don't have strength. If there is no food you can hardly be able to pray."

A resident of Gauraka and a nurse Mustafa Usman who is also one of the youth leaders confirms to *Daily Trust* that: "People have been suspecting him of voodoo practices and or may be he is doing something secretly that nobody knows but no one has caught him with anything. Generally people don't trust him because it is not normal for a person to be living inside the graveyard. Now they have asked him to leave because there is plan to build a fence round the cemetery. But the other time he helped to arrest a woman who came to do some traditional rituals around the graves. I think he may be a normal person but living in a graveyard is odd."

Malam Sabo, another resident of Gauraka also tells this paper that Prince Wasiu is friendly and harmless. "He is a Muslim. It is just his way of living his life," he says.



Peeping out of his house



A row of graves in the graveyard

FINANCE BUSINESS

Pension: 48 employers face legal action

In a bid to ensure strict compliance with the new Pension Reform Act, the National Pension Commission (PENCOM) has instituted legal action against 48 default employers for various pension offences including the non remittance of the obligatory 7.5% contribution to the Retiree Saving Account (RSA).

The Commission has also issued 2,398 warning letters and 79 monetary penalties after holding series of consultation with

By Abubakar Buba

employers on the effective implementation of the new scheme.

In a paper presentation on the status and challenges of compliance of the contributory pension scheme in Nigeria, PENCOM's head of Resolution and Enforcement, Mallam Mohammed Bello Umar said that the commission has also adopted the strategy of "naming and shaming" to 90 defaulting

• 2,398 get warning letters

employers as part of her sanction regime.

He added that the commission was forced to institute legal actions against the defaulting employers after other sanction options failed.

"The commission has a kind of sanction regime used to compel employers to contribute to the pension scheme. We have issued warning letters to 2,398 defaulting employers and monetary penalties to

79. Presently, we have started the process of legal action against 48 employers of labour from both the private and public sector".

Mallam Bello said that compliance level in the public sector indicates that about 1.4 million employers are participating in the scheme, while the private sector draws about 1.3 million employers.

"Compliance level in states is however very low

with only 842,321. 10 states have successfully passed pension laws in their states, while 23 states have pension bills under



Mohammed Kabir Ahmed, DG, PENCOM

deliberation in their state houses of assembly. However 3 states are at various stages of passing pension laws in their states".

He said that compliance level in Nigeria is very low because employers are under the impression that pension contributions increase personnel cost.

Malam Umar added that compliance level by employers can be enhanced through massive enlightenment and sensitization campaign.



From right to left: Deputy President North-West (MAN) Senator Walid Jibril; President MAN Dr. Bashir Borodo; Managing Director PAN Dr. Haroun Ibrahim Aliyu; Deputy Managing Director PAN Shehu Sani Dauda during the visit of MAN President to PAN last week.

Stop chasing customers for deposit, ANAN warns banks

The growing desperation and rattrace by which commercial banks seek for deposits among potential customers is disturbing the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN).

The association said while managers of the banks have thrown caution and professional etiquette to the wind in the pursuit of deposit, the exercise has not added any value to Nigerians.

Specifically, the union said the accumulation of deposits

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

have not translated into the creating loans to finance real sector of the economy which is in dire need of assistance. President of ANAN Dr. Samuel Nzekwe who disclosed this yesterday in Lagos at a meeting with Commerce and Industry Correspondent Association of Nigeria [CICAN] appealed to the Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN] to introduce measures that would check the excesses of commercial banks in deposit mobilisation.

He said the economy cannot grow with the questionable posture being displayed by the banks in building deposit portfolio and called on the apex bank

to nip the practice in the bud.

He also called on the apex bank to ensure that the twenty five commercial banks which scaled the recapitalisation hurdle are kept alive in the face of the on-going global financial crisis.

According to him, Nigerians have given a clean bill of health to the surviving banks and cannot afford to watch them go into extinction.

Commenting on the lacklustre attitude of financial institution to auditing, the ANAN boss stated that auditing issues are not well imbibed by banks in the country.

He said banks treat auditing with kid gloves purposely to prevent customers' access to loans.

E-payment will check corruption - UBEC boss

An effective and efficient e-payment system will check corruption and waste because transactions of government can easily be traced from one source to another, Dr. Ahmed Modibbo Mohammed, the Executive Secretary of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) said yesterday.

The Executive Secretary who made this known while delivering a keynote address at a two-day workshop on the: "Effectiveness of e-payment in Universal Basic Education", said that it is imperative for government to migrate from the manual payment system to e-payment in its efforts to become a cashless and technology-driven economy.

According to him, e-payment will also reduce the amount of currency outside the banking system and this will ensure a more effective monetary policy management that will bring about stability in price and interest rates.

Dr. Mohammed who was represented by Professor Charles Oloja said that

From Ibraheem Musa, Kaduna

UBEC is one of the government agencies that has embraced e-payment.

"As at today, we have not only disbursed over N2 billion to State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) through the system, we have also paid over 30 contractors and remitted our taxes (withholding tax, VAT and PAYE) up to the month of March, 2009 through e-payment", he said.

However, the executive secretary mentioned the problems of data security, delay in crediting beneficiaries' accounts due to system failure and submission of wrong account numbers by contractors as some of the problems being encountered in the implementation of e-payment. In addition, he listed wrong authorization and unconfirmed transactions, as well as lack of constant power supply, telephone lines and functional internet facilities as the bane of the system.

He warned that an

inefficient and ineffective e-payment system may jeopardize the nation's financial commitment and this will make "stakeholders to lose interest and hope in the system." The executive secretary pointed out that a successful e-payment system rests on accounting officers, accountants and auditors, urging participants at the workshop to look into how the system will work better.

Dr. Mohammed reminded SUBEBs who are yet to submit the names, bank and account numbers of the participants of Federal Teachers Scheme (FTS) to do so immediately because the 45,000 FTS participants will be paid through e-payment.

"Furthermore, disbursement of the 2nd tranche to over 4,000 communities that benefited from 2007 UBE Self-Help Projects would be through the e-payment system", he added.

Although the commission has implemented e-payment through the use of 'e-payment mandate,' UBEC's "ultimate aim is to implement end to end e-

payment as early as possible.", he further said, adding that their bankers and other service providers should help the commission to achieve its objective.

First Bank rewards 166 customers

First Bank of Nigeria (FBN) Plc has rewarded 166 customers with cash and other gift prizes in the second edition of its Big Splash Reloaded Promotion draw held in Lagos.

Out of the 166 customers, six emerged winners of N1 million each, while 40 others emerge winners of N200,000 cash prize each.

Winners in the N1 million draw include: Agunbiade Inre-Gbolohan from Abuja region, Enang Boniface from Ibadan, Ordu Gentle from Port Harcourt, Gani Aliyu from Sokoto, Enwere Geraldine from Lagos and Okafor Nwaora from Awka.

Speaking at the draws, Mr. Gbenga Sobo, General Manager, Products/Channels disclosed that the promotion is targeted at empowering its customers and also as a way of showing appreciation to its

From Kayode Ekundayo, Lagos

customers for their loyalty and patronage over the years.

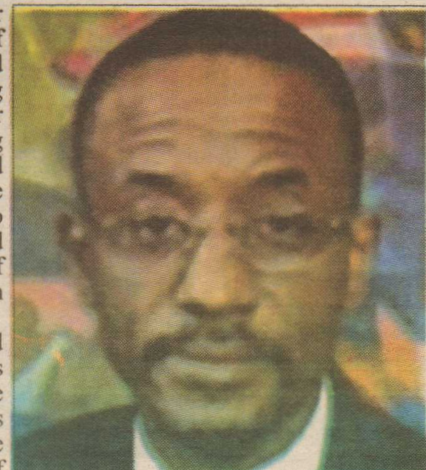
He said: "The Big Splash Promo Reloaded, is an extension of the promo held last year, it is targeted at

appreciating our vast majority of customers and also empowering them to better their living conditions and contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy."

He disclosed that the promo is targeted at the common man, as seen in the introduction of motorcycles and

the array of prizes to be won.

He further stated that the promo is designed to strengthen its relationship with its customers, giving them a sense of belonging in addition to the assurance of safety of deposits and improved banking relationship.



Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, MD, FBN

FINANCE BUSINESS

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2009

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
2ND-TIER SECURITIES				
CAPITAL OIL PLC	1	13.83	250	3,457.50
Sector Totals	1		250	3,457.50
AGRICULTURE				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC	2	0.86	1,545	1,344.15
FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	18	1.10	167,900	183,490.00
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	7	1.13	34,491	39,899.38
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	1	29.61	30,000	843,900.00
PRESCO PLC	10	5.33	79,910	425,382.50
Sector Totals	38		313,846	1,494,016.03
AIR SERVICES				
AIRLINE SERVICES AND LOGISTICS PLC	1	10.64	10,000	101,100.00
NIGERIAN AVIATION HANDLING CO. PLC	36	6.48	272,973	1,770,091.89
Sector Totals	37		282,973	1,871,191.89
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC	15	0.50	624,196	312,098.00
R. T. BRISCOE (NIGERIA) PLC	8	9.16	5,350	46,598.50
Sector Totals	23		629,546	358,696.50
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	203	5.03	6,707,047	33,997,889.58
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC	77	5.05	707,287	3,612,498.88
DIAMOND BANK PLC	103	4.90	2,726,209	13,364,223.23
ECOBANK NIGERIA PLC	11	27.96	201,071	5,621,945.16
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	40	4.48	549,768	2,401,267.17
FIDELITY BANK PLC	82	2.44	994,789	2,444,737.55
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	661	15.45	13,220,341	203,752,806.66
FIRST INLAND BANK PLC	31	2.25	548,018	1,302,593.33
GTBANK PLC	307	10.05	17,277,480	174,537,341.44
STANBIC IBTC BANK PLC	51	5.39	1,764,065	9,465,475.10
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC	401	6.60	19,727,721	128,867,105.34
OCEANIC BANK INTERNATIONAL PLC	195	6.53	2,681,727	17,598,488.87
BANK PHB PLC	78	5.13	1,228,360	6,336,452.39
SKYE BANK PLC	121	4.47	2,576,795	11,568,813.39
SPRING BANK PLC	1	5.59	9,615	53,747.85
STERLING BANK PLC	47	1.20	3,680,321	4,324,642.13
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	231	8.36	1,953,542	16,277,481.35
UNION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	164	10.50	800,203	8,150,944.20
UNITYBANK PLC	36	1.10	1,938,767	2,134,848.55
WEMA BANK PLC	4	3.84	103,133	396,030.72
ZENITH BANK PLC	213	11.20	2,261,984	25,467,641.37
Sector Totals	3,057		81,658,243	671,676,974.26
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC	66	89.55	1,628,865	145,081,950.80
INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	14	2.97	54,275	163,374.25
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC	84	36.40	590,560	21,563,821.70
Sector Totals	164		2,273,700	166,809,146.75
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC	55	8.05	1,205,430	9,886,744.11
BENUUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC	13	21.63	273,505	5,913,271.98
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIGERIA PLC	9	7.84	27,580	206,769.55
LAFARGE WAPCO PLC	56	17.11	1,441,900	23,435,203.87
Sector Totals	133		2,948,415	39,441,989.51
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS NIGERIA PLC	1	6.31	1,000	6,000.00
Sector Totals	1		1,000	6,000.00
COMMERCIAL SERVICES				
COURTVILLE INVESTMENTS PLC	5	3.00	202,500	568,475.00
RED STAR EXPRESS PLC	5	1.90	104,220	188,018.00
Sector Totals	10		306,720	756,493.00
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
OMATEK VENTURES PLC	20	0.78	695,800	548,714.00
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC	2	7.77	40,000	295,600.00
Sector Totals	22		735,800	844,314.00
CONGLOMERATES				
JOHN HOLT PLC	1	11.97	3,500	39,830.00
PZ CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC	38	16.27	2,367,200	36,974,720.55
SOCA NIGERIA PLC	1	11.95	203	2,306.08
TRANSNATIONAL CORP. OF NIG. PLC	48	0.52	7,796,919	4,154,755.38
UAC OF NIGERIA PLC	30	29.00	3,331,338	96,595,315.56
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	60	8.10	302,962	2,498,830.55
Sector Totals	178		13,802,122	140,265,758.12
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (WA) PLC	40	4.80	229,871	1,099,451.98
G. CAPPAL PLC	1	24.10	500	11,450.00
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC	10	24.00	89,886	2,053,650.80
MULTIVERSE RESOURCES PLC	19	0.53	783,258	405,743.25
Sector Totals	70		1,103,515	3,570,296.03
ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC	3	1.41	142,010	200,234.10
Sector Totals	3		142,010	200,234.10
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING CO. PLC	9	37.05	16,515	609,742.50
BIG TREAT PLC	1	2.47	1,000	2,350.00
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	34	10.10	160,323	1,707,589.37
DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC	65	7.98	449,526	3,592,347.47
DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	114	14.99	2,081,533	31,173,154.28
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC	59	14.65	2,941,512	43,153,197.62
NATIONAL SALT COMPANY NIGERIA PLC	9	3.76	220,100	827,576.00
NIGERIAN BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	16	21.60	69,521	1,511,209.25
NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	42	138.00	186,718	25,625,723.05
TANTALIZERS PLC	17	0.94	205,177	192,866.38

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
UTC NIGERIA PLC	3	3.16	28,700	86,387.00
Sector Totals	369		6,360,625	108,482,142.92
HEALTHCARE				
EVANS MEDICAL PLC	4	2.66	59,000	156,940.00
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	4	2.28	10,500	23,940.00
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	9	15.76	59,252	923,307.52
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	10	4.70	48,585	221,809.00
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMA. PLC	6	1.72	175,400	301,823.00
UNION DIAGNOSTIC & CLINICAL SER. PLC	22	0.56	527,898	295,222.88
Sector Totals	55		880,635	1,923,042.40
HOTEL & TOURISM				
CAPITAL HOTEL PLC	5	4.14	51,500	213,210.00
IKEJA HOTEL PLC	1	4.32	470,000	2,030,400.00
Sector Totals	6		521,500	2,243,610.00
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
B. O. C. GASES NIGERIA PLC	5	16.16	34,404	583,491.84
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC	2	2.05	69,000	141,450.00
VITAFIPLAST NIGERIA PLC	4	4.10	37,000	144,700.00
Sector Totals	11		140,404	869,641.84
INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & TELECOMMUNICATION				
CHAMS NIGERIA PLC	31	1.20	1,573,609	1,924,694.98
MASS TELECOM INNOVATION NIG. PLC	3	0.62	11,300	7,006.00
STARCOMMS PLC	66	2.02	3,701,776	7,741,431.04
Sector Totals	100		5,286,685	9,673,132.02
INSURANCE				
AIICO INSURANCE PLC	93	0.95	1,306,237	1,207,761.51
CONTINENTAL REINSURANCE PLC	12	0.87	550,100	476,487.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC	30	1.20	2,530,000	3,095,454.00
CUSTODIAN AND ALLIED INS. PLC	21	2.20	1,236,542	2,688,138.20
EQUITY ASSURANCE PLC	6	1.79	538,920	964,666.80
GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	4	0.50	96,000	48,000.00
GUINEA INSURANCE PLC	6	0.54	384,000	207,360.00
CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INS. PLC	3	0.50	341,666	170,833.00
INVEST. AND ALLIED ASSURANCE PLC	9	0.50	961,000	480,500.00
INT'L ENERGY INSURANCE CO. PLC	55	1.05	9,096,849	9,548,260.77
LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	12	0.88	639,780	563,006.40
LAW UNION AND ROCK INSURANCE PLC	2	1.35	8,500	10,965.00
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	5	0.50	350,000	175,000.00
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	26	0.77	889,841	660,821.29
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG) PLC	25	0.64	378,603	244,749.01
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC	15	1.62	43,308	70,892.80
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	2	4.62	1,700	7,463.00
REGENCY ALLIANCE INSURANCE CO. PLC	1	0.50	1,600	800.00
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	71	0.57	4,115,623	2,263,348.99
UNIC INSURANCE PLC	15	0.70	340,750	239,284.00
UNIVERSAL INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	9	0.54	176,267	95,184.18
INTERCONTINENTAL WAPIC INS. PLC	28	2.40	294,353	687,996.70
Sector Totals	450		24,281,639	23,906,972.65
LEASING				
C&I LEASING PLC	1	6.04	200,000	1,208,000.00
Sector Totals	1		200,000	1,208,000.00
MARITIME				
JAPPAUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC	137	1.84	1,821,514	3,288,908.85
Sector Totals	137		1,821,514	3,288,908.85
MEDIA				
DAAR COMMUNICATIONS PLC	111	1.32	5,588,882	7,312,551.34
Sector Totals	111		5,588,882	7,312,551.34
MORTGAGE COMPANIES				
ASO SAVINGS AND LOAN PLC	32	1.01	1,368,267	1,368,166.29
UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	38	1.40	415,929	603,179.96
Sector Totals	70		1,784,196	1,971,346.25
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				
CRUSADER NIGERIA PLC	1	3.62	1,052	3,618.88
ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	2	2.28	3,763	8,165.71
Sector Totals	3		4,815	11,784.59
PACKAGING				
NIGERIAN BAG MAN. CO. PLC	219	1.32	1,520,821	1,995,849.65
Sector Totals	219		1,520,821	1,995,849.65
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC	26	75.83	73,454	5,570,016.82
CHEVRON OIL NIGERIA PLC	3	90.30	520	49,301.20
CONOIL PLC	15	67.23	35,338	2,257,038.06
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC	4	26.68	25,780	687,810.40
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC	3	96.61	4,825	489,448.00
OANDO PLC	62	70.50	129,700	9,013,977.39
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	7	143.32	5,414	754,140.00
Sector Totals	120		275,031	18,821,731.87
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC	1	3.56	11,776	43,924.48
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC	11	3.99	132,000	501,970.00
Sector Totals	12		143,776	545,894.48
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT CO. PLC	4	17.30	34,825	574,960.75
Sector Totals	4		34,825	574,960.75
ROAD TRANSPORTATION				
ASSOCIATED BUS COMPANY PLC	10	0.92	592,000	523,990.00
Sector Totals	10		592,000	523,990.00
THE FOREIGN LISTINGS				
ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORP.	15	9.25	1,509,013	13,958,370.25
Sector Totals	15		1,509,013	13,958,370.25
Overall Totals	5,430		155,144,501	1,224,610,497.55

Continued on page 32

FINANCE BUSINESS

Start from page 31

Top 10 Trades

Symbol	Volume	Value	Trades
STERLN BANK	3,680,321.00	4,324,642.13	47
STARCOMMS	3,701,776.00	7,741,431.04	66
STDINSURE	4,115,623.00	2,263,348.99	71
DAARCOMM	5,588,882.00	7,312,551.34	111
ACCESS	6,707,047.00	33,997,889.58	203
TRANSCORP	7,796,919.00	4,154,755.38	48
INTENEGINS	9,096,849.00	9,548,260.77	55
FIRSTBANK	13,220,341.00	203,752,806.66	661
GUARANTY	17,277,480.00	174,537,341.44	307
INTERCONT	19,727,721.00	128,867,105.34	401

Gainers

Symbol	Last Close	Yesterday's Close	Change
AP	72.22	75.83	+3.61
OANDO	69.20	70.50	+1.30
GUINNESS	88.50	89.55	+1.05
BCC	20.60	21.63	+1.03
WAPCO	16.30	17.11	+0.81
PZ	15.50	16.27	+0.77
GLAXOSMITH	15.01	15.76	+0.75
NBC	21.00	21.60	+0.60
UBN	10.06	10.50	+0.44
FIRSTBANK	15.05	15.45	+0.40

Losers

Symbol	Last Close	Yesterday's Close	Change
NB	36.90	36.40	-0.50
ETI	9.73	9.25	-0.48
UNILEVER	8.50	8.10	-0.40
CADBURY	10.45	10.10	-0.35
NAHCO	6.82	6.48	-0.34
CILEASING	6.35	6.04	-0.31
UACN	29.30	29.00	-0.30
GUARANTY	10.34	10.05	-0.29
SKYE BANK	4.70	4.47	-0.23
IKEJA HOTEL	4.54	4.32	-0.22

Market State: Closed

Index	: 19,962.57
Deals	: 5,430
Volume	: 155,144,501
Value	: N1,224,610,497.55
Cap.	: N4,515,986,929,192.17

Stock markets give up early gains

European stock markets have given up early gains, falling on expectations that Wall Street would open lower.

Earlier, shares had extended a recent rally inspired by hopes that the worst might be over for the world economy.

After rising more than 1% at first, the UK's FTSE 100 index was down 1.1%, and French and German stocks also fell. Concerns about the upcoming corporate earnings season and reports suggesting that IBM was abandoning its takeover of Sun Microsystems unsettled investors.

The FTSE 100 index was down 43.5 points at 3,986.17 points in afternoon trade.

France's Cac 40 index was down 0.94% to 2,931.04 while Germany's Dax index had fallen 0.8% to 4,350.07. In Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended up 3.1%, while Japan's Nikkei rose 1.2%.

Investors were hopeful that low interest rates, stimulus plans and banking bail-outs would begin to pull the world economy out of its slump.

The gains came after US stocks ended higher on Friday, logging a fourth week of consecutive gains, despite gloomy data on the jobs market. Markets also took heart after investors strongly backed HSBC's cash call - the biggest in UK corporate history.

"Bulls are putting their

heads above the parapet on the basis that the global economy appears to be getting past the bottom, but the next test will be how robust earnings are," said Richard Hunter, head of equities at Hargreaves Lansdown.

Asian markets shrugged off news of a rocket launch by North Korea, focusing instead on economic figures.

Japanese exporters, like Panasonic, got a boost as the yen weakened and after US Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke said that Fed strategies were easing the US financial crisis.

BBC business editor Robert Peston says that share prices have been rising not because there is evidence of economic recovery - but rather that the pace of deterioration may have been decelerating.

He says there is evidence that the availability of credit is improving in the UK, and that the underlying message from recent mixed data on the UK housing market may be that prices are not dropping as quickly as they were. BBC.

US 'may remove bank executives'

US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner says he is prepared to oust executives and directors at banks that require "exceptional" government assistance. He said the government would consider forcing out senior management to ensure that US taxpay-

ers were protected.

His comments to CBS television come after the US government removed GM boss Rick Wagoner from his post.

Critics say that financial firms have not been subject to the same government intervention despite massive bail-outs.

Mr Wagoner was forced to leave as a condition for possible additional loans.

"If, in the future, banks need exceptional assistance in order to get through this, then we'll make sure that assistance

comes with conditions," Mr Geithner said.

"Not just to protect the taxpayer but to make sure this is the kind of restructuring necessary for them to emerge stronger. And where that requires a change of management of the board, we'll do that."

The US government has come under fire after executives at AIG received large bonuses, despite the insurer needing \$170bn of government support. BBC.

Shell reopens Nigerian gas plant after repairs

Royal Dutch Shell has resumed operations at its Utorogu gas plant in Nigeria three days after it was shut down to repair a pipeline that was tapped by thieves, a spokesman said on Monday.

The facility's brief closure caused the OPEC member's already intermittent power generation to fall by more than 20 percent. It began resending gas supplies to several power stations in Africa's most populous country on Saturday.

"We've repaired the pipeline. The plant resumed gas supplies on Saturday," Shell spokesman Precious Okolobo said.

The cut in supplies from the plant, in the southern state of Delta, forced the Power Holding Company of Nigeria

(PHCN) to shut down three power stations and reduce operations in a fourth.

The state-run electric company said power generation fell by more than 700 megawatts to around 2,500 MW.

Despite being Africa's largest oil producer, Nigeria's power system is in shambles due to decades of corruption and mismanagement. Much of Nigeria goes without electricity for weeks at a time, leaving residents to rely on expensive gasoline-powered generators.

The power problems in Nigeria, home to 140 million people, are one of the main brakes on economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa's second-biggest economy. Reuters.

Pension asset and global meltdown

By Abubakar Buba

In 2007 when world economies began to etch under the excruciating pain of the global meltdown, financial experts in Nigeria including the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Professor Charles Soludu in his "everything is alright" mentality assured Nigerians that the country is well insulated from the sweeping effect of the hurricane.

However, the hydra-headed problem of the meltdown was to prove that Nigeria's economy was not after all protected as alleged by experts when the country began experiencing cash crunch, fall in the value of Naira and rise in cost of importation with the resultant effect of food stuffs skyrocketing beyond the reach of the ordinary Nigerian. To cap it all, Nigerians began to experience a general increase in standard of living.

Perhaps, the worst nightmare to ever hit Nigeria is the crash in the capital market occasioned by a free fall in the value of equities in the floor of the Stock exchange market.

According to a report by an American financial news and data company, All Share index in the stock exchange market dropped by 37%, the biggest decline to have ever been recorded in more than a decade and the worst of 89 benchmark indexes.

Within 8 months, the NSE recorded an estimated lost of N7 trillion, a situation that forced the Director General of NSE, Dr. Ndi Okereke Onyiuke to call for bail-out from the federal government in order to rescue the ailing market.

As part of the boomerang effect of the meltdown in the capital market is the lost in pension asset worldwide.

In USA, retirement savings account alone lost \$2 billion (approximately N335 trillion) in 2005. According to the United Kingdom's Pension Protection Fund, 89% of pension schemes in the country became unhealthy by the end of 2008 largely due to the stock market crash. Irish pension funds lost 30% of their value in 2008.

In Latin America, Chile's pension fund dropped from US\$94.3 billion in October 2007 to US\$69.1 billion in October 2008. Except for Germany which adopted a different pattern of pension management by investing a larger proportion in bonds, other European countries also suffered a major setback.

In Nigeria, 7% of the total contribution to the Retiree Savings Account (RSA) which stood at N471.77 billion was lost due to crash in the equities market. Pension Fund Asset which had accu-

lated to an estimated value of N1.1 trillion as at December 2008 was ordinarily supposed to call for celebration for all stakeholders in the pension industry including the apex regulatory body (PENCOM), but, the meltdown ensured they never did.

In addition, RSA investment in equities which was 15.93% in 2007 crash landed to 9.52% as at the end of December, 2008.

Unlike Germany, Nigeria had only about 32% of its total pension funds invested in Federal Government securities/bonds and 11% in real estate.

A colossal look at the actual asset holdings of the N1.098 trillion pension funds indicates that investment in money market securities was 32%, while ordinary share gulped 20%. Investment in unquoted and corporate debt securities both had 1% each.

Speaking at a two day workshop organized for Finance and Labour correspondents in Kaduna, Director General of PENCOM, Mr. Mohammed Kabir Ahmed said that pension funds which had the largest exposure to equities were most hit by the meltdown.

He however observed that the limit imposed by the regulation on investment on Pension assets that only a maximum of 25% of pension assets

under management can be invested in quoted equities shielded the largest proportion of asset from becoming seriously affected by the stock market crash.

Mr. Ahmed said added: "Returns from non-equity and mutual fund investment were however positive and had out weighted the losses incurred in 2008 due to the meltdown in the capital market. Eventually, overall return for the RSA funds was marginally positive (at 0.73%) over the year. Being long term funds, the low returns by the RSA fund may also be compensated in time when the capital market rebounds".

In his paper presentation, Head of risk management, Mr. Ehimeme Ohioma said that 11,304 employees are due to retire between 2008 and 2009 and have been enrolled and verified for the issuance of retirement bonds.

He added that N55.21 had been redeemed and paid into RSAs for FGN employees, who retired in December, 2008.

More so, PENCOM's Technical Commissioner, Eyamba Henshaw said that a special Retiree Fund had already been created to take care of 1% retirees and investment which was strictly in fixed income securities.

However, many serving employers have raised doubts on the safety of their fund at retirement.



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Job Vacancies



Since 1971, Family Health International (FHI) has been at the forefront of public health research and intervention programs in the developing countries. In collaboration with national governments, local communities and leading research institutions, FHI delivers services and conducts research in HIV/AIDS, other infectious diseases and reproductive health to improve the lives and well-being of some of the world's most vulnerable populations. In Nigeria, FHI is engaged in providing public health services and undertaking research in HIV/AIDS, TB and reproductive health, in partnership with the Government of Nigeria. To strengthen our operations in the country, we are seeking qualified candidates for the following positions:

Position title	No. required	Location(s)
Monitoring and Evaluation Department		
Associate Director, Monitoring and Evaluation	1	Country Office Abuja
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	2	Edo and Bauchi Zones
Medical Services Department		
Clinical Services Officer (LAMIS)	2	Cross River and Taraba Zones
Clinical Services Officer	1	Kano
Program Management		
Senior Program Officer	2	Taraba and Cross River Zones
Laboratory Services Department		
Laboratory Quality Officer	1	Country Office Abuja
Laboratory Officer	1	Borno Zone
Shared Services Department		
Associate Director, Human Resources	1	Country Office Abuja
Senior IT Officer	1	Country Office Abuja
Administrative Officer	1	Anambra Zone
Accountant	1	Kano Zone

Associate Director, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Associate Director Monitoring and Evaluation provides leadership in all monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities for Family Health International in Nigeria.

Job responsibilities

- Provide technical inputs to improve and facilitate the delivery of sound technical assistance in M&E, including to the Government of Nigeria (GON) and United States Government (USG) upon request
- Collaborate closely with other major stakeholders such as the United Nations family or the Nigerian Country Coordinating Mechanism to participate in the implementation and improvement of the national M&E effort in Nigeria
- Support the Director of M&E in managing the FHI M&E Department, defining strategies, goals, objectives and working plan, and monitoring their implementation
- Directly supervise the FHI zonal office M&E teams, and facilitate, monitor and improve the support of the FHI country office M&E team to the state M&E teams, assisting them to maintain high standards of performance in all their local M&E activities
- Take a leadership role in all quality assurance/quality improvement processes within FHI Nigeria and its implementing agencies
- Foster FHI's relationships with key counterparts at the national level, especially from the National Agency for the Control of AIDS and the National HIV/AIDS and STI Division of the Federal Ministry of Health to facilitate synergies and guarantee harmony between FHI and GON M&E activities
- Review, validate, share and present regular FHI M&E reports to be used by various stakeholders (health workers in service delivery points, public health practitioners in GON or USG, technical officers and management in FHI)

Minimum requirements

- Health related diploma and PhD or similar degree in monitoring and evaluation or related field
- 8-10 years experience in monitoring and evaluation in large HIV/AIDS programs at national or international level
- Sound knowledge of statistics and public health
- Experience in working with local partners, including host governments, NGOs and CBOs
- Knowledge of the Nigerian local context is an asset, as well as familiarity with USAID and PEPFAR programs

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, under the supervision of the Zonal Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, and Zonal Manager, and with technical oversight from the Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, is responsible for the implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities for the zonal office.

Job responsibilities

- Work with others in the zonal office and local implementing partners to ensure that zonal monitoring and evaluation activities are appropriate and meet the donor and project's M&E needs
- Work with local partners to support the correct implementation and use of monitoring and evaluation tools, and ensure adherence to complete, correct and timely reporting
- Conduct routine monitoring visits to project sites, including the conduct of data quality assessments (DQAs) using official tools
- Assist in the preparation of monthly reports and provide supportive supervision
- Provide direct technical assistance and capacity building in the design and implementation of the program/project monitoring and evaluation components of the activities in the communities served
- On a monthly basis, analyze state-level data and provide reports to state and national offices and local partners
- Participate in project assessments, evaluations and design teams when requested
- Represent FHI and make presentations at professional meetings and conferences related to monitoring and evaluation

Minimum requirements

- MPH, MD or similar degree in monitoring and evaluation, medicine, pharmacy, or related field experience in monitoring and evaluation in reproductive health or HIV/AIDS programs in developing countries
- 1-3 years experience in monitoring and evaluation in large HIV/AIDS programs at national or international level
- Experience working with local partners, including NGOs and CBOs and knowledge of the local context
- Familiarity with USAID programs is preferred

Clinical Service Officer (LAMIS)

The Clinical Service Officer (LAMIS), under the supervision of the Zonal Senior Medical Services Advisor and the Zonal Manager is responsible for the implementation of clinical and monitoring and evaluation activities, including the Lamiya Management Information System (LAMIS) and the provision of technical and programmatic support for implementing high quality care/support activities with primary focus on clinical management of HIV/AIDS, TB, RH, OI management, PMTCT, HAST and facility logistics management at the LAMIS/public health evaluation facilities in the zones.

Job responsibilities

- Work with others in the zonal office and the LAMIS facility staff to ensure that activities at the sites are appropriate and meet government, donor and project needs
- Interact with the MBE officers of SACAs/SASCP, other implementing agencies and local research groups on needs to ensure that these parties can understand and support the system
- Work with the LAMIS/PHE facility staff to ensure that daily data entry activities at the sites are done in time to provide up-to-date and valid data for timely program reporting on all program areas
- Manage contact tracking of defaulters, patients on ART, facility inventory and analyze patient outcomes and program service quality
- Provide direct technical assistance and capacity building in HIV/AIDS clinical management, PMTCT, monitoring and evaluation, LAMIS and other program areas
- Perform other related duties as assigned

Minimum requirements

- MBBS/MD and MPH or related postgraduate qualification (MBBS or MD with additional experience will be considered)

- 1-3 years clinical experience in HIV/AIDS programs in developing countries with additional 1-2 years working with facility level data
- Experience working with local partners, including NGOs and CBOs, and knowledge of the local context
- Understanding of the political and ethical issues surrounding HIV infection
- Ability to work with government facility staff
- Good analytical and software skills and ability to pay attention to detail
- Experience with standard statistical software (STATA or SPSS) is an added advantage
- Well developed written and oral communication skills
- Familiarity with USAID programs is preferred

Note: The officer may be required to live at the site location if specific site is too far from the zonal office.

Clinical Services Officer

With the Senior Medical Services Officer, the Clinical Services Officer will provide technical and programmatic support to implement high quality care and support activities with primary focus on clinical management of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT at the zonal and state levels.

Job responsibilities

- Coordinate the implementation of components related to clinical management of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT at the facility level
- Contribute to the development of lessons learnt from programs and projects related to clinical management of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT and apply these lessons to modify existing programs and improve the design of new programs
- Assist in strengthening reporting systems on program progress against stated objectives
- Contribute to the development of program strategies, subproject documents, work plans and budgets

Minimum requirements

- MBBS/MD with 1-3 years experience in clinical care with sound understanding of HIV/AIDS
- 2-3 years experience in the provision of ART in resource-constrained settings
- Postgraduate degree in public health is desirable
- Familiarity with the Nigerian public sector health system and NGOs and CBOs is an advantage

Senior Program Officer

Under the supervision of the Zonal Manager, provide support to and coordination in program planning, design, review and the monitoring of project activities to the country and field offices.

Job responsibilities

- Work with the zonal manager to provide support to and coordinate the FHI Nigeria activities in accordance with USAID and PEPFAR guidelines and regulations
- Assist in strengthening a system of reporting on program progress against stated objectives and monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Assist the zonal manager in developing program strategies, subproject documents, work plans and budgets
- Supervise the work of the program officer and state M&E officer
- Assist the zonal manager in providing programmatic assistance to local FHI partners in HIV/AIDS/STI programming
- Work with the zonal manager to oversee technical capacity building activities at the national, state and local government levels and for local implementing agencies
- Remain informed on current programs and research in STI/HIV/AIDS and work closely with international prevention specialists
- Perform other duties as may be assigned by the zonal manager

Minimum requirements

- Masters degree in public health or the behavioral sciences with 5-7 years experience (B.Sc. with 7-9 years experience)
- At least 5 years in HIV/AIDS programming
- Experience working with NGOs and CBOs
- Strong knowledge of HIV/AIDS programming and of project monitoring

Laboratory Quality Officer

Job responsibilities

- Provide technical support, assistance and advice on issues relating to quality within the laboratories
- Contribute to implementation, development and co-ordination of quality processes, including adherence to relevant professional standards and guidelines, and involvement with laboratory clinical governance issues and audit
- Provide technical support in updating and developing quality policy, tools, SOPs and recommendations related to the implementation of laboratory services for HIV/AIDS, opportunistic infections (OI) and malaria care and treatment in collaboration with technical staff within FHI and at national, state and local agencies in Nigeria
- Work closely with M&E and other laboratory staff to ensure that laboratory quality related data, e.g. proficiency testing and retesting are adequately captured in the DHS and LAMIS
- Prepare reports on the progress of laboratory quality assurance (QA), quality control (QC) and proficiency testing activities
- Monitor QA and QC activities of the laboratory in order to determine conformance with established policies, national regulations, or accreditation requirements
- Coordinate the distribution of PT samples to respective facilities and timely collection and submission of results to PT providers

Minimum requirements

- Bachelor's degree in the physical sciences, medical laboratory sciences, microbiology, molecular biology or related field with 5 years post-NYSC experience in laboratory quality management
- Working knowledge of clinical laboratory equipment
- Proven skills in clinical laboratory assessment and creative problem-solving will be an advantage
- Certification/license to practice as a medical laboratory scientist is a plus
- Familiarity with the Nigerian public sector health system and NGOs and CBOs is highly desirable

Laboratory Officer

Job responsibilities

- Liaise with the Senior Laboratory Advisor and the country office laboratory technical officers to provide technical support to implement high quality laboratory services in the GHAIN project within the state
- Coordinate the day-to-day operations of all laboratory services at the state level
- Coordinate laboratory support services for counseling and testing, HIV clinical care including OI management, ART, and PMTCT at the state level
- Coordinate the setting up of ART laboratory services at the state facility level
- Coordinate inventory management and stocktaking systems of GHAIN laboratory services at the state level
- Represent FHI/GHAIN on issues of HIV/AIDS laboratory management at the state level

Minimum requirements

- B.Sc. and AMLSN, B.MLS or AMLSN and FMLS
- Minimum of 5 years post-NYSC experience with a minimum of 3 years experience in the provision of laboratory support for HIV/AIDS
- Sound understanding of HIV/AIDS technical issues
- Familiarity with the Nigerian public sector health system and NGOs and CBOs is highly desirable

Associate Director Human Resources

Job responsibilities

- Lead the human resources team at the country office in functional areas including developing job specifications, staff recruitment, employee relations, benefits administration, compensation, HRIS, and staff development
- Provide leadership in the development and implementation of FHI Nigeria's human resource strategy
- Provide technical direction and oversight on compliance to zonal offices on human resource matters



Job Vacancies cont'd.

- Ensure timely, efficient, and proactive conduct of the day-to-day operations of the human resources department
- Oversee both the internal and external recruitment processes for all FHI Nigeria appointments to ensure effectiveness, transparency and accountability
- Ensure compliance with FHI standards by all recruiting managers and interviewers
- Work with country office directors and zonal managers in planning and implementing staff recruitment, orientation, benefits, etc to the required standards
- Initiate, develop, and implement organizational human resource programs and strategies
- Contribute to the development and editing of policies and procedures
- Review and recommend updates to the personnel policy manual as required
- Stay abreast with developments in labor laws and legislations and advise management accordingly

Minimum requirements

- MS/MA in business administration, social sciences or related field with at least 6 years relevant experience in a business setting, or BS/BA with at least 8 years relevant experience
- Excellent analytical, interpersonal and computer (Excel and spreadsheet) skills
- Experience in managing human resource functions in multicultural non-profit environments
- Good working knowledge of USAID and Global Fund contracts and grants regulations is an advantage
- A higher degree or professional qualification in human resource management is an advantage

Senior IT Officer

Job responsibilities

- Provide support for the maintenance of FHI Nigeria's computer and network infrastructure to ensure acceptable and stable operations
- Be responsible for all IT related equipment and software that are part of FHI Nigeria's inventory, including local area network, servers, PCs, printers, etc
- Provide technical IT support to FHI zonal offices in Nigeria
- Troubleshoot network and server software problems, including e-mail/internet systems.
- Assist in performing software installations and upgrades as required
- Ensure virus prevention and perform updates as required on all computers
- Perform "housekeeping" functions such as server and user management
- Provide periodic IT training to FHI Nigeria staff and to partner organizations
- Assist in planning and implementation of IT related projects introduced by FHI USA
- Perform daily and monthly backup of all data on the servers to a tape drive
- Ensure timely update of Microsoft Windows 2000/2003/XP security patches and other updates or service packs as required

Minimum requirements

- B.Sc. in computer science or equivalent with at least 2 years professional experience in the information technology industry OR
- At least five years of demonstrated work experience in computer maintenance and network management
- Adequate knowledge and ability in Windows 2000/2003 server and Windows 2000/XP workstation management support
- Ability to troubleshoot software problems, including e-mail/internet systems
- Ability to assist and perform software installations and upgrades as required
- Ability to perform "housekeeping" functions such as server user management

Administrative Officer

The Administrative Officer will be based in a state field office.

Job responsibilities

- Provide administrative and secretarial support to the zonal office
- Serve as point of contact for logistic and administrative needs in the office

- Coordinate all administrative and secretarial support services for the zonal office (as relevant)
- Keep proper office records/filings as appropriate
- Record minutes of staff meetings and circulate same amongst staff of the zonal office.
- Coordinate all travel details/logistics for staff, consultants and TDyers' including travel bookings, hotel accommodation and arrangement for airport and hotel pick-ups
- Supervise administrative assistants
- Assist the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer in the provision of logistic support for workshops and trainings
- Coordinate all records/storage of supplies for the country office

Minimum requirements

- Degree in secretarial studies or related subjects
- Minimum of three years experience in a non-profit or international development organization

Accountant

Under the direction of the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer, the Accountant shall assume responsibility for accounting in the zonal office and ensure compliance with project contractual financial requirements.

Job responsibilities

- Assist the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer in ensuring accurate keeping of all project books of account, including checking account, equipment and supply registers, etc
- Work with the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer to lead the preparation of monthly and annual financial reports, including financial status of subprojects account activities with accompanying bank documentation and receipts
- Assist the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer in monitoring NGO subproject budgets in accordance with approved work plan activities
- Work with the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer to analyze, develop, and monitor accounting/fiscal control procedures and program budgets including monitoring cash flows and requesting for fund transfers from FHI headquarters
- Prepare financial reports for country office staff to monitor and track obligations and expenditures
- Assist the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer to provide training and backstopping on the MTX double entry accounting system
- Work with the Senior Finance and Administrative Officer to provide technical assistance to NGOs on accounting and financial matters
- Identify areas needing improvement and provide necessary staff development and training
- Prepare written and verbal responses to inquiries and requests for budgetary information

Minimum requirements

- University degree in accounting, finance and business administration or its recognized equivalent
- CPA, ACA, ICAN or recognized equivalent
- Minimum of 5 years experience in accounting related to NGOs and community level programs
- Familiarity with USAID-funded programs and non-governmental organizations in Nigeria

Method of application

Interested candidates should forward their suitability statement (application) and resume (CV) as a single MS Word document within 10 days from the date of this publication to:

Medservicesjobs@ghain.org for Medical Services Department vacancies
MandEjobs@ghain.org for Monitoring and Evaluation Department vacancies
PMjobs@ghain.org for Program Management Department vacancies
Labservicesjobs@ghain.org for Laboratory Services Department vacancies
Sharedservicesjobs@ghain.org for Shared Services Department vacancies

Only applications sent electronically (i.e. by e-mail) with the job title and location clearly indicated as the subject of the mail will be considered, and only short listed candidates will be contacted.

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DATE: 27TH - 30TH, APRIL 2009 VENUE: MADRID, SPAIN DATE: 4TH - 7TH, MAY 2009 VENUE: LONDON, UK COURSE FEE 400,000

ABOUT THE FACILITATOR



John Glen was Director of the Executive MBA (2002-2004) and the Director of Full Time MBA Program (2004-2007) at University of Cranfield, School of Management. John currently holds visiting lectureships in Universities in Germany, USA, Netherlands, South Africa and Spain. In addition to MBA teaching, John lectures on many Executive Programs, where he specializes in teaching Strategic Process and Strategic Marketing and Leadership.

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DATE: 18TH - 21ST, MAY 2009 VENUE: JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA COURSE FEE: 375,000

PAUL GALLAGHER

Has over 10 years experience in policy formulation and implementation. He was the Head of People Policy at the London Development Agency where he was responsible for a range of programs and projects, including contributing to the Skills and Employment Strategy. He is the Director of Research in a consulting firm responsible for effectiveness of Government policies.

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STRATEGY, TRANSFORMATION & IMPLEMENTATION



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PRESS STATEMENT

THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Human Rights Monitor welcomes the appointment of a new Executive Secretary for the National Human Rights Commission. The appointment of Mr. Roland Ewubare, a corporate lawyer with a progressive bent from the private sector to head the institution has finally freed the Commission from the strange recycling of lawyers from the Federal Ministry of Justice as Executive Secretaries of the Commission. The former Executive Secretary, Mrs Kehinde Ajoni has consequently been redeployed back to the Federal Ministry of Justice from where she was seconded to the National Human Rights Commission.

Human Rights Monitor recalls that Mrs. Kehinde Ajoni's predecessor Bukhari Bello was recalled back to the Federal Ministry of Justice in 2006 in a similar fashion. Human Rights Monitor also notes that the recall of Mr. Bukhari Bello back to the Federal Ministry of Justice precipitated a crisis of confidence between the Government and Civil Society Groups and most civil society groups simply boycotted the activities of the Commission.

Mrs. Kehinde Ajoni, the former Executive Secretary apparently got bogged down by the circumstances of her appointment and the opposition generated by the said appointment. She could not in the circumstances rise up to the challenge of the mandate of the Commission and could not give it the character and face that will inspire confidence and restore its credibility.

The replacement of Mrs. Ajoni with a new Executive Secretary from the private sector is a positive development

that we hope will steer the Commission towards true independence in its actions, conduct and operations.

We therefore urge the Federal Government to show more commitment to the independence of the National Human Rights Commission by reconstituting the Governing Council with men and women of integrity working in the area of human rights, elections, the prisons and the judiciary.

We also urge the National Assembly to expedite action on the passage of the National Human Rights Commission Amendment Act presently in the National Assembly. The Bill if passed will further guarantee the independence of the Commission both in the appointment of its Commissioners and funding.

We believe that the removal of Mrs. Kehinde Ajoni, the appointment of Mr. Roland Ewubare and the Bill pending before the National Assembly are steps that may lead to the fulfillment of government's commitments under the Paris Principles and Nigeria's commitment to strengthen and guarantee the independence of the Commission.

It is sad that under Ajoni's leadership, the National Human Rights Commission was downgraded from 'A' to 'B' status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions.

We counsel and advice Mr. Roland Ewubare to:

1. Assert the independence of the Commission, reposition it and adopt a pragmatic and non bureaucratic approach to fulfill its mandate.

2. Adopt a global view of issues and move Nigeria towards fulfilling its domestic and international human rights obligations.
3. Lead the National Human Rights Commission on a solid background to regain her 'A' Status in the comity of National Institutions.
4. Employ more persons with civil society background in the National Human Rights Commission and raise the morale of the existing staff through improvement in their welfare conditions.
5. Open broad based consultation with civil society groups and other stakeholders with a view to improving the climate of rights and bringing to book those that violate the civil rights of innocent citizens.

Human Rights Monitor and other civil society groups and organizations will cooperate with the new Executive Secretary to enable him fulfill the mandate of the Commission. The rule of law and due process must be made to permeate all facets of the Nigerian society and the National Human Rights Commission must be the leader in this area.

Festus Okoye
Executive Director Human Rights Monitor



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTANTS OF NIGERIA
(FOUNDED IN 1979 AND CHARTERED BY ACT 76 OF 1993)

PUBLIC NOTICE

2009 MANDATORY CONTINUING

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MCPD) PROGRAMME

Pursuant to Rule 14(10) of Association of National Accountants of Nigeria Rule 1995, the 1st Session of 2009 Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (MCPD) programme will hold as follows:

Date: Monday 20th - Thursday 23rd April, 2009.

Venue: City Hall, Shendam Road, Lafia, Nasarawa State.

Course Fee: N20,000.00 (Twenty Thousand Naira Only) per participant.
The fee is to cover Course Souvenir and Lunch only.
PERSONAL CHEQUES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.

For Whom: It is compulsory for every member of the Association to attend this programme at least once a year. In other words, all members, whether practicing or non-practicing must attend. **There is no Exemption.** Although this session is particularly for the members in the Northern Zone, which includes the following States:- Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Niger and Abuja. Members in other States who wish to attend this session at Nasarawa State are free to do so.

Please note that registration would commence from **12.00 noon on Monday 20th April, 2009 at the venue.**

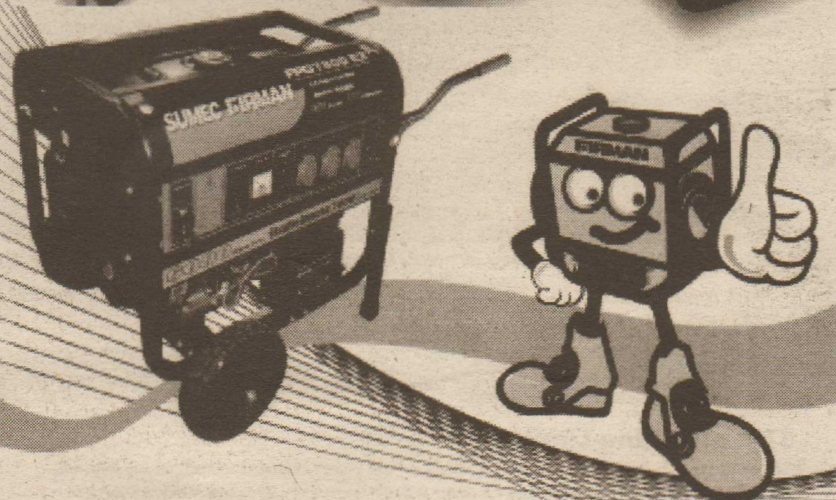
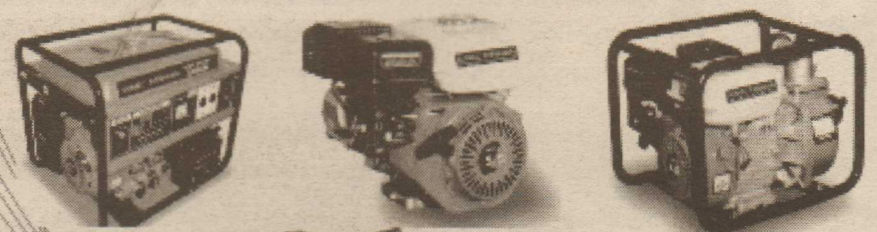
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Registrar/Chief Executive
6th April, 2009
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DIGEST

Dog owners do look like their pets, say psychologists

Researchers found that members of the public could predict which breed of dog a person would own almost twice as accurately as they should be able to, just by looking at a photograph of their owners.

Volunteers rightly connected poodles, labradors and Staffordshire bull terriers with their masters.

There were a number of physical reasons why owners looks suggested which dog they would have, including what clothes they wore and their build, said Dr Lance Workman, from Bath Spa University.

"There is a little bit of truth in the theory that owners look like their dogs, but if you are of a robust build you will probably have a more robust dog so that you can get lots of exercise. If you are more slight you may want a poodle as you think that they need less exercise," he said.

Dr Workman, who previously carried out a study which showed that

the Birmingham accent was the most hated in Britain, added: "When we tested the dog owners' personalities, we found no strong links between any particular personality trait and choice of dog breed, so

psychologists

any shared qualities are only skin deep."

Many celebrities have

been compared to their dogs, including the petite Paris Hilton and her

miniscule Chihuahua, Tinkerbell.

But dog lovers should be warned that volunteers also wrongly thought that choice of breed could predict the owners' personality

Overall, they judged bull

terrier owners as less intelligent than the others, while those who had plumped for poodles and labradors were thought to be nicer.

However, personality tests revealed no such differences between the three groups.

Dr Workman added: "What this study shows is that you shouldn't judge a person by their dog, but we all do."

The tests also showed that overall the dog owners were nicer or "more agreeable" than the general population, the only major personality difference the study found.

Psychologists asked 70 people to match 41 dog owners, found through the Kennel Club, to their breeds.

They were correct between 50 and 60 per cent of the time, when chance suggested that they should have a success rate of around 33 per cent.



Women with long, glossy hair stand with their Afghan hound during the Crufts dog show

Photo: REUTERS

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

How eating chocolate can help improve your maths

Eating chocolate could improve the brain's ability to do maths, a new study suggests.

Mental arithmetic became easier after volunteers had been given large amounts of compounds found in chocolate, called flavanols, in a hot cocoa drink.

They were also less likely to feel tired or mentally

drained, according to the findings, presented at the British Psychological Society annual conference in Brighton.

New curbs needed on cheap drinks in university bars, says Prof. David Kennedy, director of the brain, performance and nutrition research centre at Northumbria University,

and a co-author of the study, said that chocolate could be beneficial for mentally challenging tasks.

The findings suggest students who binge on chocolate when revising for exams may gain a real benefit from doing so.

"For things that are difficult to do, mentally demanding things that

maybe crop up in your work it could help," Prof Kennedy said.

The flavanols, part of a group of chemicals called polyphenols, work by increasing the flow of blood into the brain.

For the study 30 volunteers were asked to count backwards in groups of three from a random number between 800 and 999 generated by a computer.

The findings show that they could do the calculations more quickly and more accurately after they had been given the drink.

However, the same was not true when the group was asked to count backwards in groups of seven, which the researchers described as a more complex task, requiring a slightly different part of the brain.

The findings also show that the volunteers did not get as tired doing the calculations if they had been given the cocoa drink, despite being asked to do them over and over for an hour.

Human hearts can regenerate which could reduce need for transplants, say scientists

It was thought the ability to regenerate organs apart from the liver was reserved for science fiction characters like Dr Who.

But now scientists have shown the human body can renew heart cells at a rate of about one per cent a year

The discovery could one day reduce the need for transplants.

A study of 50 volunteers, using a dating method that detects traces of a carbon isotope left by Cold War nuclear bomb tests, raises the prospect of artificially stimulating the renewal process some day.

"It would be a way to try and help the heart to some self-help rather than transplanting new cells," Jonas Frisen of Sweden's Karolinska Institute said.

"Taking advantage of the heart's own capacity to generate new cells either using pharmaceutical compounds or, if it is possible, by exercise or any other environmental factor."

Heart cells are unusual in that they stop dividing early in life. Doctors knew there were master cells called stem cells in the heart, but heart muscle usually simply forms scar tissue after damage and never fully regenerates.

In their four-year study reported in the journal Science, Frisen and his colleagues employed an ingenious method to find out whether there was any regeneration at all.

"The DNA of all plant and animal cells incorporated high concentrations of carbon-14 released into the atmosphere by above-ground nuclear testing during the Cold War," Charles Murry of the University of Washington and Richard Lee of Harvard Medical School wrote in a commentary.

"This unfortunate episode provides a unique opportunity to test cell population dynamics in human tissues."

Carbon-14 dating showed that overall, the hearts of their 50 volunteers were 'younger' than the patients' ages.

Frisen said the rate at which the new cells are produced slows as we get older, with a young adult in their twenties renewing cells at a rate of about 1 per cent a year, falling to half a percent a year by the age of 75.



Scientists have proved the heart can regenerate itself



Mental arithmetic became easier after volunteers had been given large amounts of compounds found in chocolate in a hot cocoa drink

Photo: PHILIP HOLLIS

Culled from telegraph.co.uk

Culled from dailymail.co.uk

DIGEST

SUDOKU PUZZLE

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.

EASY

53.

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

SOLUTION TO SUDOKU PUZZLE No. 52

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

SIGN LANGUAGE



If you are dead as....
Photo location: Hawaii by Martins Phillips
Culled from the telegraph.co.uk

FIND & CIRCLE JUMBO

FIND & CIRCLE JUMBO puzzles are solved by finding all the hidden words in the diagram. The words are always in a straight line and may read up, down, forward, backward, or diagonally. Cross a word off your list once you have circled it. Many words will overlap.

42

Habor lights

D	O	C	K	S	R	R	K	S	R	E	K	N	A	T
F	E	R	R	Y	O	E	T	A	G	I	R	F	R	G
X	H	U	A	P	T	E	L	P	N	S	C	O	W	C
U	X	I	E	C	A	M	F	W	C	C	T	D	U	T
O	S	S	H	M	A	V	B	H	A	A	H	T	L	Y
P	A	E	E	A	C	T	O	U	O	R	T	O	O	T
K	I	R	O	S	D	O	A	B	O	E	T	E	R	V
Q	L	H	S	T	N	K	G	M	R	Y	B	F	T	O
R	B	O	S	E	T	U	X	E	A	O	S	M	A	T
E	O	E	R	E	T	H	G	I	E	R	F	L	P	F
I	A	U	A	A	L	R	C	K	O	T	A	I	F	A
R	T	R	P	C	A	T	N	A	W	S	P	N	D	R
R	U	N	A	B	O	U	T	Y	Y	E	Z	E	Q	Q
A	T	F	P	Z	J	N	J	A	V	D	R	R	Y	T
C	L	I	P	P	E	R	X	K	B	U	M	C	Z	Q

- Freighter
- Frigate
- Junk
- Kayak
- Ketch
- Liner
- Mast
- Oars
- Patrol
- Raft
- Ropes
- Runabout
- Sailboat
- Schooner
- Scow
- Anchor
- Carrier
- Cruiser
- Steamer
- Barge
- Catama-
- Cutter
- Tanker
- Battleship
- ran
- Destroyer
- Trawler
- Beacon
- Clipper
- Docks
- Tugboat
- Buoys
- Crew
- Ferry
- Yacht

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 41

G	W	O	D	E	S	U	S	T	O	D	E	J	Z	
F	L	R	H	V	N	I	V	A	L	P	K			
D	E	A	A	C	T	I	V	I	T	N	I	O	C	
V	V	A	D	Z	E	I	C	J	L	D	C	E	O	P
P	I	T	S	S	I	B	I	B	E	M	V	N		
P	U	H	E	D	A	L	D	R	L	R	F	F	Z	R
A	R	G	G	Q	Q	U	B	G	O	I	V	O	S	
S	T	I	L	H	L	T	M	A	R	T	R	M	W	
S	S	L	E	F	P	E	T	T	A	A	E	E	G	T
I	O	E	E	M	O	A	R	N	N	T	I	S	X	
L	S	O	B	O	B	G	S	D	F	W	E	M	T	
E	L	A	R	F	L	U	A	T	E	A	S	B	Y	N
B	H	V	I	E	E	H	S	V	U	D	R	N	S	Y
C	N	A	I	D	A	B	O	B	B	I	R	N	U	L
U	I	E	W	U	T	A	J	T	L	R	T	R	O	

PROPERTY



FCT Minister Sen. Adamu Aliero, right, receiving a gift from the South African High Commissioner to Nigeria Kingsley Mamalolo, who paid him a courtesy call...recently.

We are neglected, Gurara Dam communities tell FG

Most communities of the multi-purpose Gurara dam in Kaduna state, which supplies water to Abuja and its environs at the weekend staged a demonstration at the dam site over the alleged failure of the federal government to fulfill the promises made to them when the dam was about being built in 2001.

Speaking to newsmen during the demonstration, president of Kuturmi Development Association, Mr. Samuel Bahago who led the protest said the communities are left behind in term of social amenities.

"We do not have a single tap water, despite the fact that water from the dam is what is used in supplying

From Ismail Mudashir, Kaduna

Abuja, which also passes through our communities. We are lacking all the basic amenities you know. Social amenities like clinics, primary schools, accessible road network and market have all been denied to the communities, despite government's promised to provide them in 2001," he alleged.

During demonstration, placard-carrying youths took control of roads leading to the dam site and the one leading to the workers living for hours.

Apparently scared by the protest, the Italian and Israeli expatriates handling the construction of the dam

stayed within their offices and living quarters, throughout the protest.

He added that pregnant women and people who fall ill are at serious risks as the closest clinic is about 60 kilometers away, while the whole communities have only one secondary school.

In addition to these, the communities are also asking the federal and state governments to ensure that their villages are provided with some of the 30 megawatts of hydro-electricity that is about to be evacuated to Kaduna state from the dam.

Among those who addressed the demonstrators, include the vice chairman of Kachia

Local Government, Mr. Ibrahim Dangana, Councilor of Awon village, Mr. Cletus Ali and the District Head of Awon village who also appeal to the federal government for a capacity building training on irrigation and agric activities, regarding the 14,000 irrigation scheme at the Gurara dam valley which will be done by the federal government.

When contacted, the project coordinator of the dam from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Engr., Babbaji Ibrahim who was also at the dam during the demonstration refused to talk to journalists who sought his confirmation of the communities demand.

N360m for construction of 1.6 km road near Onitsha

The 1.6 kilometer of road in the thickly populated area of Okpoko near Onitsha was flagged off and awarded to Consolidated Construction Company (CCC) at a contract sum of N360 million with completion period of four months by Governor Peter Obi of Anambra state.

The road which links various parts of Okpoko from Obodoukwu road to the Onitsha-Owerri express way, is expected to be reconstructed to serve as a

From Beatrice Onuchukwu, Awka

major road that would help to ease off the problem of flooding in the area.

Speaking at the flag off ceremony, Obi said the project was part of the state government's Urban Renewal programme for the Okpoko community, adding that it would be followed by other development projects that would uplift the standard of living of the people.

He said that his

administration had paid 65% of the cost of the reconstruction, adding that the reconstruction of the Uga-Junction-Atani-Osamara-Ogwuikpere road, in addition to provision of four water bore-hole schemes and VIP toilet facilities in the area have taken off.

Also speaking, governor Obi said that his government was equally spending over two billion Naira for the dredging of the Sakamori drain and charged the people

to avoid dumping refuse in the drains so that government huge investment in the project will not be wasted.

A State House of Assembly member representing Ogbaru constituency Mrs Njideka Ezigwe commended and expressed gratitude to Governor Obi for responding to the needs of the people and saving them from untold hardship after many years of neglect by past administrations.

HOTLINES:
08064416006, 08035946883

Monarch seeks compensation over acquired community land

The paramount ruler of Ado kingdom in Lagos State, Oba Lateef Olayinka, has appealed to the federal government to compensate the community for its land taken over by the government.

Oba Olayinka made the appeal while briefing newsmen on the preparations for his 10th anniversary on the throne.

He explained that his community has been affected by the acquisition, saying that his people have little portion of land left. According to him, "the forceful acquisition of the land has affected the community," which is made up of 12 towns. The monarch said that over 940 hectares of land belonging to the community was taken by the government for the construction of the Ojo Military Cantonment, another 910 hectares for International Trade Fair Complex and 1,100 hectares for festac phase 11.

He explained that apart from compensation paid for the crops destroyed when acquiring the land, nothing has been paid to the community for their land.

Oba Olayinka also appealed to the Federal Government to release of some portions of the land not utilised to the community. Speaking further on the demands of the community, the National Coordinator of Odua Peoples Congress (OPC), Chief Gani Adams, who is the chairman of the anniversary committee, said the community should be provided with a road network to link it with other communities.

Kwara secretariat complex renovation gulps N602m

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

The phase one of the Kwara State Secretariat Complex, Ilorin general renovation work on some State Ministries in the Complex, which began last week, will cost the state government six hundred and two million naira.

The project is expected to be completed within forty weeks. The State Head of Service, Alhaji Muhammad Dabarako disclosed this while briefing Daily Trust on the recent retreat held in Ilorin for civil service.

In a related development on the renovation, the Special Adviser to the State Governor on Infrastructure, Engineer Kola Shittu added that affected Ministries include Education, Science and Technology, Information and Home Affairs, Social Development, Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs and Women Affairs.

Engr. Shittu however said that the two contractors handling both the main building and the external works have been fully mobilized, adding that Civil Servants in the affected ministries would not be completely displaced as the renovation would be in phases and called for cooperation in the affected ministries.

Daily Trust visit to some of the affected offices undergoing renovation gathered that it would include provision of functional lift, water supply system and befitting parking space.

LG commences construction of N300m secretariat

The Ahoada West Local Government Council in Rivers is building a new secretariat valued at more than N300 million.

The Chairman of the council, Mr Awori Miller, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at Akinima in Rivers that the present secretariat built in 1996 is grossly inadequate.

"The present structure has not been able to accommodate all our staff, both civil servants and politicians and that informed the decision to build a new secretariat," he said.

The chairman said that work on the secretariat had reached an advanced stage and would be completed in December.

"It has provision for 50 offices and we are working toward completing it in December. It is a big project because we also took into

consideration our terrain.

"We have a peculiar terrain. The contractor put in place ground beams at the foundation level as reinforcement so that it does not crack in future," the chairman said.

Miller said the contractor had also brought in other items that were not in the original plan, but were necessary for the building, adding that these items might affect the cost of the project.

"Some civil servants stay up to 10 persons in one room due to lack of space in our present secretariat. In this kind of setting, we need adequate office space for all staff to put in their best," he said.

The chairman said that when completed, the new secretariat would accommodate all staff and make them have a sense of belonging.

ENVIRONMENT

Kwara tasks LGs on Clean, Green programme

The Kwara State Commissioner for Environment and Tourism, Alhaji Ahmed Makama, has urged all the 16 local government areas in the state to support the Clean and Green programme of the present administration.

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

The Commissioner gave the charge in Oyun, Offa, Isin, Irepodun, Ekiti and Oke-Ero Local Government Areas during the first leg of the ministry's scheduled visits to assess the performance of the six local

government's waste management consultant and to seek support for the scheme

Makama who commended the state as one of the very few clean states in the country, implored the local government areas to

comply with the governor's directives on the provision of light tools, uniforms and other incentives required for the operative's effective and efficient performance. Makama, who was accompanied by the ministry's Permanent Secretary and other top

officials, urged the local governments to embark on vigorous mass enlightenment campaign on the importance of having toilet facilities and advised the people to desist from indiscriminate refuse dumping.

He commended the

efforts of the Local Government areas for their support and implored them not to relent. The second and final round of the visits would take the ministry to Asa, Moro, Ifelodun, Patigi, Edu, Baruten and Kaiama Local Government Areas of the state.



The body of a victim lies on the street in front of his collapsed house in L'Aquila, a medieval city in the Apennine mountains 70 miles north of Rome

Ekiti approves N386m for flood control

From Ralph Adekunle, Ado-Ekiti

Ekiti State Government has approved over N386 million for the control of flooding in some crisis prone area in the state. The areas include Otun, Ado-Ekiti, Ilawe, Iworoko and Itapaji among other affected area in the state.

Briefing newsmen after the state executive council meeting headed by the Acting Governor, Tunji Odeyemi, the Special Adviser on Information, Mr. Sola Ajigbolamu, said council took the decision to address some major areas of concern in the state on road rehabilitation, road construction, agriculture and ecological problems.

Ajigbolamu said another N285 million was also approved for the purchased of earth moving equipment for the rehabilitation of the state roads and contracts have been awarded to Areje Nigeria Limited in that direction.

He pointed out that council also took the decision for the establishment of a Nigeria/China Cassava Centre at Iyemero to improved on the agricultural base of the state government. Government, he said have also considered the packaging and plouring of about 450 hectares of land for agricultural cultivation and a water treatment plant would be purchased by government very soon. In another development, the chairman of the Ekiti State Local Government Service Commission, Chief Femi Akinyemi, has described the political violence happening in the state right now, as alien to the state. According to him, it is in the opposition rally that you record violence in recent times. He noted that he does not for see any problem for the candidate of the PDP, Mr. Segun Oni, not to win the rerun election, saying there chances are bright to come back to government. He however pointed out that Oni, have realized some mistakes of the past, adding that after the election which they will win, the party would make amends in some government policy.

Akinyemi, noted that in the political sector, some people believe they did not do well enough but Oni did well in his developmental projects for 21 months, adding that the PDP candidate is not a person that will open up the treasury of the state to people for looting.

He said most civil servant did not like the due process policy of government then, but what they are saying it that government should give them their due and take away the process.

FG to buy 6 incinerators for medical institutions

In a bid to curb health waste management in Nigeria, the federal government is set to buy six incinerators for medical institutions, a top official has said. Dr Oludayo Dada, the Director, Department of Pollution Control and Environmental Health, Ministry of Environment, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), on Saturday in Abuja. He said that the six incinerators would be distributed to some medical institutions to burn used syringes and needles, gloves and other medical waste. Dada said that discussions by health stakeholders on the matter had led to the adoption of three documents to curb health waste management in the country. The documents are National Policy on Health Care Waste, National Technical Plan Guidelines Manual and National Action Plan on Health Care Waste.

He said that the stakeholders and the ministry had recommended the incinerators as a way of boosting health care waste management in the country.

"The ministry is working on modalities for the purchase of the incinerators that would be suitable for our environment for all medical institutions. "Our strategy is to provide medical incinerator for all the tertiary health medical institution in the country and we have about 72.

"We are not looking into hospitals alone, we are looking at medical institutes and pharmaceutical factories," Dada said. The director said that the delay in providing incinerators at Idu National Institute of Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD) was due to some adjustment made on the equipment. He said that work on the incinerator would soon be commissioned by the ministry.

Officials also said that five new federal medical institutions.

Google co-founder plans eco-mansion

Google Inc co-founder Larry Page is building an eco-mansion in Palo Alto, the original Silicon Valley powerhouse town, the local weekly said on Friday.

Page's green-certified home should be 6,000 square feet, hardly modest

for most folks, but only a bit over half the size that he could build on the lot, according to Palo Alto Online, the website for Palo Alto Weekly, which uncovered the plans.

Google declined to comment.

The house will include

solar panels, materials that do not give off noxious chemicals, and paving that lets the rain seep through, a big deal in dry California where water planners want to fill up aquifers.

That should be enough to give it the minimum qualification for a green

home, as measured by the Green Point Certification program, the website said.

Page aims to apply for a building permit next week on the 0.75 acre lot. It is adjacent to where he already lives, Palo Alto Online quoted neighbors as saying. - Reuters

FCTA partner manufacturers over environmental equipment

By Nasir Imam

In order to improve the environmental condition of the Federal Capital Territory, the FCT Administration has concluded arrangement to go into partnership with manufacturer/suppliers of environmental equipment.

The FCT Minister, Senator Muhammad Adamu Aliero dropped this hint at the weekend while meeting with the Abuja cleaning contractors at the Banquet Hall, FCT Minister's Residence, Gwarinpa Life-Camp, Abuja.

The Minister revealed that the equipments to be supplied include brand new compacting trucks as well as sweeping trucks which would be leased to the cleaning contractors to aid them in the aggressive cleanliness of the

Federal Capital City.

Senator Aliero reiterated that the era of engaging cleaning contractor without modern equipment to be used for the job was over and therefore urged them to sit up for greater productivity.

According to him, the FCT Administration would not accept mediocrity as far as the cleaning of the Federal Capital City was concerned and called on the contractors to embrace this capital investment initiative.

Senator Aliero disclosed that the equipment when supplied and leased to the contractors would surely assist them in tackling some of the problems currently being faced; stressing that Abuja must be clean thus, the

need for the phasing-out of old and rickety compacting trucks.

The Minister further revealed that the supplier would contribute 80 per cent of the total sum of the equipment while the FCT Administration through its investment arm, the Abuja Investment Company Limited (AICL) would contribute 20 per cent. Senator Aliero who also disclosed that the arrangement is a full package including their maintenance, service as well as training for the drivers; remarked that the payment by the cleaning contractors for the equipment would be spread over 6 years to reduce any inconvenience the payment regime might cause them.

The Minister noted that the supply of these special

purpose vehicles would mark a new beginning in the cleaning of the Federal Capital City as challenges in this area would adequately be addressed.

He stated that the FCT Administration is already working on the dump sites in the Federal Capital Territory especially their access roads now that the raining season is just at the corner.

Senator Aliero said that their contract would expire by June 2009 and that only those who are performing would be retained because all is about productivity.

The meeting was attended by the officials of the Abuja Environmental Protection Board and all the contractors handling the cleaning of the Federal Capital City.

ENVIRONMENT

UN plans guide to fighting climate-change disasters

A proposed U.N. study of climate extremes will be a practical guide for tackling natural disasters and fill a gap in past reports focused on the gradual effects of global warming, experts said. Floods, mudslides, droughts, heatwaves or storms are often the main causes of destruction and human suffering tied to climate change, rather than the creeping rise in average temperatures blamed on a build-up of greenhouse gases.

"We are saying a lot about changes in mean temperatures but the impacts on real people, real companies, are taking place at the extremes," said Chris Field, a co-chair of a group in the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Better knowledge of extreme climate events could help governments, companies or humanitarian organizations to cope with natural disasters, he told Reuters on Tuesday during a March 23-26 IPCC meeting in Oslo.

"Most importantly (a special study) will be a guide for how we can get going with practical measures in countries vulnerable to climate change," said Ellen Hambro, head of the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority which is hosting the talks. About 100 scientists are meeting in Oslo to map out a possible special U.N. report about climate extremes by Field's group, under a proposal by Norway and the U.N.'s International Strategy for Disaster Reduction...-Reuters

Kano pollution control lab urged to go commercial

Kano state pollution control laboratory at Farm Centre under the ministry of environment has been instructed to commercialize its services to the interested applicants.

Alhaji Garba Yusuf Abubakar, announced the instruction when he visited the department recently. According to him, the reason behind the instruction was as a result of the expertise in the testing of items for human consumption and health. He said the items that undergo testing in the departments include air, food, and fertilizer among other related commodities. In addition to the assessment of the laboratory's services, observation has indicated that the working personnel therein are operating according to the rule of the law and they are trust-worthy ambassadors, he said. The commissioner further explained that pollution control laboratory centre is excellent in service and is among one of the best or rather the best seasonal laboratory in the Northern region of the country.

He also pointed out that for the instruction to be achieved and meet the government's demands and private applicants; the ministry is preparing to come up with a blueprint for the department to improve its services. Alhaji Yusuf enjoined the laboratory department to sell out the services to the interested universities; industries, NGOs and even other related organizations as doing so would enhance its way of revenue generation. In the same vein, he urged the staff to maintain the tempo in rendering the services as commended par excellent by trusted/interested voices in the state at large.



Benue State governor, Gabriel Suswam (middle), commissioning the rural electrification project at Mchia, a community along Anyiin-Ugba-Amaafu-Abaji road in Logo local government area, yesterday. Pic: Hir Joseph

Minister calls for increased control of fossil fuel

By Mustapha Suleiman

Fossil fuel has been described as critical to meeting global economic development and energy security needs hence the need to control its use.

This call was made by the Minister of Environment Mr. John Odey at the opening ceremony of the workshop on Cleaner Fossil Fuels Technology in African held yesterday at Transcorp Hilton Abuja. The minister explained that the increasing consumption of fossil fuel will persist, warning that the uncontrolled use of fossil fuel could have serious local, regional and global environmental impacts.

"It is therefore imperative to find ways for the deployment of cleaners and more efficient fossil fuels combustion technologies that will

mitigate the adverse consequences of the use of fossil fuels and permit their positive qualities to be more fully harnessed for economic and social development," he said. He further noted that the fossil fuel technologies are very relevant as it will contribute immensely to a more reliable service in the power generation sector to meet the growing electricity demand. "May I therefore use this opportunity to call on both policy makers and practitioners at this workshop to take advantage of this rare opportunity that the World Energy Council (WEC) and its Committee on Cleaner Fossil Fuels Systems, with the support from the Nigeria National Committee of the WEC (NNC-WEC), the energy Commission Of Nigeria (ECN) and other relevant stakeholders, have given all of us, in organising

this 2-Day National Workshop on Cleaner Fossil Technologies in Africa."

The workshop was jointly organised by the World Energy Council (WEC), Committee on Cleaner Fossil Fuel System (CFFS) and the Nigerian National Committee of the World Energy Council (NNC-WEC) in collaboration with the energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN).

It has in attendance stakeholders in the sector within Nigeria and outside.

In his address the Minister of Power, Dr. Rilwan Babalola said that the continued dependence on depletable energy sources is not only unsustainable but also environmentally hazardous. He disclosed that the Nigeria electricity generation facilities currently consist of Eighty-five percent fossil fuel fired power plants, adding that additional capacity is being planned for

2010, leading to greater percentage of fossil fuel in the power system.

"Nigeria needs stable power supply from a robust mix of all viable resources to galvanise economic development and allow us to meet the target of being one of the 20 economies in no distant future. We are putting in place, policy and regulatory frame works to attract private investment in the power sector.

"The challenge here is not to stop fossil based power generation but to find ways for the deployment of cleaner and more efficient fossil fuels combustion technologies that will mitigate the adverse consequences of the use of fossil fuels and permit their positive qualities to be more fully harnessed for economic and social development. This workshop in Nigeria is therefore very timely," the minister said.

Bamboo firewood, charcoal programme launched in Ghana, Ethiopia

The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR), in collaboration with the European Union (EU), and other partners have launched the bamboo firewood and charcoal programme in Ghana and Ethiopia yesterday.

The "Bamboo as sustainable biomass energy: A suitable alternative for firewood and charcoal production in Africa" programme, is a collaborative project between INBAR, EU, the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG), Rural Energy Development and Promotion Centre (EREDPC) of Ethiopia, the Federal Micro and Small

Enterprises Agency (FeMSEDA) of Ethiopia, the Bamboo and Rattan Development Programme (BARADEP) of Ghana and Nanjing Forestry University of China. These were contained in a statement signed by Dr Coosje Hoogendoorn, Director General of INBAR, and issued in Kumasi on Friday. The release said the project is the first of its kind that seeks to develop bamboo firewood and charcoal as an alternative to wood charcoal in the countries that would be expected to benefit from the venture. It said the project aimed at increasing the range of useable bamboos available

in Africa establish bamboo charcoal micro and macro enterprises and help governments and civil society organizations to support bamboo firewood and charcoal production and use. The statement said the new bamboo charcoal technologies developed in Asia by INBAR and its partners over the past decade had enormous potential to help reduce deforestation and generate sustainable incomes. It also marked a major step in their application for improved energy security, environment and livelihoods of the people of the bamboo-growing regions in Africa.



Bangladeshi firefighters extinguish a fire in a slum in Dhaka yesterday. Over 100 shanties burnt down as a devastating blaze raged through a slum in Mirpur in the capital. Pic: AFP.

PROPERTY

NEMA and the challenge of managing disaster in Nigeria

By Yushau A. Shuaib

Can one guess what makes news in the media? Disasters: the real bad news, especially on emergencies, conflicts and strange occurrences are some of the newsworthy events that draw attention and influence mass readership and viewership. And guess! Nobody wishes to be a victim of adversity.

A year ago, from a seeming obscurity the Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) came to the limelight of the media, not on good news but from harshest criticisms over the loss of an aircraft, Beechcraft which disappeared in our airspace without a trace. During the period most of the editorials, news headlines and commentaries feasted on the missing aircraft, ignoring other developmental issues in the country.

Apart from the media mentions in the aftermath of the missing plane, there were also negative impressions on the agency, sometimes created by mischievous faceless writers. The director general of the agency, a retired Air Vice Marshal Mohammed Audu-Bida viewed the criticisms as challenges to be focused and devised strategies to prevent a reoccurrence or to respond immediately in case of similar emergency. Not many would be willing to work in an organization whose major responsibility is to manage disaster because of the fear of being caught in the flame of the tragedy, but Audu-Bida and staff of the agency have developed passion for the job in saving people in distress.

Though stubbornly principled, Audu-Bida's aura of simplicity and humility influenced him to open up the agency to the as he engaged the media to regular interactions on the activities of NEMA while encouraging the formation of a staff union in the organization for constructive dialogue in meeting their obligations and demands of the public.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was established via Act 12 as amended by Act 50 of 1999, to manage natural and man-disasters in Nigeria. Basically it formulates a policy on all activities relating to disaster management and coordinates the plans and programmes for efficient and effective response to disasters at national level.

It does not have a full complement of fire-fighters, security personnel, road marshals amongst other outfits to combat such related disaster-outbreaks, like fire, flooding, landslides, epidemics, communal crises, it is nevertheless statutorily empowered to mobilize and coordinate respective agencies such as Fire Service, the Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, Federal Road Safety Commission, Federal Ministry of Health and even

the non-governmental organization like Red Cross to raise to the occasion in managing disaster in the country. This it displayed during the last communal crises in Jos, landslides in Cross River, Flooding in Kwara and Market Fire in some states by coordinating the evacuation of displaced people and providing succors to them in the forms of relief items. Even though NEMA is widely known for distributing relief materials for victims of disaster, in its effort to deemphasize reactionary approaches to crises, one of its effective proactive methods is to educate and inform the public on disaster prevention and control measures. For these reasons it organizes press conferences, seminars and workshops regularly for different stakeholders on basic rudiments and actions to be taken on emergency situations. Past participants at some of the capacity-building programmes included community leaders, civil society organizations, NGOs, teachers, youths and students. The staffs of the agency also undertake advocacy and sensitization campaign to communities and markets to sensitize artisans and petty traders on the need for insurance covers for their wares in case of fire outbreaks so that they could be compensated over their losses.

It was at one of the workshops organized for media representatives that an idea was mooted for the establishment of a forum known as Journalists Against Disaster (JAD) to independently monitor, review and report disasters in any part of the country.

Realizing that since most disasters can be prevented through adequate education and effective coordination of voluntary organizations engaged in emergency relief operations, NEMA launched and promoted the establishment of volunteerism for disaster management in the country. So far it has mobilized and registered thousands of volunteers in its Grassroot Emergency Volunteers Corps (GEVC) and Emergency Management Vanguard (EMV). While the former draws volunteers from the local communities at the grassroots, the latter is a platform for members of National Youth Corps who are keen in making impact in disaster risk reduction. The essence of the volunteerism is to ensure that the volunteers not only engage in advocacy and awareness campaigns but with adequate training they can immediately respond to any emergencies when it occurs before the arrival of relevant agencies. The volunteers underwent training and are provided with information materials like fliers, booklets and guide

books. They are also kitted.

In achieving its desire to monitor the state of preparedness of agencies which may contribute to disaster management in Nigeria, it regularly organizes simulation exercises with the participation of the stakeholders. The recent simulation was on the aviation sector which was held at Abuja International Airport. The stimulation exercise witnessed mobilization of Fire Fighters, Health Workers, Security personnel and emergency agencies struggling to rescue and evacuate presumed passengers within few minutes from a mock aircraft that was assumed to have crash-landed in thick of smoke. The purpose of such simulation exercises is to test the capabilities of the first response agencies in the event of an unexpected incidence.

Because it is mandated to collate data from relevant agencies so as to enhance forecasting, planning and field operation, NEMA continues to give early warning signals on impending disaster and epidemics. As early as January 2009 it warned on threats of Meningitis and Lassa fever before it later consumed some people in some parts of the country. It has consistently, before the rainfalls, alerted communities located along rivers and flood belts on looming water surges. Those who refused to heed the early warnings became victims of fury of the natural disaster. The agency's forecasts are not based on mere speculations or fake prophecies but through analyses of data from various sources including the use of satellite technology which the agency has acquired.

Its proposal to have six federal universities to offer postgraduate programme on disaster management was approved by the government. With this, it achieved another feat in its mandate of coordinating and promoting research activities relating to disaster at the national level. NEMA would provide the takeoff grants to the institutions to enable them commence the programme this year.

Not many Nigerians including the press realize that NEMA has attained a Full Operational Capacity (FOC) of its Mission Control Centre (MCC) by the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat. The technology which is available in few countries in the world and only in three African nations, is satellite-based equipment that provides distress alert and location information for Search and Rescue services, for Maritime, Aviation and Land Users in distress.

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Head of Press and Public Relations
National Emergency Management Agency
Abuja.

Italy earthquake in pictures



Most people in the city of L'Aquila were asleep when an earthquake struck at 3.32am, leaving dozens dead, hundreds injured and causing severe damage to homes and buildings



HEALTH & REPORT

email:healthreport@dailytrust.com

World Health Day: WHO calls for safer hospitals

Regional Director of World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr Luis Gomes Sambo has called on all member states to build hospitals in specific locations where they can withstand challenges of emergencies and ensure safety of lives.

The regional director, speaking on the celebration of the World Health Day under the theme, "Save Lives; Make Hospitals Safe in Emergencies", said many countries have lost lives due to the negligence and ignorance of the importance of hospitals and the best environment where they should be located.

His words, "I would like to use this opportunity of the World Health Day to call upon all countries to take necessary measures to make health facilities safe during emergencies. The safety measures include construction of facilities at safe sites. The design should help ensure the safety and uninter-

By Ruby Rabi

rupted supply of power, water, medicines, reagents and equipment as well as services for management of wastes, logistics, transport and communication."

Sambo advised that health facilities should not be targeted or used for military operations during conflicts, and that in the event of armed conflict, warring factions should ensure the safety and functionality of health facilities, including the safety of health workers.

"Health facilities are expected to be safe havens for people during an emergency. The facilities and their staff must be regarded by all parties - particularly combatants during conflicts - as neutral and must not be subjected to any act of violence. Countries should develop legislation and implement programmes for safe hospitals as an important step towards protecting health facilities and providing health

care during emergencies, he added

He explained that the time has passed when hospitals are located anywhere without a specific design to en-

sure their safety, saying, "The revision of building policies for health facilities as well as physical planning of towns, cities and villages is an exercise that transcends the

health sector. In the planning and construction of health facilities at urban and rural areas, ministries of health should involve not only architects but also town plan-

ners and environmental engineers in order to build health facilities in the right places and in physical forms that would enable them to withstand emergencies."

How Child immunization debate took centre-stage in KWAHA

From Mustafa Abubakar, Ilorin

Kwara State House of Assembly began last Wednesday a general debate on the state's Child Immunization Amendment Bill.

Leading the debate, the majority leader, Alhaji Ishola Balogun-Fulani stated that the proposed amendment is aimed at enhancing effective immunization programme in the state and expressed the belief that the amendment will strengthen the responsibility of every individual, particularly parents, to redouble their commitment towards achieving enhanced immunization programme in the state.

On his part, the Deputy Speaker, Alhaji Abubakar

Sukababa charged religious and community leaders in the state to play active role in the immunization programme for children across their domains.

The deputy speaker noted that the involvement of notable opinion leaders and groups are important for the overall success of the exercise. He explained that the programme was meant to protect children against the diseases that usually kill them. He called on all stakeholders to intensify the campaign on the significance of the programme and enlighten the masses about

child welfare while calling on personnel to always demonstrate high commitment to achieve the desired objectives.

Also speaking, a member representing Oke-Ogun, Prince Rasaan Taiwo reasoned that with regards to Section 4 of the principal law, the amendment should be comprehensive.

Another speaker, the member representing Oke-Ero, Engineer Usman Lawal said the proposed amendment was geared towards ensuring effective law to make the programme more effective.

Meanwhile, the Chairman, Kwara State House of Assembly Committee on Agriculture, Alhaji Al-Hassan Bagidi, identified inadequate public enlightenment campaign, ineffective monitoring and improper supervision as challenges militating against the holistic success of the immunization programme in some selected areas of the state. Alhaji Bagidi noted that despite government's efforts at achieving the desired target on the exercise, certain factors had been

hindering the full realization of the set objectives. According to the lawmaker, the programme was facing inadequate ad-hoc staff to administer drugs to the children. He therefore advocated the inclusion of community and religious leaders as well as the involvement of the existing public health institutions across the state while adequate training should be provided for all the personnel to guide against maladministration of drugs. He called for the provision of adequate drugs at all times and the extension of the duration for the exercise in order to achieve desired objectives.

Contributing, the member representing Ilorin East, Alhaji Babatunde Umar, stressed that the amendment became significant to ensure healthy living conditions for the children. The legislator said that as future leaders, children should be adequately protected physically, mentally and medically in an environment devoid of deadly diseases.

A member representing Ekiti, Mrs. Cecilia Ore, maintained that the amendment was fundamental to the general welfare of the children in a bid to guarantee their safety against ailments. He was of the opinion that apart from the government, every individual had a role in securing the future of his children.

In his submission, a member representing Isin, Chief Bisi Olorunjobi, said the proposed amendment re-emphasized the importance of immunization exercise on the lives of the children and called on all stakeholders to be alive to their responsibilities.

The speaker, Alhaji Babatunde Mohammed expressed satisfaction with the contributions of the members and directed that all suggestions raised during the debate should be critically examined at the committee level to achieve the desired target. He referred the Amendment Bill to the House Committee on Health for further legislative procedure.

Governor Abubakar Bukola Saraki had forwarded the Amendment Bill to the lawmakers as a means of raising commitment for the immunization programme in the state.

Why mouth diseases may kill many Nigerians

Nigerians who ignore their dental services or have poor mouth care stand the risk of suffering heart failure among other cardiovascular diseases which might lead to sudden death.

The Nigerian Dental Association which disclosed this in Lagos noted that recent researches both internationally and locally which showed that there are two dentists to 100,000 patients further makes the situation even more alarming.

Speaking on the subject, President of the association, Professor Adeyemi Oluniyi Olusile, explained, "Globally, the burden of dental diseases is very heavy. Studies have shown that some bacteria after residing in the mouth for sometime find their way into the blood stream and become injurious to the heart."

Professor Olusile spoke at a press conference in Lagos to announce the annual general meeting (AGM) of the association, which comes up between April 6th and 9th.

He disclosed that the theme of the AGM, "Restoration of Grossly Broken Down Teeth", was informed by alarming rate of poor oral care amongst Nigerians and

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Lagos

the attendant grievous consequences.

He explained further, "In fact, many Nigerians may die from heart failure due to poor oral care. It has been demonstrated that there is a strong connection between periodontal (gum) diseases and heart diseases. In a study involving over 600 subjects conducted in America, it was discovered that the poorer the oral hygiene, i.e. the more dirty the mouth, the narrower the major blood vessels of the body becomes. It is well known that it is the narrowing of the blood vessels that causes high blood pressure leading to hypertension, stroke and possibly heart attack. The conclusion of this is that a person with poor oral hygiene has a doubled risk of a fatal heart attack."

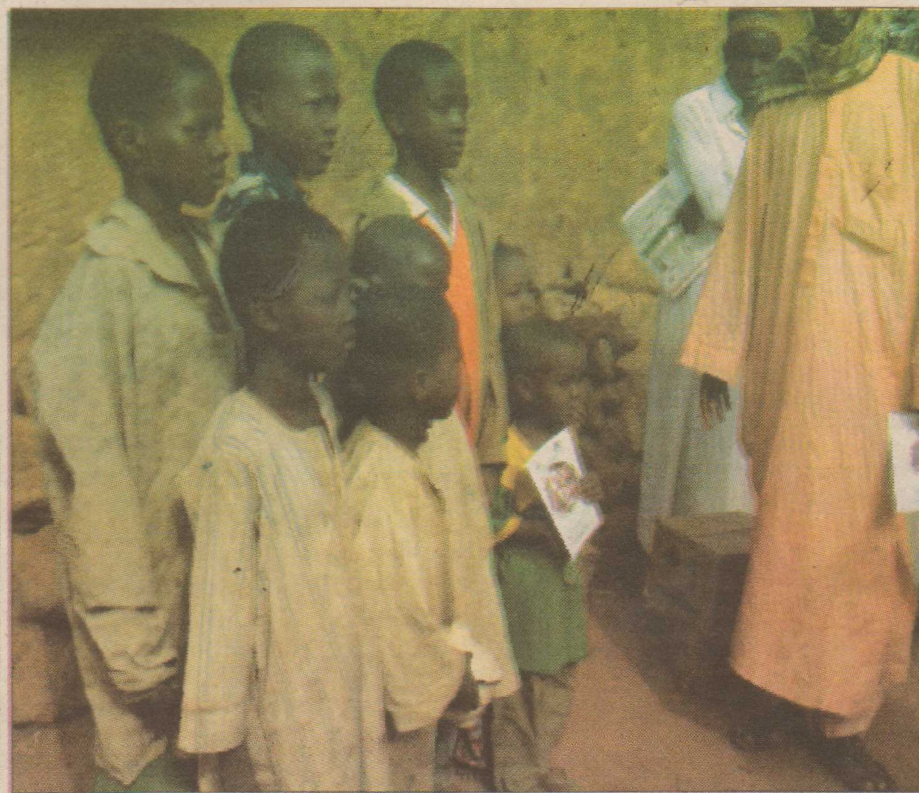
Olusile who also lectures at the Dentistry Department of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife, Osun State; argued because the mouth is the gateway to the whole body, it is very strategic and deserves proper care.

He added, "Many diseases were first detected by dentists. It is a fact that dia-

betes and white blood cancer can be detected in the mouth. Some cases of HIV/AIDS and associated ailments are detected in the mouth by dentists. It is called oral manifestation of HIV/AIDS."

Special guests expected

at the event are the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, Namadi Sambo; his Health Commissioner, Dr. Y E Peter; and the Chief Medical Officer of the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Professor H. A. Rafindadi.



Children for immunization

Cancer: 200 women get free screening in Kwara

In view of alarming spread of cancer, especially among women in Kwara State, Wellbeing Foundation, a nongovernmental organization based in Kwara State, has assisted 200

By Mustafa Abubakar

women with free cancer screening.

The foundation is the pet project of Barrister Oluwatoyin Bukola Saraki, wife of

Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara State.

Programme officer of the Foundation, Mrs Christiana Afolayan who spoke with

newsmen revealed that the 200 women who were be-

tween the ages of 25 and 60 years registered with the organization in collaboration with the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital.

She said the programme was targeted towards women within the ages of 25

to 60 years since they are prone to cancer.

She explained that the Wellbeing Foundation had embarked on the project to assist women who could not afford it, as well as enlighten those ignorant of cancer.



NO, THANK YOU!

We have an in-house policy of rewarding staff who keep to the straight and narrow path.

The practice of journalism today in Nigeria has acquired some odium due to the "brown envelope syndrome". For those who may want it spelt out, "brown envelope," is the practice whereby journalists, or those who pass off themselves as such, insist on being paid to cover events, write news report or feature articles (that are clearly not to be paid for). This practice is not limited to the lowly reporter; it obtains also at the high echelons in media organisations.

Similarly, many reporters and editors are offered gift and gratification, sometimes with the overt aim of influencing their work. Some of these gifts could be described as "token." If not, it may be offered in ways it would be rude or self-righteous to reject there and then.

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FCDA officials seal up bank at Utako

Three officials from the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) yesterday sealed up Standard Chartered Bank's branch at Utako, Abuja.

The officials led by Sanusi Mohammed, Utako district officer of the department of development control, arrived the bank's Plot 4, Cadastral Zone B05

By Abubakar Yakubu & Suleman Musa

Ekukinam Street, Utako office in the morning and chained both entrances of the gate before putting a sealed notice on the bank's entrance.

Our reporter gathered that before the officials stormed the bank's premises, they went into the

Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Abuja Council office to intimate them of their action as well as to make them understand that their land leasing agreement with the bank was not properly done.

It would be recalled that in March 2008, the then executives of the NUJ Abuja Council collected N40 million from Standard Char-

tered Bank as first instalment for leasing part of the council's plot at Utako District to the bank.

After the payment of the instalment, the bank built a banking hall in the leased plot and also fenced the portion given to them.

Yesterday's action by officials of the department of development control caught the bank's officials un-

aware as business was going on in the hall when the FCDA officials called.

The Utako District Officer of Development Control, Sanusi Mohammed said the bank is operating on a plot meant for the Nigeria Union of Journalists.

According to him, the said plot meant for the NUJ was divided into two, and used for banking operations as well as the NUJ council secretariat, without any notification to the relevant authorities.

He said the place had to be sealed up because the agreement lacked official backing.

The FCDA official said the seal can only be removed if the bank gets a formal approval from the Abuja Geographical Information System or a letter of clearance from the 'change of land' committee set up by the FCT Administration, adding that the clearance must be attached with an endorsement by the minister.

In another development, the present executives of

the NUJ Abuja Council have called on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to investigate how the N40 million collected from Standard Chartered Bank by the past executive was spent.

A statement signed by the council's Chairman said the entire money was first paid into the union's account at GTB bank, from where N17 million was used to open a fixed deposit account with a bank's branch at Asokoro.

"Surprisingly, the money in GTB was withdrawn in eight weeks and only last Friday (March 28), N2 million was withdrawn from the said account with N17 million," he said.

The NUJ Abuja council officials expressed their shock that after the matter was reported to the EFCC, the commission is yet to conclude its investigation and charge the culprits to court.

"We challenge the EFCC to, as a matter of urgency charge the culprits that have plundered the union's resources to court.



Standard Chartered Bank, Utako branch, after it was sealed up by FCDA officials yesterday. Pic: Abubakar Yakubu.

Mass Transit commuters complain over smart cards

Three commuters, who gave smart cards to a bus conductor to deduct their bus fares were yesterday shocked when the conductor told them that the cards were empty.

Two of the commuters

By Abubakar Yakubu

complained to the conductor from Abuja Urban Mass Transport Company (AUMTCO) that they bought the cards that morning from Masaka and have never used it, while the third said he only used the card on a ride from Ado to Berger Bus stop.

The three rejected cards were the only ones presented to the electronic machine inside the bus, and the affected commuters had to pay cash.

The bus conductor, who assured them that the machine was working well, said they made a mistake in collecting the cards without confirming them.

"Once you pay for a smart card, tell the seller to put it inside the machine for you to confirm the amount inside it," the conductor explained.

Man jailed for stealing iron rods

An Abuja magistrate court yesterday sentenced a man to two weeks imprisonment for stealing iron rods from a construction site at Katampe village, Abuja.

The accused, Nasiru Balamati of Mabushi village, Abuja, was reported to have committed the crime with one Tanimu, said to be at large.

Prosecutor Ahmed Mohammed told the court that on March 30, 2009, one Paul Saidu of opposite NICON junction, Maitama, Abuja, reported to the police that the accused and one

By Husein Yahaya & Ibraheem A. Fatai

Tanimu, now at large, jointly stole iron rods from a site at Katampe village, where they were caught red-handed.

He argued further that the offences committed by the accused are punishable under sections 79 and 28 of the Penal Code Law.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded guilty, saying it was true that he committed the said offence together with his friend.

"It is true that we stole the

iron rods at the said site, but I plead with the court to have mercy on me and promise not to steal again," he said.

Magistrate Omolola Oladipo sentenced him to two weeks imprisonment.

In another case, a man was arraigned for allegedly breaking into the house of one Umar Suleiman and collecting N800,000, a handset and a digital camera through intimidation.

The accused, Hosea Lirba of no 5, Ona Crescent, Maitama, Abuja was arrested on March 14, 2009.

Prosecutor Monday Akor

informed the court that on March 14, 2009, one Umar Suleiman of no 5, Ona Crescent, Maitama, Abuja, reported to the police that the accused and his accomplice, now at large, broke into the complainant's house through the back window.

He said the accused and his accomplice intimidated the complainant and collected N800,000, a handset and a digital camera.

According to the prosecutor, the offences committed by the accused are punishable under Sections 79, 347 and 293 of the Penal Code

Law.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded not guilty, and requested for bail.

Magistrate Omolola Oladipo granted the accused bail in the sum of N200,000 and two sureties in like sum, in which one of them must be a civil servant of not below Grade Level 07; and both of them must reside within the court's jurisdiction as well as swear to an affidavit to produce the accused in court on the adjourned date.

The case was adjourned to April 29 for hearing.

City news

New guidelines for mass housing projects in Abuja

The FCT Executive Committee has approved new guidelines for the execution of Mass Housing Projects in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

By Nasir Imam

decision making and weed-out unserious ones," he added.

FCT Minister, Senator Muhammad Adamu Aliero said this was one of the decisions taken during the bi-weekly FCT Executive Committee meeting on Monday in Abuja.

The minister reiterated that the new guidelines, which are expected to bring sanity to the sub-sector, will affect both the old allottees as well as those wishing to participate in the scheme.

Senator Aliero disclosed that the FCT Administration has worked out a new legal framework to give all stakeholders a level playing ground as well as to assist genuine developers in the FCT achieve their goals.

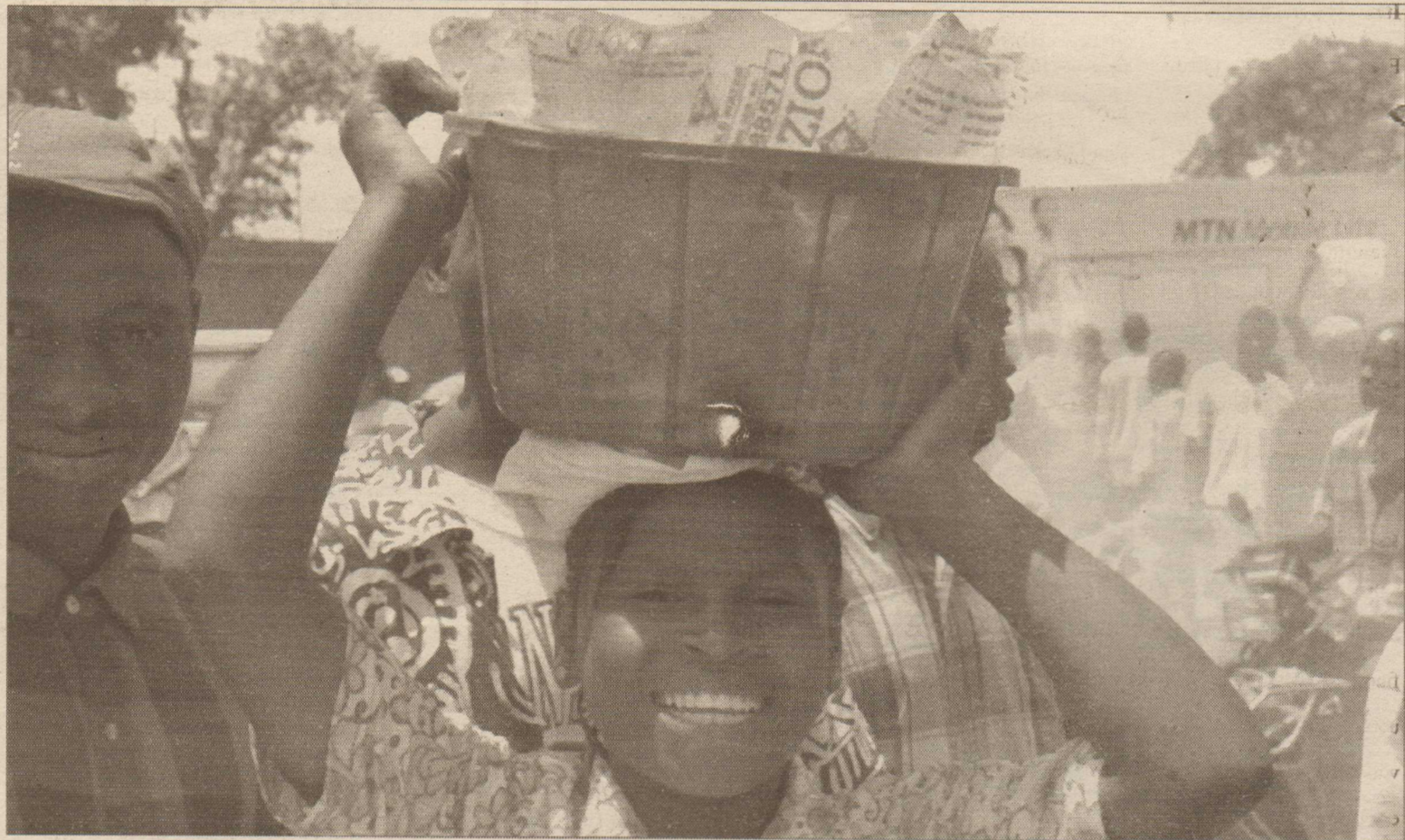
According to him, the guidelines have been made stringent by the FCT Administration to ward-off land speculators in order to allow only serious developers to survive in the overall interest of the nation.

"The FCT Administration in this dispensation will do away with land speculators and unserious developers who might exploit the good intentions of government for introducing the Mass Housing Scheme for average Nigerians," he said.

Senator Aliero said the players in the scheme must convince the FCT Administration of their financial capability to partake in the scheme, adding that other criteria to ascertain the developer's technical capability will include: bank guarantees or memorandum of understanding between the developers and their financiers.

The minister disclosed that allottees of mass housing plots who are yet to mobilise to site would be invited to come forward for re-validation of their allocations; while those who have already mobilised to site would be made to comply with the new guidelines.

"Evidence of similar projects undertaken elsewhere by the developer may also be verified by the FCT Administration to assist in



An underaged girl hawking satchet water at Nyanya yesterday.

Pic: Felix Onigbinde

Driver charged for theft

A 29-year-old driver was yesterday arraigned before an Abuja magistrate court over allegations of house-breaking and theft.

By Sikiru M. Jimoh

Godwin Isaac Thompson at Morning Star Hotel, Nyanya.

Court Registrar, Mr. Tijani Ahmed, while reading the police report said that on January 28, the complainant reported to the police that while he went to charge his

phone outside his hotel room, the accused and three other persons (now at large) broke into his room and stole his Brinca camera valued at N15,000 and N8,000 cash.

Prosecutor Tangshek Jerry equally told the court that the police investigated the

allegation and recovered the camera and the sum of N5,000 from the premises of the accused person.

When the charges were read to the accused, he denied them and asked for bail. Magistrate Ahmed Ndajiwo granted him bail in the sum of N50,000 with two reason-

able sureties that must reside within the court's jurisdiction.

The case was adjourned to April 16 for hearing.

In another court, an 18-year-old labourer was yesterday arraigned for allegedly stealing a handset.

The labourer, Yahaya Okah of Jikwoyi Phase 1 was accused of stealing a Nokia handset belonging to one Friday Edward of the same address.

Court Clerk, Mr. Mustapha Yusuf Abdul-Rahaman, while reading out the police report stated that in the night of March 12, the complainant of the same address reported to the police that the accused stole his handset valued at N9,000.

When the charges were read to the accused, he pleaded not guilty and requested for bail.

Senior magistrate Samuel E. Idhiarhi granted him bail in the sum of N20,000 and a surety that must reside within the FCT.

The case was adjourned to April 17 for hearing.



From left, Chambalin of Oceanic Bank and Samuel Igborgbor of Sky Bank, during an athletic competition at Lugbe Friday.

City news

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Amigo Supermarkets

1023 Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja

Items you can buy

Fresh fruits and vegetables Butchery-fresh Lamb, beef and chicken, dairy products, Bakery, toys, comestics, household items, Suya, popcorn, Electionics, stationary, seasonal items, food products, juice, Jewellery, mobile phones and confectionery

Park n shop Supermarkets and departmental store

740 Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja

Items you can buy

Cookers, washers/dryers, fridge/freezers, air conditioners, music systems, home and office furniture, lights, pet food, cheese products, fresh vegetables and fruits, butter, milk, wines, flat screen television, DVD/CD, cameras, phones, cigars

Emab Plaza

Plot 751 Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, close to Park n shop

Items you can buy

Artworks, children shops, boutiques, household items, supermarkets, pharmacy

Maitama Stores

Suites 5,6 and 7 Maitama Shopping Complex at FHA, Maitama, Abuja.

Items you can buy

Provisions, cosmetics, assorted drinks, ice creams, textiles and frozen foods.

Children's World Investment Ltd.

Prime Plaza. Plot 1012, Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, opposite Rockview Hotel, Wuse II, Abuja.

Items you can buy

Toys, cards, shoes, dresses, accessories for kids.

Grand Square

Plot 270 Muhammadu Buhari Way Central District, Abuja

Items you can buy

Homemade ice-cream, toiletries, fresh and frozen food, eggs, bakery, pastry, Drinks, wines, electronics, household appliances, Suitcases, toys, furniture, flowers

Garki Stores and Supermarket

Plot 1240 Samuel Ladoke Akintola Street, Abuja and Plot 465 Ahmadu Bello Way, Garki 11, Abuja.

Items you can buy

Textiles, cosmetics, assorted drinks, frozen foods, provisions and ice creams

Metro Plaza

Plot 991/992, 4th Cadastral Central Area, opposite War College, Abuja

Items you can buy

Canned and dry food goods, toys, electronics, drinks and clothes, ice-cream

Children Affairs

1079, Kolda Link, off Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Abuja

Items you can buy

Toys, cards, party accessories, sweets, everything for children

Sahad Stores

Plot 1512, Uke Street, off Ahmadu Bello Way by NPI, Garki II, Abuja

Items you can buy

African prints, perfumes, Cosmetics, Canned foods, Cooking utensils, Greetings Cards.

K City Plaza Ltd

Plot 528 Aminu Kano Crescent (by Multichoice/DSTV), Wuse 11, Abuja.

Available services include:

Boutique, Cosmetics & Perfumes, Cyber Café & Business Centre, Home Appliances, Super Market, Saloon, Travel Agency, Phones / Accessories

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION



**NIGERIAN LAW SCHOOL,
HEADQUARTERS, BWARI,
P.M.B. 170, GARKI, ABUJA.**

APPLICATION FORM 2009 BAR PART I COURSE

This is to inform all intending applicants for the admission into the Bar Part I Course for the 2009 Academic Session that applications will commence from Wednesday April 8, to April 30th, 2009. The session will commence on Monday June 15, 2009 at the Headquarters Bwari, Abuja.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: The programme is open to Law graduates of approved overseas universities or Law Schools whose Law courses have been approved by the Council of Legal Education. The programme is also open to students who have obtained at least a "Pass" in the English Bar Final or Solicitor's Final Examinations, provided the course of studies includes core subjects as stipulated by the Council of Legal Education. Degrees obtained through Part-time studies, long distance learning or study as an external student are not recognized for admission to this programme.

METHOD OF APPLICATION: Prospective applicants are to visit the School Portal, www.mynlsp.com. Follow the instructions, fill and submit on-line. After this, Print a copy of completed form A2, then download and Print forms, B, B1 and B2. No payment for application form is required.

CLOSING DATE: Downloaded Application forms together with References on applicants must be completed and returned to the Law School on or before Friday May 8th, 2009. On no account will late submission of application forms be entertained. Applicants are to note their **Application Numbers** as this will be required to check their admission status subsequently.

**Y.S. USMAN, ESQ.
SECRETARY TO COUNCIL AND
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION.**

City news

NEWS YOU CAN USE

SEROB LEGACY HOTELS, Plot 686/687, Idris Gidado Road, Wuse District, Abuja. Tel: +234-9-6281160, Fax: 09-6281161

Room type	Rates	Inclusive	Deposit	Non Resident
Standard room	N7,000	N8,050	N10,000	\$100
Deluxe Room	N9,000	N10,350	N12,000	\$120
Executive Room	N11,000	N12,650	N15,000	\$125
Business Suite	N15,000	N17,250	N20,000	\$150
Royal Suites	N18,000	N20,700	N23,000	\$175
Amb. Suites	N22,000	N25,300	N27,000	\$200

Banquet Tariff:

Legacy Hall	250	-	500 persons	N60,000 per day
Princess Hall	100	-	120 persons	N30,000 per day
Pool Side	50	-	80 persons	N40,000 per day
Meeting Rooms	-	-	20 people	N13,000 per day

Note: Inclusive means, 10% service charge and 5% Value Added Tax (VAT). US Dollar rate apply to expatriate without Nigerian resident permit. The above rates are subject to change with prior notice.

Golden Age Hotels Limited: Plot 2330, Kigoma Street, Zone 7, Wuse District, Abuja, FCT P.O. Box 9119
Tel: 09-5230006, 5235100, 08036450811, Fax: 5239792

Room type	Rates	Inclusive	Deposit	Non Resident
Standard Room	N6,087	N7,000	N8,500	\$66
Alcove Room	N6,804	N7,825	N10,500	\$75
Golden Room	N7,804	N8,975	N11,500	\$85
Golden Suite	N14,348	N16,500	N19,000	\$140

Other Facilities: Our heavy duty 350 KVA generating set is on standby to ensure that you will have no cause to worry in case of power outages. While at the Golden Age Hotels, all your secretarial needs will be taken care of at our fully automated Business Centre that is equipped and

FCT Helplines

Federal Capital Territory Administration
0804448844 08052000600 096729002

FCT website: www.fct.gov.ng.

Abuja Fire Service

09-6711371, 09-4836175, 09-6701722

092341299 (Garki) (HQ) 093149682 (State House)
095232465 (Wuse Station) 08062091082 (Nyanya)
08059686173 (Nyanya) 08059665342 (Nyanya)

Medical (National Hospital)

+234-9-2342686, 2341224, 2341382, 6712524,

Fax:

234-9-2342632

FCT Directorate of Muslim Pilgrims Affairs

08058516721 08035949215
08069277076 07037837125
08036785152 08051332258

SECURITY TIPS

1. Be cautious when entering private vehicles that operate as taxis
2. Before you board a cab, take down the number and search the car to see if criminals are not hiding in it.
3. In crowded bus stops, hold tight to your bags and pockets in order not to be robbed by pick pockets.
4. Do not leave your children with strangers, especially in religious places of worship.
5. Always secure your residence by locking up the place.
6. Do not allow a stranger embrace you in public as such person may be out to pick your wallet
7. Mind how you give lift with your cars to strangers as some of them may be robbers
8. Be observant inside and outside bank premises in order not to be trailed by robbers.
9. Stop keeping money or valuables inside your car
10. Avoid buying sachet water in motor parks as some may be drugged
11. Watch over your luggages in motor parks

RESORT CENTERS

1. Wuse Park, opposite Sky Memorial Plaza at Zone 6, Abuja.
2. Berger Park, Berger Roundabout, Abuja.
3. Children's Amusement Park, opposite National Hospital, Abuja.
4. National Zoological Park, Asokoro.
5. Abuja Zoological Garden, Area 1, Abuja.
6. Millennium Park, Maitama.
7. Ceddi Plaza, Central district, Abuja.
8. Wonderland Amusement Park, Opposite National Stadium, Abuja.
9. Maitama Amusement Park, Maitama, Abuja.

HOTELS IN ABUJA

manned to cater for your meetings and office support services like Binding, Photocopying, Typing, Word Processing, Facsimile, Laminating and Scanning etc.

DENIS HOTEL, 19, Ndjamena Crescent, off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja.

Room type	Rates N	Inclusive N	Deposit Required N
Deluxe room	15,156	17,430	21,000
Twin room	17,722	20,380	23,000
Family suite	29,680	33,421	40,000
Executive suite	30,680	35,285	42,000

Inclusive rate means: Addition of 5% vat and 10% service charge

CHIDA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL, Plot 224 Solomon Lar Way, Utako district, P.O. Box 12338, Garki, Abuja.

Room Type	Room Rates
Presidential Suite	N40,000.00
Royal Suite	N30,000.00
Ambassadorial Suite	N25,000.00
Superior room	N18,000.00
Executive room	N15,000.00
Standard room	N13,000.00

BOLTON WHITE HOTELS LTD. No 7 Gwandu Street, Beside NPL Area 11 Garki 2 Abuja. Tel: +234-9-3144311, 3144406, 3144406, 3144408, 3144318, 3144319 Fax: +234-9-3144405, +234-8022267197, +234-8065902167, +234-8054295027

Room Types	Room Rates (N)	Inclusive	Dollar (\$)
Club World	8,000	9,200	85
Delux Room	11,000	12,650	120
Super Delux Room	13,000	14,950	150
Executive Royale	15,000	17,250	160
Ambassador Suite	24,000	27,600	240
Presidential Suite	33,000	37,950	335

* 50% Discount on all room types from Friday 12 noon to Sunday 12 noon Non-Inclusive of complimentary Breakfast.

* Change without prior notice * Availability, * 5% VAT and 10% Service Charge (Special rates applicable to corporate, group and long stay guests. Reservations are available on request.)
24 Hours room service

ROCKVIEW HOTELS. Plots 194/196, Cad Zone A8, Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse II, Box 5879, Garki, Abuja. Tel: 094612800-30, 08039043800-30; Classic: Tel: 094136722-38, 4614600-30;

reservationroyale@rockviewhotelsltd.com;

reservationclassic@rockviewhotelsltd.com

Room Types	Inclusive (N)
Superior Room	18,170
Superior King Room	19,320
Executive Room	20,700
Classic Room	22,080
Queens Room	23,230
Deluxe Room	25,530
Premium Deluxe Room	26,680
Royale Room	28,060
Alcove Room	30,590
King Size Room	33,120
Ambassadorial Suite	40,480
Diplomatic Suite	45,770
Business Suite	48,300
Service Apartment	59,800
Presidential Suite	82,800

* Inclusive means 10% Service Charge and 5% VAT
(317 Rooms extensively furnished and equipped with colour TV, Satellite Channels, Telephone Systems and Air Conditioner. 24 Hours room service

Areas to pay for government services in FCT

Waste bills.

All waste bills should be paid at the office of Abuja Environmental Protection Board at Area 3, Abuja.

Electricity Pre-paid cards

Vending Stations are available at:

*PHCN Service Centre at Area 3, Opposite Afribank, Garki 1

*PHCN Service Centre, at Area 11, Opposite Police Community Bank, Ahmadu Bello way, Garki 111

*PHCN Service Centre by Power House Junction at Asokoro

*PHCN Zonal Office at Loma Monsa Street, off IBB way, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja.

*Business Unit Office, Morija Close, Behind Oti Carpets, Wuse 11.

*PHCN Service Centre, Opposite British Village, Wuse 11.

*PHCN Service Centre, Opposite El-Aamin School Maitama.

*PHCN Service Centre, Gwarinpa.

*Business Unit Office, by Regency Press Junction, Kubwa.

Telephone numbers: 08033109583, 08033375852, 08033054709, 08033139242, 07026027302 and 07041764910

Water Bills

Payments can be made at designated banks.

Enquiries can be made at the FCT Water Board Office at Area 3 Abuja.

BUSES, TAXI FARES

A. Nationwide Unity Transport Ltd

Wuse to Gwarinpa - N50

Wuse to Suleja - N80

Wuse to Madala - N60

Wuse to Kubwa - N60

Wuse to Bwari - N70

B. Abuja Urban Mass Transit Company

Wuse/Area 1/City centre to Nyanya/Maraba & Ado - N50

Wuse/Area 1/City centre to Masaka - N60

Wuse/Area 1/City centre to Karu - N50

City centre to Karshi/Orozo - N80

C. Sonic Global

Area 1/Wuse to Gwagwalada - N100

D. Abuja cabs

Each drop within the City centre - N100

TRAVEL AGENCIES

African Wings (Travels) Limited: BMG Plaza, Plot 2222, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja. 09-5234075, Fax: 09-5234076

Amir Int'l Air Services Ltd.

Suite 20, Dec-Awal Plaza, Michael Okpara Street, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja, GSM: 08033333668, 08032477880 Fax: 099-5240787

Ashmin Travels & Tours (Nig) Ltd.

Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (Complex) Plot 266 Cadastral Ao, Central Business District, Abuja.

Tel: 096701875, 09-7805463, 08033111288

Azowar Umrah Co. (Travel Agency): Sky Memorial Complex, Wuse Zone 5, Behind PDP Head Quarters, 08034905883

Baitil-Atiq Travels & Tours (Nig.) Limited

Ajami Plaza, Plot 500B Tafawa Balewa Way, Area 3, P.O. Box 10829 Garki, Abuja.

Tel: 09-2340964, 08033109675, 08042131835, 08033119640

Cong Travels and Tours Limited: Suite A5 Rocunio Hotel Plaza, Plot 1392 Abidjan Street Near Military Pension Board, Wuse Zone 3 Abuja, 088037864710

Dab-Bare Travel Agency Limited: 1 Suite 24, Mangal Plaza, Plot 1, Garua Street, Off Nouakchott Street, Wuse Zone 1, Abuja. 09-5234733

El-sawy Travels Nigeria Limited: Oyibo Odinamadu Block, Suite 0.06 Jigawa Women Development Centre, Opp. CBN, Central Area, Abuja, 080-33490939

Finest Travels and Tours Limited (Hajj and Umrah): Block G, 12 Sky Memorial Complex, Plot 518, Michael Okpara Street, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja 09-5237764, 080-36006923

Gateway Travels & Tours Limited: Metro Plaza (Annex A) AF01, Plot 991/992, Zakariya Maimalari Street, Central Area, P.O. Box 7132, Wuse Post Office, Abuja. Tel: 09-6279770, 6279835, 6715157. Fax: 6271126

Jirch Travels & Tours Ltd: Ground Floor, Ekiti House, Plot 1042, Kur Mohammed Street, Central Area Abuja.
Tel: +234(0) 94803180, 09-5232275, 07027860847

Jupiter Travels and Tours Limited: Suite 6, AP Shopping Complex, Opp. Nicon Hilton Hotel, Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama Abuja, 09-4131650

JYC Travel and Tours Limited: Suite 27, Abuja Shopping Complex By Fototek Centre, Area 3, P.O. Box 6261, Garki Abuja, 08033149321

Perisoft Travel & Tours

Suite B9, Plot 2942, Bensima House, Opp. Maitama Hospital, Aguiyi Ironsi Way, Maitama, Abuja. Tel: 08035089494, 08078151126

Seagull Travel Agency Limited: 1762 Yusuf Maitama Sule Street, Asokoro, Abuja, 08036234493

Sintali Travels & Tours

Katsina House, 2nd Floor, Opp. Federal Ministry of Finance, Central Area, Abuja - Nigeria.

Tel: 09-8706922, 08051729492, 07028039094

Starlight World Travel and Tours Limited: Suite 3, Mongal Plaza, Nouakchott Street, Wuse Zone 1, Abuja, 08038685974

Tijays Travels and Tours Limited: Plot 572 Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Koro Plaza, Wuse II Abuja, 09-5237283

Visa Travels & Tour Limited: Arcade club suites plot 68 1st Avenue, by Shehu Shagari way, Abuja.
Phone number: 09-5236141

Zhan Travels and Tours Limited: Suite 12, Fanaha Business Suites behind AP plaza, Ade Tokunbo Ademola Crescent Wuse II, Abuja Nigeria. Tel: 09-6718168, 08055247007, 08037879767, 08044131502

INSIDE POLITICS

'With checks and balances, president can appoint INEC chair'

Dr. Christiana Thorpe, the Chief Electoral Commissioner of Sierra Leone, is one of the runners up of the maiden edition of Daily Trust African of the Year Award in 2008, an award she received for conducting free and fair elections in her war-torn country. Last week, Thorpe was in Abuja for a seminar and she visited the Head Office of Media Trust, where she fielded questions from a team of editors and reporters. Excerpts:

When you were appointed, given the background of a post conflict situation, did you feel any worry that it might be absolutely difficult to conduct free and fair elections in your country?

Very much so, especially when I knew that before I was appointed, three nominations from the president had been turned down by parliament. And it was a period of 10 to 11 months and they were searching. I was the fourth nominee. But I am somebody that likes challenges. Secondly, whatever is needed to bring my country out of the doldrums much as it lies within my power, I give it a shot.

What was the reason they rejected the initial three nominees?

I can't say now for confidential reasons. But that was it. It is important for us now in Nigeria because you are coming in the middle of a dispute about who should appoint chairman of the electoral commission here. What do you think about the president appointing the chair of the commission?

I don't want to relate it to any specific country. The executive has unique powers but those powers must always be balanced or there must be somewhere where there are checks and balances. Don't forget that at the state I was appointed, government had majority in parliament but even at that, they rejected three nominees from the president, which shows that if the National Assembly realises its role as having an obligation to its people... I am sure they went back and confided in their various constituencies, people's views came into play and for one reason or the other, they said we are not happy with these nominations. You have this separation of power that must work. It depends on how this is happening. If the separation of powers is working, then a lot of things can happen correctly. It is when the separation is not there that you have problems. I would say it is very difficult to categorise or make something for another country but if separation of power is working and everyone's responsibilities are respected, then things should move.

When you were holding the elections, did you at any point get a phone call ask-

By Yunus Abdulhamid

ing you to declare certain persons as winners? What kinds of pressure did you come under?

No, there were no such. The pressures were like 'if you don't perform'. But it got to stage that sometimes around 7pm, I will just close my phones. For about three weeks during the elections, I was not sleeping in one place twice. I was moving. But I knew that because of the way we had prepared for the elections—we brought on board all stakeholders—as we were having regular meetings with political parties, civil society, the press, the police and the army. Every stage on the way, we put everything on the table for appraisal. We succeeded in getting local ownership of the process. The reason being that we were coming out of a war situation. Any mistake we knew would take us back to deeper abyss. People recognised and realised we don't want to go back. Even though during the campaign period, political parties were threatening, or whatever, you know you have the support of the masses behind you. The fact that the commission gave the impression and was truly open helped. That notwithstanding at the end of the day, we also discovered we had two commissioners who were not toeing the line but they came out themselves, they booted themselves out. I think you need to be sincere, honest and credible.

Do you think it is practicable to have some people trained and nurture certain qualities in them?

(Laughs) I don't think you could have a green house set up where you could keep a number of people and say we are now nurturing you to X, Y and Z position. I think it goes back to the society and I believe that in any and every society, there are good people who are credible. What needs to be done is to fish them out.

I should say, I believe all eggs are not rotten. There are good people around who have the interest of the nation at heart. Such people, I can tell you are not found up front. You have to go and look for them because if things are going so bad, there is the tendency for such persons to say, 'I am not going to be part of that. I

will just sit down and do my own little thing.' If they are kind of head hunted, and spoken to, because of their love for their nation, they will come out. If you have people, it is very hard for them to compromise. For me, I was not looking for fame or money. I was not even looking for job. It was purely in the service of my country. If

commission self accounting. So, we do our own budget at the parliament and receive the fund directly. Before then, it used to go through the treasury. Really, what we needed came from the government. Because we were coming out of a war situation, the international community came in a big way and two-third of the electoral

institute of an electoral administration. We will be working with one educational institution in each region to train the trainers. We are starting that next month. We will have 100 trainers in each region and in the next 24 months, they will train more people. By 2012, we expect that even the ballot box controller should have a certificate of this institute to know that you have gone through a learning process for elections. We want to make the commission a professional body. If you don't have it, you won't be allowed to work on elections even on temporary basis.

Our country is a small country. We are five million people with four regions. We are working on the reforms and we are nearly 90 per cent.

The two things basically remaining now is setting up these institutions and finalising our headquarters building. When I took over, we were housed by the party in government. The first month, I said we have to move out (general laughter). We did move out and rented a building. We are still at a rented building.

In South Africa, the electoral commission chair is a woman and there you are as another. Will you say we should be giving it to women in Africa?

(General laughter) Give women a chance. I think the DNA is different. When it comes to service, women are better. Men look at the power but women look at the repercussions because we are thinking about our children, stability. The DNA is just different; we come from a different background. But I think we should be open. It shouldn't be a man or woman thing. Whoever shows the best should be given the shot.



Dr. Christiana Thorpe

you don't allow me to serve as think I should, I say bye-bye and thank you.

One thing I will say among other suggestions I am hearing is that the Political Parties Registration Commission is to be set up. The people manning the Commission are also going to be appointed I suppose. People should begin to think. When I took over as the electoral chair, the commission was responsible for the parties as well but the political registration act was enacted in 2002. It was a big relief because all their conduct is shifted now to the commission. That commission is going to be a powerful one and people need to watch to make sure that those that are going to sit there are credible. It will free the electoral commission to now concentrate on the electoral process of elections which is very demanding.

How does the commission you head receive funds?

When I came in and we started the reforms, the first thing we did was to make the

budget came from the international community. Now we are self accounting and we are doing resource mobilisation so that we don't depend on individuals to get our job done. It is very important that the commission is self accounting for the independence. Even though the government provides funding, you don't have to wait for a minister.

So the money comes directly to the commission?

Yes, the money comes to us directly. We do our budget and say this is what we need. Once it is approved by the legislature, it comes to us directly. If we don't get what we need, we go on the air to say 'we need X amount for X reasons, and for Y reasons it cannot be.' But it had not happened.

When is the next election due?

In 2012 and it is going to be interesting because then we will have presidential, parliamentary elections as well local government elections. We have started now. By next year, we want to establish something like an

100 AC members defect to PDP

Chairman of Gombe Local Government Area Alhaji Dasuki Jalo Waziri has advised the more than 100 AC members who defected to PDP on Sunday to work for the development of the state.

Jalo, who gave the advice while receiving the politicians, said that PDP was ready to receive anybody that had good intention in joining the party.

He said most of those who defected to PDP on Sunday were in PDP before and had served the party in various ways. The politicians were from Gombe Local Government Area.

One of the defectors, Alhaji Kabiru Jauro, who was AC's Deputy National Organising Secretary, told newsmen after the ceremony that he left AC because he wanted to be associated with PDP's achievements in the state.

Jauro said that he was a notable member of PDP before he left the party in 2006, adding: "I left the party because of the crisis in the party in 2006. I was frustrated and had no other alternative than to defect to another party."

Also speaking, Alhaji Ibrahim Abubakar, AC House of Assembly candidate in 2007, claimed to have left AC because it had no direction and had not recorded any meaningful achievement.

"I was in PDP and I decided to decamp to AC because our political interest

at the time varied but I have decided to return home finally," Abubakar said. (NAN)

Waku seeks early end to election litigations

Former Senator, Mr Joseph Waku, has suggested that no elected official, whose election is being challenged in court, should be sworn in until the conclusion of all litigations.

He said at the weekend in Kaduna that all electoral litigations should be concluded before the swearing in of any official, in line with the recommendations of the Justice Muhammadu Uwais electoral reform committee.

Waku urged Nigerians to mount a campaign similar to the protest on the third term agenda, for the conclusion of all electoral litigations before the swearing in of elected officials.

Waku, who was in the Senate from 1999-2003, recommended the adoption of the Option A4 voting system for the 2011 general elections, saying it would produce the true result of the election in a voting unit.

Commenting on his political future, Waku said the introduction of independent candidacy had opened a window of opportunity for him and other Nigerians, adding that he was considering running for a higher office. (NAN)

SPORTS

Hotline:
08059100030 (Text Only)

Akpodiete wins First Bank Open

By Abiodun Jimoh, Lagos

Augustine Akpodiete was full of excitement on Sunday night when he emerged winner of the 48th edition of First Bank Lagos Amateur Golf Championship held at golf section, Ikoyi Club 1938.

Akpodiete won the event at the expense of Mohammed Muazu of Ikoyi club having both shots 157, 15 over par 36 holes at the end of the event hitherto dragged to play-off to hole one in which he hit the shots that sealed the victory at the championship that featured over two hundred golfers across the country.

The Shell Club of Ogunnu, Warri golfer who had earlier shot 79, eight over par on the first day came out forcefully on the last day as he stepped up his game by finishing the game with 78 shots, seven over par courtesy of the birdie secured to tied on shots with the Ikoyi golfer whom everybody believed to have won the contest with same shots.

After securing the needed shots that made him winner, Akpodiete fell down on his knee and shout seven halleluyah to the admiration of spectators that witnessed the battle tagged "survival of the fittest".

Speaking to sportswriters, the birthday boy who could not hide his joy hinted that he was very happy to win this year edition having prepared well for the event. He added that when he placed fourth at the 2008 edition, he fell disappointed at the feat but prayed to God to give him the trophy as his birthday gift and God answered him.

Similarly, Muazu stated that he felt bad to have lost the title right back in his own yard despite all the support given by Ikoyi golfers and others who participated at the money spinning event, adding that what happened has taught another lesson to practice more than before.

Meanwhile, last winner, Muideen Olaitan aspiration of retaining the trophy was shortlived into third position as he shots 158, 6 over par on same number of holes while Musa handicap two golfer placed fourth as Remi Olukoya rested at fifth place with 158 shots same as Musa.

In the other award categories, Tunde Olowude won the overall net award with 147 shots of 73: 74, while Winston Stresser and Olajide O have 148 shots to placed second and third respectively.

Flying Eagles told not to underrate opponents

By Orkula Shaagee

Nigerians yesterday cautioned the Flying Eagles not to underrate any of their group opponents at the Egypt 2009 FIFA U-20 World Cup, but rather approach them the same way they would tackle Brazil and Argentina.

The Flying Eagles, who finished third at the African Youth Championship held in Rwanda

early in the year, are to play in group B alongside 1999 champions Spain, Venezuela and Tahiti.

Former Head of professional league in the Nigeria Football Federation, Charles Ojugbana told Trustsports in a telephone interview that though the

group is good for Nigeria, the Eagles should be weary of their opponents who will also be all out to scale through to the next round.

Ojugbana advised the players and the team's coaching crew led by Samson Siasia to work hard and approach all matches with all the seriousness it deserves in order to

qualify from the group.

"It is good for Nigeria, but my advise to the team and the coaches is that they should be weary of complacency and take all the teams in the group like Brazil and Argentina. They should prepare well to ensure Nigeria qualifies from the group.

"Spain has an excellent

youth programme, and also know they have young players playing in Real Madrid and Barcelona, so they are going to be Nigeria's main challengers", Ojugbana stated.

He also challenged the technical crew led by Samson Siasia to make the country's football followers who voted for the appointment proud by posting excellent performance at the global soccer fiesta.

"There was a general consensus among Nigerians that Siasia should be the one to lead the team because of the confidence in him, and the ball is now in their court and they should strive to do the nation proud", he added.

Similarly, former Chairman of the Nigeria Football Federation, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima urged the Flying Eagles to tackle all their group opponents as if they were playing in the final of the tournament, considering that each of the 24 qualifiers are going to Egypt to lift the trophy.

To achieve that, Galadima asked the Eagles to work extra-hard for all matches, even as it look as if they will face weak opposition in the group.

"In football there is no weak team, all the teams are equal and willing to go; there is nothing like group of death any longer. So, the Flying Eagles should not think of a simple group, and there is no two ways to achieving it, except through hard work", Galadima noted.



FIFA officials before the U-20 World Cup Final Draw in Luxor, Egypt on Sunday.

Egypt 2009 Draw: What the coaches say...

On Sunday 5 April, the historic Temple of Luxor provided a magnificent setting for the Final Draw for the FIFA U-20 World Cup Egypt 2009. Coaches, officials and reporters from around the world were captivated by the breathtaking show and ceremony. FIFA.com summarises reaction to the event.

Miroslav Soukup, Egypt coach

The groups are all very strong, because every team good enough to qualify for the World Cup has to be strong. I've closely followed the qualifying tournaments around the world, and these are all very good teams. We'll now begin preparing for the various systems used by our group opponents. The whole of Egypt is expecting us to succeed at the tournament.

Thomas Rongen, USA coach

We have definitely been drawn into a strong group, perhaps the strongest of the tournament but that poses a great opportunity. Anytime you have the chance to play against teams like Germany, Cameroon and Korea Republic is a chance to showcase American football.

Brian Eastick, England coach

First of all, I have to give a lot of credit to the Egyptian LOC and to FIFA for a fantastic draw. The setting was magnificent; very unique and exotic and everyone connected with hosting the draw should be congratulated. It's a very difficult draw for us. Obviously, the team that jumps out is Ghana, but Uruguay and Uzbekistan will be very difficult opponents too. We're very much looking forward to the challenge.

Jan Versleijen, Australia coach

coach

It is not an easy group, but you can expect at a World Cup that all matches will be challenging as you have the top countries participating. Brazil has qualified for more FIFA U-20 World Cups than any other nation, and have won the tournament on four occasions. The Czech Republic were runners up in Canada in 2007 and the Costa Ricans are unknown but always produce great players with good skills.

Zoran Vranes, Trinidad and Tobago coach

We've landed in a very tough group, but we're looking forward to meeting Egypt, Paraguay and Italy. The draw ceremony was perfect—even better than I expected."

Horst Hrubesch, Germany coach

It's a very difficult group.

Cameroon have a very skilled team. The US team also has very good players in their squad and Korea won't make it easy for us. Anyway, our goal is to reach the next round."

Hong Myung Bo, Korea Republic coach

This isn't an easy group. It'll be very difficult, but we'll rise to the challenge.

Ronald Gonzalez, Costa Rica coach

We've landed in an exotic group with strong opponents. It will be very interesting.

Winston Marumo, South Africa team manager

The draw as a whole has been a fantastic event.

Francisco Flores, Venezuela player

We have two U-20 world champions - Nigeria and Spain, but we

cannot rule out Tahiti. It won't be easy, but we have the desire to play a good tournament and show that we deserved to be here.

Luis Milla, Spain coach

Each team will cause us different problems. Venezuela eliminated Argentina, so they qualified for a good reason and football is improving there all the time. Nigeria have very powerful players, very competitive, and Tahiti is the team we know least of all. But they will compete with energy and passion.

Sellas Tetteh, Ghana coach

The group is solid, difficult and tough. England will be a huge force to reckon with considering their background. Uruguay and Uzbekistan have good youth football policies so it definitely will be difficult to play them, but we will be ready for them when the competition kicks-off.

FIFA postpone final U-17 World Cup inspection

The Nigeria Football Federation, NFF have revealed that the much awaited visit of the Federation International Football Association, FIFA for the U-17 FIFA World Cup has been shifted.

Top officials of the football house said that the visit which is to finally ascertain if Nigeria has met the standard required for the FIFA U-17 World Cup will now hold in May.

This postponement would be a welcome relief to the Local Organising Committee (LOC) for the FIFA World U-17 Championship after the world football governing body's vice-president Jack

Warner, had expressed strong reservations about the country's readiness to stage the competition during their last visit.

"FIFA will now be in Nigeria in the first week of May and not as originally scheduled for this month," an official said.

Nine Nigerian cities bidding to host the tournament with FIFA in conjunction with the LOC expected to pick six out of these cities to stage the competition come November. Only the Abuja National Stadium in the capital city of Abuja and Ijebu Ode Stadium received FIFA's pass mark when Warner and his team last visited the country.

Congolese coach lauds players despite loss

In spite of their ouster from the CAF Confederation Cup by Bayelsa United, Mankou Jean Elo, coach of 57 Tourbillion of Congo Brazzaville, on Sunday lauded his players' performance. Elo said after they went down by a lone goal to the Nigerian side in the second round tie played in Oghara, Delta, that his boys did well in the game.

Bayelsa are through to the third round on a one-goal aggregate after the first leg ended scoreless three weeks ago in Brazzaville. Speaking through an interpreter, Elo said: "I praise my boys for doing a good job. They played well in spite of losing to their Nigerian counterparts."

He said the officiating was fair, although there were some questionable calls by the Ivorian centre referee.

"There were a few occasions we had cause to be worried. Generally, my boys gave a good account of themselves and I expect Bayelsa United to improve as they advance in the competition," Elo said.

His Bayelsa United counterpart, Monday Odigie, said his boys did their best in the game, which he said was tough. "This is their first outing in an African competition and it was not easy for them. I am happy we won this match and we will go back to correct the flaws in the team."

Stanley Ohawuchi scored the day's only goal when he connected home Ameh Aruah's cross with four minutes to time.

Quote of the Day

"I am getting old; I'm hitting the ball so short now, I can hear it land. And the hole seems about the size of a Bayer aspirin."

—South African golf legend, Gary Player, saying this week's U.S. Masters, his record 52nd appearance, would be his last on the regular tour.

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

Lamido Zubairu Way, Yola By-Pass, PMB 2250 Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria

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VACANCY

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

SUMMARY OF POSITION

Charged with spearheading the further expansion of the IT infrastructure of American University of Nigeria (AUN). We are seeking an enthusiastic, entrepreneurial individual to develop and implement IT policy, lead the IT planning process, and set the overall strategic direction for technology services.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Lead innovation efforts and have executive responsibility for Information Technology Services involving all University locations on campus and off campus. Negotiate and maintain responsibility for managing various IT related vendor contracts. Assist with or create requests for proposals for IT related projects. Translate and articulate administrative and educational goals of the institution into technical initiatives. Recommend and/or determine the University's long-term system needs and propose hardware/software solution to accomplish the University's business objectives and to support campus goals.

2. Develop and implement a reliable and easily scalable IT Architecture for the University at the logical through physical and application layers.

3. Build and motivate a high performing team. Manage the day-to-day operations of the Information Technology Department including directing staff who support administrative and/or academic computing, networking, user services, telecommunications and other information technology functions.

4. Other responsibilities as may be assigned.

Requirements for the position

Bachelor's degree in Computer Science/IS plus preferably 10 or more years of post-graduate experience and/or related training. Master's Degree in Computer Sciences and/or related discipline is preferred. Prior experience as a senior executive within an IT Department supporting a large university or equivalent industry experience with sound Management and Technical Skills. Excellent communication skills including ability to effectively present information to top management, public groups, and/or Board of Trustees will be an additional advantage.

BANNER PROJECT MANAGER

SUMMARY OF POSITION

Oversees the Banner project including establishing and maintaining the project schedule, evaluating and assigning both the staff and resources as needed. Provides consulting services to the users, for all project-related administrative applications, providing analysis and oversight of software enhancements, maintenance programs, and release updates.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Runs the project on a day-to-day basis, Coordinates users and service providers.
2. Manages a server environment to include

security, data safety and integrity disaster recovery, and development and implementation of bulk data import/export procedures.

3. Manages multiple servers and workstations ensuring proper integration of these components with existing University computer systems.

4. Researches, evaluate purchases, installs, configures, and troubleshoots all hardware, peripherals, and equipment necessary to meet integrated systems objectives. Troubleshoots networks, systems, and applications to identify and correct malfunctions and other operational problems.

Requirements for the position:

- Engineering degree in Computer Science or related field;
- 10 years related experience; OR, any equivalent combination of education and/or experience from which comparable knowledge, skills and abilities have been achieved.
- Experienced project manager with expertise in multi-module SunGard Banner implementations for a 2 or 4 year university environment.
- Project management experience and a solid understanding of financial and human resources functionality and how they integrate with Banner.
- Excellent communication skills.

LAB. TECHNOLOGIST (PHYSICS)

SUMMARY OF POSITION:

Management of physics undergraduate teaching laboratories, helping undergraduate geology teaching laboratories. Maintain physics and geology labs, working with physics faculty to ensure smooth operation of geology and physics teaching labs and laying equipment needs for labs.

RESPONSIBILITIES: This position report to the Dean, School of Arts and Sciences through the faculty coordinator for Natural Sciences. Responsible for setting up of physics and geology labs and assist the faculty and students with the operation of lab equipment. Updates lab manuals; calibrate and repairs instruments, computer software; purchase physics and other supplies. Keeps physics labs and prep rooms orderly and organized.

Requirements for the position: HND in Laboratory Science and Technology with specialization in physics laboratories. Adequate knowledge of electrical and electronic equipment, computer literacy is compulsory. Keen interest in learning how to interface physics lab with computers and knowledge in data acquisition is desired.

HOW TO APPLY

Qualified applicants should send an updated Curriculum Vitae and a letter of interest highlighting his or qualification for the applicable position to abubakar.ahmed@aun.edu.ng not later than 2 weeks from the date of this publication.



JOB VACANCIES

Successory Nigeria Ltd

Recruits on behalf of a New International Microfinance Bank

To launch its operations in Kaduna City, a new Microfinance Bank seeks to recruit: Human Resources Manager, Accountant, IT Manager, Purchase / Logistics Officer, Loan Officers, Client Advisors and Cashiers.

Human Resources Manager

Responsibilities
The Human Resources Manager will lead the Human Resources Department which is in charge of all personnel matters from hiring, to training, to performing evaluations.

- Qualifications/Skills**
- ✓ University degree in Business Administration, Human Resources Management or General Economics
 - ✓ Minimum 5 years of experience in human resources related role with experience in managing staff (required)
 - ✓ Track record in developing a Human Resources Department based on performance management (valuable)
 - ✓ Past experience in the financial sector (valuable)
 - ✓ Knowledge of Nigerian labour law and employment practices
 - ✓ Excellent presentation, organisational and training skills
 - ✓ Strong analytical skills with entrepreneurial personality and team orientation

Accountant

Responsibilities
The Accountant will be in charge of booking all daily records and preparing financial reports in compliance with local regulations and best practices.

- Qualifications/Skills**
- ✓ University degree in Business Administration or Accounting
 - ✓ Minimum 5 years of experience in accounting with a track record in developing a proficient department
 - ✓ Past experience in the financial sector (valuable)
 - ✓ Knowledge of Nigerian accounting practices and regulations
 - ✓ Strong analytical skills with excellent presentation and organisational skills
 - ✓ High level of integrity

IT Manager

Responsibilities
The IT Manager will be in charge of all hardware and software related issues in the microfinance bank.

- Qualifications/Skills**
- ✓ University degree in IT
 - ✓ Minimum 5 years of experience in IT management with a track record in developing a proficient department
 - ✓ Past experience in the financial sector (valuable)
 - ✓ Knowledge in Nigerian IT infrastructure requirements
 - ✓ Detailed oriented with organisational skills
 - ✓ Strong analytical skills with entrepreneurial personality and team/user orientation

Purchase / Logistics Officer

Responsibilities
The Purchase / Logistics Officer will be responsible for planning and executing both purchases and logistics.

- Qualifications/Skills**
- ✓ University degree in Business Administration, Management or General Economics
 - ✓ Minimum 5 years of experience in Purchase / Logistics in a well-established company
 - ✓ Strong interpersonal and negotiation skills
 - ✓ Organisational expertise

Loan Officers

Responsibilities
Loan Officers are responsible for recruiting and managing a loan portfolio of up to 200 microentrepreneurs. Pre-loan disbursement tasks include promoting products, evaluating and analysing businesses, preparing loan synthesis for credit committee and presenting the cases. Post-loan disbursement tasks include monitoring visits to business, following up on loan repayment, managing loan recovery and assessing the impact of loan for renewal.

- Qualifications/Profile**
- ✓ Diploma: ND minimum with basic knowledge in accounting, finance and mathematics
 - ✓ Articulate, well spoken with fluency in English (written/spoken)
 - ✓ Detail and target oriented
 - ✓ Self starter, able to work alone
 - ✓ Creative and innovative
 - ✓ Customer service oriented
 - ✓ Dynamic and motivated individuals who like to work outdoor

Client Advisors

Responsibilities:
As Client Advisor, the main responsibilities include mobilising deposits, managing savings accounts, data entry and control of client data in the information system.

- Qualifications/Profile**
- ✓ Diploma: ND minimum
 - ✓ Articulate, well-spoken
 - ✓ Fluent in English (spoken/written)
 - ✓ Detail and target oriented
 - ✓ Customer service oriented

Cashiers

Responsibilities
As Cashier, the main responsibility is cash management in the bank branches. Each cashier will be responsible and accountable for the efficient and accurate operation of one teller.

- Qualifications/Profile**
- ✓ Diploma: ND minimum
 - ✓ Fluent in English (spoken/written)
 - ✓ Detailed oriented
 - ✓ Self motivated
 - ✓ Customer service oriented

Compensation

All positions have a competitive compensation package.

Application Process

Interested candidates for HR Manager should send an updated CV and a cover letter explaining the reasons for applying for this position to hrmanagermicrofinance@yahoo.com not later than 14 April.

Interested candidates for positions of Accountant, IT Manager and Purchase / Logistics Officer should send an updated CV and a cover letter explaining the reasons for applying for this position to hqrecruitmentmicrofinance@yahoo.com. Please indicate the position name in the heading and respond not later than 17 April.

Interested candidates for positions of Loan Officers, Client Advisors and Cashiers should send an updated CV and a cover letter explaining the reasons for applying for this position to branchrecruitmentmicrofinance@yahoo.com or to the postal address: Managing Consultant, Successory Nigeria Ltd, Suites 516/517, 5th Floor Bank of Industry Building, 18 Muhammadu Buhari Way, Kaduna Nigeria. E-mail address is preferable. Please indicate the position name in the heading and respond not later than 14 April.

Sports

Returnee Ezeji sets league goals record

Returnee Premier League star, Victor Ezeji, emerged the hero on the night of seven goals thriller at Liberation Stadium, Port Harcourt as Sharks battered Wikki Tourists of Bauchi 6-1 in a week 31 fixture.

Ezeji grabbed a double brace in the enthralling clash, opening his goals account just thirteen minutes after kick off after Prince Nnake scored in three minutes.

The domestic league veteran added four more goals in 13, 37, 43 and 74 minutes to help Sharks to a spectacular 6-1 win.

Ezeji, returned to the Nigerian scene after a spell with Tunisian side, Club Africain. Winner of several FA Cups, Ezeji was part of Enyimba's CAF Champions League glorious squad in 2003.

Sharks win on Saturday catapulted the Garden City side to the 6th position on the log with 44 points. The result bolstered Manager Kadiri Ikhan's title dream even with just seven matches remaining on the fixture.

Rangers International climbed one step up on the ladder after hammering Gateway of Abeokuta 3-0 at Beverly Hills Hotels mini-stadium on Saturday.

The Antelopes wasted a handful of scoring opportunities before finding an antidote to their blunt attack in the second period.

Petit John Nnam opened scoring from the penalty spot in 55 minutes before two late

goals from substitutes Brendan Ogbu and Stanley Okoronkwo in 81 and 89 minutes respectively to bring the final scores to 3-0.

Now 4th on the league table, Rangers with 46 points are five points adrift of third placed Enyimba who handed a 1-0 defeat to Kaduna United on

Sunday in Aba.

The Peoples Elephant fetched all three points on offer when Ofem Inah stepped forward to convert a 49 minutes penalty after Osas Idehen had lost one in the first half. Enyimba thus bridged the gap with second placed Heartland to just one point even though

the Owerri side have three games in hand.

In Makurdi, Lobi Stars took one giant step out of their relegation worries, beating Zamfara United 1-0 in one of the week 31 Premier League matches.

Ikechukwu Okemmiri, one of the Okemmiri dynasty

scored the eventual match winner just four minutes after kick-off.

Akwa United put a wedge to Warri Wolves title ambition with a 2-0 defeat in Uyo.

A brace from former Rangers forward, Ogbonna Onuoha in 35 and 60 minutes ensured that the

Uyo outfit erased the sad memories of their last week woeful 3-0 defeat by Zamfara United.



Padraig Harrington of Ireland chips on the practice green in preparation for the Masters golf tournament at the Augusta, Georgia, United States... yesterday.

BCC Lions decry poor officiating

BCC Lions FC of Gboko yesterday decry poor officiating in the national professional league and urged NFF to rectify the situation.

In a post-match interview with the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) in Kaduna after the Gboko team lost 3-1 to Ranchers Bees, the Chief Coach Andrew Agu, said visiting clubs required protection against unfair officiating.

Agu said host clubs enjoyed undue advantage from referees who usually ensured that they won their matches at the expense of the visitors.

"The NFA has to ensure that teams playing away matches will be protected from the referees, whose officiating is one sided," said Agu.

Agu commended his boys saying "they did their best. If they had not played well, we would have ended up with no goals from the way the referee handled the match."

However, the captain of the side, Macelin Liam said they lost because "the players lost grip of the match in the first half."

"They all went for attack and left the defence open, leaving Ranchers to take advantage to score two goals in the first half."

"Even in the second half the boys did not do better than that's why the third goal came."

Lions' first goal came through Tema Yough, while Ranchers equalised through Mansur Addurashed, who scored from the penalty spot.

Anthony Michael increased the tally, while Tijani Adam sealed victory for the hosts in the second half with the third goal.

Ranchers Bees Chief Coach Gideon Gaya, told NAN that his boys were "incredible. It is not easy to come down from one goal and win with that margin with we won today."

"I am satisfied," said Gaya.

We are not afraid of Al Ahly - Galadima

Kano Pillars Football Club of Kano Continental Committee Chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima yesterday said the Kano-based soccer outfit will tackle Egyptian side the same way it would face any club in its continental campaign.

Speaking in a telephone

interview with *Trustsports* from Kano, Galadima stated that they respect Al Ahly as African champions but would not be afraid of them when they meet in the next round of the CAF Champions League.

The former chairman of the

Nigeria Football Federation stated that immediately the team returns from Abuja after a league duel against FC Abuja, they will go into close camping for intense preparation ahead of the CAF Champions League match against the cup holders.

"We know that Al Ahly is strong side, we can't take that

away from them, we respect them, they have good players, but big names don't play football, so we are going to take on them the same way we could face any other team in this campaign.

"We are also champions of the Nigerian league, so we are going to give them a good fight. The team is still in Abuja

to honour a league match and immediately the return to Kaduna they will go into close camping in preparation for or continental competition.

"In addition to that, we will continue to motivate our players and do whatever we feel is possible to enable us win the trophy", Galadima stated.

Heartland look ahead to clash with Cotonsport

Heartland FC of Owerri are already looking forward to their next game in the CAF Champions League against Cameroon's Cotonsport, after disposing Morocco's FAR on Saturday, in Rabat.

In an interview with the

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Owerri on Monday on arrival from Morocco, midfielder Moses Ezeruikwe, said they were confident of overcoming the Cameroonians when they meet on April 17 in Owerri, in the first leg of round three of the competi-

tion. The second leg second round tie in Morocco ended 1-1 and gave the Imo side 4-2 aggregate win after their 3-1 first leg win in Owerri three weeks ago.

Ezeruikwe said the Moroccans did everything to frustrate them in their country.

"When we got there, they tried to frustrate us, but we thank God that their plans did not work. We tried our best because there was pressure on us to deliver," he said.

He said Mazdi gave the

Moroccans their goal 36 minutes into the game while substitute Sign Chibambo, drew level 13 minutes into the second half.

...get N2m bonus

Apparently overwhelmed by his team's performance in Morocco against FAR FC which earned them passage to the last knock out stage of the CAF Champions League, Chairman of Heartland of Owerri, Chief Ignatius Okeahialam, Saturday night announced a cash pro-

mise of N2m to the players. The money, *Complete Sports* gathered, was not part of the normal bonus paid to the players.

Confirming this when *Complete Sports* called him up Sunday in Rabat, Morocco, an official of the club, Promise Nwachukwu, said Okeah-

ialam was elated by the performance of the players that he promised the players extra N2m aside their normal match bonus.

"That was not all," he added.

"He organised a party for the entire team after the match and even promised to hold

another party for them when we return to Nigeria.

"To be honest with you, the players as a team did play excellently well.

"I don't want to start appraising them player by player, but generally, they played well and we are very proud of them," he concluded.

Nigerians excel in powerlifting in Dubai

The Nigeria Paralympics Committee (NPC), yesterday expressed satisfaction with the performance of the country's powerlifters at last week's Fazza International Powerlifting Championships in Dubai.

Simon Ebhojiaye, the NPC Secretary, told the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) on Monday in Lagos that the invitation of Obioma Aligekwe and Solomon Amarakuo by

the organisers of the competition was a confirmation of the country's rising profile in powerlifting.

Ebhojiaye said the two powerlifters were invited on the strength of their outstanding performance at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics.

He said Aligekwe became seven lifters in the men's 90kg category while Amarakuo placed fourth in the 100kg category.

Sports

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Old rivalries rekindled

Liverpool against Chelsea is the most eagerly anticipated Champions League quarter-final first leg this week despite the pair having met in the competition in each of the last four seasons.

Liverpool's stunning form at home and abroad and Chelsea's resurgence under interim coach Guus Hiddink make for an intriguing all-English tie rather than a boring fifth instalment of what has usually been a cagey affair.

Rafa Benitez's side, who beat Real Madrid home and away in the last round and also humbled Manchester United recently to reopen the Premier League title race, have home advantage on Wednesday with the return leg in London on April 14.

"There are no secrets in modern football," Hiddink told uefa.com before his team beat Newcastle United 2-0 on Saturday and Liverpool won 1-0 at Fulham with a last-gasp goal.

"The players are known by the managers, the players know each other very well, the managers know how they play, so it's very open and very tight. Benitez has proven he is a very smart manager. I'm looking forward to this battle."

Familiarity is a theme across the ties with holders Manchester United hosting Porto on Tuesday, five years after the Portuguese club knocked out Alex Ferguson's side on their way to winning the 2004 Champions League.

United have had a wobble domestically since eliminating Inter Milan in the last 16 but overcame Aston Villa 3-2 in a thriller on Sunday thanks to a stoppage-time winner.

Striker Dimitar Berbatov misses out with an ankle injury.

Also on Tuesday, Villarreal host Arsenal with the Spanish club's winger Robert Pires coming up against his former team.

"When I go out to face Arsenal for the first time since leaving, there will be a lot of emotion," he said. "But I'm sorry Arsenal fans, if I can play well and eliminate them then I'm going to do it. But for Villarreal, not for me."

Villarreal, without injured winger Santi Cazorla, want revenge after losing to Arsene Wenger's side in the 2006 last

four before Arsenal were beaten by Barcelona in the final.

Spanish league leaders Barca entertain fellow heavyweights Bayern Munich on Wednesday in the only tie without English interest.

Bayern are reeling from a 5-1 thrashing by Wolfsburg on Saturday which dented their hopes of retaining the German title.

They will look to Franck Ribery to restore their confidence by outshining fellow magician Lionel Messi at the Nou Camp.

Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard, joint top scorer in the Champions League this term, is equally on fire and will have to be at his best to help beat a side he once almost joined.

He has already given the

club a boost ahead of the tie by joining coach Benitez and Dirk Kuyt in signing a new contract.

Liverpool beat Chelsea in the 2005 and 2007 semi-finals while they drew 0-0 twice in the 2005/06 group stage. The Londoners finally overcame their bogey team in extra-time in last season's semi-final before losing to United in the final.



FC Porto's Hulk, centre, trains with teammates at Old Trafford Stadium ahead of their Champions League quarter final clash against Manchester United in Manchester, England ...tonight.



United set to welcome back trio

Manchester United welcome back Wayne Rooney, Nemanja Vidic and Paul Scholes to their Champions League squad for Tuesday's match against Porto at Old Trafford after they were suspended from domestic action at the weekend.

Manager Alex Ferguson's prospects of establishing a healthy quarter-final first leg lead over Porto would be enhanced further if centre-back Rio Ferdinand shakes off a back injury to play.

However, Ferguson will definitely be without striker Dimitar Berbatov who has an ankle injury and will be sidelined for the next two weeks.

Holders United, looking to extend their record unbeaten run in the Champions League to 22 matches, go into the game in a far better of frame of mind than looked likely after 80 minutes of Sunday's Premier League match against Aston Villa.

They trailed 2-1 and appeared to be heading for a third league defeat in a row before late goals from Cristiano Ronaldo and teenage substitute Federico Macheda gave them a 3-2 win.

The result transformed the mood at Old Trafford with United going back on top of the Premier League and keeping alive their hopes of winning five trophies this season.

United will start favourites although, five years ago, Porto knocked United out 3-2 on aggregate in the last 16 on their way to winning the trophy. Coach Jose Mourinho performed a touchline jig that is still a bad memory for many Red Devils fans.

Jesualdo Ferreira's Porto team are not as organised nor as tactically disciplined as the one Mourinho built, but they have plenty of attacking threat and go into the match in top form.

However, their record in England is poor, losing 11 of the 12 matches they have played. The only exception was the 1-1 draw at Old Trafford against United in 2004.

Hulk, the Brazilian striker who has attracted attention in Spain after a brilliant display in the first leg of the last-16 tie against Atletico Madrid, will pose a threat with aggression and pace reminiscent of his compatriot Ronaldo.

Arsenal primed for strong finish to season

Arsene Wenger has all but conceded any possibility of the Premier League title but still believes the team have a realistic chance of silverware in the Champions League and FA Cup.

As a rejuvenated Arsenal headed for Villarreal and Tuesday's Champions League quarter-final first leg, Wenger was in buoyant mood following Saturday's demolition of Manchester City which extended their unbeaten run in the Premier League to 17 matches.

"You cannot win the championship if you lose five of your first 14 games," he said after Arsenal's 2-0 victory.

"But the team is young and we have come through it, and

we are not the same team now as we were in August and September.

"There's a lightness back in the team, we are playing without the handbrake and we go into this Champions League game in a good state of mind, very focused, full of belief and commitment. I still believe this season can be a very successful one for us."

Arsenal's win consolidated fourth place in the race for next season's Champions League spots, but as important as the three points was the return from long-term injuries of midfielder Cesc Fabregas and striker Emmanuel Adebayor.

Fabregas, back in the side for the first time since December after recovering

from a knee injury, ran the match in midfield and made both goals for Adebayor, returning after 10 games out with a hamstring injury.

Winger Theo Walcott, also returning to the starting lineup after injury, should be fit to face the Spaniards when Arsenal play their 200th match in European competition.

Dutchman Robin van Persie, injured while on international duty for the Netherlands last week, is more unlikely to play but has not been completely ruled out while Eduardo and Abou Diaby remain on the injured list.

Andrei Arshavin, who signed from Zenit St Petersburg in the winter transfer window is ineligible after playing for the

Russian side in the UEFA Cup earlier this season.

Villarreal are still reeling from their miserable 3-0 league defeat at Almeria on Saturday, that was made all the worse by the injury to winger Santi Cazorla.

A fractured shin bone has put the Spain international out for the rest of the season.

"Cazorla is a key figure for us, but we have a large squad and whoever steps in in his place I am sure will do well. We will try to beat Arsenal for him," defender Diego Godin said.

"Saturday's game aside we have been playing well. We will try to pick ourselves up again."

Villarreal remain fourth in the Primera Liga and have never lost at home in the Champions

League.

The last time they played Arsenal in the competition they drew 0-0 at the Madrigal to fall 1-0 on aggregate in the semi-finals in 2006.

Possible teams:

Villarreal: 13-Diego Lopez; 18-Angel Lopez, 4-Diego Godin, 2-Gonzalo Rodriguez, 5-Joan Capdevila; 10-Cani, 19-Marcos Senna, 6-Sebastian Eguren, 7-Robert Pires; 15-Nihat Kahveci, 22-Giuseppe Rossi

Arsenal: 1-Manuel Almunia; 3-Bacary Sagna, 5-Kolo Toure, 10-William Gallas, 22-Gael Clichy; 27-Emmanuel Eboué, 17-Alex Song, 15-Denilson, 4-Cesc Fabregas (captain); 14-Theo Walcott, 25-Emmanuel Adebayor.

Sports

Who is Federico Macheda?

If football fans across the globe had not heard of Federico Macheda before his wonder goal against Aston Villa, they certainly have now.

The 17-year-old Italian announced his arrival in English football with a dramatic and decisive injury-time curler, which gave Manchester United a 3-2 win and took them back to the top of the Premier League table above Liverpool.

But who is the player known at Old Trafford as "Kiko" Macheda and where did he come from?

Macheda was born in Rome in 1991 and began his footballing life at Lazio, where he would have stayed had it not been for Italian football regulations, which prevented under-18s signing professional terms.

The striker had already been spotted by United's vast scouting network during his early teens and, sensing an opportunity, they got their man.

He was only 16 when he signed for United as a trainee in September 2007, a move that caused uproar at Lazio, who rated him so highly they had taken him to the senior squad's pre-season camp in the summer of that same year.

"Manchester United - as they have done in the past with other promising Italian players like Giuseppe Rossi - came in early and offered Kiko a contract as an apprentice," Giancarlo Galavotti of Italian daily newspaper La Gazzetta dello Sport, told BBC Sport.

"Whatever happens in his future career, he will remain among the legends of Manchester United. It was a goal that at the end of the season will make the difference between United winning and losing the title."

Lazio chairman Claudio Lotito is critical of United's approach for the youngster, and believes academy players should be protected from the advances of overseas clubs until they are 18.

"We tried in every way to

stop Manchester United from taking away our player, but the present Italian regulations don't give you any type of

professional terms at Old Trafford on the day of his 17th birthday and just eight months later became an instant hero for

led to Macheda being promoted to the first team against Villa.

Despite his age, Macheda

"He is a real Italian striker. He might not look as if he is doing much but when he gets the ball his touch is very good and he makes good decisions.

"In some ways he has a style of Berbatov. He makes some very clever runs and is a very good finisher.

"He has fitted into the club very well and is on a really good wavelength with Danny Welbeck."

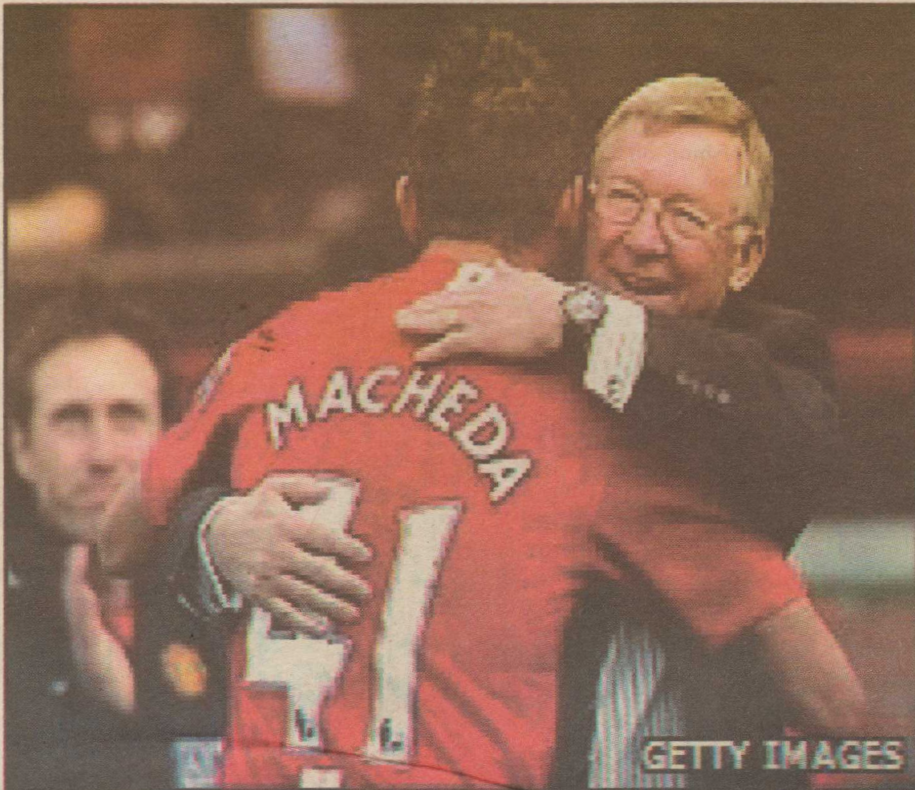
Berbatov's absence may provide Macheda with further first-team opportunities. He is now a member of United's 25-man Champions League squad

for the knock-out stages after midfielder Owen Hargreaves was ruled out for the season with a knee injury.

Macheda's goal on Sunday has been compared to that of Steve Bruce against Sheffield Wednesday in 1993 because of its importance.

Bruce's late header clinched victory for United, with Ferguson's side going on to win the Premier League title.

It may yet prove to be a pivotal goal in the battle for the title but whatever the outcome of the Premier League race this season, a star has been born.



Good boy... Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson hugs the new wonderkid Federico Macheda after their 3-2 victory over Aston Villa.

defence," Lotito said. "In reality we find ourselves in front of a proper cattle market.

"I talked repeatedly with Macheda's parents, we established a dialogue, but it was not possible to do anything. We could not compete with United's offer.

"That is not right, we have to be provided with more reliable and concrete rules than those which govern Italian clubs."

Macheda moved to Manchester with his family - his father, Pasquale, his mother and his younger brother, Simone.

In August 2008, he signed

the Red Devils.

But what had the Italian been doing during that period?

Under the guidance of former United striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer - now reserve coach for the reigning Premier League champions - Macheda began getting to grips with English football.

He started in the youth team, but, under Solskjaer's tutelage, had been promoted to the reserves this season, scoring eight goals in eight games, including a hat-trick against Newcastle in March.

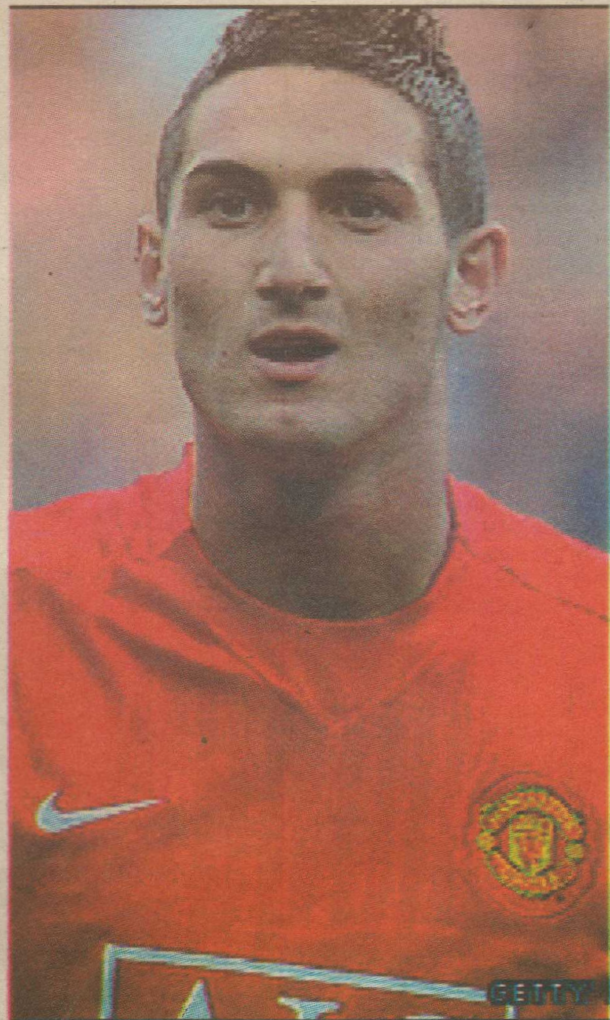
Those three goals, coupled with Dimitar Berbatov's lay-off because of an ankle injury and Wayne Rooney's suspension,

has already physically matured into a man, something that has not gone unnoticed by Sir Alex Ferguson.

"The young boy Macheda is progressing exceptionally well in the youth and reserves," the United manager said recently. "He's a big lad now, he has improved physically. We're really pleased with him."

Macheda has been compared to team-mate Berbatov in style, although, as he showed on Sunday, the teenager is not shy of a challenge or two.

"Federico is a very good technical player," stated United Under-18s manager Paul McGuinness.



Manchester is widely known as "Kiko" at Old Trafford.

White Birch, Las Monjitas join race to capture U.S. Open

Two former U.S. Open Polo Champions, White Birch and Las Monjitas, came one length closer to capture the 2009 title as they both won their first matches in the 2009 U.S. Open Polo Championship at International Polo Club at Palm Beach in Florida on Sunday.

Las Monjitas, who captured

the title in 2006, defeated Black Watch 9-7 while 2005 champions White Birch narrowly escaped a sixth chukker comeback by 2009 Piaget Gold Cup victors Lechuza Caracas to win 12-11 in sudden-death overtime. Las Monjitas and White Birch are the only two teams playing in this year's U.S. Open to ever

capture the title.

White Birch, who also finished as the runner-up in 2004, 1997 and 1995, kept a solid lead through the first five chukkers, ending the fifth at 11-7. Lechuza Caracas' Nicholas Espain scored one from the field at the top of the sixth and then scored the tie breaker with only seven

seconds left in regulation play. White Birch's Pancho Bensadon, scored the winning goal on a penalty shot in overtime.

"They got nothing to lose so they came out punching and they scored two goals in the first two minutes," said White Birch's Mariano Aguerre who was referring to

the four goals Lechuza Caracas scored during the last chukker. "Hat's off to them. They got a couple of good breaks and they won the chukker. But we won."

In the day's featured match in the International Polo Stadium, Las Monjitas, who was also the 2008 U.S. Open runner-up, did not appear as solid as White Birch during the first three chukkers, trailing Black Watch 4-2 at the half.

"It was a battle and they got the better of us in the first three chukkers," said Las Monjitas' Adam Snow who solidified his team's win as he scored the match's final goal with just over two minutes left in regulation play. Snow also referred to today's competition as a war as the match was tied

five times. "I think that's the best way to describe it!"

"For me it's the toughest game because you're playing against all six and seven goal players and it's very difficult," said Las Monjitas team Captain Camilo Bautista. "Finally we pulled this out!"

U.S. Open Polo Tournament play continues Friday, April 10 when Audi will take on Orchard Hill.

The US Open culminates the high goal season at International Polo. Played since 1904 the US Open Polo Championship is the oldest polo tournament in the United States. This is the 105th year since it began and an eight team field is competing for the most coveted trophy in the United States.

...Audi turns it on to beat Zacara

Audi regained its winning form today as it trounced Zacara 15-8 in its opening round game of the US Open Polo Championship at International Polo Club at Palm Beach in Florida.

"We executed well and were crisp today," said Audi Captain Marc Ganzzi. The Audi fourso-

me came out very strong in the opening chukkers and mounted a 10-5 lead at the half. "Our plan was to allow zero space on defense and capture as many throw-ins as possible by keeping a man outside to go to."

In the second half Audi thwarted every attempt Zacara

mounted as they allowed only two field goals and a penalty goal. Facundo and Gonzalito

Pieres of Audi combined for 12 goals with brother Nicolas adding two of his own. Ganzzi rounded out the scoring with one.

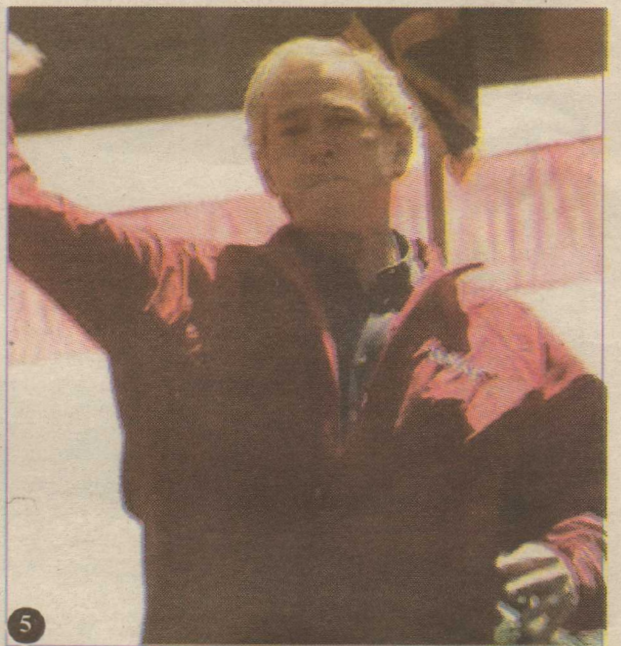
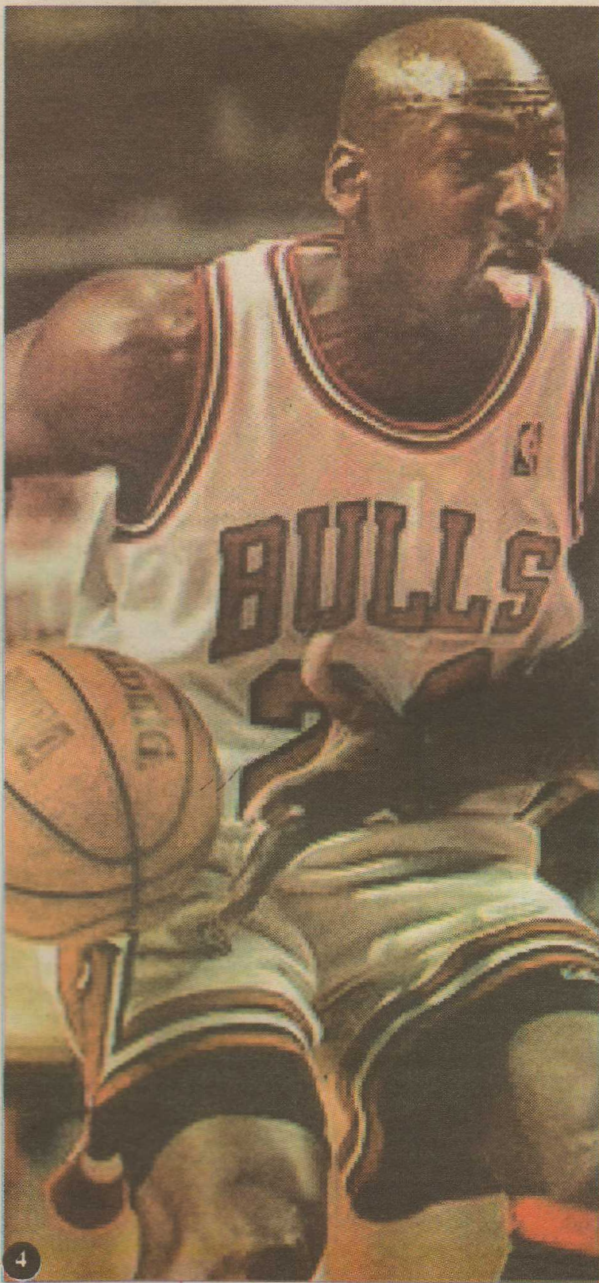
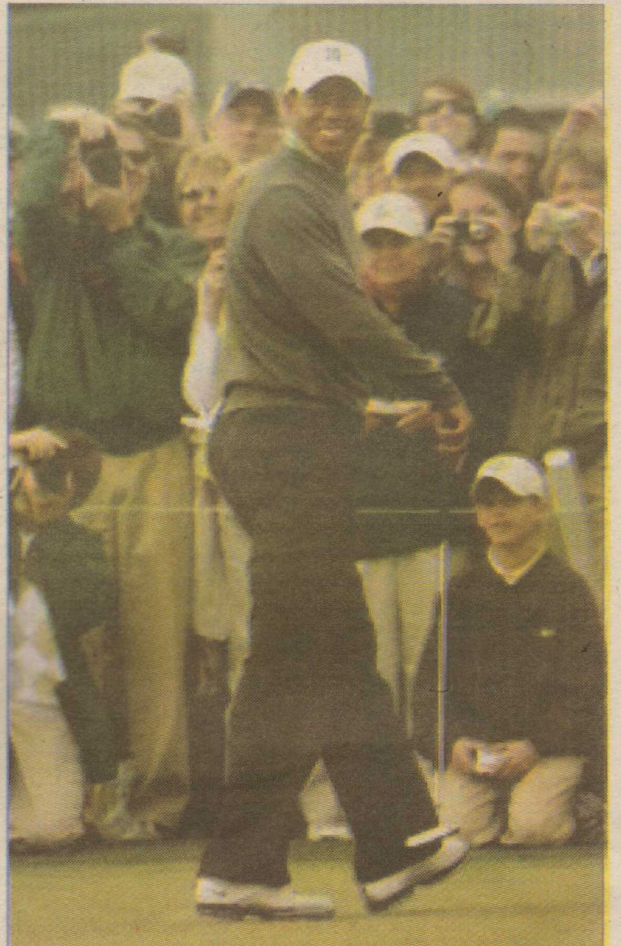
"We're playing our best

horses and really well as a team," added Ganzzi.

"With this being the last tournament of the season we have to play our best.

We added Nic (Pieres) in the last tournament and he has now settled in and working well with all of us." Audi fell in the Gold Cup to Lechuza Caracas.

Sports Illustrated



CAPTION

1. Greg Norman of Australia points to his ball during his practice round for the Masters golf tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, United States.

2. Tiger Woods of the U.S. walks on the putting green during practice for the 2009 Masters golf tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, United States.

3. FC Porto's Lisandro

Lopez trains with teammates at Old Trafford Stadium the day before their Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match against Manchester United, Manchester, England.

4. National Basketball

Association legends and 1992 US Olympic "Dream Team" players Michael Jordan, seen here in 1998, David Robinson and John Stockton were among five selections named yesterday for the Basketball Hall of Fame.

5. Former U.S. President George W. Bush throws out the ceremonial first pitch before the start of American League MLB baseball action between the Texas Rangers and the Cleveland Indians in Arlington, Texas.

6. Ryo Ishikawa, left, of Japan and Ian Poulter of England walk up to the seventh green during their practice round for the Masters golf tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, United States.

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SPORTS Bits

Casey warms up for Masters with first US win

Britain's Paul Casey gave himself the perfect warm-up for this week's US Masters by winning his first PGA Tour title in a play-off at the weather-delayed Houston Open last night. The 31-year-old sealed victory with a bogey five at the first extra hole where the big-hitting American JB Holmes double-bogeyed after driving into the water. The win lifts the Englishman to a career-high No6 in the world rankings.

Casey had led by a stroke going to the 18th hole at the Redstone Club at 12 under but dropped a shot to finish the round with a level-par 72 who had finished earlier having shot almost three hours six birdies for 69, a lifeline.

It's really difficult to explain, Casey said of his first US victory in 77 starts. "When you get introduced on the first tee here and you're playing with Geoff Ogilvy and they're going through all the accomplishments Geoff has had and I'm thinking, 'Come on, at least mention, you know, something.' But I hadn't done anything yet out here. This is the first win and it's fantastic."

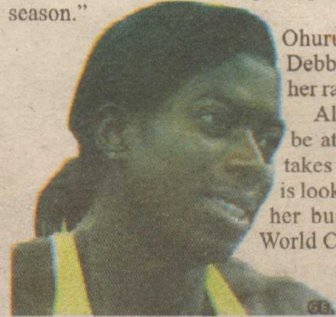


Ohuruogu to compete in Manchester

Olympic 400m champion Christine Ohuruogu is the latest athlete to commit to next month's Great City Games in Manchester.

The 24-year-old joins triple Beijing sprint gold medallist Usain Bolt at the innovative event featuring men and women's 150m races on 17 May.

She said: "150m is much shorter than my normal distance but it will be good preparation for the outdoor season."



Ohuruogu will face Bahamian Debbie Ferguson-McKenzie in her race.

Although the Londoner will be at a disadvantage when she takes on dedicated sprinters, she is looking forward to the event in her build-up to this summer's World Championships in Berlin.

"I am excited about the concept of taking athletics and sprinting to the streets," said the world champion.

"I was delighted to get the invitation to race in Manchester and compete in this unique event."

Mark Lewis-Francis, the 2004 Olympic 4x100m gold medallist, and World University Games title holder Simeon Williamson have already committed themselves to challenging double world record holder Bolt.

United without injured Rio for Porto

Defender Rio Ferdinand will miss Manchester United's Champions League quarter-final first leg against Porto tonight after failing to recover from a groin injury, manager Alex Ferguson said.

The problem forced the England centre back to sit out Sunday's dramatic 3-2 home win over Aston Villa in the Premier League, a match where United's defensive unit looked unusually vulnerable.

With Ferguson wary of the threat posed by Porto and their powerful Brazilian striker Hulk, he admitted there needed to be a big defensive improvement if his side are to take a commanding advantage into the return leg in Portugal.

"We knew it was a difficult situation (against Villa) but we chose the right options in terms of the fact players were coming back from international duty," Ferguson told a news conference.

"Most of the players will be okay and we can bring some fresh faces in but Rio, no, I don't think so."

"For most of the game against Villa we looked fragile defensively. There was that fragility at the back but we can change things. The win in the end has galvanised the whole club."



2011: The Buhari factor

"All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men; for they may act their dream with open eyes to make it possible."

— T. E. Lawrence
(Seven Pillars of Wisdom)

From what I reliably gathered, anytime from now, General Muhammadu Buhari, the former military Head of State and standard-bearer of Nigeria's comatose and largely ineffective opposition since 2003 will bid a much anticipated farewell to what remains of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) his political platform in the last two general elections.

Buhari's departure from the party will surprise few Nigerians actually. It was destined to happen sooner, rather than later. The signs were always there, and, in the end, it must also be recognized that the ANPP as presently constituted, has left him with few options over the matter. Far from the picture of the credible main opposition party it portrayed after its impressive performance at the polls in recent times, the ANPP

had become the booth of practical and not so practical jokes of late.

In time, the party also became a veritable dwelling place for motley crowd of greedy opportunists, renegades and unprincipled journeymen who have little or nothing in common with the Daura-born General whose transformation from the iron-fisted despot of the 1980s to the calm and accommodating politician of today must have impressed not a few Nigerians.

For the ANPP, what Buhari brought to the table all these years was the tremendous goodwill and groundswell of support he continues to enjoy among the teeming masses of ordinary Nigerians particularly in the north. What they think of his squeaky clean image, and he of them, were always his strongest points.

His popularity was obvious in the ANPP's strong showing in 2003 and 2007 when most of the politicians cowed by the rampaging menace of the EFCC under Ribadu began to put their individual political survival over and above the collective interests of the party. Among the first to crack is the incumbent Minister of the FCT Adamu Aleiro. Others who chose to remain in the ANPP worked assiduously against its interests for their own safety all the same. The rest, as they say, is now history.

The lesson we can easily deduce from the failure of the ANPP to build on its gains in elections since 1999 and the subsequent crisis in the ranks of the opposition in recent times is simple and painful as well. Elections conducted on these shores have hardly been decided by proletarian sentiments.

Those who made life hellish for Buhari in the ANPP, and also worked against him at every turn, are equally conscious of the fact that the General's popularity at the grassroots will always count for nothing for as long as it does not result in electoral victory at the centre which looks increasingly unlikely with the passage of time.

Therefore, as the General bids farewell to the party ahead of the next elections, the question to be asked is how his absence will affect the fortunes of the party in 2011. In the murky shark infested world of today's politics which has become a naked dance for survival among the various actors, our politicians dream their dangerous dreams and also plot their lethal schemes against known and unknown adversaries. What they hardly do however, is to also think aloud!

In a nation literally bristling with all manner of felons and serial kleptomaniacs in high and low places, even pick-pockets know they cannot expect any form of amnesty in the eventuality of a Buhari presidency. From his pronouncements down the years, it is a burden the General must carry once again, come 2011.

To that extent, Buhari will, once again, be come face to face with heavily entrenched interest groups and individuals intent

TUESDAY COLUMN
with **Muhammad Al-Ghazali**
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on retaining their spoils in 2011. They will also use every available political platform including anyone the General chooses to join to actualize his ambition to frustrate him. To these interest groups it will not only be the logical thing to do but a matter of survival as well.

That aside, the General's departure from the ANPP will also be a virtual death sentence for the party especially in the various states where its gubernatorial candidates coasted to victory in recent elections. That is because while not underestimating the individual qualities of the governors, the General's exit will diminish rather than enhance their chances especially in politically sophisticated states like Kano where the people are renowned for making their votes count. Such desperation, I suspect, explained the recent peace overtures made to the

Buhari recently by some of the leading figures in the party such as Ahmed Sani Yarima.

To that extent, the absence of Buhari will compel many elected politicians in the ANPP to hurriedly re-evaluate their options in the next several months. In states such as Kano, Yobe, Zamfara, Bauchi, to name just a few, it is obvious that Buhari's exit will erode the ANPP's popularity base and ultimately affect the chances of their candidates since the incumbents are about to serve out their terms.

It may not exactly be panic stations yet, but my prediction is that given the survival instincts of the average Nigerian politician, many will choose the safety-first option. I will not be totally surprised if Buhari's absence precipitates a massive



Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (rtd)

exodus from the ANPP to the relative safety 'guaranteed' by the preponderance of the PDP's control of the various instruments of state coercion.

Unless the opposition rapidly organize to banish the thought, more and more elected ANPP candidates will simply waltz across the carpet to guarantee their rule by proxy rather than face the humiliation of losing out completely, especially if Buhari resurfaces in another viable party capable of standing up to the PDP like the ANPP did in 1999 across the north.

There is no doubt that Buhari's consistency and service as the perpetual image of the opposition in last ten years gives him a moral pedestal unrivalled by any Nigerian politician since the return of democracy to these shores in 1999. But if truth must be told, that is hardly enough to clinch the presidency for reasons I have already advanced. Even if he joins the so-called mega party being currently muted in several quarters, it will still be a herculean task for him to actualize his goals.

Yet, in 2011, his adversaries can only underrate Buhari at their collective peril. Finding the right platform to upstage the PDP may be virtually impossible for now in truth, but the General can certainly count on his popularity in determining the occupants of the Government Houses in some states north of the Niger.

And who knows, perhaps a nationwide mega-party with broad appeal may still emerge with the General as its arrowhead but I doubt it very much. If we blame the PDP government for emasculating the political system it is equally clear that many individuals in the opposition these days also lack discipline and conviction to enrich our democracy.

It is a major problem Buhari must contend with yet again in 2011. As he dares the PDP, he must also continuously look over his shoulder to see if there are other Etiebet's and Yarima's bearing down on him. He must always be wary of exactly where his field commanders are on the battlefield. Even if he finds another political platform he may need to dream more and avoid the pitfalls of thinking aloud all the time. He must never underestimate the survival instinct of his adversaries.