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**Low water level
worries River
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44 die in Iraqi polls violence

- Large turn-out in Kurdish areas
- Sunnis shun election

Iraqis defied threats of violence and calls for a boycott to cast ballots in Iraq's first free election in a half-century yesterday, and resistance seeking to wreck the vote struck polling stations with a string of suicide bombings and mortar strikes, killing at least 44 people, including nine suicide bombers.

A Web site statement purportedly from Abu Mo-

By Ekhsan Charaf, Foreign Affairs Reporter with Agency Report

sab al-Zarqawi's group claimed responsibility for election-day attacks, although the claim could not be verified. The Jordanian militant, whose group is allied with al-Qaida, is said to be behind many of the suicide car-bombings, kidnappings and beheading of foreigners in Iraq and his group vowed to

kill those who ventured out to vote.

But polls were largely deserted throughout the day in many cities of the Sunni Triangle north and west of the capital, particularly Fallujah, Ramadi and Beiji. In Baghdad's mainly Sunni Arab area of Azamiyah, the neighbourhood's four polling centers did not open at all, residents said. In Samarra, north of Baghdad, stations were empty for hours, but later hundreds of people showed up.

Several hundred people turned out to vote in eastern districts of the heavily Sunni city of Mosul Iraq's third largest city and a centre for insurgent violence in past months. But in western parts

of Mosul, clashes erupted between guerrillas and Iraqi soldiers.

Some other Iraqi cities no one is voting.

As polls opened across the country, early signs showed a poor turnout of voters in Mosul. US soldiers were seen driving around city blocks asking why residents

Contd. on Pg 2

National Confab: 27 parties allege exclusion plot

- It'll be all-inclusive - FG
- Benue, Kwara name representatives

As nominations for the fourth coming national political reform conference ends today, 27 of the 30 registered political parties have raised alarm that they were yet to receive invitation to attend the confab, suggesting that government may have decided to shut them out.

As at yesterday evening, only three parties were said

By Habeeb I. Findiga, in Abuja, Sanj Babadoko, in Kaduna, Hir Joseph, in Makurdi & Abdulrazak Adebayo, in Ilorin.

to have received invitations to send in their representatives to the conference, while the remaining 27 have not been contacted by the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), from where the calls for nominations emanated.

The ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) were asked to nominate 12, four and two delegates respectively.

Initial reports had said that the other 27 parties would be collectively asked to fill two slots through the two umbrella groups of the parties, the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) and the National Consensus Forum (NCF).

But Secretaries-General of CNPP and NCF, Maxi Okwu and Joseph Boko respectively, confirmed in separate interviews with *Daily Trust* yesterday that they have not been contacted by the government.

Okwu, who claimed to have made efforts to find out

Contd. on Pg 2



Iraqi police and US soldiers examine the scene after a suicide bomber blew himself up near a polling station in Baghdad...yesterday.

Annan tasks AU on poverty, conflict resolution

This year could be a "turning point" for Africa, UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, said, urging continent-wide cooperation to resolve conflicts in the world's poorest conti-

nent at a summit of 53 African leaders.

"Africa has an indispensable contribution to make to ensure that 2005 becomes a turning point for the continent, the United Nations and the world," the Ghana-born

secretary general told the gathering of some 40 heads of state.

"One key to success will be to forge an even closer relationship between the United Nations and the African Union."

Forum organizers however decided to postpone planned talks on ways to expand Africa's leadership role at the United Nations after clear disagreements on the issue emerged during three days of preliminary

Contd. on Pg 2

NATIONAL CONFAB: SOME STATE DELEGATES AT A GLANCE

Kaduna State Umar Dikko Chris Abashiye Ja'afaru Mankarfi Emmanuel Toro Ango Abdullahi Abdullahi Jibrin	Fred Orji George Kargbo Jack Gyado
Taraba State Tanko Hobbo Anadami Luka Zanya Ibrahim Abubakar Emmanuel Bavou Yakubu Agbazi Johnny Atiku	
Katsina State Ibrahim Coomassie Saïda Barda Garba Ja Abdulkadir Kabir Saïdu Ibrahim Shema Tukur Mani	Kwara State Abubakar Baraje Ayinfa Falorunsho Kola Shima Saïdu Ias Mahmud Ibrahim Albert Ogunshola
Benue State Victor Mabu Geoffrey Ejigah Steven Okor	

OPEC retains 27m bpd output as oil prices rise

Ministers of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), rose from their meeting yesterday resolving to keep oil output levels unchanged at 27

million barrels a day.

OPEC's resolution is coming even as crude prices are up about 40 percent on

last year's level. The OPEC ministers said they do not believe the world economy is being held back by current price level, though they said

Contd. on Pg 2

NEWS

Iraqi polls

were not voting. Despite a heavy US and Iraqi National Guard presence and no civilian vehicular traffic, six explosions rocked the city. The general hospital had no immediate word on casualties.

Voter turnout was heavy in Al-Qadisiya district of the city, however. A polling station for the city's Kurdish population is located in the heart of the district.

Polling stations in several towns in Iraq have not opened five hours after nationwide voting started yesterday, the country's electoral commission said.

"In Latifiya, Mahmudiya and Yusufiya, polling stations have not yet opened their doors," commission spokesman, Farid Ayar, told reporters.

"As you know, Latifiya, Mahmudiya and Yusufiya are hotspots. We have allowed residents of these areas to vote in the nearest polling stations" to the towns, said another member of the commission.

In war-ravaged Falluja, nearly all residents stayed at home despite the presence of five polling stations. Only one man was reported to have voted.

Meanwhile, the head of the local council in Samarra said no citizens would vote because of the poor security situation.

"Nobody will vote in Samarra because of the security situation," said Taha Husain, the head of Samarra's local governing council.

No employees turned up at polling centres in Samarra and police were not to be seen on the streets, an agency correspondent reported.

While many voters across Iraq were hesitant to venture outside because of a highly volatile security situation and the promise of major attacks, Kurds in Arbil and other northern Iraqi cities have been rushing to polling stations.

Kurdish areas are expected to register the highest turnout in Iraq.

A low Sunni turnout could undermine the new government and worsen ten-

sions among the country's ethnic, religious and cultural groups.

Officials said turnout appeared higher than expected, although it was too soon to tell for sure. A few hours before polls closed at 5 p.m., one Iraqi official, Adel al-Lami of the Independent Electoral Commission, said 72 percent of the 14 million eligible voters cast ballots but offered no overall figures of the number who participated.

Attacks began within two hours of the balloting's start, and over the day, Baghdad saw eight suicide attacks, mostly against polling sites, using bombers on foot with explosives strapped to their bodies since private cars were banned from the streets.

In one of the deadliest attacks of the day, a bomber got onto a minibus carrying voters to the polls in Hillah, south of Baghdad and detonated his explosives, killing himself and at least four other people, the Polish military said.

Shiite Muslims, estimated at 60 percent of Iraq's 26 million people, were expected to turn out in large numbers, encouraged by clerics who hoped their community will gain power after generations of oppression by the Sunni minority.

The election will create a 275-member National Assembly and 18 provincial legislatures. The assembly will draw up the country's permanent constitution and will select a president and two deputy presidents, who in turn will name a new prime minister and cabinet to serve for 11 months until new elections are held.

Casting his vote, Interim Prime Minister, Ayad Allawi, called it "the first time the Iraqis will determine their destiny."

A ticket endorsed by the country's leading Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, is expected to fare best among the 111 candidate lists. However, no faction is expected to win an outright majority, meaning possibly weeks of political deal-making before a new prime minister is chosen.

OPEC

they may consider cutting production output if prices continue rising.

Production was raised last year after prices hit record levels amid supply disruptions and soaring demand from the US and China. The quota-busting, however, was blamed by members for a subsequent retreat in crude prices. In December, OPEC cut production by one million barrels a day to bring output closer to its target level.

In New York on Friday, a barrel of light crude fell \$1.66 to \$47.18, while in London, Brent crude was down \$1.49 to \$44.95.

Several OPEC ministers have indicated that oil prices were too high to justify production cuts, despite concerns over a possible build in supplies during the seasonally weak second quarter of the year.

OPEC said consultations may take place before the group's next meeting in March to coordinate a cut if

needed.

The BBC reported yesterday that the OPEC ministers appear, however, to be prepared to defend current price levels.

"We think the high price will not affect the global economy," said OPEC president and Kuwaiti Energy Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Fahd al-Sabah.

Analysts say the weakening of the US dollar has protected non-dollar importers from the rise in dollar-denominated oil prices.

"Oil prices are high but the US economy hasn't skipped a beat and the weaker dollar has insulated many growing economies from a shock," said Yasser Elgindi at Medley Global Advisers.

The 11-member group also agreed to suspend its target price band of \$22 to \$28 a barrel - a level set in 2000.

"We have to wait until the second quarter of this year to know exactly where the price indicator will head," said Sheikh Ahmad.

meetings by foreign ministers.

Instead, heads of state including Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak - joining the summit for the first time in a decade - turned their focus on the long-running conflicts that have hampered development in Africa, home to 830 million people of whom some 300 million live in abject poverty.

"Africa has a disproportionate share of the world's poor... and lags behind other parts of the developing world," suffering from the consequences of conflicts, Annan said.

He warned that the continent was unlikely to achieve the United Nations' Millennium Goals of halving the number of people in poverty and improving access to

what was happening from the SGF's office, said, however, that as at the close of work last Friday, no communication was received from the government on nominating delegates to the conference.

On his part, Boko said he went to see the SGF, Ufot Ekaette, Wednesday last week, but was told through his (Ekaette's secretary) that the government will contact NCF chairman, retired General Ike Nwachukwu.

"But because there was mounting pressure from our political parties, I went back on Thursday and explained to them that the NCF is not an individual but a body of parties that cannot be pushed aside... So when I explained this to the SGF's secretary, she said I should leave (yesterday evening), no contact from her," he said.

Asked what they would do if the conference kicked off without them, Okwu said "You know we take the conference with a lot of suspicion... but some of us suggested we go there and make our point. That being the case, if they shut us out we'll seek the enforcement of our fundamental right from the court."

Boko said "If we are not invited, it (the conference) won't be the last one because most expectations of the people will not be met," adding that NCF will meet today to decide on the next line of action.

Both Okwu and Boko said even if they were given two slots, the proportion of delegates was unfair to CNPP and NCF and that the proper representation for the parties would have been at least two delegates each, contending that all parties were equal under the law.

According to the NCF scribe, "PDP should be made to understand that the call for the conference became necessary because expectations of Nigerians have not been met under this government. If they have been doing well, there won't be clamour for the conference. If governments at the two levels have 266 nominees, we think the fairest thing is for every party to have two nominees. We are talking about a political reform conference; political parties have better roles to play in this. We have the brains. What makes them feel that they have the monopoly of knowledge? We all have one certificate of registration each, so all the 30 parties should receive equal representation. Had the big parties satisfied Nigerians, there won't be need for any conference.... You are bringing

Annan

claiming some 70,000 lives and causing an exodus of 1.6 million people in the world's largest humanitarian crisis.

A working group chaired by South African Foreign Minister, Dlamini Nkossana Zuma, met Saturday to outline progress towards Sudan's post-war reconstruction.

The heads of state were also to discuss the rebuilding of post-anarchic Somalia, instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo more than two years since a peace pact was signed to end five years of civil war and revive its state.

Talks opened early yesterday between Ivorian President, Laurent Gbagbo and the AU-appointed mediator

National Confab

emirs who have always been in dialogue with the government, what will they say?"

When *Daily Trust* contacted presidential spokesperson, Mrs. Remi Oyo, she said: "I am not in a position to comment on the nifty-gritty of the conference. But what I can assure you is that President Olusegun Obasanjo intends to make this an all-inclusive conference. The president doesn't intend to exclude any of the stakeholders from participating in the conference."

Asked whether the 27 parties qualify to be stakeholders in the confab, Oyo declined further comments, saying details of the conference should be sought from the office of the SGF.

The confab is scheduled to kick off mid-February with 400 delegates and is expected to last three months.

State governments are to nominate six delegates each, while President Olusegun Obasanjo is to present 50 participants. Others are the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Nigeria Employers' Consultative Assembly (NECA), Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), National Association of Nigerian students (NANS), Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) and National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (NACCIMA).

Meanwhile, six eminent citizens from Kwara State have been nominated for the National Political Reform Conference in Abuja.

The six personalities from the three senatorial districts in the state include Alhaji Abubakar Baraje, a permanent secretary in the state civil service and Alhaji Ayinla Folunsho, a veteran politician from Kwara central senatorial district.

For Kwara south senatorial district, Professor Albert Ogunbola and Mr. Kola Shitta were nominated, while a former minister, Alhaji Saidu Issa and Alhaji Mahmud Ibrahim, were chosen to represent the Kwara north senatorial district at a meeting in Bode-Sadu.

The nomination of the Kwara central senatorial district representatives was made at a meeting held at the weekend at Olorunshogo PDP secretariat presided over by Alhaji Salaudeen

to the West African state's two-year civil war, South African President, Thabo Mbeki.

The Cote d'Ivoire conflict took centre stage at the AU's Peace and Security Council meeting on January 11 in the Gabonese capital Libreville, but little headway was made in reconciling the divided country, the world's top cocoa producer.

"Other heads of state are trying to soften the ground for the mediation so that the options will be clearly presented to Gbagbo," a UN official said on condition of anonymity.

"This is really a last chance for Ivory Coast because they have exhausted all of their options and the heads of state are growing tired of this."

on the strength of the individuals to represent their people at the proposed dialogue.

Although other members of the six-man delegation were in attendance at the meeting, the former strong man of the late General Sani Abacha regime, General Victor Malu, was conspicuously unavailable.

Although he was said to be in the country for the burial of his relation, General Malu kept far from government house, venue of the meeting, while speculations made the round that he may not after all, honour the call for the national assembly.

The retired military general, who is now a consultant with the United Nations Security Organisation, said to be in total disagreement with the policies of President Olusegun Obasanjo under whose regime, armed soldiers attacked and destroyed his Tse-Adoo home, killing one of his uncles.

Nevertheless, retired General Ejigah who accepted the role with gratitude, promised governor Akume that, "we will work for you and with you. We will not disappoint you, having given us this opportunity to serve and represent the people of Benue."

Yobe State Governor, Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim, has called on the 403 delegates to the forthcoming political reform conference to reform the country's Electoral Act to avoid the bare faced robbery associated with elections since the first republic.

Speaking at the launch of the book: "Nigeria Must Survive" at Arewa House, Kaduna at the weekend, the three term governor said the most formidable challenge facing the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria was the hiccups in our electoral process.

He however said in spite of the imperfections in the April/May 2003 general elections, Nigerians will rise up in arms against any military intervention in the political process in the country.

Speaking further, the governor told the over 200 attendants at the meeting that the selection of the six members which also include Steven Olor, Fred Orti, Chief George Kurgba and Senator Jack Gyado, was done by a committee earlier set-up for the purpose.

He said the selection was not done on party basis but

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Gov Ahmad Mohammed Makwafi

News

Controversy as Perm Sec ejects deputy director

A controversy is currently brewing in the federal civil service over alleged forcible ejection of a deputy director from his official residence by the permanent secretary in the office of the Head of the civil service of the federation, Ambassador T.D. Hart.

Mr. James Ogwuche, deputy director, personnel department in the federal ministry of science and technology, allegedly returned from work on Friday to discover that his government quarters was vandalized, with his family and property thrown out.

Sources in finance quarters, also referred to as Gidado Idris housing estate, told *Daily Trust* that the deputy director's family was ejected on the instructions of Ambassador Hart, who is the permanent secretary, staff welfare office of the Head of Service. The house, *Daily Trust* gathered, was allegedly allocated to another deputy director, one Mr. Tukur who was said to have just joined the federal civil service through transfer of service from one of the states.

Ambassador Hart was said to have sent an ejection notice to Mr. Ogwuche's house only on Wednesday, January 26, 2005, and by Friday morning, the task force from his office allegedly threw out Mr. Ogwuche's family and property.

Mr. Ogwuche was said to have waited to see the permanent secretary from 11 am up to 5:30 on Friday but the permanent secretary allegedly refused to see him. His mission to the permanent secretary's office was to present a letter from the permanent secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, Dr. Abdullahi Aliyu, asking for the intervention of Ambassador Hart who was allegedly misled into asking for Mr. Ogwuche's ejection.

Dr. Aliyu was said to have personally called Ambassador Hart on phone before sending the letter to be delivered by Mr. Ogwuche, but even the intervention at that level did not help the situation.

Mr. Ogwuche's trouble was said to have started late last year when the allocation to the house he was living was revoked. He had been allocated that house, Block B, Flat 10A, which is a semi detached four bedroom duplex in finance quarters, Wuye, Abuja, through a letter with reference HCSF/SW/WY/H.021/S.28/1 dated December 18, 2002, signed by one A.D. Gidado.

Until then, he was in BK D1 Flat 2 in a long stretch of building of about 8 flats. He was said to have applied for the semi-detached apartment when it became vacant and was later allocated.

Sources said Ambassador Hart may have been misled to believe that Mr. Ogwuche deliberately refused to disclose that he was occupying a government quarter at the time he applied for the duplex in question. But a copy of his February 7, 2002 application shows that Mr. Ogwuche clearly stated that he was living in the same Wuye quarters, and explained why he wanted to relocate to the vacant duplex following the retirement of its former occupant.

It was also learnt that Mr. Ogwuche's responses to the Staff Welfare Office on the matter were hidden from the permanent secretary purportedly to create an impression that the allegation that Mr. Ogwuche did not give adequate information in the application was true.

The deputy director's predicament was said to have been made worse by the fact

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor

of official residences so that they would occupy one and sub-let the other's for huge sums for themselves. This is allegedly common among senior, middle cadre and junior civil servants alike.

that Ambassador Hart's office had allocated his former house to Mr. I.O. Malaolu, assistant director, office of the Head of Service.

It is a recurring trend in the federal civil service, particularly in Abuja, where there is acute shortage of accommodation, for civil servants to maneuver their ways into getting double or more allocation



Speaker House of Reps, Hon. Aminu Bello Masari (l), House of Reps Whip, Hon. Bawa Bahari (m) and Hon. Independent Ogunlewe during the public hearing on the erosion and floods control commission bill, held at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja. (Pics: Felix Ougbide)

Low water level worries communities

There is panic among communities along the river Niger over the latest shrinking of the river. The river which is said to be consistently drying up in the past thirty five years has reduced to what experts described as "abnormally" low level of about two metres causing panic among communities which depend on the river for their sustenance.

Experts attributed the causes of the shrinking to the many dams on the river's tributary and distributory channels the major one being the Kanji Dam.

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Correspondent (Lokoja)

Sources said it was only in 1969 that the water level reached an all time height dropped to between seven and eight metres since then describing the recent drop to two metres as dangerous for communities along its bank and the country.

A hydrological expert who spoke to *Daily Trust* on condition of anonymity said the federal government has been consistently informed of the yearly drop in water level but has done nothing to stop the trend.

The abnormally low level

River Niger

of water is impacting negatively on especially Lokoja residents who depend on the river for their daily water needs.

The state's commissioner for water resources, Chief James Ojmorin, who confirmed the development to *Daily Trust*, said the relocation of the water works from the Niger river to the Benue river is being considered but expressed fears about the financial implications, saying the project is beyond the state government.

Sand bars have become a common feature on the water thereby blocking the Nigerian Inland Waterways Authority's right of way while also affecting the dry season farming.

The solution to the problem, according to the expert, lies in the quick dredging of the river and the regular maintenance of same.

45 policemen on peace mission to Darfur

Forty-five officers and men of the Nigeria police have departed on an Africa Union (AU), peace keeping mission to Darfur, Sudan.

This is part of the nation's statutory obligation to the AU to create a peaceful atmosphere for a free and fair elections in Sudan.

In a press statement signed by the force public relations officer, Mr. Emmanuel Ighodalo, police primary assignment in Darfur is to maintain law and order before and during the elections.

Addressing the officers and men, the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, charge them to be good ambassadors not only to the police force but the nation.

The IG also said that the policemen should consider themselves lucky to have been selected among many

By Benjamin Anta, Crime Reporter

others for this mission, and enjoined them to keep the flag flying.

Gana blames presidential aspirants for PDP crisis

The presidential adviser on political affairs, Professor Jerry Gana, has attributed the current crises in the PDP to the ambitions of those aspiring for the presidency in 2007.

Speaking to journalists in Bida, Gana who is also one of the 38 men appointed to reform the party, said that besides, the party has fallen into its present state due to the vested interests of some individuals who benefit from the present crisis in the party.

"What is happening in the PDP is unfortunate because we didn't expect this to happen. But everything being the same, the party will be revitalized to take its front-line position," he said.

Elaborating on the two key issues affecting the party,

From Kashim Sale, Springer (Minna)

professor Gana pointed out that it is double dealings by some party men that have contributed immensely to the present crisis.

He said if the party must come back to life, all these issues must be tackled headlong.

On the forth-coming national dialogue, the presidential aide said government had to succumb due to popular pressure, even though it had hesitated in the past to endorse the conference.

The federal government's reversal of position, according to Professor Gana, indicates the superiority of democracy over other form of governments that do not allow debate, argument, diplomacy, dialogue and opposition.

Millennium Dev Goals review c'ttee established -Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo has disclosed that a presidential committee is in place comprising ministers and members of the United Nations in Nigeria which will review the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) quarterly.

He said this during the inauguration of the United Nations house and the official handing over to the UN system in Nigeria and in the presence of the secretary-general of the UN, Kofi Annan.

He reiterated government's commitment to achieve the millennium development goals adding that the government is set to achieve more goals before 2015.

He called on the secretary-general of the UN, Kofi Annan, to support Nigeria and other African countries over debt relief which he said will assist in the realization of the millennium development goals.

Kofi Aman lauded government's efforts to facilitate UN's work in the country, stating that "a UN house is the epitome of the UN family in action - an illustration of our efforts to work better together and to improve our performance especially at the country level."

"Whether you are working to help alleviate poverty, build better lives for children or protect environment, it is vital that your efforts reinforce each other, that you avoid rivalry or duplication, and that you pool your resources and harmonise your programming to achieve the greatest possible impact. Team work is the only way we will help Nigeria reach its objectives," he said.

Aiman stressed that the UN house in Abuja will ease the hassles on UN staff commuting from Lagos to Abuja,

By Ekamsh Chahal, Reporter (Foreign)

buying more time to fulfil UN primary mission which is helping the people of Nigeria.

The UN resident coordinator, Tegegnework Gettu, in his welcome address, expressed appreciation to Nigerians, saying "this is the golden age of the UN system

in Nigeria if we wish to achieve tangible results in our goals."

The UN house is a donation from the Nigerian government, built at the cost of \$16 million.

The building which is one of the few in Africa, houses most of the UN agencies in Nigeria and is a realization of the secretary-general's goal to bring the UN agencies together on the same premises.

Work begins on Ilesha-Baruba-Chikanda road

The Kwara state government at the week end finalised the construction of Oyo state boundary - Ilesha-Baruba-Okuta-Kosubosa-Chikanda road in Baruten local government area of the state with the formal handing over of the road to the contractors handling the project.

Handing over the road to the contractors, the state's commissioner for works and transport, Engr. Yinusa Afolabi, said the road being an international route between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, would cost about N6b.

Engr. Afolabi reiterated the commitment of the state government to bring about rapid development to all parts of the state, explaining that the road has been divided into three sections and awarded to two contractors to ensure completion within 29 months.

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo, Correspondent (Ilorin)

He charged the contractors handling the road project to justify the confidence reposed on them by the government, stressing that they were given the contract on merit having gone through due process.

Engr. Afolabi who called on residents of Baruten local government area to give maximum support to the contractors to make the completion date a reality, commended the federal government for giving the state government necessary approval to construct the road.

The permanent secretary in the ministry, Architect Halima Tayo Alao, signed the site possession documents on behalf of the ministry while the managing director of KYFU Global construction company, Engr. Ghassan Jabel, signed for his company and Mr. George Aghnadias signed on behalf of Setraac Nigeria Limited.

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News

Fourth session of the African Union Assembly held in Abuja ... weekend



Flags of the AU countries billed to attend the fourth Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly flying during the occasion held in Abuja ... yesterday.



AU chairman, President Olusegun Obasanjo (middle) flanked by the United Nations Secretary General, Dr. Kofi Anan and Chairman of the AU Commission, Alpha Oumar Konare (l) during the opening ceremony at the International Conference Centre, Abuja.



A cross section of the members of African Union during the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly.



The United Nations Secretary General, Dr. Kofi Anan, coming out of the press briefing with other officials during the session



(l - R): Alhaji Iyaku Ibrahim, director, Nigerian-American Bank Ltd., Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, Chairman NEPAD business group and Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, Nigeria's former Permanent Rep at the UN during the NEPAD, Nigeria Forum held at the State House, Abuja ... Friday.



A cross section of delegates of the AU coming out from the Fourth Ordinary Session.



President Olusegun Obasanjo observing the National Anthem with the chairman of NEPAD Business group, Alhaji Bamanga Tukur (l) and Chief Goddy Ibru (R) during the NEPAD Forum held in Abuja ... Friday.



President Olusegun Obasanjo commissioning the UN House in Abuja Saturday, second left is the United Nation's Secretary General Dr. Kofi Anan during the ceremony. Pictures: Joe Oruye

Opinion

Not by despair alone

It sometimes seems to me that our days are poisoned with too many words. Words said and not meant.... Wounding words. Words that conceal.... Dead words' wrote Ben Okri. Words said and not meant are countless in Nigeria. Samplers: Health for all by year 2000, reducing poverty by half by 2015 under the Millennium Development Goals MDGs etc.

There is of course a bagful of wounding words, such as 80 per cent of Nigerians live below poverty line; Africans are poorer now than they were 30 years ago or that the former IG of police was found with billions in sundry accounts few months after there was spirited official contestation of Transparency International Nigeria's corruption rating.

The latest star-wounding words came from British Prime Minister Tony Blair. At the recent world Economic Forum in Davos, he declared that Africa's poverty (note, not Euro-American opulence!) is 'a scar on the conscience of the world'. NEPA's dead words are definitely familiar, the latest being a paid advert announcing load shedding from a non-load of miserable 3000 megawatts with an insulting apology to a nation that ordinarily should ask for a receivership for a failed monopoly and prosecute whoever is responsible for energy-non delivery after so much cumulative annual huge monetary votes!

The dead and wounding words do not only poison our days as poet Ben Okri rightly observed, but they nurture national and continental despair. We are already familiar with the theory of a failed state. As if this was not

"For students of development, NSITF challenges the orthodoxy of received wisdom. Firstly, contrary to text-book economists, it is the institutions of the market that deliver services and not an abstract market or some so-called market forces. As financial/labour market institutions like NSITF, we can see that if we strengthen institutions, public or private, not assault them under a dogma of do nothing, market forces, they can promote reform"

wounding enough, we are confronted with another dead word; catastrophic state. Against the background of stories (sorry, books!) of despair a few paragraphs of hope and relative success must be a refreshing departure!

NSITF had the grand finale of its 10th anniversary last weekend. The acknowledged statistics show that we need not live by despair alone if only we can build institutions. Born from the ashes of the defunct NPE, NSITF had traversed a road of relative successes in social insurance industry. It has a registered membership of 4.3million employee members and 40,000 employers, a record in membership drive. In a country weighed down by lack of organization, NSITF shows that hope is not lost.

The qualitative achievements of mass registration of employees and employers alike and compliance with deductions and remittances explain its remarkable quantitative results in an environment of failed enterprises. Were NSITF a bank its consolidation under the new CBN policy trust is given without merger and acquisitions. With N36.6 billion collected benefits from 10 percent deductions (6.5 employer, 3.5 employee!) within a ten year period, 1994-2004, NSITF shows that the imperatives of capital formation need not elude us nor must we go to South Africa to discover what we can do and indeed already doing at home! NSITF is a mega-social institution judging by its capital base.

There is certainly a considerable room for improvement in terms of

benefits administration when compared to sums ably collected and managed. But with almost a billion naira (N906.9m) disbursed to employees so far, NSITF shows that with good corporate governance, claimants can have return on their investment. When many NSITF contributors see their counterparts dying under the weight of collapsed public sector pension schemes, they are right to think aloud how they could have survived without NSITF monthly stipend. The relative success recorded by NSITF must only be improved upon by both the new comers like Pension Commission and National Health insurance scheme.

For students of development, NSITF challenges the orthodoxy of received wisdom. Firstly, contrary to text-book economists, it is the institutions of the market that deliver services and not an abstract market or some so-called market forces. As financial/labour market institutions like NSITF, we can see that if we strengthen institutions, public or private, not assault them under a dogma of do nothing, market forces, they can promote reform. Secondly we have been told the half truth that the poor is poor because they are poor. NSITF with its current limitations shows that the poor is indeed rich when their resources are pooled together and well managed. That its investment in real estate totalled N7.68 billion by June 2004 and that NSITF, an organization of the poor, became an institutional investor and so honoured with membership of Council of the Nigeria Stock Exchange shows that the key to poverty eradication is wealth generation and wealth management. Lastly, Dr Ahmed Rufai Mohammed, NSITF's CEO rightly underscores the imperative of corporate governance in the fund transformation. According to him, a 'major advantage possessed by the NSITF is the statutory involvement of its shareholders in the running of the scheme.'

Employers, workers and the government are ably represented on the Board and in the management team. This has brought about the much needed synergy which has impacted positively on the running of the scheme.

So much for story of despair if only we allow for participation and public ownership of public institutions and policies!

Tube as surrogate parent

By Talatu Landy

What effects does television and video entertainment have on children? According to Alain Poussaint, an educator and a Doctor, who has worked with children in America for 30 years, opined that "watching films containing sex and violence teaches children that such behaviour is normal". He also said that "I have seen children return home from such movies to become fearful or extremely aggressive. I have also seen others regress to clinging or thumb sucking or bed wetting".

One research carried out by the Mexican newspaper "El Universal" reports that cartoon and

The importation of undesirable films including obscene advertisement should not compromise of our culture.

The unnecessary importation and display of dangerous films on our screens have caused a lot of psychological damages to the development of the Nigerian child. In developed country films are rated and branded either unfit for little kids or fit for adult. Even though such imported films carry such label or marks, the Nigerian film industry and audience rarely consider such warnings.

While we are still thinking of a way out, internet, came on board. Everybody now access any

video games for children. Therefore, the government of Nigeria need to take a cue from Los Angeles (California) to bring to an end the problem that is trying to kill the good future of the Nigerian child.

It is obvious that the rise and sophistication of crime, especially in Nigeria's urban centres is partly promoted by influx of foreign movies. 44 years after independence, the country is having difficulty enforcing laws to check junk foreign movies and pornography on the net.

Apart from the other dangerous effects. It is one of the most efficient ways of transferring of western culture (which our Nigerian films have started copying already). For example, the Nigerian movies have

"It is obvious that the rise and sophistication of crime, especially in Nigeria's urban centres is partly promoted by influx of foreign movies. 44 years after independence, the country is having difficulty enforcing laws to check junk foreign movies and pornography on the net"

video games 'influences the behaviour of children more than what they learnt in school. In the same vein the research revealed that television and video contribute in determining which attitude children adopt in a particular situation even when the child is aware of the negative or positive consequences of such behaviour.

The report explained that, if the child watch cartoons or film in TV, in which one of the characters is tied up, with satisfactory results, the child will probably want to imitate this practice. The investigation indicated that, kids apply in their daily life what they learn everyday from movies but not what they learn at school, since they consider school as just an obligation.

Looking at the above premises, it has become exigent for media policy makers and the Nigerian film censorship Board to take adequate step in curbing the menace of the influx of dangerous films into the country.

web of his/her choice at any given time, with the attendant pornography and atheism.

There is no doubt, that internet like other mass media is an instrument that provides access to knowledge and entertainment, but this requires a disciplined approach especially for children at their formative age. The Nigerian government need to make guidelines on responsible use of Internet, and also laws and restrictions on children visiting the Internet at any time of the day should be introduced to curb this problem once and for all.

Example this such law, can be found in the state of California, it restricts the hours during which children can visit the internet and cyber cafes.

To ensure that the law is effective shops the council has directed all stops in the city to secure a police permit for operation as well as install video cameras, ostensibly for security. Also, that law is targeted at business centres that provide internet access and

completely become westernized, by adopting the Western way of life in the films they produced. Looking at the noxious nature of these films, what will be the contribution of the Nigerian child to the future of this nation?

A nation that is being controlled by foreign culture will remain enslaved by the culture and patriotism will be more of a mirage.

To that extent, since it is evidently clear that children will become the future leaders of this country, government and policy makers should not raid their arms and watch these future leaders, destroyed. What will be the future of Nigeria if the child should be groomed under such circumstances. Human attitude is very easy to form than to discard.

The earlier this problem is tackled, the brighter the chances of Nigeria becoming a power to be recon with, among the International community, and avoid wasted generations.

Talatu Landy writes from Department of Mass Communication, University of Maiduguri.



YOUR LETTERS

Street begging in Kano

Kindly give me a space in your most popular newspaper to express my view on street begging in Kano. Disabled and incapacitated persons mainly adopt street begging to earn a living in the state. However, these days, some sound and healthy, but lazy, selfish, and greedy persons have also taken up begging as a means of livelihood.

The devastating economy of this nation, is the main factor to the current devastating level of streets begging. The government of day cannot discharge its basic responsibilities to the citizens to facilitate decent livelihood, which is why many more people now resort to begging to make both ends meet.

While it can be said that begging is endemic in Islam under certain conditions, non-the less Islam generally discourages it. It's therefore not correct to say that begging is part of religion of the Islam. However due to laziness, and ignorance some people misconceive the position of Islam on the issue of begging.

Due to lack of development, it's understandable that some disabled persons resort to begging as a means of livelihood.

The tradition of *Almajiri* system where by some young boys are sent from their villages into the cities in the pursuit of Qur'anic education, and also beg for money and materials to sustain life is a significant contributory factor to street begging in Kano state.

How to eradicate street begging in Kano state. The government should strive hard to provide employment for all the incapacitated persons in

Kano state. Encouraging self-employment, job creation, especially in small-scale entrepreneurs, and other economic sector employment can do this. It is rather disheartening to see how much Nigeria realizes in terms of income, but more and more of its citizens are living in a object poverty.

The government should also enact a legislation banning this street begging in the state, so that people should be discouraged from begging, because begging is a national disgrace. This move becomes necessary as Nigeria regards its self as the leader and giant of Africa.

Agricultural, which is the predominant occupation of people of Kano State, contributes to begging because peasant farmers practise it at subsistence levels. They hardly get half of their needs (out puts) after harvesting their crops, so the rest is to be source elsewhere.

One easy way of supplementing their income is through begging. There fore government should also strive hard to improve farming techniques through production of improved variety of seedlings and agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, chemicals, etc. Government should also provide irrigation farming facilities, so that farmers will be kept busy and their income improved, so that they will have no time to go begging all over the place.

Government should also provide agricultural extension officers, in each locality to guide farmers about modern farming techniques. The aim of all these is to have wealth creation through farming, and other agricultural skims.

In the olden days there used to be a policy of even

distribution of amenities in the society, however due to gradual change of policy to capitalism, there is a serious disparity between rich and poor, there by forcing some people to resort to begging as a means of livelihood.

It is my desire that something must be done to address the issue of poverty (begging) in Nigeria and Kano in particular.

Muktar Sabiu Yahuza
house no. 114 Gwale
quarters Kano.

Re: NARD strike Nigerians silent tsunami

I read with shock and great pain in my heart the article written in your paper of Thursday 27/1/05 on the above subject. It is really unfortunate that somebody can conceive such a write up meant to be consumed by a nation of over 120 million without being well informed. As at the time of writing you this letter we are yet to be fully verified not to talk of receiving any payments.

We are governed by a group of sycophants that are ready to reach any extent in deceiving the public on the true state of things. The so called shortfall that the government went on every media in the land to proclaim its approval more than 3 weeks ago came to most of the centres short of what was required, again setting the pace for another crises.

The writer talks about NARD not following the due process before embarking on the strike action. The issue of shortfall started over 1 year ago in some centres, NARD literally spent the whole of last year trying to convince the government through the ministry of health. During this period there were 2 ultimatums of strike action,

Memo to Kogi legislature

When the present Kogi State House of Assembly was inaugurated by the state Governor, Alh. Ibrahim Idris around June 2003, the people of the state welcomed it as a vibrant and articulate due to the sound educational qualification and experience of most of the members. The entire electorate who voted for them have it at back of their

minds that they would not be disappointed this time around because they have confidence that they made right choice by electing them into the house.

The relationship that existed between the executive and the legislator would enable the people of the State reap the much anticipated dividend of democracy.

But of recent, one needs to express some reservations about the conduct of the honourable members as regard some resolutions and motion been debated.

The members should allow the interest of the State and those who voted for them to be paramount in any decisions that are taken so that posterity would remember them for bringing peace, unity and development to the entire State.

The leadership style of the speaker of Kogi State House of Assembly in carrying along the entire members of house is highly commendable and this has endeared him to the generality of members and other tiers of government.

The harmonious relationship that existed could be attributed to the wealth of experience maturity and tolerance he exhibited since the inception of the honourable house.

The members should desist from any form of diversionary attitude towards their deliberation so that good people of the State would appreciate their contribution in the up keep and sustenance of our nascent democracy.

The good people of Kogi

State are watching them closely and any form of blackmail and over heating the already charged political tension in the State should be avoided by the honourable members.

We have total confidence in them to ensure that, they prove to doubting thomases that they are not in the house for any and selfish interest but the growth, progress and the general development of the state.

The entire people of the state would continue to extend their cooperation to the members and ensure the progress of the State.

Bala Nayazhi Lokaja No. 1 Yashi Area, Lokoja.

On Obasanjo's confab

The proposed National Conference by the Federal Government is ill-timed but since it is suppose to be an academic exercise I am of the view that renowned scholars and opinion leaders should make up the membership.

To me people like Dr. Paul Mamza (Borno) of A.B.U., Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman (Katsina) of A.B.U., Dr. Ibrahim Tahir (Bauchi), Prof. Wole Soyinka (Ogun), Col. Abubakar Dangwa Umar (Kebbi), Prof. Ben Nwabueze, Rev. Fr. Matthew Hassan Kukah (Kaduna) etc should constitute the Confab.

Let the Conference proceedings be advisory to the legislature and executive.

Adamu Usman Isa Kalita
Rd Kaduna Kaduna State

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

Dr. Attah Ahmed,
ABUTH, Zaria
attahaj@yahoo.com



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ISO 9000 Introductory	7 - 11 March	Nationwide - IITA
ISO 9000 Introductory	18 - 22 April	Nationwide - IITA
SON/FDO Quality Management System, Productivity Works Ethics.	25 - 29 April	To be fixed
ISO 9000 Introductory	25 - 27 May	Nationwide-IITA
ISO 9000 Lead Auditors	27 June - 1 July	Nationwide-IITA

COURSE CONTENT

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Candidates who did not qualify from an earlier Introductory Course may apply to sit the exam-Exam fee: N10,000.00 date: Last Day for each Course, Time: 8:00 a.m. Application for exam must be made two weeks before the course.

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The main objective of this course is to train potential Lead Auditors in the principle and practice of assessment of quality/environmental systems to the ISO 9011:2002 standard or their equivalents. It is to make them aware of good practices and to encourage constructive development of audit skills through analysis and self-criticism. The course comprises case studies, lectures, workshop and examination.

Only candidates who qualify from the Introductory Course by SON or BSI/hold equivalent certificates need apply.

NOMINATION FORMS

Nomination forms are available from the office of the Training Coordinator, Standards Organisation of Nigeria, Plot 13/14 Northern Business District Victoria Arobieke Street, Lekki Phase I, Lekki, Lagos, Phone 01-2708240, 01-2708247 (Telefax); E-Mail: sonnis.ng@yahoo.com; info@sononline-ng.org.

Nomination forms are also available at our Abuja office and the SON Zonal offices in Kaduna, Port Harcourt, Lagos, Ibadan, Jos, Kano, Uyo, Minna, Enugu, Benin City and Yola.

Candidates are to state very clearly the particular course they wish to attend as specified in this announcement. Since the spaces are limited to a maximum of 20 delegates per class, nomination is based on first-come-first served. Nominations close two weeks before the commencement of each course.

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-Signed-
Director General
Standards Organisation of Nigeria.



NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (NCC) ABUJA

Invitation For Pre-Qualification Telecommunications Measurement Laboratory

The Nigerian Communications Commission has plans to set up a **state of the art telecommunications measurements laboratory** in the Department of Technical Research and Standards of the Commission.

Expressions of Interest are, therefore, invited from reputable companies for the supply, installation and testing of the following types of equipment.

1. Network Analysers
2. EMC Testing facilities
3. RF and Microwave Test Equipment
4. Digital Communications Test Equipment
5. Other sundry equipment

PRE-QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

Interested companies are required to submit the following:

- a. Evidence of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- b. Evidence of similar projects successfully completed
- c. Tax Clearance for the last three years
- d. Bankers details
- e. Company profile including staff strength, qualifications and experience
- f. Technical Expertise

PRE-QUALIFICATION FORM

The pre-qualification forms could be obtained from the Deputy Director, Support Services Office, Nigerian Communications Commission's head office in Abuja.

FORM SUBMISSION

Pre-qualification documents could be obtained submitted in two bound copies contained in an envelopes and marked: TRSLabEquip/PRE-QUALIFICATION

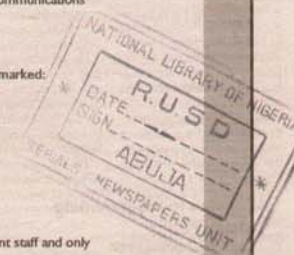
The Complete document should be sent to:

The Executive Vice Chairman
Nigerian Communications Commission,
Plot 72, Ahmadu Bello Way,
Central Business District,
Abuja.

On or before February 28, 2005. All pre-qualification submissions will be studied by a team of the management staff and only the short-listed companies will be advertised and invited for the tender.

NOTICE

This publication is not an invitation to tender. All companies applying for the supply of the equipment must pass through the selection process and only short listed companies will be invited for an interview. The contract involves the supply of highly sensitive specialized equipment. Only companies with experience and highly specialized staff are required to apply. More information and specifications of the equipment will be provided to the shortlisted companies to help them prepare their quotations.



Nigerian Communications Commission

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1000/011

Trust International

Groups urge Sudan's commitment to peace

About 50 African and International Civil Society Organisation attending the preparatory meeting of the 4th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and the government of the African Union weekend called for urgent measure to ensure that Sudanese and International obligations.

Briefing newsmen in Abuja, the spokesman of the civil society group which met under the of the Dafur consortium, Mr. Abdelhaji Jibril said that AU should ensure that Sudanese government comply with International treaties fully without any condition. He stated that the AU must

From Kemi Ogedengbe, Judicial Editor

take effective measure to halt all attacks against civilians in Dafur and end, the impunity with which grave violation of human and people right are being committed in Dafur.

Besides, the civil society groups also called support, including the production of suppliers and response to the Janjaweed and other government sponsored militia group which continue to terrorise defenceless African civilians and aggravate the precarious situation in the region.

It called on AU to provide the necessary support to international agencies and non-

material organisation to ensure them safe and unheeded access to the conflict affects people in Dafur in order to facilitate the delivery of the necessary relief materials and assistance to the needy.

Other suggestions of the groups include: Strong condemnation of the government of Sudan for its unwillingness to protect civilian populations victims of the conflict as well as disarming the Janjaweed and other government-sponsored militia groups and apprehend

their leaders and supporters that are largely responsible for the humanitarian crisis in the region as demanded by the AU 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government and the Peace and Security Council most recently at its 23rd Meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government, in Libreville, Gabon, on 10 January 2005.

It expressed its strong condemnation for the repeated violations - by all parties to the conflict - of the N'djamena Agreement on Humanitarian

Ceasefire of 8th April 2004 and the Abuja Protocols of 9th November 2004, in particular the government's irresponsible handling of the humanitarian crisis in Dafur and its continuous policy of massive military build up in the region.

It called on the AU to strengthen its military presence in Dafur and extend the mandate of its current monitoring force in the region to include clear and specific provisions for a peace-keeping mission to protect civilians,

disarm the Janjaweed militia and apprehend their leaders and supporters.

It urged for concrete steps to end the state of impunity with which serious crimes are being committed in Dafur and help create conditions of security that permit civilians to safely and voluntarily return to their areas of origin.

It called on the AU to urge all parties to the conflict to cooperate fully and unconditionally with the Commission of Inquiry on Dafur to identify the crimes that have been committed in Dafur as well as those responsible for their commission, bring them to justice and repair the damage done to the victims.

Ivorian PM calls for disarmament talks

Cote d'Ivoire's moderate Prime Minister Seydou Diarra has called for the armed forces of the state and the rebels holding the north of the country to resume disarmament talks without delay, an official statement said.

Diarra, who heads a government of "national reconciliation" set up by a peace accord that has failed to make progress, was quoted as saying Friday that disarmament was the "priority of priorities" to resolve the crisis in Ivory Coast.

"You must return to the negotiating table without delay to discuss launching disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, with the assistance of impartial forces," he told both sides.

The question of disarmament provided for in the peace process and being pushed by the African Union mediator, South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki, is in deadlock. The rebel New Forces said both sides should disarm in parallel, which is rejected by President Laurent Gbagbo.

Diarra also urged the nine rebel ministers, who walked out in November claiming their safety could not be guaranteed, to return to the government.

And he called on the government to fight "the perverse effects of war, the insecurity of people and property, corruption and racketeering, the defiance of the rule of law."

Diarra, a 69-year-old Muslim from northern Ivory Coast named a year ago under the French-brokered Marcoussis accords, has struggled to impose his authority under criticism from both sides, particularly the Gbagbo camp.

He insisted on Thursday that he would continue his mission until the organisation of national elections which are due to be held in October but appear increasingly unlikely.

Two weeks ago he urged Gbagbo to declare hostilities over with the rebels who tried to oust the president in 2002 in order "to send a strong signal at the national level", but was rebuffed.



Ivory Coast's President Laurent Gbagbo (L) meets his South African counterpart Thabo Mbeki in Ivorian capital Yamoussoukro...recently.

Egypt detains opposition lawmaker

An opposition parliamentarian in Egypt has been detained by the police on suspicion of forging documents to form a new political party.

Ayman Nur, founder of the al-Ghad, or Tomorrow Party,

was taken into custody on Saturday after the Egyptian parliament stripped him of his parliamentary immunity.

Lawmakers approved a request by the justice minister for Nur's parliamentary immunity to be lifted so he could be detained.

His arrest came two days before the ruling National Democratic Party was due to meet with Egyptian opposition parties to discuss political reform.

"What is going on is a flagrant violation of the political rights of citizens," Nur, a vocal government critic, said in comments carried by the country's semi-official Middle East News Agency.

State security investigators have accused Nur of forging all but 14 of the more than 2000 signatures he was required to present to the committee responsible for licensing political parties.

Investigators searched his home and office for additional documents.

Nur has described his party, one of just three to be given permission to operate in the past 25 years, as a liberal democratic party that represents youth.

"What is going on is a flagrant violation of the politi-

cal rights of citizens"

He has made numerous suggestions for Egyptian economic and political reform, including constitutional amendments to allow for the president to be elected and the removal of the reference of socialism as the country's guiding principle.

Egypt holds presidential referendums, rather than elections, in which people vote "yes" or "no" for a sole candidate, who is nominated by the parliament, which President Hosni Mubarak's party dominates.

In October, 650 activists and opposition political party members vowed to push for a constitutional amendment to end Egypt's system of one-man rule and bar Mubarak from standing at a referendum to be held later this year for a fifth term.

Before heading to the Nigerian capital, Abuja, on Saturday, Mubarak described calls for a change to the constitution as futile.

"Those who talk about direct elections and referendum, and trying to choose between them, must realise the referendum is based on the nomination of people's representatives in parliament," Mubarak said.

Congo's militia kills 16, kidnap 34 girls

Militiamen armed with guns and machetes killed 16 people and kidnapped at least 34 girls in attacks this week on a remote area of eastern Congo, a UN spokesman said Saturday.

Two platoons of UN peacekeepers arrived in the remote area by helicopter early Saturday to protect the population from further violence, UN spokesman Christophe Boulierarch said by telephone from Bunia, capital of Ituri province. Bunia is 65 kilometres south of Che, an area that has been attacked several times since Jan. 19.

Earlier this week, aid workers with the group German Agro Action reported seeing burning houses and residents streaming out of Che as it was under attack.

Boulierarch cited witnesses saying 34 girls had been kidnapped from Che and two others were missing.

Residents told the UN that 15 people were murdered by armed Lendu militiamen. Boulierarch said he saw the body of another old man along the road outside town who had been shot once in the head. Ituri has long been the scene of savage fighting between Lendu and Hema militias.

Since 1999, fighting in Ituri has killed more than 50,000 and forced 500,000 to flee their homes, UN officials and human rights groups say.

The Ituri conflict was part of a larger, five-year, six-country war in Congo that killed nearly four million people, mostly through starvation and disease. The 1998-2002 war ended with the creation of a transitional government in 2003 that has struggled to extend its authority to the vast country's often lawless east.

During the war, both neighbouring Uganda and Rwanda aided the Hema and Lendu militias, mainly to wrest control of the mineral-rich territory. The two sides eventually turned on one another.

Britain in total debt relief pledge

The world's seven richest countries - the G7 - should offer poor countries 100% debt relief, UK Chancellor Gordon Brown has said.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Mr. Brown said he hoped to persuade his colleagues to commit to the goal by the end of the year.

His pledge has already won support from France's new Finance Minister, Herve Giscard.

Both politicians promised to engage with Global Call to Action Against Poverty, a pressure group formed on Thursday at the World Social Forum in Brazil.

Mr. Brown also promised that the current round of trade

talks would be the "first that is in the interest of developing countries".

Next Friday's meeting of the G7 finance minister would put debt relief and development issues at the top of its agenda, Mr. Brown said, adding that this had been agreed with all the ministers from the world's richest countries.

The meeting will also be addressed by former South African President Nelson Mandela, who will argue the case for comprehensive debt relief.

Anti-poverty campaigners like rock star Bono and former president of Ireland Mary Robinson, now president of Oxfam International, praised the UK and French finance ministers, but warned that they would hold them to account at the end of the year.

Global Call to Action Against Poverty is supported

by a wide range of organisations, from Action Aid and the All Africa Council of Churches to global trade unions and World Vision International.

The organisation plans three action days this year to lobby G7 governments with peaceful demonstrations.

Mrs Robinson said there was still a lack of political will to tackle poverty, despite the support from the UK and France, and the promise by German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to support a major British debt relief initiative.

Mr. Schroeder had told delegates at the World Economic Forum that he would back a UK proposal to increase funding for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by refinancing the so-called International Finance Facility.

Trust International

'Israel provoking Palestinians'

The Palestinian Authority has accused Israel of seeking to frustrate Palestinian efforts to restore calm and achieve a ceasefire in preparation for the possible resumption of the stalled Middle East peace process.

Abd Allah Abd Allah, director-general of the Palestinian foreign ministry, said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plans to annex Jewish settlements in the heartland of the West Bank were a "clear provocation aimed at thwarting efforts to end the violence."

"I am confident Sharon is not really interested in the restoration of calm," he said. "He is more interested in stealing more Palestinian land and shutting-in Palestinian population centres with this satanic wall."

Speaking to *Aljazeera* yesterday, shortly after Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian civilian in Rafah in southern Gaza, Abd Allah said the Israeli decision to move the route of the gigantic wall deep into the West Bank in the southern Bethlehem and northern Hebron regions would kill peace efforts.

"It would mean cutting Hebron from Bethlehem and turning both into separate Bantustans surrounded by Jewish-only settlements and the hateful wall," he said.

Abd Allah said the Palestinian Authority (PA) would urge the Bush administration and the European Union to pressurise Israel to stop "mutilating our homeland".

Seeking to appease his Likud hardliners opposed to the planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, Sharon has apparently endorsed a new route for the wall that would take tens of thousands of acres of Palestinian land and ghettoise a number of small Arab towns and villages in the

Hebron region. According to Israeli media sources, the new route will reduce Palestinian towns such as Surif and Nahalin and several other surrounding villages into virtual detention camps.

Inhabitants in the area will not be able to leave their towns except through so-called security gates manned by Israeli soldiers. The gates would be open only during certain times of the day.

Moreover, thousands of Palestinians from the Bethlehem and Hebron regions would lose their land and farms due to the wall.

The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* has reported that the Israeli government will go ahead with its plan to build the wall in the southern part of the West Bank despite Palestinian objections and possible American consternation.



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

Iran warns EU over nuclear cooperation

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned European powers Saturday that they must take their nuclear negotiations with Iran seriously, otherwise Tehran would reconsider its cooperation.

"The Europeans negotiating with Iran should know that they are dealing with a great, cultured nation... if Iranian officials feel that there is no seriousness in the European negotiations, the process will change," Khamenei was quoted as saying by the Iranian media.

His comments followed the emergence of reports that the EU was hardening its stance towards Iran and calling on Tehran to compli-

etely dismantle its nuclear fuel programme in order to guarantee that it does not seek atomic weapons.

Iran, accused by Washington of trying to build an atomic bomb, has suspended uranium enrichment as a confidence-building measure but the EU now wants the Islamic republic to definitively abandon enrichment as well as any activities for making plutonium.

Khamenei told the Europeans that "wasting time could not impede Iran's path to nuclear technology since it is a part of its national interest."

Iran insists that its nuclear activities are peaceful and that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty guarantees its right to peaceful enrichment activities.

But at a closed-door mee-

ting in Geneva this month, the so-called EU3 of Britain, France and Germany told Iran: "Nothing short of full cessation and dismantling of Iran's fuel cycle efforts would give the EU3 the objective guarantees they need that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful."

The Geneva meeting was the second round of talks on a potentially lucrative trade pact after a deal clinched in November by the European bloc's three most powerful members for Iran to suspend uranium enrichment, the key process that makes what can be fuel for nuclear reactors but also the explosive core of atomic bombs.

"Europeans know that Iran under no circumstances will give up (uranium) enrichment for peaceful purposes," Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Hasan Rowhani told the conservative *Mehr* news agency.

Five die in Kuwait shootout

A policeman, three suspected fighters and a Bahraini civilian have been killed in a gun battle near Kuwait City, state television has said.

One person was also arrested yesterday and four security men wounded in the fire fight, which broke out in the al-Salimiya district, about 20km east of the capital, after police cordoned off an area in search of wanted fighters.

Kuwait television said security forces had stormed a building where "terrorists" were hiding and that a heavy exchange of gunfire took place.

"The shooting began about 9:30am after police sealed off a main street, the one with all the restaurants on it," one witness said, adding that Special Forces arrived on the scene to back up police.

Al-Salimiya is a residential neighbourhood that includes many residents.

The incident came two weeks after a shootout between fighters and Kuwaiti security forces left one Saudi gunman dead in Um al-Hai-

man, south of the capital near the border with Saudi Arabia.

The gun battle, near the largest US military base in Kuwait, came five days after another clash closer to Kuwait City left two security officers and a Kuwaiti suspect dead.

The authorities have seized arms and explosives in subsequent raids around the tiny oil-rich emirate and, according to Interior Minister Shaikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah, arrested about 15 suspected fighters.

However, an unspecified number, including the group's spiritual leader, are still at large. Shaikh Nawaf acknowledged that the militants belonged to an organised group, but the country's National Guard chief, Shaikh Salim al-Ali al-Sabah, said some of the group were members of al-Qaida.

The US, British and French embassies in Kuwait have advised their nationals to avoid certain areas in the country and warned of the danger of more unrest.

UN criticises Israel, Lebanon over boundary

The U.N. Security Council condemned continued hostility along the UN-drawn boundary between Lebanon and Israel as it unanimously extended a peacekeeping mission there by another six months.

The council endorsed a recent report by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan that said Lebanon's position that the so-called Blue Line isn't valid in the Chebaa Farms area is not compatible with previous Security Council resolutions. Annan called on the Lebanese government to heed repeated calls to respect the Blue Line.

The strong language in the resolution, adopted Friday, comes after several recent hostile episodes ended six months of relative quiet along the Blue Line, which is not a border and was drawn by the United Nations to mark Israel's withdrawal. On Jan. 9, an Israeli patrol came under

attack from Hezbollah guerrillas. A French U.N. observer was killed and a Swedish observer was wounded during Israel's military response.

Israel entered Lebanon in 1978 and launched a full-scale invasion in 1982. From 1985 until its withdrawal in May 2000, Israel occupied part of southern Lebanon as a buffer against guerrilla attacks on northern Israel.

The Chebaa Farms area on the foothills of Mount Hermon was captured by Israel when its forces seized Syria's Golan Heights in the 1967 Middle East war. The United Nations determined that the area is Syrian, and that Syria and Israel should negotiate its fate. But Lebanon claims the Chebaa farms and is backed by Syria.

The council said it was "gravely concerned at the persistence of tension and violence along the Blue Line." It reaffirmed previous statements that the Blue Line must be respected.

ODD WORLD

Britain gets new prime minister ... Gordon Brown

It was the promotion Britain's finance minister Gordon Brown has long been waiting for: elevation to the premiership in succession to the incumbent, Tony Blair. Unfortunately for Brown, his sudden ascent up the political ladder was not what it seemed, when he was wrongly introduced at a press conference at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on tackling poverty in Africa.

"Now we move to our two colleagues from G7 governments," said Kumi Naidoo, who was chairing the briefing, pointing at Brown and French Finance Minister Herve Geyraud.

"So without further ado, to you prime minister..." The room erupted in laughter, Brown joining in. "Sorry, I beg your pardon," said Naidoo. "The chancellor of the exchequer."

Brown did not refer to the slip-up, saying only "thanks" and making a joke about being the only minister wearing a tie at this informal gathering of the world's business and political elite.

Blair had opened the meeting of global business and political leaders on Wednesday with an anti-poverty message.

The prime minister and Brown have been locked in what by all accounts is an increasingly rocky political marriage since they masterminded Labour's election victory in 1997.

Publicly, they strive to put up a united face, but evidence points to the door Brown being angry and frustrated by the more charismatic Blair's refusal to step aside in line with an allegedly long-standing agreement.

Fresh speculation of a breakdown in trust emerged earlier this month as a new book claimed Blair repeatedly told Brown last year that he would give him the keys to Downing Street — only to change his mind and provoke his furious finance chief to fume that he could never trust the premier again.

Mechanic runs errand, returns wrong car

An auto mechanic used a customer's sport utility vehicle to run an errand, left it in a parking lot with the motor running, then mistakenly took another running vehicle and returned to the garage, police said.

Police said after they informed Michael Brown, 47, that he had taken the wrong vehicle, he returned it to the bank, where the customer's vehicle was still running and unlocked in the parking lot, police said.

Brown mistakenly got into a pickup truck owned by Brian McHale, who parked two spaces from Brown's customer's SUV. McHale also left his truck running as he went into a bank.

State trooper John Powis said Thursday that he was unsure whether charges would be filed against Brown.

Neither the garage nor Brown has a listed telephone number. A woman who answered the phone at McHale's address said the bank called police when McHale noticed his car was gone.

Police recovers car after stolen three times

A man here owns one hot car. Police said the dark purple Ford was stolen three times in six days.

1. Mike Wardzinski said the car was first reported stolen on Jan. 20. It was found and towed back to the man's house early Tuesday, only to disappear a few hours later. It was found later in the day.

The car was stolen again on Wednesday. Police recovered the vehicle the next day.

Wardzinski said there were no keys inside the car and the doors were locked each time the car was stolen. The owner told police it didn't look like anyone had forced their way into the car.

Police have no suspects and are investigating the case. Wardzinski said it appears someone else has a set of keys to the car.

The thefts will likely stop now, Wardzinski said. One of the car's wheel assemblies was damaged in the most recent theft, he said.

Russia's mailmen to carry guns

The Russian government decided to equip its mail carriers and their bosses with guns, the Interfax news agency reported.

The guns, preferably revolvers, will be given to those who have to transport cash, the report said, without specifying how many weapons would be issued in all or when the program would begin.

The decision must still be approved by the justice ministry, the report said.


Without a viable bank checking system, prominent in the Western world, many Russian payments are made in cash, with bills stuffed in envelopes and sent across the country's 11 time zones.

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Afribank, TCB in merger talks

Tropical Commercial Bank and the Afri Bank plc have currently engaged in high level discussion on the possibility of a merged to form a single financial institution with adequate capitalisation in excess of the mandatory of 25 billion naira.

from Yusha'a Adams Ibrahim, Correspondent (Kano)

has commenced a private placement drive to raise its

shareholders funds from its present level. It is the first step towards the events consummation of the proposed merger plan.

Attah seeks partnership with Diamond Bank

Governor of Akwa-Ibom State, Obong Victor Attah, has urged Diamond Bank to use its presence in Uyo to strengthen public-private sector partnership for the economic development of the State.

A statement from Tropical Commercial Bank Plc signed by the head of the corporate Affairs of the bank, Alhaji Abba Adu Dan-Dago said the proposed merger plan also involves other banks that have same sync and pedigree with TCB across the country.

The statement added the series of deliberations were being held at various levels preparatory to signing a memorandum of understanding between them and other banks.

The banks, post merger plan, according to the statement was to consolidate their various strategy holds and niche markets into highly capitalised world-class financial institutions capable of providing standard customer service, deploying the advanced and up to date technology available in the banking system.

In another development, Tropical commercial Bank

According to a release by the bank over the weekend, speaking at the official opening of Diamond Bank Uyo branch last week, Governor Attah said Banks should not be merely satisfied with receiving customers' funds but should invest such proceeds in uplifting the communities within which they operate.

Governor Attah said the expectation of his government from financial institutions is to partner with the public sector in the execution of major projects, and pointed specifically to such giant initiatives as the Tinapa project in Cross River State. He said his administration is eagerly awaiting Diamond Bank's action on that front.

The statement signed by spokesman of the bank said,

in his speech, the chairman/CEO of Diamond Bank, Mr. Pascal Dozie had pledged that his Bank will continuously support the people-oriented development programmes of the government of Akwa-Ibom State.

Mr. Dozie said Akwa-Ibom State has been a key factor in the overall strategic thinking of Diamond Bank, adding that although the Bank did not have any physical presence in the State until May last year, it had been a strong supporter of Governor Victor Attah's single-minded determination to transform Akwa-Ibom State economically.

Mr. Dozie recalled that Diamond Bank has been actively financing several companies that are engaged in the execution of the various projects of the Governor. Attah administration, said Mr. Dozie: "Now that we have established a foothold in the State, we are more determined than ever to be a major partner-in-progress as many of our friends here would already acknowledge".

The Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) last week achieved a turnover of 340.1 million shares worth N3.27 billion in 21,940 deals in contrast to a total of 310.0 million shares valued at N4.0 billion exchanged previous week in 11,572 deals. This included a total of 4.1 million units of the 1st Cross River State Floating Rate Redeemable Ranch Development Bond worth N351.8 million.

However, there were no transactions in the Federal Government Development Stocks and Industrial Loans/Preference Stocks sectors. The index dropped by 2.79% to close Friday at 23,060.00 while market capitalisation closed at N1-86 trillion.

The Banking subsector was the most active during the week measured by turnover volume, with 262.8 million shares worth N1.36 billion, exchanged by investors in 9,294 deals.

Volume in the Banking subsector was driven in part by activity in the shares of NAL Bank Plc and EIB International Bank Plc. Trading on the shares of the two banks accounted for 94.1 million shares, representing 35.8% of the subsector's turnover. As in the preceding week, the Conglomerates subsector followed on the week's activity chart with a

NSE records

N3.27bn Turnover

turnover of 12.4 million shares valued at N152.2 million in 1,931 deals.

Twenty Eight stocks appreciated in price during the week, lower than the forty-two in the preceding week. Okomu Oil Palm Plc led the gainers' chart with a gain of N2.39 to close at N17.10 per share while Mobil Oil Nig. Plc followed with N1.00 to close at N180.00 per share. Other price gainers in the Top 10 category include:

- PZ Industries Plc N 0.80
- Royal Exchange Assurance Plc N 0.77
- NAL Bank Plc N 0.59
- Cement Co. of Northern Nig. Plc N 0.36
- UACN Prop. Dev. Co. Plc N 0.34
- CAP Plc N 0.31
- Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals Plc N 0.31
- Inland Bank (Nig) Plc N 0.27

Fifty-Four stocks suffered price depreciation; higher than the twenty-eight that suffered the same fate in the preceding week. Oando Plc led on the week's price losers' chart, dropping by N7.49 to close at N96.51. Conoil Plc followed on the price losers' chart with a loss of N4.51 to close at N125.00 per share.

Other price losers in the Top 10 category include Guinness Nigeria Plc N 4.49 Nigerian Breweries Plc N 3.72

Texaco (Nig) Plc N 2.00 Nestle Nigeria Plc N 2.00 Presco Plc N 1.83 Unilever Nigeria Plc N 1.60 Total Nigeria Plc N 1.50 Nig Bottling Co. Plc N 1.01

Meanwhile, the NSE opened a new branch in Benin City, Edo State, during the week. The on-line/electronic dealing-Branch was inaugurated on Thursday, January 27, 2005 by the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar, in a colourful ceremony attended by Captains of Industry, Senior Public Servants and Traditional rulers.

According to the exchange, new branch brings to eight the total number of branches of The Nigerian Stock Exchange. Other branches are located in Abuja, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Yola, Onitsha and Port Harcourt. Each branch has a Trading Floor. The Head Office of The Exchange remains in Lagos.

*Ina Lillahi wa Ina
Ilahi Raja'ana*

The entire Board, Management and Staff of Reliance Bank Limited deeply regret the passing away of our father and a friend of the bank, **Alhaji Mahmud I. Attah, OFR**

We pray that Almighty Allah grants him Al-Janah Firdausi and the deceased family the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

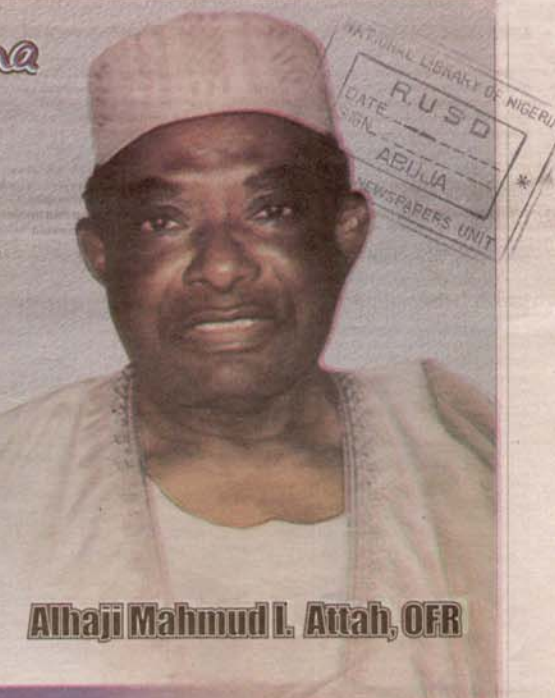
SIGNED MANAGEMENT



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Website: <http://www.reliancebanklimited.com> e-mail: info@reliancebanklimited.com

Alhaji Mahmud I. Attah, OFR



Business Trust

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air

Lagos - Abuja 07:20
10:30
15:15
13:00

Abuja - Lagos 8:45a.m.
11:00
13:15
17:00

Maiduguri - Abuja 06:50

Abuja - Maid. 17:00

Lagos - Yola 1:00 p.m.

Abuja - Yola 14:30

Yola - Abuja 15:30

Yola - Lagos 4:00 p.m.

Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos - Abuja 8:15a.m.

11:00a.m.

12:10p.m.

4:45p.m.

Kaduna - Lagos 8:30a.m.

PHI - Lagos 9:00a.m.

Abuja - Kaduna 2:30p.m.

Kaduna - Abuja 1:30p.m.

IRS Airlines

CDQ - Abuja 8:00 a.m.

Abuja - Lagos 9:45a.m.

Lagos - Kaduna 9:30a.m.

Kano - Lagos 7:30p.m.

Lagos - Kano 11:15a.m.

Kaduna - Lagos 11:00a.m.

Lagos - Abu/MM 2:30p.m.

Abuja - MM 1:45p.m.

MM - Abuja 3:45p.m.

Abuja - CDQ 5:15p.m.

Kano - Abuja 1:15p.m.

Abuja - Kano 2:30p.m.

Kano - Lagos 3:45p.m.

Lagos - Kano 6:00p.m.

EAS Airlines

Lagos - Abuja 8:15p.m.

11:45a.m.

5:45p.m.

Abuja - Lagos 10:15a.m.

7:15p.m.

Lagos - Jos 11:45a.m.

Jos - Lagos 2:30p.m.

Dasab Airlines

Abuja - Lagos 8:30a.m.

Lagos - PHC 10:30 a.m.

PHC - Lagos 12:30 a.m.

Lagos - Kano 2:30 p.m.

Kano - Lagos 4:30 p.m.

Lagos - Abuja 6:30p.m.

ADC Airline

Lagos - Abuja 7:15 a.m.

12:45 p.m.

Abuja - Lagos 8:55 a.m.

Lagos - Calabar 11:15 a.m.

Calabar - Lagos 7:20 a.m.

PHI - Lagos 9:45 a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

NCC allays fears on mobile phone radiation

As more people express fear on likely havoc from handling mobile phones, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) says there is so far no proof of such insinuations.

The regulatory body said it had, however, taken precautionary steps to ensure that the industry operates within 2 watts in the country instead of the range of 5 to 10 watts as obtains in other countries.

Speaking at a panel discussion Wednesday in Abuja, the NCC director of engineering,

Mr Steve Bello, said the regulatory body was concerned with the reports.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Bello had presented a paper entitled "Spectrum Management" at a workshop for judges on legal issues in the telecommunication industry.

NAN also reports that

the increased use of mobile phones in the country in the last three years has been accompanied with fears of possible health hazards, as stories from Western media continue to indicate.

Some of the judges at the workshop cited several cases of reports from the media of people who had sued operators and manufacturers in the West due to health problems traced to the use of

mobile phones.

Bello said the regulatory body was also in touch with the United Nations agency, CISPRO, which had been mandated to investigate the veracity of such claims.

CISPRO, according to Bello, "sets standards and regulation guiding the exposure of human beings to ionizing radiation."

He said the UN had not uncovered any harmful effect of mobile phones, promising

that the regulatory body would continue to monitor research on the issue.

Bello said that the NCC had ensured that all cell sites in the country for transmitters were a safe distance from residential and office areas as recommended by international laws on telecommunication.

"I have been to some research centres in the U.S. where radiation from handsets are tried on

simulated human beings and, some times, animals to ascertain the safety or otherwise," Bello further told NAN.

According to him, the results all indicated that mobiles were safe for use, at least for now.

On the fears expressed by some subscribers last year that some numbers have voodoo effects when answered, Bello said it was "scientifically unverifiable".



Ernest Ndakwe, NCC boss

The worst is over for NITEL - CEO

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Nigerian Telecommunications Ltd (NITEL), Mr. Rein Zwolsman, has predicted a brighter future for the company, saying the worst was over for the heavily-indebted national carrier.

In a message to the 11,000 workforce of the company, obtained by NAN in Lagos, Zwolsman said that most of

the issues holding down the company over the years had been resolved.

"The management of the company is now poised to confront the challenges head-on so that we can achieve our targets and make NITEL a better company," he stated.

NITEL, the huge but rather inefficient monopoly, has fallen into bad times since the federal government deregulated the telecommunications sector, giving opportunity to other investors.

Government subsequently, invited Pentascope International, the Dutch management consortium to take over the running of NITEL, in a bid to make it achieve its set goals.

However, the Pentascope managers have run into stormy waters since they took over NITEL in June, including intense criticisms that the company was not doing better under their management.

NITEL's woes have been made worse by its huge debt burden of about N43 billion, much of the sum owed it by the federal government and other state agencies.

The company also recorded a loss of about N19 billion in the 2003 fiscal year a period when rival companies posted landmark profits.

But Zwolsman said he has found the magic wand to turn the company around and that "NITEL is still very strong and viable".

He said that he was optimistic that the 250,000 additional lines planned by the company to be deployed in Lagos would make the difference and attract huge profits in the years ahead.

According to him, the project, expected to be completed within nine months, would run on the Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) technology and would yield about 600,000 lines with data and internet capability.

"NITEL management is mindful of the fact that the quantum jump in the number of new lines will certainly require more transmission capability.

"This is why a tendering process has nearly been concluded for the national optic fibre backbone, scheduled to be fully delivered in the fourth quarter of 2005," he added.

... thrift society purchases 330 desktops

The Staff Cooperative and Credit Society of the Nigerian Telecommunications Ltd. (NITEL) have purchased 330 desktops and 16 laptop computers to be re-rolled to members at subsidized rates.

The president of the society, Mr. Ella Agida, told newsmen in Lagos that the gesture was part welfare programmes embarked upon by the society to make life meaningful to its members numbering about 4,649.

He said that the society also purchased various plots at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, for its members to enable them own their own houses before retiring from service.

Agida said that the society had since paid for the certificate of occupancy for the plots so that the owners would not have problems relating to title bids in future.

The president said that the body disbursed N112 million various loans to members last year to assist them to pursue their personal goals.

Giving a breakdown of the performance of the society last year, Agida said that its turnover rose to about N16 million, while the total shareholder's fund hit N228 million from N122 million of 2003 fiscal year, describing the performance as "encouraging".

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that the thrift society of the Lagos Mainland Territory of NITEL has similarly disbursed N15 million housing loans to its members.

Judicial precedents in telecom law non-existent - NJI boss

The administrator of the National Judicial Institute (NJI), John Adebola Ajakaiye has said that

judicial precedents in telecommunications almost

By Anas A. Galadima, Reporter (Business)

Briefs CDMA

The Minister of Communications, Chief Cornelius Adebayo will today January 31, 2005 inaugurate the Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) technology executed by Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) for Oyo and environs.

The new project which has its base in Oyo covers seven other locations of Esie, Ediki, Ajele-Ipa, Oko-Onghin, Igbaja Orungun and Otu-Otu.

A statement from NITEL, signed by the deputy general manager, Corporate Communications, Mr. Tayo Huankeyo said, works began on the project six of two months ago and the execution was carried out by Messrs Huawei Technologies Limited, a Chinese equipment manufacturing company. The Oyo CDMA project is a pilot after which the nation-wide roll-out programme will commence.

Already a similar project is ready for inauguration in several other locations including Abuja, Lagos, Enugu and Kano.

The governor of Kwara state, Dr. Bakola Saraki is expected to attend the event as Guest of Honour.

CFO

The recently appointed chief financial officer (CFO) of the Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), Ali Hassan Garba Yar'Adua, has assumed duty.

Pentascope, the Dutch management of NITEL, recently appointed Yar'Adua as CFO of the first telecom national carrier, having passed through rigorous screening.

Yar'Adua's appointment followed the resignation of Mr. Graham Moss. Under the agreement between the federal government and Pentascope, the contractor is to appoint the chief executive officer (CEO), chief technical officer and chief financial officer (CFO).



Hassan Yar'Adua, NITEL CFO

Business Trust

International

Japan to propose new Africa aid at G7

aid at G7

Japan said on Friday it would call for a new aid plan for African nations at a meeting of major industrial powers this week which involved a greater role for international institutions.

"We felt there was a need to present Japan-distinct views, based on our experiences in Asia," finance minister Sadakazu Tanigaki told reporters.

US companies back in Libya

Libya awarded its first contracts to US companies in 18 years Saturday, handing oil and gas exploration licenses to three American firms to draw a line under decades of international isolation.

The United States eased its trade embargo on oil-rich Libya last spring as a reward to Tripoli for giving up weapons of mass destruction.

The European Union (EU) swiftly followed suit, paving the way for a plethora of companies with oil and gas interests to renegotiate business deals with the North African state.

Tripoli's ties with the West were helped by its agreement in 2003 to accept civil responsibility and make payouts for the 1988 Lockerbie bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Scotland which killed 270 people.

US bid winners Occidental Petroleum Corp, Amerada Hess Corp and Chevron-Tecoco were among more than 120 companies who registered bids or expressed interests on the offers, Libyan officials said.

A total of 15 licenses were offered for onshore and offshore blocks in one of the world's exploration hotspots.

Australia's Woodside Petroleum Ltd, a Canadian consortium grouping Vernex and Medco, United Arab Emirates' Liwa company, Brazil's Petrobras and Algerian oil and gas giant Sonatrach also won blocks in the first round.

Shortly after naming the bid winners, Libyan state-run National Oil Company chairman Abdullah al-Badri said Tripoli would offer 40 blocks in a second licensing round next month.

Libya produces about 1.6 million barrels per day (bpd) and hopes to raise this to 2.1 million bpd by the end of this decade.

Occidental Petroleum first entered Libya in 1966. The company's output reached 170,000 bpd before it left in 1986, and it operated on fields with reserves of 23 billion barrels, the company said.

Amerada is part of the Oasis Group, which includes Marathon Oil Corp. and ConocoPhillips.

credit would boost incentives for those countries to work harder to reform and repay debt.

Japan also called for an expansion of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) at the International Monetary Fund and to make PRGF loans interest-rate free.

To expand the PRGF, a loan facility for poorer nations, Japan proposed to use gold reserves held by the IMF, either by selling the reserves or reassessing their value.

Japan has helped extend aid to developing nations in Asia via international organisations such as the Asian Development Bank and has been behind in helping Africa.

Japan will also aim to help African nations nurture an environment in which they can take on credit. It would propose that countries which have sufficient frameworks to take on loans be able to do so by cutting their debt with international financial institutions.

European countries such as Britain have been supporters of forgiving debt held by poorer countries, but Japan believed, based on its experience with Asian developing countries, extending



Some of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) ministers at the cartel's meeting held in Vienna, Austria, yesterday.

WTO moves to step up treaty talks

Facing a year-end deadline, ministers from key trading nations agreed Saturday to step up talks on a wide-ranging treaty to liberalize global commerce that have been dragging on for four years.

"This was the kick-start to the political process necessary to put negotiations on the right track," said Swiss economic minister, Joseph

Deiss, who hosted the meeting of leading World Trade Organization members in Davos.

European Union (EU) trade commissioner Peter Mandelson hailed the "strong sense of purpose" among participants.

The meeting, held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum drew about 25 major WTO members—in-

cluding the United States, European Union, Canada, Brazil and India. Such "mini-ministerials" have been used in the past to push forward formal negotiations at WTO, which sets the rules for global commerce.

Trade officials are trying to emerge a round of trade talks, launched in Doha, Qatar, in 2001, that aim to slash subsidies, tariffs and other barriers to global commerce, and to use trade to help poor nations. The 148 governments in the WTO have just 11 months before a gathering in Hong Kong that they hope will bring the treaty into force in 2006.

WTO's Geneva headquarters, they agreed they need to prepare a draft text by the end of July.

"We need to have as much as on the table as possible by then," WTO chief Supachai Panitchpakdi said after the meeting.

In 2001, the plan was to create a new global trade treaty by the end of 2004. But a WTO conference in Cancun, Mexico, in 2003 collapsed amid bickering over investment rules between rich and poor members, as well as differences on agriculture.

High-level meetings in Geneva last summer finally led to a framework accord that laid some groundwork on cutting tariffs in agricultural trade, as well as export subsidies that have helped farmers in rich nations and undercut their poor country competitors. Last summer's agreement also contained looser language on trade in industrial goods and in services such as telecommunications and banking.

Deiss said ministers agreed to push harder to bring talks on other areas of commerce up to the same level as those on the farm trade.

"There is a broad recognition that we should move from the clarification phase to real negotiations in all issues," he said. "A special effort should be undertaken in areas which are lagging behind."

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick hailed the outcome of the meeting, saying the tone showed a commitment to make serious progress by the end of the year.

"There's a lot of work to be done," he said. "But unless we started of the year with this sense of momentum, focus and energy, the odds would be much less than they are now."

Asked if the final trade treaty might not emerge until 2007, however, Zoellick said, "You never know with these things."

World Bank, IMF foray into anti-globalisation debate

For the first time, World Bank and IMF representatives joined the debate at the World Social Forum anti-globalization summit, as many delegates underscored their frustrations with the conditions they must meet to get development aid.

And the future of free software to allow cheaper access to cyberspace was on the agenda, as several high profile individuals Saturday signed the Global Call to Action Against Poverty launched earlier in the week.

ment economic policy but its transparent use of the funds it receives, he argued.

"Our people are very angry with you. We ask why do they accept the conditions you put," a Cameroonian participant warned the financial institutions' representatives.

"Cameroon is not poor. We have oil, but still the population is poor. IMF and World Bank, please do something for development," he implored.

"It is important to have here (representatives) from the IMF and World Bank, but one has to know that they put conditions to their aid to countries," Novib/Oxfam Netherlands' Ted Van Rees said, at the Fifth World Social Forum.

"They are imposing privatizations and forcing countries to open up when they are not ready to compete with stronger economies," he said.

Asked about the need for the IMF and World Bank to change their modus operandi and an economic policy seen by critics as too severe, John Garrison, a member of the civil society team at the World Bank, said: "Our poverty agenda has already changed. In 1947, it was mainly the reconstruction of Europe, improving development with sound economic growth."

Thomas Deve, with Mwingo, a center for reflexion and development of the NGOs from Southern Africa, slammed International Monetary Fund and World Bank conditions imposed before credit is granted as "a disaster" encouraged by "UN advice to our governments."

What should be the deciding factor for these financial institutions is not a gov-

"The money has also to go to NGOs and civil society," he added. "We are putting the emphasis in policies of governments on social policies."

Simonetta Nardin, senior external affairs officer at the IMF, said "the issue of reforming financing of aid by the IMF and World Bank was already raised in Monterrey in 2001. It is true we are lagging behind, you (civil society) have more power than us, but do not underestimate your countries — your governments are not puppets of the IMF and World Bank."

Asked about the need for the IMF and World Bank to change their modus operandi and an economic policy seen by critics as too severe, John Garrison, a member of the civil society team at the World Bank, said: "Our poverty agenda has already changed. In 1947, it was mainly the reconstruction of Europe, improving development with sound economic growth."

"Now we have a whole agenda, including access to education, ... (and) we allocated one billion US dollars to AIDS grants for Africa," Garrison said.

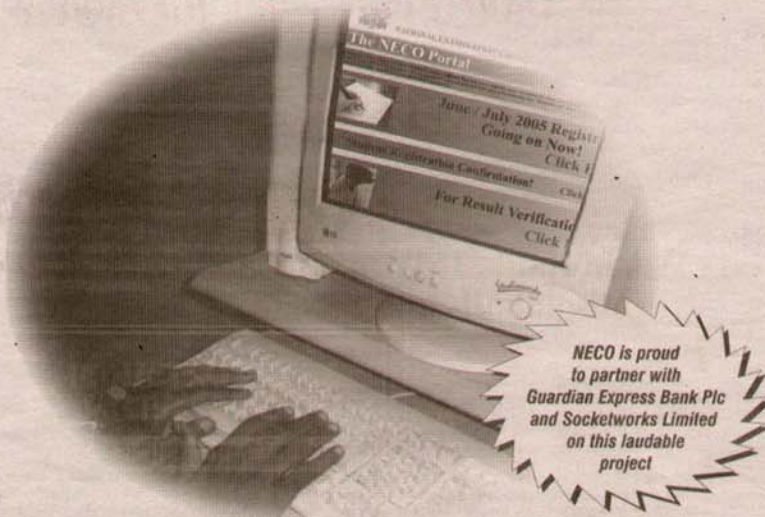
Market Indicators

Nigerian Inter Bank Foreign Exchange (NIFEX) Rates			
Quotes as of: 28/01/2005	Bid(\$=N=)	Offer(\$=N=)	
Spot Fixing	133.008	133.3	
Tenor (Days)	Swap Points	Forward Fixing	
30	1.5602 / 1.3632	134.3685 / 134.6632	
60	2.7148 / 2.7207	135.7231 / 136.0207	
90	4.0636 / 4.0725	137.0719 / 137.3725	
180	8.0764 / 8.0941	141.0847 / 141.3941	
Dutch Auction held on: 26/01/2005			
Rates			
Total Amount Offered	US\$ 90000000		
Total Amount Demanded	US\$ 107465989.28		
Total Amount Sold	US\$ 105019767.42		
Lowest Successful Bid Rate	N 132.86 / 1 US\$		
Highest Successful Bid Rate	N 133.05 / 1 US\$		
No. of Successful Applicants	621		
No. of Unsuccessful Applicants	16		
Naira official rates as of: 26/01/2005			
N			
Currency	Buying	Selling	Central
US DOLLAR	131.86	132.86	132.36
POUNDS/STERLING	247.5144	249.3915	248.45295
EURO	171.6026	172.904	172.2533
SWISS FRANCS	0	0	0
JAPANESE YEN	1.2743	1.2839	1.2791
CFAFRANCS	0.2551	0.2651	0.2601
WAUA	200.2043	201.7226	200.96345
SAUDI RIVAL	35.157	35.4237	35.29035



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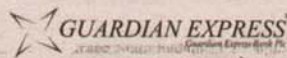
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Business Trust

Obasanjo lauds PAN over vehicle exports

President Olusegun Obasanjo has commended Peugeot Automobile Nigeria (PAN) for pioneering and promoting

By Anas A. Galadima, Reporter (Business)

exports of Nigerian-made Peugeot vehicles and for pro-

viding timely logistic support to the organisers of the African Union summit which ends today in Abuja.

According to a press re-

lease from the office of the senior special assistant to the president, Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar, who is also the chairman of PAN, the president

had earlier on approved the Peugeot brand of vehicles as the official carrier of the visiting heads of states and dignitaries who are attending the AU summit.

With the approval, PAN was asked supply 160 units of Peugeot 607 limousines for the summit. A move which is expected to popularise the Nigerian-made Peugeot vehicles among the visiting African leaders.

According to the statement, the approval is also in line with the policy of the federal government to patronise

local manufacturers of automobile rather than importing from abroad.

Recently, Peugeot Automobile was said to have exported 200 vehicles manufactured at its Kaduna assembly plants and this was said to have fetched about 2 million euros into the coffers of the Nigerian government.

The PAN export was the first time Nigeria will be exporting vehicles manufactured in the country, thus giving Nigeria an opportunity to join the league of automobile exporting countries.

'SMEs hold key to Nigeria's exports'

Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) have been described as a veritable means through which goods and services for exports could be produced to generate huge foreign exchange for the country.

The minister of commerce, Ambassador A. D. Idris Waziri stated this at the National Stakeholders Consultative Seminar on the National Export Strategy held in Kano recently.

Ukrainian firm to acquire Jos steel mill

From Jibril Dauda, Regional Editor (Jos)

LEMAN commodity group, a top Ukrainian Steel Company in Europe on Saturday inspected the facilities at the Jos Steel Company with a view to acquiring it.

Dr. Innocent Izoma, leader of the LEMAN inspection team as well as officials of the federal ministry of steel and industry and Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) inspected all aspects of the steel company.

Discussing with the group later, Plateau state governor, Chief Joshua Dariye agreed with LEMAN as a reputable organisation that can manage the steel rolling mill because of its proven track record in Europe and other parts of the world.

Dariye called on other foreign investors to invest in the state as he said peace has finally returned, saying that Plateau is now a safe haven for both internal and foreign investors, even as he pledged the protection of their investments.



Liyel Imake, Plateau state governor

From Ahmed Abubakar, Correspondent (Kano)

Ambassador Waziri said no discussions of export strategy could be complete without mentioning the versatile, adaptive and resilient SMEs in the country.

Ambassador Waziri added that, it is therefore of

utmost importance that Nigeria's SMEs are supported and encouraged through provision of reliable credit support system as well as capacity building to enable them achieve the central role they are expected to play in the production of goods and services for export.

Waziri called on stakeholders at the forum to address all relevant issues highlighted in the document.

Meanwhile, while declaring the seminar open, the Kano state governor, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau cautioned stakeholders against bad implementation of good ideas.

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FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT
MABSUHI - ABUJA

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the general public to the effect that the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is processing applications for consent for assignments/sublease/mortgage etc on the underlisted properties.

SNO	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF CONSENT/DEED	PARTIES TO THE TRANSACTION	CONSIDERATION	DATE OF APPLICATION	REMARKS
1.	Property at Odebe Road, Phase II, Scheme, Bays, Ferochere, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr Michael Agbolade Odebiyi (Assignor) (b) Chief Depo Olanrewaju (Assignee)	N10,000,000.00 (Ten Million Naira only)		E1001159
2.	Property at Block 97, Plot 2209 Federal Govt. Area, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Adu Odehinde Eremuwa	N100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Naira Only)		ES6170/A43
3.	Property at Block XXXIV, Plot 18, Ibeju-Odefin, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Biyeye Isang (Assignor) (b) Wilson Odega (Assignee)	N120,000.00 (One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Naira Only)		ES6170/A43
4.	Property at Plot 1A, Block CXIII, Gwona Extension (Gwanda Layout) Ibeju-Odefin, Alimosho	Manager Deed of Assignment	(1) Olusade Babatun (Mortgagee) (2) Leleke Investment Ltd. (Borrower) (3) All State Trust Bank PLC (Mortgagee)			EA6170A872
5.	Property at Street AD, Plot 64 at Ikanda, Lagos State Registered as No. M66/59 on 17/8/2000 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Monica Oluseyi Odekan (Assignor) (Assignee) World Mission Agency Inc. (Assignee)	N1,775,000.00 (One million, seven hundred and seventy five thousand naira only)	02/10/2003	ES621A/96
6.	Plot 34, Block CLVIII, Federal Government Layout, Ibeju-Odefin, Lagos State Registered as No. 63/62/26 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays on 20/11/1996	Deed of Assignment	(a) Oluyinka Tolowosede (Assignor) (b) Springboard Educational Services Limited (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand Naira only)	23/04/2003	ES6170/A389
7.	Plot 36, Block CLVII, Federal Government Layout, Ibeju-Odefin, Lagos State Registered as No. 23/2/28 on 24/12/1996 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	Olusegun Joseph Adigunwo (Assignor) (b) Springboard Educational Services Limited (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand naira only)	23/04/2003	ES6170/A426
8.	Plot 38, Block CLVIII at Ibeju Odefin in Lagos. Registered as No. 76/76/26 on 22/11/1996 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Dr. (Mrs) Olusoyin Ademola (Assignor) (b) Springboard Educational Services Limited (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One Hundred thousand Naira only)	23/04/2003	ES6170/A426
9.	Plot 18, Block CLVIII, Federal Government Layout, Ibeju Odefin Alimosho, Lagos State. Registered as No. 75/75/30 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos on 04/04/1997	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs Veronica Isadagbe (Assignor) (b) Echarya Godwin Ugbegbe (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One Hundred thousand Naira only)	23/08/2002	ES6170/A438
10.	Plot 9 Block 2, Federal Government Layout Site 'D' Extension Satellite Town, Lagos. Registered as No. 81/81/17 on 15/04/1996 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos.	Deed of Assignment	(a) J. S. T. Properties & Investment Ltd. (Assignor) (b) Friday Chai Onali (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Five hundred thousand Naira only)	23/09/2002	E1104410
11.	Plot 20, Block V Site 'E' Satellite Town, Lagos.	Deed of Assignment	(a) DR. Abdulkhalil Heli Oyekan (Assignor) (b) Mr. Derophilus Okwalili Oyeatani (Assignee)	N400,000.00 (Four hundred thousand Naira only)		Application not dated E1102318
12.	Plot 1, Block 'X' Site 'E' Federal Government site and Services Scheme Satellite Town Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(a) Dr Simon Odebiyi Bernard (Assignor) (b) Olamide Ajibola Anubi Anilowade (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	30/01/2003	E1103393
13.	Plot 9, Block V, Federal Government Layout Site 'D' Satellite Town, Oyo, Lagos State. Registered as No. 36/36/19 on 11/06/1996 at Federal Land Registry Bays, Lagos.	Deed of Assignment	(a) Abay Karimola Adenuga (Assignor) (b) Mr. Alexander Odebiyi Enchulwa (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	4/3/2003	E11037
14.	Plot 20, Zone 'H' at Banana Island Ferochere, Bays, Lagos State. Registered as No. 16/16/1993 on 6/3/2003 at the Federal Land Registry, Bays, Lagos.	Deed of Assignment	(a) Patrick Odebe (The Assignor) (b) Fama Nigeria Enterprises (Assignee)	N10m. (Ten Million Naira only)	13/08/2002	LASAS/52/10/A124
15.	Plot 19, Block 22, Ibeju Odefin in Lagos State. (Federal Government Layout) Registered as No. 74/74/19 on 25/8/1996 at Federal Land Registry, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Akemi Anjo (Assignor) (b) Obasogie Anura (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand Naira only)	15/8/2002	ES6170/A124
16.	Plot 5, Block 'H' Site 'G' Fed Govt. Site & Services Layout, Satellite Town Lagos. Registered as No. 63/63/38 on 15/06/2000 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos.	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Vivian Nicholas Nwanyiwa (Assignor) (b) Mr. Enoch Odebe (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	None	E1104903
17.	Plot 12, Block LXVIII Fed. Govt. Layout Satellite Town, Lagos.	Deed of Assignment	(a) Joseph Odebiyi Odebiyi (Assignor) (b) Mr. Akintunde Isina Monemola (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand Naira only)	15/10/2002	ES6170/A474
18.	Plot 4, Block V, Site B, Fed. Govt. Layout Satellite Town, Lagos.	Deed of Assignment	(a) Adewale Odebe Odebe (Assignor) (b) Mr. Vincent Nwan (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	June 2002	E1103988
19.	Plot 5, Block 'T' Site 'E' Fed. Govt. Site & Services Layout, Satellite Town, Lagos State. COVERED BY Deed of Lease No. 58/59/1929 on 28/01/1992	Deed of Assignment	(a) Adeniyi Tajudun Odebe (Assignor) (b) Mrs. Priscilla Odebe Odebe (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	20/5/2003	E110139
20.	Plot 11, Block 1, Fed. Govt. Layout Site 'F' Extension, Satellite Town Amoso-Odefin, L.G.A., Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Alphonse Odebe Odebe (Assignor) (b) Mr. Austin Chama Odebe (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	31/07/2003	E110222
21.	Property No. 13A, Ranson Road Bays, Lagos State.	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Sylvester Mburara Arigbo (Assignor) (b) Mrs. Dola Shajayk (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	31/07/2003	E11723
22.	Plot 4, Block III, Site 'F' Extension, Satellite Town Lagos Registered C of 'O' No. 31/31/48 on 14/04/1999 at Fed. Land Registry Odebe, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Sunday Odebe Awolaja (Assignor) (b) Mr. Sunday Isenake Nwemaku (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	Not dated	E11050
23.	Plot 9, Block 1, Fed Govt. Layout Site 'E' Satellite Town off Babay Road, Lagos State. Registered, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Tostin Okadike (Assignor) (b) Mr. Ken Odebe (Assignee)	N400,000.00 (Four hundred thousand Naira only)	Not Dated	E110765
24.	Plot 4, Block 11, Fed. Govt. Layout Site 'B' Satellite Town Oyo Lagos.	Deed of Assignment	(a) Madonald Scantill Emporium (Assignor) (b) Temu Wilfred Adede and Mrs. Rem Helen Adede (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand Naira only)	01/10/2004	E110994
25.	Plot 2, Block III, Fed. Govt. Layout Site 'G' Satellite Town Oyo L.G.A., Lagos State Registered C of 'O' No. 40/40/30 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos on 16/06/1999	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs Odebiyi Isola Akinyemi (Assignor) (b) Odebe Cosmas Anjo (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	19/02/2003	E110497
26.	Plot 21, Block XII, Fed. Govt. Layout Site 'E' Satellite Town Amoso-Odefin L.G.A., Lagos Registered C of 'O' No. 37/37/55 on 11/01/2000 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Sunday P. Ailopokun (Assignor) (b) Okunne Odebe Chukwu (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	Not dated	E110468
27.	Plot 13, Zone 'E' Fed. Govt. Layout at Banana Island Ferochere Estate off Onkoy Road Bays, Edo-On L.G.A., Lagos. Registered C of 'O' No. 58/59/79 on 23/11/2001 at Fed. Land Registry Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) DR. Okachukwu John Mboro (Assignor) (b) Mr. Frank Ezeudu (Assignee)	N6m. (Six Million Naira only)	26/03/2004	LASAS/BS/E1134
28.	Plot 8, Block XIII, Fed Govt. Layout, Site 'D' Satellite Town Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Andrew Nduka Nwankwo (Assignor) (b) Mr. Alex Odebe Agbebi (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	3/6/2002	E110704
29.	Plot 11, Zone 'E' Fed. Govt. Layout, Banana Ferochere Estate Bays, Lagos State. Registered C of 'O' No. 99/99/00 on 11/12/2002 at Fed. Land Registry, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Eng. Victor Abimbola Odebe (Assignor) (b) Mr. Cyril Odebe Bays (Assignee)	N15m. (Fifteen million naira only)	15/01/2004	LASAS/BNL/D/E1205

No.	Plot	Site	Deed of Assignment	Parties	Value	Date	Ref.
28	Plot 11, Block V, Fed. Govt. Layout, Site 'F' Extension, Satellite Towns, Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 32/3241 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) (Chikings Investment Ltd/Cycli Olatunbosun (Kings Investment Limited)(b) Halford Bank PLC (Mortgage - Lender)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	26/09/2003	E1105339	
31	Plot 11, Block IV, Site 'A' Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Babatunde Olatunbosun (Assignor) (b) Ucheoma Anikweke (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	12/12/2002	E1105965	
32	Plot 14, Block 11, Fed. Govt. Layout Site 'D' Extension, Satellite Towns Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 22/2259 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos on 12/05/2004	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Janet O. Anzime (Assignor)(b) Ibi and Nigeria Limited (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	Not dated	E1105183	
33	33/Plot 17, Block 1, Site 'T' Fed. Govt. Layout, Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Cecilia Okin (Assignor)(b) Eugene Ewaka Anum (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	24/09/02	E110539	
34	Plot 9, Block XII, Site 'E' Fed. Govt. Layout, Rdg. C of O No. 96/965A on 08/09/99 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Adiat Agbada (Assignor)(b) Mr. Edebi Uba Oyejide (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	No date		
35	Plot 10, Block 1, Fed. Govt. Layout, I.C.T. Abajo C of O No. 2575/62 on 23/02/02 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Josephine Chiamaka Onyiah (Assignor)(b) Emmanuel Anubaku Chikwura (Assignee)	N2.00m (Two million Naira only)	04/03	FCTASAGLD	
36	Plot 13, Block XII, Site 'D' Fed. Govt. Layout at Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Felix Oyejide (Assignor)(b) Mr. Tony Vincent Ajumobi (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	24/02/03	E110592	
37	Plot 223, Street AN, Site for the National Housing Programme along Bodeleleba State, Regd C of O No. 22/252 on 08/09/99 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Third Party deed of Legal Mortgage	(a) Mr. Tawo Tilye Oshunjo (Assignor)(b) Mr. Benjamin Akintoye (Assignee)	N2.00m (Two million Naira only)	31/1/03	E5620A31	
38	Plot 1, Block VII of Site 'T' Extension Satellite Towns Lagos Rdg. C of O No. 66/66/99 on 10/09/99 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Clak Investment Ltd. (Borrower) (b) Mr. Opeoluwa Chris Oyejide (c) First Tech Finance & Investment PLC (Mortgage)		25/3/02	E1105517	
39	Plot 30, Block VI, Fed. Govt. Layout, Idoro, Lagos, Regd C of O No. 63/63/41 on 16/08/01 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Samuel Olatunbosun (Assignor)(b) Mrs. Olan Olan Akintoye (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Naira Only)	28/5/01	E56170A139	
40	Plot 7, Site 'U' Fed. Govt. Layout, Satellite Towns, Lagos State, Rdg. C of O No. 32/3279 on 30/11/01 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Michael Aboye Ighalo (Assignor)(b) Tina Oshinubi Awoniyi (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	No date	E1105300	
41	Plot 10, Block 1, Site 'F' Extension, Fed. Govt. Layout, Ojo LGA, Lagos State, Covered by Deed of Assignment, Regd on No 7777/19 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Legal Mortgage (Deposit)	(a) Harvest Gate Investment Ltd. (Borrower)(b) Mr. Damachi Mohide Ibrahim (Mortgage)		30/10/03	E1105300	
42	Plot 1, Block II, Fed. Govt. Layout, Site 'D' Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Olatunde Alade Olatunjo (b) Union Homes & Savings Lend Ltd.		29/01/04	E1105300	
43	Plot 2, Block I, Fed. Govt. Layout, Site 'T' Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Oluwaseun Iwa Knight (Assignor)(b) Charles Chikwura (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three Hundred Thousand Naira Only)	No date	E1105300	
44	Plot 3, Block V, Fed. Govt. Layout, Site 'F' Satellite Towns off Babay Road, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Dr. Augustine Ikerehinwa Rengwa Merish (Assignor)(b) Nse Emmanuel San Eze Alade (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira only)	12/03/04	E1105300	
45	Plot 3, Block XI, Site 'D' Fed. Govt. Layout, Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Ekeya Fabun (Assignor)(b) Emmanuel Chikwura (Assignee)	N400,000.00 (Four Hundred thousand Naira only)	No date	E105579	
46	Plot 20, Block 02, Abesan/Idoro, Lagos, Fed. Registry, Lagos, Registered C of O No. 44/44/86 at Fed. Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Mojibade Akintoye (Assignor)(b) Mrs. Adenike Oshinubi (Assignee)	N150,000.00 (One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira only)	9/10/03	E56170A138	
47	Plot 20, Block I, XVII, Fed. Govt. Layout, Idoro, Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Janet Olatunbosun (Assignor)(b) Mr. Vincent Seye Olayinka	N200,000.00 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira only)	25/08/02	E56170A362	
48	Plot 20, Block IV, Site 'E' Fed. Govt. Site & Services Layout, Satellite Towns, Lagos, Covered by Fed. Govt. deed of Lease No 32/321931 of 14/05/92	Deed of Assignment	(a) Oluwajoba Umar (Assignor)(b) Oluwajoba Umar (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	12/09/02	E110537	
49	Plot 10, Block VII, Site 'T' Fed. Govt. Layout, Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. I. A. Oshin (Assignor)(b) Mr. Chiroka Remigun Ajayi (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	No date	E100205	
50	Plot 14, Block 3, Fed. Govt. Layout, Site 'T' Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Dr. Joseph Bayo Ajala (Assignor) (b) Mr. Oluwaseun Edebi (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	3/3/03	E1105314	
51	Plot 17, Block CLVII Fed. Govt. Layout, Idoro, Lagos, Registered C of O No. 56/56/34 on 20/8/1997 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Saragudun Bawari (Assignor)(b) Ekeocha Godwin Olayinka (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand Naira only)	26/08/2002	E56170A438	
52	Plot 3, Block X, Fed. Govt. Layout, Site 'F' Satellite Towns, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mofun Adedun Olu-Agha (Assignor)	N500,000.00 (Five hundred thousand Naira only)	17/02/2003	E1003813	
53	Plot 10, Block XII, Osborne Rd, Babalola, Lagos, Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 83/83/64 on 21/8/2002 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Prime City Properties Ltd (Assignor)(b) Abaji Godwin Ibrahim (Assignee)	N1m (One million Naira only)	10/10/2002	E1001152	
54	Plot 4, Block X, Fed. Govt. Layout Site 'E', Satellite Towns, off Babay Road, Lagos, Covered by a deed of Assignment dated 17/4/1999 Registered on No. 63/63/31 at the Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Tripartite Deed of Legal Mortgage	(a) Dec. Cec & E International Ltd (c) Ekan Oluwajoba (c) Liberty Bank Plc		29/3/2004	E11038317	
55	Plot 1, Block III, Site 'E' Fed. Govt. Layout, Satellite Towns (Ojo) L.G.A., Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Juliet Isioke (Assignor)(b) Richard C. Ugbah (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	20/2/2004	E1104133	
56	Plot 870, Block VI, Fed. Govt. Layout, Abesan, Lagos, L.G.A., Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 32/32398 On 18/9/2003 At Fed. Land Registry Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Christian Oluwaseun (Assignor)(b) Mr. Sade Alwanmohammed (Assignee)	N150,000.00 (One hundred and fifty thousand Naira only)	11/11/2003	E56170A430	
57	Plot 4, Block XII, Fed. Govt. Layout, Idoro, Lagos, Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 78/78/31 on 12/5/1997 at Fed. Land Registry Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Oluwaseun David (Assignor) (b) Mr. Gabriel Akpan Akpan (Assignee)	N120,000.00 (One hundred and twenty thousand Naira only)	7/10/2003	E56170A1097	
58	Plot 1589, Block 08, Fed. Govt. Layout, Abesan, Lagos, Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 13/13/54 on 16/11/1999 Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Julius Oshin Oshinubi (Assignor)(b) Oluwaseun Aden Oshinubi (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand Naira only)	4/12/2003	E56170A470	
59	Plot 3, Block 9 Fed. Govt. Layout, Fashola Park Estate, Lagos, Registered C of O No. 13/13/30 on 24/12/2001 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Marine Nig. Ltd. Assignor (b) Diamond Industries Ltd (Assignee)	N7.5m (Seven million, Five hundred thousand naira only)	26/1/2004	L10ASABKBSU	
60	Plot 603, Block 28, Fed. Govt. Layout, Abesan, Lagos, Registered C of O No. 36/36/20 on 5/7/1996 at Fed. Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Lucy O. Fashola (Assignor)(b) Mr. Paul O. D. Adedun (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand naira only)	3/01/2003	E56170A164	
61	Plot 18, Block V, Fed. Govt. Layout, Abesan, Lagos, Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 36/36/35 on 10/1/2000 at Fed. Land Registry Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Egeri Nathaniel Marsh Made (Assignor)(b) Eger. Emmanuel Chikwura (Assignee)	N1.5m (One million five hundred thousand naira only)	6/4/2001	FCTASAGRLD	
62	Plot 18, Block V, Fed. Govt. Layout, Abesan, Lagos, Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 36/36/35 on 10/1/2000 at Fed. Land Registry Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Abaji Ayobake Sabal Adedun (Assignor)(b) Mrs. Monumet Olatun (Assignee)(c) Mrs. Sherita Chikwura (Assignee)	N750,000.00 (Seven hundred and fifty thousand naira only)	4/5/2001	E56170A498	
63	Plot 04, Block 19, Fed. Govt. Layout, Abesan, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Johnson Adem Albor (Assignor)(b) Mr. Babatunde Kale (Assignee)(c) Mrs. Chikwura (Assignee)	N150,000.00 (One hundred and fifty thousand naira only)	14/08/2002	E56170A1849	
64	Plot 10, Block III Fed. Govt. Layout, Lagos State, Registered C of O No. 36/36/95 on 18/3/2003 at Fed. Govt. Registry, Lagos	Tripartite Deed of Legal Mortgage	(a) Oluwaseun (Borrower)(b) Fide Oluwaseun (Surety/Mortgagee)(c) International Bank Plc (Lender)	N20m (Twenty million naira only)	28/10/2003	E56184	
65	Plot 4, Block 5, Bayo/Fashola Estate, Lagos, Registered C of O No. 25/25/30 on 10/11/1996 at Fed. Land Registry Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Franklin Uzoma Anzime (Assignor) (b) Jeremiah Damilola Akanni (Assignee)	N10m (Ten million naira only)	13/02/2003	L10ASABKBSU	





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Off Peak: Other Networks	18.00	0.40	Flat Rate Per Minute: Outside Bundle	22.00	19.00	17.00
Off Peak: Vmobile	18.00	0.30				

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Plot No.	Plot Description	Transaction Type	Parties/Details	Amount	Date	Reference No.
66	Plot 5, Block V, Fed Govt. Layout Site 'C' Satellite Town, Anomolu L.G.A Lagos State registered C of O No. 262373 dated 25/2001 at Fed. Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Third Party Legal Mortgage	(A) A.D. De Young Auto Agency Ltd (Borrower) (B) Prince Adedokun Late (C) The Surety Ltd (D) Equity Bank of Nig. Ltd (Lender)	Not stated	27/8/2004	E109502
67	Plot 11, Block 27, Fed Govt layout Site 7 Services Scheme Idedoh	Deed of Assignment	(a) Dr. Gueper Paul Mwanza (Assignor) (b) Mr. Awolade W. Abayomi (Assignee)		24/3/2004	E56730
68	Plot 164, Street 'AK' Located Within Housing Programme, Bonade, Lagos. Registered C of O No. 434350 on 14/2000 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Legal Mortgage	(a) Mr. Gabriel Dandade Adeyemi (Mortgagee) (b) Investment Bank Ltd (Mortgagor)		4/10/2003	E56286A31
69	Plot 64, Block 29, Fed. Govt. Layout at Abura, Abura, Lagos State. Registered C of O No. 898924 on 18/10/1996 at the Fed Land Registry Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Neayem R. Ojo (Assignor)	N400,000.00	31/3/2004	E56730A5028
70	Plot 41, Block 1, Fed. Govt Layout Town, Shiki, Oshodi, Anambra State. Registered C of O No. 898924 on 18/10/1996 at the Fed. Land Registry Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Tripartite Legal Mortgage	(a) Signor Eddy dove Investment Nig. Ltd (Borrower) (b) Mr. Edwin V. Chawwaka (Surety Mortgagee) (c) Equity Bank of Nig. Ltd (Lender)		28/10/2003	E56730A640
71	Plot 9, Block 33, Fed Govt. Layout, Oshodi Road, Ibeju-Feshin, Bayo, Fed Govt. Layout, Registered C of O No. 133317 on 31/01/1996 at Fed. Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Chief Emmanuel Mijangbe Nwade (Assignor) (b) Stonewall Continent Ltd (Assignee)	N25m (Twenty five million naira only)	21/04/2004	E800118.195
72	Plot 11, Block 11, Fed Govt Layout D'Estimote Satellite Town, Ojo, Lagos	Deed of Tripartite Legal Mortgage	(a) Eyon Spark Limited (b) Alexander Chidi Nwabueke (c) NBM Bank Limited	N2m (Two million naira only)	23/01/2004	E19034
73	Plot 10, Block 11, Fed Govt Layout 'D' Estimation Satellite Town off Badagry Road Lagos	Deed of Tripartite Legal Mortgage	(a) Daniel Oluwole Oluwole (Mortgagee) (b) Union Bank Savings & Loan Ltd (Mortgagor) (c) Dr. Charles School (Customer)		5/4/2004	E11047
74	Plot 23, Block 31, Fed Govt Layout, Mimi Oshodi, Bayo Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Ekinde Adedokun Adeyemi (Assignor) (b) The General Executive Council of Christ Apostolic Church (Assignee)	N1,500.00 (One thousand five hundred Naira only)	21/11/2003	E56730A236
75	Plot 19, Block 33, Fed Govt Layout Idedoh, Oshodi, Bayo, Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(a) Dr. Jace U. Omiti (Assignor) (b) Ajayi Oluwole Mwanza (Assignee)	N200,000.00 (Two hundred thousand Naira only)	19/3/2004	E56730A198
76	Plot 21, Block LXXXVIII, Fed Govt Layout Idedoh, Oshodi, Abinibi, Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Esther Oluwole Taiwo (Assignor) (b) Mr. Babatun Akin (Assignee)	N150,000.00 (One Hundred and fifty thousand Naira only)	14/10/2004	E56730A137
77	Plot 6, Block H, Fed Govt. Layout Site 1, Satellite Town, Lagos Registered C of O No. 2699 on 28/2001 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Peter Okochiwa Okeke (Assignor) (b) Captain Sylvanus Uzamaka Chirweke (Assignee) (NIGERIAN)	N350,000 (Three hundred and fifty thousand Naira only)	Not dated	E110521
78	Plot 09, Block CVIHA, Fed Govt. Layout, Idedoh, Oshodi, Lagos State. Registered C of O No. 141429 on 27/2000 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Abimbola A. Akintunde (Assignor) (b) Mr. Oluwole Oluwole Oluwole (Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand naira only)	17/4/2002	E56730A491
79	Plot 11, Fed. Govt. Layout Site 'H' Satellite Town Lagos State. Registered C of O No. 30080 on 19/06/2002 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Engr. Damjan Adedokun (Assignor) (b) Mr. Mrs. Kazem Grace Oluwole (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand naira only)	Not dated	E110519
80	Plot 2, Block III Site 'F' Fed Govt Layout, Satellite Town Lagos Registered C of O No. 898917 on 17/01/1996 at Fed Land Registry Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Chief Joshua Ekinde Kufowale (Assignor) (b) Prince Chawwaka Ekinde Akin (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Naira only)	28/20/2003	E110526
81	Plot 12, Block II, Fed Govt. Layout 'C' Satellite Town off Badagry Road, Lagos State. Registered Deed of Assignment No. 849442 dated 11/8/2000 at Lagos	Deed of Mortgage	(a) CRE A.O. Mwanza (RTD) (Mortgagee) (b) Union Bank of Nig. Plc. (Bank) Account (1) Bishop Engineering Services Ltd. (2) Jereen Nigeria Ltd.	N1	28/2004	E10023
82	Plot 20, Block 1, Site 'E' Fed Govt. Layout, Satellite Town	Deed of Assignment	(a) Oluwole Chawwaka (Assignor) (b) Edith Hymanu Ugoeze (Assignee) (c) Mrs. Penelope Nwagwu (Assignee)	N400,000.00 (Four hundred thousand naira only)	21/08/2003	E110579
83	Plot 16, Block 12, Site 'F' Fed Govt. Layout Site, Satellite Town, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	Mr. Damjan Oluwole Administrators of the Estate of late Jide N. Oluwole (Assignor) (b) Mr. George Okeke (Assignee)	N400,000.00 (Four hundred thousand naira only)	Not dated	E110582
84	Plot 2, Block XI, Fed Govt. Layout, Site 'F' Satellite Town, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Benjamin Umeadi Okobi (Assignor) (b) Chief Lash Mbah (Assignee)	N180m (One hundred and eighty million naira only)	12/06/2004	LASAS/ESLDP0400
85	Plot 41, Zone 'F' Housing Programme Estate off Badagry Road, Lagos State. Regd C of O No. 2123296 on 20/06/2003 at Fed. Land Registry, Bayo Lagos	Deed of Legal Tripartite	(a) FPA Investment Ltd (b) Chief Fata O. Akintunde (c) Landbank Plc.	N200,000.00 (Two hundred thousand naira only)	18/03/2000	E56730A476
86	Plot 1671, Block 72, Fed Govt. Layout, Lagos State Regd C of O No. 787027 on 12/12/1996 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Christian Eke Okeke (Assignor) (b) Mr. Oluwole Oluwole (Assignee)	N150,000.00 (One hundred and fifty thousand naira only)	July, 2002	E56730A324
87	Plot 403, Block 18, Fed Govt. Layout, Abura, Bayo LAG, Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(a) Abasi Okunade Abasi (Assignor) (b) Samuel Francis Uwehale			
88	Plot C9, Block 17, Fed Govt. Layout, Abura, Bayo LGA, Lagos State. Regd C of O No. 944429 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Julius Okunade Okunade (Assignor) (b) Anthony Stanley Ezeomaka Okeke (Assignee)	N30,000.00 (Three hundred and fifty thousand naira only)	3/6/2004	E56730A312
89	Plot 105, Block 41, Fed Govt. Layout, Abura, Abura, Bayo LGA Lagos State. Covered by C of O No. 3325 dated 24/10/1996 at Fed. Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Ising Abiodun Dahunsi (Vendor Assignor) (b) Jereyda Joseph Akin (Purchaser - Assignee)	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand naira only)	29/06/2004	E56730A301
90	Plot 78, Block CXXXVII, Fed Govt. Layout, Idedoh, Bayo LGA, Lagos State. Covered by C of O No. 303077 dated 16/01/2001 at Fed. Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mr. Chikwade Curtis Anthony Odeke (Assignor) (b) Emmanuel E. Ezeomaka (Assignee)	N150,000.00 (One hundred and fifty thousand naira only)	Not dated	E56730A515
91	Plot 1, Block VIII, Fed Govt. Layout, Gbagada, FCT, Abuja. Covered by C of O No. 1779 dated 09/11/2001 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Michael Raphael Ede (Assignor) (b) Mr. & Mrs. Chetani & Lash Okunade (Assignee)	N250,000.00 (Two hundred and fifty naira only)	4/1/2004	E5671A228
92	Plot 11, Block XIII, Fed Govt. Layout, Gbagada, Abuja. Covered by C of O No. 456550 dated 20/06/1999. Fed Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Margaret Mary Umeadi Okunade (Assignor) (b) Mr. & Mrs. Chetani & Lash Okunade (Assignee)	N250,000.00 (Two hundred and fifty naira only)	26/2/2004	E56730A145
93	Plot 127A, Block V Fed Govt. Layout, Independent Layout, Epe, Lagos State. Covered by C of O No. 202092 dated 30/01/2003 at Fed. Land Registry, Bayo Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Mrs. Aloysius N. Ojo (Assignor) (b) Chief Gabriel Agbaje Ugoeze (Assignee)	N30,000.00 (Thirty thousand naira only)	21/07/2003	E56730A679
94	Plot 7 Housing Estate Furber Estate, Bayo Lagos. Covered by C of O No. 845844 dated 29/02/02 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Sterling Property Development Company Limited (Assignor) (b) Oluwole Ekin (Assignee)	N30,000.00 (Thirty thousand naira only)	21/03/2004	LASAS/ESLDPG0302
95	Plot 6, Block VI, Site 'C' Fed Govt Layout Satellite Town off Badagry Road, Lagos State. Covered by C of O No. 252524, Bayo Lagos Fed. Land Registry dated 4/19/1996	Deed of Assignment	(a) Oluwole James Ajedokun (Assignor) (b) Mathew Okunade (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand naira)	10/12/1999	E10043
96	Plot 23, Block 1 Fed Govt Layout, Oshodi Road, Ibeju-Feshin, Bayo Fed Govt Lagos State. Covered by C of O No. 131315 dated 20/01/98 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Chief Mathew Taiwo Mba (Assignor) (b) Sparkle Chem Limited (Assignee)	N10m (Ten million naira only)	18/05/04	E100115.8
97	Plot 6, Block VIII Fed Govt. Layout, Oshodi Road, Ibeju-Feshin, Lagos State. Covered by C of O No. 528221 dated 08/06/96 at Fed. Land Registry, Bayo Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Abasi Okunade Abasi (Assignor) (b) NorthGate Properties Ltd (Assignee)	N20,000,000.00 (Twenty million naira only)	3/04/04	E100115/31
98	Plot 8, Block XII, Fed Govt. Layout, Oshodi Road, Ibeju-Feshin, Bayo, Fed Govt Lagos State. Covered by C of O No. 343477 dated 12/11/97 at Fed Land Registry, Bayo, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Chief Property Bankers Ltd (Assignor) (b) Exclusive Bankers Ltd (Assignee)	N6,000,000.00 (Six million naira only)	Not dated	E100115/640

No.	Site	Deed of Assignment	Trustee/Assignor	Amount	Notes	Reference
139	Site 'F' Plot 17 Block 151 Fed. Govt. Layout Satellite Town, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	Rev. Dr. Samuel N. Ushaghi/Assignor & Ventures Nig. Ltd. (Assignee)	N500,000.00 (Five hundred thousand naira only)	Not dated	E56170A3157
140	Block Plot 12, Osborne Road, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	Fintress Olu Ayinde & Mr. Frank C. Finde	N5,000,000.00 (Five million naira only)	Not dated	E1009412
141	Plot 16, Block 1 Fed. Govt. Layout, Bays Forebore Oshere Street, Parkview	Deed of Assignment	Rev. Admiral Wilfred Oluogun Arokadare (Assignor) & Central Securities Clearing System Ltd	N40,000,000.00 (Forty Million naira only)	Not dated	DLJ09P408
142	Plot 6, Kings Avenue, Yakeyo-Oyake, Ho Local Government Area, Ogun State	Deed of Assignment/Legal	Chief James Oluomiran Kanni Idemigie & Mr. Oluseyi Fofe Adekunle	N100,000.00 (One hundred thousand naira only)	Not dated	L1UAC/SAS/IKOYU FOREEST/04
143	Property at Plot 36, Zone P, Banana Island, Lagos	Tripartite Legal Mortgage	(1) Kampus Shopping Ltd. (Assignor) & (2) Forte Properties & Investment Ltd. (Assignee)	N25,000,000.00 (Twenty Five million naira only)		E80162190
144	Property along Ajana Road, Motran Village, Lagos State	Tripartite Legal Mortgage	(1) Fortin International Nig. Ltd. (Borrower) & (2) Mr. Tony Uhaia and Mrs. Tina Yoramide Nwoko (Surety) & Inter Continental Bank Plc (Lender)			LASAS/BN/IS/LD P/06/205
145	Close 51, House 5, Satellite Town	Deed of Assignment	(1) Claybrook Opemide (Mortgagee) & (2) Arange Nigeria Ltd (Borrower) & (3) FSD International Bank Plc (Lender)			B05N52
146	At Akode Village Ibeju Lagos, Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Mr. Oluomiran O. Remore of J. Jacob-Ran Close Akode Village, Oshere, Lagos (Assignor) & (2) Dr. Yemi Kayode of NSPMNC Staff Hospital 10, Lantana Rg. Assignee	N3,000,000.00 (Three Million naira only)		E8012405.130
147	Along Adeniyi Bajejo St/ Olanmi St, Ojodu Abiodun Ibeju Ogun State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Mr. & Mrs. Popoola Ayinde Akanni (Assignor) & (2) Mr. John Babalola Edebi (Assignee)	N400,000.00 (Four hundred thousand naira only)		E801628J
148	Property at Block 12, Plot 2A at Osborne Rd. Phase 1, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) MAC Decision International Limited (Assignor) & (2) Mr. Andrew Odober (Assignee)	N6,000,000.00 (Six Million naira only)		E80162A1403
149	Property at Block 1, Plot 3 Abata Close Old G.R.A Port-Harcourt, River State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Mrs. Ughas Nwoko (Assignor) & (2) Saphal Nigeria Limited (Assignee)	N2,000,000.00 (Two million naira only)		E100115.545
150	Block II, Plot 7 Osborne Road, Bays, Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Mr. James Christopher Olorunmila (Assignor) & (2) Syndicate Investment Holdings Limited (Assignee)	N20,000,000.00 (Twenty million naira only)		E56170A3.56
151	Block 5 Plot 4 Bays Forebore Bays in Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Kamini Ahmed (Assignor) & (2) Zubair Ventures Nigeria Ltd. Assignee	N10,000,000.00 (Ten Million)		E100115.134
152	Block CL VII A, Plot 2 at Ibeju Odele in Lagos State	Legal Mortgage	(1) Mrs. Oluomiran Oluomiran Adediji (Assignor) & (2) Mr. Sunday Odober	N200,000.00 (Two hundred thousand naira only)		L1UAC/SAS/IK EST/04
153	Property at Block VI, Plot 2 Site 'G' Satellite Town Badagry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) Mr. John Ibbeson Eganufe Amadi (Borrower) & (2) First Bank of Nigeria (Lender)			E56170A5281
154	Property at Block XII, Plot 18 at Osborne Phase 1, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) Woodway Credit Limited (Assignor) & (2) Wema Bank PLC (Assignee)	N6,000,000.00 (Six million naira only)		E1105038
155	Property at Block XII, Plot 16 at Osborne Phase 1, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) Ed Properties Limited (Assignor) & (2) Wema Bank PLC (Assignee)	N7,000,000.00 (Seven million naira only)		
156	Property at Block XII, Plot 17 at Osborne Phase 1, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) Kees Shellen Ltd (Assignor) & (2) Wema Bank Plc (Assignee)	N6,000,000.00 (Six million naira only)		
157	Property at Block XII, Plot 19 at Osborne Phase 1, Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) Innesgro Estate and Properties Limited (Assignor) & (2) Wema Bank Plc (Assignee)	N7,000,000.00 (Seven million naira only)		
158	Plot in Satellite Town Badagry Road, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) Mr. Nwandi Ike (Assignor) & (2) Mr. Eneke Adeniyi (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand naira)		
159	Property at Block CXL Plot 18 at Ibeju Odele in Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Mrs. Mondia Aberkolu Anumamahar (Assignor) & (2) Mr. Sunday Eneke Uwaite & Mrs. Agnes Joba Uwaite (Assignee)	N200,000.00 (Two hundred thousand naira only)		E1104617
160	Land at Satellite Lagos	Tripartite Legal Mortgage	(1) Tipatun Adeniyi Sijade (Assignor) & (2) Christian Chando Adede (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand naira)		E56170A1325
161	Property at Block CLIX, Plot 38 at Ibeju Odele in Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) Fun-Fun Nigeria Enterprises (Borrower) & (2) Mr. Oluomiran Oluomiran (Mortgagee) & (3) NIBB Bank Limited (The Lender)			E1105401
162	Block CXVIII Plot 5, Meri Odele, Lagos State	Deed of Legal Mortgage	Mr. Oluomiran Agba & Mrs. Chikwae, Agba (Assignor) & Abaji Oluomiran Adeniyi (Assignee)	N300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand naira)	Not dated	E56170A4352
163	Site G, Plot 2 Block IV Satellite Town, Lagos State	Deed of Legal Mortgage	Great Ben Mark Overseas Ltd. & Mark David Umoh (Surety/Mortgagee) & Guardian Express Bank Plc.		Not dated	E56170A.5085
164	Block II, Plot 2A, Units 3 Osborne Road, Bays, Lagos	Tripartite Legal Mortgage	Leghobal Offshore Services Ltd. (Borrower) & Carleton Marine Limited (Surety/Mortgagee) & Citicore International Bank Ltd. (Lender)			E1105018
165	Block 11 Plot 2A Osborne Road Phase 1, Bays Registered as No. 20/2094 at Federal Land Registry, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	Le Global Oil Field Services Ltd. (Borrower) & Carleton Marine Ltd. & Citicore International Bank, Ltd	N600		
166	Plot 9 Block 3 Federal Govt Layout Osborne Phase 1 Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Emmanuel Oluomiran Nwadi (Assignor) & (b) Rosewell Continental Ltd (Assignee)	N25m (Twenty-five million Naira only)		
167	Plot 7 Block 11, Federal Government Layout Osborne Layout Phase 1 Bays, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) James Christopher Olorunmila (Assignor) & (b) Syndicate Investment Holding Ltd (Assignee)	N20m (Twenty million naira only)		
168	House 22, 1st Avenue Tajidun Osherewa Housing Estate, Edmund Crescent Yaba, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(a) Timothy B. Pauling Esq (Mortgagee) & (b) John Yakubu (Mortgagee) & (c) University Building Society Ltd	N5m (Five Million Naira only)		
169	3A Macpherson Avenue, Bays, Lagos State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Chief Richard Chikwene Okeke (Assignor) & (2) Cand P. properties Ltd. (Assignee)	N300,000.00		2/7/04
170	Plot 15, Block 1 Airport Road C.E.A, Kano, Kano State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Hajji Laraba Ahmed (Assignor) & (2) Mr. Newton K. Nubi (Assignee)	N300,000.00		2/7/2004
171	No 11 Brass Street, G.R.A. Abu, Abia State	Deed of Assignment	(1) Mrs. Regina Bereme (Assignor)	N0m		
172	Plot 6, Block 3, Fed. Govt. Layout, Osborne Phase II Bays Forebore, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	Abaji Bakar Babat (Assignor) & Mr. Michael Oluomiran Oluomiran (Assignee)	N0m		LASAS/ISLD/0400
173	Plot 17, Block 3, Fed Govt Layout at Osborne Road Phase II Bays Forebore, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	Metro Palace Bank Ltd.	N500,000.00		
174	Close 1 House 1, Satellite Town, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	Mr. Sekan S. Tyeni (Assignor)	N3m		E56170A4076
175	Plot 2, Block 1, Site E, Fed. Govt Layout, Satellite Town, Lagos	Deed of Assignment	(1) Oluomiran Iwa Kofu (Assignor) & (2) Charles Chikwene Okeke (Assignee)			

Any person who has any objection to the above, should send such objection to the Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Lands and Housing Department, Headquarters Mabushi, Abuja not later than (21) twenty one days of this publication

ARC JOHN L. ALKALI

Permanent Secretary
Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
Head Quarters Mabushi-Abuja

OBAJANA CEMENT PLC PUBLIC NOTICE

Obojana Cement Plc ("OCP" or "the Company"), a subsidiary of Dangote Industries Limited is developing a cement factory and associated facilities which include a 138MW power plant, a 908KM gas pipeline from Ajakuta to Obojana, limestone quarry, 80KM aerial conveyor belt, a water reservoir and a Housing Estate at Obojana village in Kogi State of Nigeria. In pursuance of the Company's Social and Environmental Policy, OCP wishes to disclose the underlisted documents to interested members of the public, especially the project-affected communities.

1. Summary of Social and Environmental Assessment Studies
2. Environmental Action Plan

These documents will be available on our website (www.dangote-group.com). Hard copies can be obtained freely on request, which should be directed to any of the following addresses:

General Manager (Special Duties)
Project Department
Obajana Cement Plc - P.O. Box 4032, Fikoro Ikoyi, Lagos
Obajana Village, Kogi State

Secretary
Corporate Finance Department
Dangote Group
1 Alfred Rewane, Fikoro Ikoyi, Lagos - P.O. Box 4032, Fikoro Ikoyi, Lagos

In addition, public meetings will be held in the project-affected communities as follows:

Venue	Date
Obajana	1 st February 2005
Oyo	2 nd February 2005
Iwa	3 rd February 2005
Apaia (including Kabba Junction)	4 th February 2005

In this regard, OCP shall welcome public reactions in form of comments, observations and/or criticism. Public reactions should be written in clear language and sent to any of the addresses above, or e-mailed to publicrelations@dangote-group.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

COUNTRY: Nigeria
PROJECT: Second National Fadama Development Project (NFDP II)
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF GOODS: Computer Systems & Other Office Equipment
CREDIT NO. 3838-UNI
BID ISSUE DATE: JANUARY 24, 2005
IFB NO. TSFDO/NCB/01
LAST DATE OF BID SUBMISSION: MARCH 09, 2005

1. This invitation for bids follows the General Procurement Notice for this Project that appeared in d.g Market of the World Bank of January 19, 2004 and the *DAILY TRUST* of JANUARY 14, 2004.

2. The Federal Government of Nigeria has received a credit from the International Development Association (herein referred to as IDA) towards the cost of National Fadama Development Project II, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for Procurement of Computer Systems and other Office Equipment.

3. The Taraba State Fadama Development Project Office now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of under listed items:

Lot	Description	Qty (Unit)	Delivery Period	Bid Security
1.	Computer Systems	8	60 days	Three percent (3%) of Bid Price
	Computer Laptops	2		
	Laser Jet Printer (Medium)	4		
	UPS	4		
	Software License	3		
2.	Fax Machine	1		
	Photocopier (Medium)	2		



Bidders may bid for any one or more lots and discounts offered for the award of combined lots will be considered in bid evaluation.

4. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credit, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.

5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below between the hours of 9.00 am - 4.00pm (Mondays - Thursdays) and 9.00 am - 1.00pm (Fridays):

Taraba State Fadama Development office (TSFDO)
Taraba State Agriculture & Rural Development Project,
Wukari Road, Jalingo, Taraba State
NIGERIA

6. A complete set of bidding documents in English Language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address given above and upon payment of a non-refundable fees of Ten Thousand Naira (N10,000.00) paid in Cash or Bank Draft. The Bidding document should be collected by hand from the Project office of TSFDO or can be forwarded to the Bidders by Courier services on request.

7. Bids must be delivered to the **Taraba State Fadama Development Office, Taraba State Agricultural Development Projects, Wukari Road, Jalingo, Taraba State** on or before 12.00 noon on March 9th 2005. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security as mentioned in the table above or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. **Late bids will be rejected.**

8. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend:

Time: 12.00 Noon (Local Time)
Date: Tuesday March 9th, 2005
Venue: Taraba State Fadama Development Office,
Taraba State Agricultural Development Projects, Wukari Road, Jalingo, Taraba State.



SUBSCRIPTION FORM



Duration	Cover Price	Discount	Subscription	Amount Saved
1 year	=N=20,800.00	25%	=N=15,600.00	=N=5,200.00
6 Months	=N=10,400.00	20%	=N=8,320.00	=N=2,080.00
3 Months	=N=5,200.00	15%	=N=4,420.00	=N=780.00



Duration	Cover Price	Discount	Subscription	Amount Saved
1 year	=N=5,200.00	25%	=N=3,900.00	=N=1,300.00
6 Months	=N=2,600.00	20%	=N=2,080.00	=N=520.00
3 Months	=N=1,300.00	15%	=N=1,105.00	=N=195.00

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Name of Subscriber:

Company Name:

Delivery Address (Not Box No):

Telephone(s):

Start Date: Expiry Date:

Paper subscribe for: **Daily Trust** **Weekly Trust**

Tick (1 year) (6 Months) (3 Months)

Please send the form to any of the following Media Trust Ltd Office

<p>ABUJA No. 22 Isaaka Street, Off Buzau Street, Wuse Zone 6, P.O. Box 4871, Abuja</p> <p>PORT HARCOURT 24 Brown Road, Cavalry House, Mile 1 Dada</p>	<p>LAGOS MAN Peninsula National Arts Theatre Complex, Ibeju, Lagos.</p> <p>JOH Former British American Building, Jin, Pinnas State.</p>	<p>KADUNA No. 6 Balfour Street, Off Karam Road, Dagunze South G.A., P.O. Box 4371.</p> <p>KANO Abubaki Mf' Adia House, Maraka Maki Way Fagari C., Fagari, Kano</p>
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The Marketing Manager 09-4703943, 09-4712301, 0903788793, 09-5233787 (ext. 115)
 Nave Abub Muhammad 09-4703943, 0903374614, 09-5233787 (ext. 134)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

National Assembly Complex, Abuja.

House Committee on Communications

CALL FOR MEMORANDUM FOR

***THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AWARD OF NITEL/M-TEL
MANAGEMENT CONTRACT TO PENTASCOPE INTERNATIONAL B.V. PRIVATE LTD.
AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS***

The House of Representatives at its Session on January 13, 2005 mandated its Committee on Communications to conduct a Public Hearing on the above subject matter in order to determine the roles played by BPE, Agencies and individuals involved in the award of the contract and its management. Consequently, the Committee invites presentation of memoranda to it from the following:

- (a) Individuals;
- (b) Corporate Bodies;
- (c) Government Agencies;
- (d) Non-governmental Organisations;
- (e) Financial Institutions;
- (f) Multi-national Companies;
- (g) Corporations, Trust Companies and Conglomerates;
- (h) All other interested persons and groups,

2. The Committee envisages that each memorandum should capture relevant information that will assist it in its investigation.

3. Each memorandum must be≤

- (i) Typewritten in double space;
- (ii) Written in simple English Language.
- (iii) Submitted in twelve copies; and
- (iv) Forwarded by hand or courier to:

The Secretary,

Tel. No 09-2340582, 08035890237, 08033208393

e-mail-obotujames@yahoo.com.

House Committee on Communications,

Committee Room 6,

National Assembly Complex,

Three Arms Zone Abuja.

Not later than 15th February, 2005.

IT World

M-tel ready for GPRS broadband

The M-tel GSM network is now GPRS ready. The chief marketing officer of MTEL, Mr. Edwin Moore Momife made this disclosure at a press conference in Lagos on the forthcoming Value Added Services Expo, tagged e-NNOVATE 2005 which is being part sponsored by the GSM company. According to Momife, the M-tel network would be ready to deploy GPRS-based broadband data and content services by the end of March.

The credit for this development, said Momife rests squarely on Hajiji Ibita Ajiya, chairman of the M-tel board of directors who has since assumption of duty, striven to ensure that MTEL, as an innovation-driven company and quickly introduces a broad range of value added services. "We are in an era of fastpaced, purposeful innovation", Momife said.

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

What MTEL's deployment of GPRS implies, said Momife is that MTEL subscribers will be able to access their corporate emails and other businesscritical information by means of their MTEL phones, wherever they may be. In addition, subscribers would be able to move large files like Microsoft word and spreadsheets via their mobile devices. Yet another implication of its GPRS deployment, Momife said is that the network will enable access to the internet such that subscribers can access the internet from their phones and laptop computers from all parts of the country where MTEL has coverage. Users of the MTEL service will also have the ability to share such information as field photographs or even press reports and sales data with colleagues in real time even while away from the

office.

Beyond the use of the service in the corporate environment, said Momife, MTEL subscribers would have access to multimedia content that include pictures, polyphonic ringtones and even movie clips. "It will become possible for subscribers on the MTEL network to send and receive images and large files on their phones and even upload pictures taken via camera phones to web-based albums for viewing by friends and family".

GPRS, momife, said, has already been tested successfully by MTEL in a pilot environment. Indeed "people who possess 3G phones can confirm from the network capability indicator on such phones that M-tel 2.5G service is ready". The company, he stated, is working with Ericsson, Motorola, Huawei and ZTE on the GPRS project.



This is a picture of the AVR indigenously designed and produced to meet the needs of electric energy consumers. It has a comparative advantage of wide input voltage range.

Google to branch into television

Google Incorporation is using its popular internet search technology to find information and images broadcast on television, continuing a recent effort to extend its reach beyond the Web.

The Mountain View-based company planned to introduce the new video search service Tuesday in an index that will be operated separately from the market-leading search engine offered on its home page. The feature pinpoints content previously aired on a variety of television networks by scanning through the closed caption text that many programmers offer.

Google's index, which began storing information last month, includes programming from ABC, PBS, Fox News and C-SPAN.

"We think TV is a big part of people's lives," said Jonathan Rosenberg, Google's vice president of product management. "Ultimately, we would like to have all TV programming indexed."

The television product represents Google's latest attempt to get a better handle on the reams of vital information that isn't stored on Web pages. The company recently set out to scan millions of books from several major libraries into its search engine and is offering a program that finds material stored on computer hard drives.

Search engine analyst Charlene Li of Forrester Research said Google's latest

innovation is likely to disappoint many people because it doesn't provide a direct link to watch the previously broadcast programming.

Google instead is displaying up to five still video images from the indexed television programs, as well as snippets from the show's narrative. The search results also will provide a breakdown on when the program aired and when an episode is scheduled to be repeated.

Microsoft builds software laboratory in Abuja

Microsoft Nigeria has revealed that it would soon launch a multi-million dollars software development laboratory in Abuja, the federal capital territory.

Making the revelation recently in Lagos, country manager for Microsoft Nigeria, Mr. Gerald Ilukwe said it was in pursuit of its commitment towards re-investing into the government that the Microsoft embarked on the building of the laboratory.

He said Microsoft has invested heavily into the government to the tune of \$1 million a year in several projects. According to him, the country office has been spending more than \$250,000 a year into corporate social development initiative, which is outside the government agreement and has also invested in some software development for schools in the country.

The Microsoft country manager, who was recounting

Local programming information will be available for those who provide a ZIP code.

Rival search engine Yahoo Incorporation also has been tinkering with a product that finds video available for Webcasts. Hoping to counter Google's entrance into the space, Yahoo planned to step up the promotion of its video search tools Tuesday by linking to the service from the home page of its heavily trafficked Web site.

the company's investments in the Nigerian market since its technology agreement with the federal government two years ago, said Microsoft has a commitment towards moving Nigeria forward.

"We have been trying to grow our partner base and grow with the government. And we have been vindicated in our ability to move the country forward," said Ilukwe.

The country manager hinted that Microsoft has also begun a process of software localisation in the three major Nigeria languages as part of its commitment towards reinvesting into the Nigerian society.

By this, he said, Microsoft intends to come up with a software programme that would enable functions to be performed in the three local languages of Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa, adding that such a programme has already been produced in South Africa for Swahili language.

NOTAP, AKSG produce power voltage regulator

The National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP) in a joint venture with the Akwa Ibom State government, has produced a power voltage regulator (AVR) and a pilot plant for the manufacturing of grease.

According to a press release signed by the head of public relations unit of NOTAP, Adokiye Dugogbo-George, the two projects were commissioned by the Akwa Ibom State governor Obong Victor Attah.

Speaking during the commissioning of the projects, the governor commended NOTAP for commercialising indigenous technology projects.

According to him, the two projects are products and benefits of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) his state government signed with NOTAP in July 3, 2001 "with a view to commercialising the inventions and innovations already accessed and also use these projects as hopefuls and motivation to spur the inventiveness and innovative capabilities of Akwa Ibom indigenes."

According to the release, the minister of science and technology, Professor Turner T. Ison who was the special guest of honour at the occasion said the indigenously designed AVR will assist the development of science and technology in the country adding that stable power generation is a necessity for the development of science and technology-based enterprises.

By Anas A. Galadima, Reporter (Business)

The minister added that the pilot plant for the recovery of spent oil and the manufacture of grease was an impressive way of maintaining the "delicate balance of mother-nature" as this would facilitate the conversion of waste into useful and profitable ventures.

It would be recalled that NOTAP, has commercialised a small scale brown sugar pilot plant which was a product of an MOU NOTAP signed with the National Council Research Institute

(NCRI) Baddegi (the developments of the sugar plant, Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), of the FCT and the Kona Mande People in Kwall Area Council of the FCT, the host community for the pilot plant.

Other projects programmed for commercialisation by NOTAP include "production of essential oil, production of cassava pellets/chips, production of procelain insulators, production of hydrated lime and gasficc kerogenic cooker" the statement said.

Firm boss tasks banks on on-line banking

Managing director of Building International Company Limited (BICL) Engr. Afolabi Adedeji has advised Nigerian banks to stop opening more branches but rather concentrate on on-line banking.

Engr. Adedeji who said this in a statement signed by him and made available to IT World in Lagos yesterday, argued that banks would save more if they operate more of on-line banking.

He explained that branch expansion is still being aggressively pursued in Nigeria by all banks whereas the direct opposite is that is happening in Britain.

"Branch expansion is still being aggressively pursued in Nigeria by all banks, whereas the direct opposite is what is happening in Great Britain whereas banks are closing

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Correspondent (Lagos)

branches and encouraging their customers to do on-line banking through the internet or e-mail, or simply utilise the nearest automatic teller machine (ATM) when cash is needed," said Adedeji.

With the N25 billion recapitalisation December 2005 deadline, Engr. Adedeji, said there would be the need to integrate or harmonise the different banking software.

"Local Area Network (LANs) and wide area networks (WANs) will also have to be integrated and or harmonised, especially in these times when banks pride themselves in offering real time, and banking services to the increasingly discerning Nigerian customers," Engr. Afolabi Adedeji said.

IT World

Scientists develop software on Arabic

Computer scientists are developing software to scan Arabic documents, including handwritten ones, for specific words and phrases, filling a void that became apparent following the Sept. 11 attacks.

Besides helping with intelligence gathering, the software should expand access to modern and ancient Arabic manuscripts. It will allow Arabic writings to be digitized and posted on the Web.

"The whole Internet is skewed toward people who speak English," said Venu Govindaraju, director of the Center for Unified Biometrics and Sensors at the University at Buffalo, where the software is being developed.

Govindaraju fears that if optical character recognition software isn't developed for a particular language, "then all the classic texts in that language will disappear into oblivion."

Bill Young, an Arab language specialist at the University of Maryland, said the software could help scan through masses of typed pages for specific names or words, though he cautioned that handwritten Arabic presents serious challenges for computers.

For instance, the word *mas'uul*, meaning responsible, can be written in more than one way, he said. So the software would have to be given instructions about possible variations.

Govindaraju, who helped

develop software to recognize handwritten addresses in English, said the Arabic software would take into account the fact that characters may take different forms depending on where within a word they appear, and that Arabic vowels are pronounced but often not written.

Microsoft to launch anti-piracy initiative

Microsoft Corporation will combat piracy of its flagship operating system by requiring Windows users to verify that their copy of the software is genuine in order to receive timely updates and security fixes, the world's largest software maker said on Wednesday.

Under a new verification program, users will have to prove their copy was obtained legitimately to receive "greater reliability, faster access to updates, and richer user experiences" from Windows XP, the latest version of the operating system running on over 90 percent of the world's personal computers.

Users of pirated copies of Windows will still be able to get some updates, such as security patches, but will not be able to get other add-ons for Windows, the Redmond, Washington-based company said in a statement.

The new initiative, called Windows Genuine Advantage, will start in mid-2005.

Microsoft said it will expand in February a trial authentication program it began last fall for English-language users to include 20 more languages. In order to attract more users to the trial, Microsoft is also offering downloads of add-on software and discounts on games and online services.

Authentication will become mandatory in mid-2005 for all users seeking to access software updates, downloads and security fixes for Windows, Microsoft said.

Microsoft is also targeting software piracy in China, Norway and the Czech Republic, where the use of pirated software is more widespread, by offering discounts to users of pirated copies of Windows.

"These customers will be offered a genuine version of Windows at a reduced price," Microsoft said.

Microsoft said it was trying to boost the value of Windows, which still fuels a large part of the software giant's revenue. Microsoft said software piracy has cost the company billions of dollars in lost income.

Govindaraju, who helped

...won't appeal EU ruling on sanctions

Microsoft said a European edition of Windows without Media Player would be available "in the coming weeks" and it had made specifications available to rival makers of server software — a second key Commission order.

But Microsoft said it would continue to appeal the Commission's landmark ruling from March 2004, when the EU's competition watchdog also levied a record 497 million euro (\$649.7 million) fine.

"We remain very optimistic as we move forward in this process, and are encouraged that the December court order noted that a number of Microsoft's arguments could provide a basis for overturning the EC's decision," Microsoft said in a statement.

Commission spokesman Jonathan Todd had no comment on Microsoft's statement.

The Redmond, Washington-based firm said it expected to learn later this year when the EU Court of First Instance would hold a hearing on the main appeal.

This compares to analyst estimates of a 0.15 euro earnings per share for the quarter, and down from 0.17 euros per share a year earlier. Market analysts however appeared pleased with Nokia's results and forecast.

"Nokia's guidance strengthens expectations that (the first quarter earnings per share market consensus) figure will be met," FIM Securities analyst Paavo Ahonen told AFX.

Following the news, the company saw its stock price jump 8.2 percent in early afternoon trading on the Helsinki stock exchange to 11.85 euros a share.



A cross section of some visually challenged students, during Train-the-Trainer Computer programme at the Raja Ige Information Technology Centre, Abaja, recently.

Amazon.com adds photographs to directory

Online retail giant Amazon.com Inc. is trying to become a bigger player in the Internet's crowded search engine market with a local business directory that supplements address and phone number listings with a photographic tour covering 10 major U.S. cities.

The free service, expected to be available Thursday from Amazon search subsidiary A9.com, consists of 20 million street-level photographs that will be displayed alongside local search results. Palo Alto-based A9 said it compiled the index by covering tens of thousands of miles in trucks equipped with digital cameras and global positioning system, or GPS, receivers.

The new twist represents Seattle-based Amazon's latest attempt to grab a larger piece of the highly profitable search engine market, which is currently led by Google Inc.

and Yahoo Inc. with Microsoft Corp., AOL, Ask Jeeves Inc. and a long list of upstarts scrambling to catch up.

As an example of how A9's novel approach works, a Web site visitor who clicks a Yellow Pages tab and searches for Mexican restaurants will see street-level pictures of building exteriors, besides the standard listing information found in other directories.

The new feature includes navigation tools that enable users to inspect the surrounding neighborhood.

"It's like taking a virtual stroll around the block," said Udi Manber, A9's chief executive. "We believe this is going to expand the user experience significantly."

A9 hasn't made much of a mark since Amazon formed the subsidiary in October 2003.

In December, A9 attracted

616,000 unique visitors, ranking it 30th among search and navigation Web sites, according to Internet research firm comScore Media Matrix. Google's search features attracted 71.7 million unique visitors to lead the search pack, comScore said.

With so much ground to make up, A9 desperately needs to make a big splash, said search industry analyst Greg Sterling of the Kelsey Group. "If they are really serious about the search market, they have to step up their efforts to attract consumers. It looks like they have started down an interesting path."

A9's photos initially will span most addresses in these 10 cities: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Atlanta, Denver, Dallas, Seattle and Portland, Ore. A9 plans to add photographs of business in other major cities later this year, Manber said.

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Nokia posts \$1.33bn in 3 months

After a year of slumping sales, world-leading mobile phone maker Nokia reported better-than-expected fourth quarter and full-year 2004 results, prompting hopes that the company is on the road to recovery.

Nokia's reported net profit of 1.02 billion euros (1.33 billion dollars) in the fourth quarter and of 3.20 billion euros for all of 2004 beat forecasts but showed a decline of 13 and 11 percent respectively from the previous year.

The company meanwhile posted fourth quarter net

sales of 9.1 billion euros, up three percent from the 8.8 billion euros it reported for the same quarter a year earlier.

Analysts surveyed by AFP's financial news service AFX had expected fourth quarter sales of 8.4 billion euros.

The mobile phone giant said it had sold a record 66.1 million handsets in the fourth quarter, giving it 34 percent of the world market, down from 37 percent in the same

period a year earlier but up from 32 percent in the third quarter.

While Nokia remained unscathed as the rest of the telecom sector slogged through post high-tech bubble problems a few years ago, the company saw its market share taper off at the beginning of 2004, largely due to its slow pick-up on the popularity of fold-out clamshell phones.

Following the launch of several new models and massive price cuts, Nokia now however appears to have placed itself on a path towards recovery.

"For Nokia, device volumes also reached new highs for the fourth quarter and full year largely backed by the ongoing boom in growth markets such as Latin America, Russia, India and China, and brisk sales of color screen and camera phones," Nokia chief executive Jorma Ollila said in a statement.

He added however that "our North American phone volumes were ... disappointing".

Nokia posted diluted earnings per share of 0.23 euros for the fourth quarter, down from 0.25 euros per share a year earlier, but well ahead of analyst expectations of 0.19 euros a share.

For the full year 2004, the company said its earnings per share was 0.70 euros, down from 0.75 euros in 2003.

For the first quarter of 2005, Nokia said it expected to post earnings per share of 0.12 to 0.15 euros after taking an estimated charge of 60 to 80 million euros.

This compares to analyst estimates of a 0.15 euro earnings per share for the quarter, and down from 0.17 euros per share a year earlier.

Market analysts however appeared pleased with Nokia's results and forecast.

"Nokia's guidance strengthens expectations that (the first quarter earnings per share market consensus) figure will be met," FIM Securities analyst Paavo Ahonen told AFX.

Following the news, the company saw its stock price jump 8.2 percent in early afternoon trading on the Helsinki stock exchange to 11.85 euros a share.

Mobile phone sales up 25%

The global market for mobile telephones grew sharply in fourth quarter 2004, with sales up by 25 percent to a record 200 million units from the same period of 2003, but overall sector growth should slow in 2005, the research group Strategy Analytics reported.

It said the main drivers of fourth-quarter demand were surging device replacement in developed markets and strong net subscriber growth in developing regions. Finnish giant Nokia Corporation's market share fell to 33.1 percent in the October-December period from 34.6 percent in the same quarter in 2003. But the world's leading mobile phone supplier maintained its dominance in emerging mobile telecommunication markets, the research company said.

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A Century of Power play

For over a century, Polo, the sport of kings, has attracted the most distinguished achievers in Nigeria's business and political arena. Naturally, when kings come out to play, power is the name of the game. As achievers converge once more at the Lagos Polo Tournament, MTN is proud to be the leading sponsor. Let the games begin.



Sponsor of The Lagos Polo Tournament
February 5th - 11th, 2005.

ABUJA TRUST

Appeal tribunal upholds Kuje council election

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Area Council election appeal tribunal sitting in Abuja has re-affirmed the Kuje area council chairmanship election held in March 27, 2004 and dismissed the appeal.

The five members of the election appeal tribunal held that the judgement was made in favour of the 1st respondent, Alhaji Usman Jibrin Wowo because the area council election petition tribunal was not mistaken when he based his judgement made on September 29, 2004 in statutory.

Honourable Saddeeq A.M.A who read the ruling

By Saidat Tella (Intern)

stated that it will be difficult for any court of law to hold on guideline/principle over status or constitution and that there is no statute that ever hold that any election that is conducted beyond 3pm on the Election Day is invalidated.

He ruled further that evidence has shown that the election is free and fair and there was tangible evidence showing that there was violence during the election.

The People Democratic Party (PDP) sought for the nullification of the election while new election be or-

dered to be conducted as stated in his submission that there was violence at Kujekwu ward of the area council.

Chief Tunyan, representing the appellants erred tribunal in his ruling when it disagree with the four petitioners witnesses testified on the issue of violence because it could not be trusted

in their testimony because of the contradictions found in their piece of evidence.

Though counsel to the 1st respondent, Alhaji Jibrin Usman Wowo Mr. Sam Ologunorisa disagreed with the submission of the learned council stating that on the issue of timing there was no place in the constitution or statutory which stated when

the actual period of an election should be conducted.

The appeal tribunal also held that the evidence before it showed that the chairman was nominated to be active chairman in Kuje after the president has announced the expiring tenure of all the five area council in the FCT on May 29, 2002 and thereby struck out the petition.

MFCT to assist elders with soft loans

By Aisha Umar (Intern)

The FCT administration is to assist the elderly in the FCT with soft loans to empower them towards meaningful contributions to the development of the FCT.

A press release made available to Abuja Trust by Zakari Aloyin press secretary to executive secretary social development secretariat, said the FCT minister Malam Nasir el-Rufai made this known recently during a working visit to Bwari area council to monitor progress made by senior citizens in livestock production.

The statement said that the minister who was accompanied by the executive secretary social development secretariat Ms Bolanle Ogunsanya was received by the council secretariat by the executive chairman of the Area Council Mr Isah Dara.

The minister reiterated the commitment of the administration towards ensuring more comfortable living conditions for senior citizens in the FCT.

He said that the social development secretariat had in October 2004 organised a 4-day training workshop for elderly people in FCT on livestock production. At the end of the workshop participants from the six area council were given seed stock starter packs as pilot projects towards boosting their entrepreneurship capacities for self reliance.

The statement said that the first point of call by the minister was the home of the eldest beneficiary, popularly called "Mama". At the point of the visit, mama, who was bereaved told the minister that she lost some of her chicken and that with a little more assistance from government she would do better, mama had emerged as the best participant during the workshop.

The minister was also taken to Sabon-Gari village where the participants had formed an association "Bwari livestock farmers association." The poultry at Sabon-Gari is being jointly maintained by the eight of the participants. According to them they had formed.

The association to enable them access credit facilities from government.

He said the minister who has expressed satisfaction on the efforts by the participants assured them that the administration through the social development secretariat will assist them with micro credit facilities to enable them expand to a larger scale.

NURTW decries multiple taxation

The president of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Alh. Gidado Hamman decried the continued multiple taxation of his numbers in the federal capital territory (FCT).

Alh. Hamman, said that no group or body is/are authorised to collect tax from drivers except local government.

He however decried the use of consultants by most area councils in the FCT which goes contrary to the law of the land.

He also said that most legal battles have been waged by his union with most local government on the matter and the court gave judgement in their (NURTW) favour.

He said the union had problems with the Abuja municipal area council on the issue where AMAC contracted some people who are not em-

By Benjamin Auta Crime Reporter

ployed by the area council to collect revenue on their behalf.

Alh. Hamman, though said that the matter is about to be resolved as members of his union and the area council are meeting to resolve arrears they can cooperate.

On the issue of unpainted taxis popularly known as kabu-kabu, the president said that "no private vehicle has the right to carry passengers unless if it is a car hire."

He called on such drivers to desist from the act or join the NURTW because if they are arrested, they will be taken to court.

Alh. Hamman, advice commuters to always board registered vehicles that have Abuja painting on it to avoid falling prey to men of the underworld.



A cross section of the newly purchased vehicles of the Nigerian prison service during the flag-off of distribution in Abuja...recently Pic: Kennedy Ighomola

el-Rufai calls for investment in FCT

The minister of the federal capital territory (FCT) Mal. Nasir el-Rufai has urged investors of African extraction to invest more in Africa especially in the FCT.

He made this call at a cocktail organised for the NEPAD business group at the Le-Meridian Hotel in Abuja.

He told the NEPAD busi-

ness group that the success of the NEPAD depend on strengthening region integration to have access to international markets challenging them to provide the much needed opportunity and framework to access the markets.

Mal. el-Rufai, also explained that the FCT has appointed a coordinator to play a catalytic role in the promotion and implementation of NEPAD programmes in the FCT.

He said the FCT boast of the best of clean, safe and serene environment that is conducive for investments adding that the ministry will be willing to partner with investors in the mining of some mineral deposits such as kaolin, tantaliser, lead and limestone.

el-Rufai, further said government policy makers to promote interaction and networking with local and international investors to dialogue and identify investment opportunities in African countries.

In his remark, chairman NEPAD business Nigeria explained that the forum in Nigeria is organised to a platform for African investors to discuss the ways of promoting healthy trade among African states.

Meanwhile, the FCT minister Mal. Nasir el-Rufai, has disclosed the intention of his administration to commission the 631 shops at the Gadu market by the first week of March, 2005.

He made this remark while inspecting the construction of the market which was jointly financed by the shop alliances and government with FCT administration providing the infrastructures.

el-Rufai, observed the narrowness of the market spaces however assured the executive director, property development (AIPDC), Alh. Mohammed Lawal Yusuf, that a good arrangement has been put in place to contain an incident of fire in the market.

In his explanation executive director, Abuja Investment and Property Development Company Limited (AIPDC), Alh. Mohammed Yusuf, said the Gadu market was built through the public private participation (PPP) while the other markets are expected to accommodate 4,000 shops are through the build, operate and transfer scheme (BOT).

He said the construction of these shops are geared towards reducing the pressure on Wuse market while assuring that everything has been done to ensure the commissioning of the market by March, 2005.

Sports council builds N47m hostel at Area 10

A 47m contract has been awarded for the construction of a 40 bed-room hostel and twin changing rooms at area (old parade ground) 10 sports centre by FCT sports council acting director, Alhaji Sani Lulu Abdullahi.

The new director, who has been effecting positive changes in FCT sports recently concluded the regressing of the former old parade ground, soccer pitch which had spotted brownish and holding surface.

Deputy director technical and head of facility and equipment in the sports council, Mallam Umaru Mohammed Kontagora told Abuja Trustsport that the new hostel facilities when completed

will host FCT teams training camp as well as provide accommodation facilities for visiting teams.

Alhaji Abdullahi, who is currently on vacation got the approval of MFCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai before embarking on the project which is expected to boost team FCT's preparation for local, national and international competitions. The construction is expected to be concluded this year.

The former vice chairman of the NFAC board, an assuming office as head of FCT sports council last August, set up committees to look for ways of improving the sporting facilities in the metropolis and the area councils.

His visionary approach

seemed to be yielding fruits, as he has secured a 10 hectares piece of land at Karu/Nyanya, where he intend to site a sports centre that would serve for all sports in the FCT sports council.

The min Stadium complex which has since been cleared now served as training ground for FCT handball, football and volleyball teams.

The new director would soon meet with the minister to discuss how funding can be obtained for the development of the facility. The funding according to the head of facility will be sourced from both government and corporate organisations.

KANO TRUST

FG sign N66m Gwarzo - Bichi road contract

The federal government has signed a contract for the rehabilitation of the Gwarzo Bichi road in Kano, awarded to SKY Tech. Coy Ltd at the cost of N66.3 million.

Other road contracts awarded include the Arochuku-Umuahia-Abiriba-Ohaifa road in Abia awarded to Hapel Nig. Ltd at the cost of N165.2 million, and the Ikot-Ekpene-Abia-Orlu-Uga-Oba Uga-Okigwe road in Imo State, awarded to Julius Berger PLC at the cost of N689.7 million.

Signing on behalf of the federal government, the Minister of Works, Sen. Adeseye Ogunlewe, said the three roads were part of 16 others identified for rehabilitation under the ministry's National Roads Development Programme.

He said the roads, spread across the six geo-political zones of the

country, were part of the ministry's effort towards the development and upkeep of federal highways network nation-wide.

Contractors, he said, had since been ordered to commence immediate work at the various sites and also utilise the current dry season to accomplish most of the assignment.

The federal government, he said, would continue to provide good roads to its people in spite of what its critics said.

Also speaking, Imo State Governor Achike Udenwa, thanked the federal government for "remembering" the promise he made to the state that all roads in the South-East zone would be given priority in the 2005 budget.

He prayed that Julius Berger PLC would keep to

the completion period of four months for the project in his state.

Also speaking, a member of the House of Representatives from Abia, Hon. Mao huabunwa, described the day as "one of the most important in my political dream."

He said that he was confident that the company handling the Abia project would complete it on schedule.

The Minister of Defence, Alhaji Rabiu Kwankwaso, who spoke on behalf of the people of Kano State, also commended the federal government for the award of the Gwarzo-Bichi road.

He said that this project would further boost commercial activities between Nigeria and neighbouring Niger Republic.



Director of Press to Kano State Governor, Alhaji Sule Ya'u Sule addressing members of the state branch of SWAN who were protesting the rejection of Super Eagle Technical Adviser by the Federal Ministry of Sports ... recently

FG tasks private sector over tourism

The private sector in the country have been enjoined to expedite timely action to pave way to their active participation in the promotion and management of culture as well as tourism industries.

The Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ambassador Frank Nohia Ogbewe made the call yesterday while declaring open a three-day national conference on Developing Strategies for viable cultural promotion and Tourism Development in a Reforming economy, holding at Royal Tropicana hotel in Kano.

Represented by the ministry's acting director of culture, Mrs. Angela Ugouyat, the minister observed that private sectors are the principal actors in the general overhaul of tourism industry in the developed countries adding that Nigeria should not be isolated from this policy.

He noted that apparently realized the good impact of tourism industry the social economic development the

From Mustapha Isah Kwara, Correspondent (Kano)

country, the federal government re-focus the role plays by federal ministry of culture and tourism coordinator of the sector hence private sectors are given adequate room for a fully participation.

Ambassador Frank argued that the economy of many nations have been revamped through the intervention of private firms into tourism industries, just as he expressed optimism that government will unveil prompt strategy so as to strengthen the sector as a weapon to woo private firms overwhelm participation.

In his address, the chief executive officer of project spectrum limited, which is the consultant of the workshop, Mr. Chike Osuagwu, stated that tourism has become a fiercely competitive business worldwide, adding that it is not simply the stock of natural reason and potentials of a country that determines her competitiveness for the

tourists' attention in the market place, but rather how these resources are managed and promoted, to what extent all stakeholders complement them with non-made innovation and support.

He pointed out that Nigeria's cultural resources are unrivalled and promoting culture represents an element of its economy which dominates society and had finally found its way toward a durable development which complement the are of receiving guests, characteristic of Nigerian people representing the engine for launching its destination into the domestic and international market place.

Also speaking at the occasion the Kano state commissioner for transport, Alhaji Alhassani Dawaki, who represented Governor Ibrahim Shekarau, disclosed that the government has accorded appropriate attention for the improvement of tourists attract sites even as he applauded the culture and tourism ministry for selecting the state to host the event.

Parents, guardians admonished on education

Parents and guardians in Kano state have been advised to inject more funds to educate their wards to enable them have a brighter future.

The principal of Nigeria-Turkish International College, Kano, Mr. Fedayi Uzum made the call at a press conference held at the school premises in Kano.

Mr. Fedayi said injecting money in educating the young ones would not be a worthless business as they were expected to lead the nation in future.

He pointed out that the Nigeria-Turkish International College in its efforts to boost the morale of Nigerian students particularly those at secondary school levels has organized nationwide mathematics competition in Nigeria.

The principal said that the competition would take place at centers of the college which among others are Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Sokoto, Port Harcourt and Lagos states.

He said the aim of the competition was to create awareness among the teeming Nigerian students particularly on the importance of the mathematics being one of the basic requirements in science class.

Mr. Fedayi disclosed that the 2nd phase of the competition would commence on 19th February

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim (Kano)

2005 in Abuja. He pointed out that the first positions winner will receive the sum of N150,000 in addition to a

certificate while the best teacher will receive the sum of N50,000 only and 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th positions will receive N1,000, N75, N50, N40 and N20 thousand Naira respectively.

Hemp: NDLEA arrests soldier, two others

A serving military man (name withheld) and two others have been arrested by the NDLEA in Kano for allegedly being in possession of 37 bags of Indian hemp.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) learnt reliably that the soldier, who was on uniform,

and the other suspects were arrested along Zaria road at the suburb of the city, while trying to smuggle the substance, weighing 232.2 kilograms, into Kano, five days into the new year.

It was learnt that the suspects, who were chased from a check point, were later caught by

NDLEA, when their vehicle broke down.

The soldier and two other suspects, including the driver of the vehicle, are now being

questioned at the NDLEA Kano command office.

Contacted, the NDLEA commander in Kano, Alhaji Malami Sokoto, confirmed the arrests and the recovery of the 37 bags of cannabis.

He said the soldier had been handed over to the Brigade

commander in Kano, who, after their military investigation, would return him to the NDLEA for further action.

Sokoto said, "We are only waiting for the report from the Brigade commander on the suspect so that we will continue with our investigation on the case."

Fire guts GSS Dambatta students hostel

Fire in government secondary school, Dambatta has razed down a student hostel gutting away all personal effects and provisions of the students.

The fire which occurred in the evening of Monday consumed a whole block of hostel accommodating over 200 students while the intensity of the heat of the inferno razed down the hostel building.

The Commissioner of Education, Hajia Balaraba Bello Sule who was on inspection tour of the rampage sympathized with the students that lost their effects and assured them of

By Ahmed Abubakar Correspondent (Kano)

government assistance in recouping their lost properties.

Hajia Balaraba Bello directed the school authority to relocate the affected students to new block of classroom while constituting a committee that will investigate on the cause of the unfortunate incidence.

The principal of the college, Mallam Adamu Muhammad thanked the commissioner for her timely response also described the situation as unfortunate and assured that the committee will dig to the root cause of the fire and preventive measures will be taken against future occurrence.

Imam tasks Muslims on Zakat

Muslims in the country have been enjoined to expedite prompt action towards giving Zakat to the needy and poor. The chief Imam of Bayero University, Kano (BUK) old campus Juma'at Mosque, Sheikh Abubakar Jibrin made the call.

Delivering a sermon after leading thousands of Muslims faithful to the Eid el-Kabir prayer, Sheikh Jibrin emphasized that such measure has become imperative with a view to minimizing the growing space of poverty and hunger that bedevil majority of Muslims.

The cleric observed that Islam is a religion which symbolizes goodness and pity for low income people mandated the wealthy

From Mustapha Isah Kwara, Correspondent (Kano)

individual to sacrifice portion of their wealth to the poor and needy as Zakat.

The Chief Imam pointed out that cordial relationship, unity and brotherhood can only be promoted between wealthy and poor individuals through Zakat which will in turn quell envy as well as hatred.

He noted that failure to abide by such directive, had caused the increase rate of theft armed robbery and other social vices, warning that unless timely invention is unmask to revert the ugly trend, confusion and misunderstanding will continue to pervade Muslims community.

EKO TRUST

FIIRO commences training for cassava flour processors

The Federal Institute of Industrial Research (FIIRO), Oshodi, has commenced training for cassava flour processors as part of efforts to ensure the success of the 10 per cent cassava flour in bread production.

Speaking at the opening of the Technology Transfer Training Workshop on Cassava Flour Processing, the Director General of FIIRO, Dr Oluwote Olatunji, stressed that if the demand for cassava flour production was to be met, there would be an urgent need to train farmers and agro food processors on relevant technology.

"The challenges have been created and the opportunities are there, it is left for the Nigerian entrepreneurs to take advantage of it to save the nation huge foreign exchange used to import wheat flour," he said.

According to him, Nigeria has not less than 10 mills, but that all the wheat requirements to feed the mills are imported.

"But if we could produce cassava flour locally, about 10 to 15 per cent of the billions of naira used for the importation of wheat will be saved and this will in turn generate more jobs for

cassava producers and farmers," Olatunji said.

The FIIRO boss stressed that with the breakthrough on 10 per cent cassava flour in bread production, Nigeria and indeed all cassava producing areas of Africa would achieve substantial reduction in their level of poverty.

He further said that the use of cassava flour as composite for bread and confectionaries would help to reduce the large post-harvest losses currently being experienced by cassava farmers.

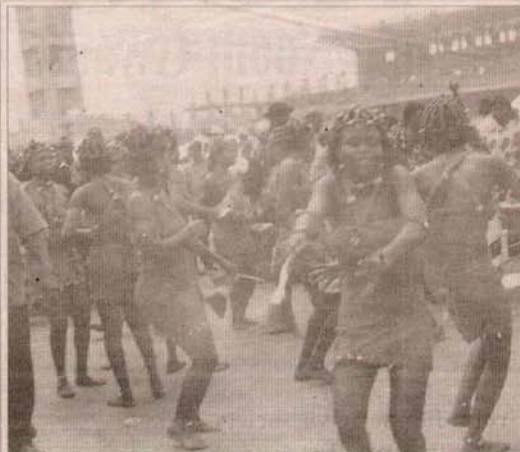
A participant at the workshop, Mr Innocent Odigie, Assistant General Manager of the Delta-State owned Universal Investment

and Development Company, lauded the training programme, describing it as highly relevant to the federal government's policy on cassava.

He said that the development would encourage the establishment of small and medium scale enterprises on cassava processing.

Odigie said that the Delta State's agricultural development programme had commenced an enlightenment programme for the cultivation of cassava on large scale.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that over 40 people from across the country are participating in the training.



Delta State cultural group showcasing their rich culture during a grand reception for gov James Ibori of Delta by the State indigenes in Lagos...recently.
Pic: Oluwajoba Oluwajoba

LASG begins drainage clearance ahead of rains

In the bid to prevent extensive flooding as witnessed last year, the Lagos State government has commenced massive drainage clearance all over the state ahead of the expected rains.

Speaking with journalists after the monitoring of the first environmental sanitation exercise for year 2005, the Commissioner for Environment, Mr Tunji Bello, said apart from the (10) ten 50-man gang set up to

clear drainages, a series of major canals have been contracted out.

He said about N25 million would be spent on the Onilewura canal in Orile area of Ifelodun local government which will be dredged to avoid the perennial flooding that characterise the area.

According to him, the new initiative "Mega PSP scheme", has shown great potential having significantly ensured improvement in the environmental condition of

Yaba, Mushin, Ikeja, Victoria Island, Ikosi-Isheri, Agboyi-Ketu among others.

While also listing Surulere, Apapa, Igname, Isolo and Lagos Island LGs, as areas where there has not been much impact, the commissioner said the government is in the process of reviewing the arrangement.

He said the state will re-plan the Orile axis if it has the financial support of the World Bank, adding that it is necessary to give the area a

new cease of life.

Earlier at the council secretariat Orile, the commissioner told a gathering of community leaders that the initiative will be extended to their local

government in March 2005.

He said it was necessary for all the people to support the government with the monitoring of the drainages near them to avoid being dumped in indiscriminately.

...asks tanker drivers to relocate in 2 weeks

The Lagos State government has given tanker drivers a fresh two-week ultimatum to relocate their vehicles parked along highways and under the bridges in the metropolis.

The government has also directed inter-state luxury buses which load on highways in the state to relocate to a new terminus allocated to them at Ojota within two weeks.

Mr Muiz Banire, the Commissioner for Transportation, gave the directives at a news briefing in Ikeja on Wednesday.

He said the government could no longer tolerate the danger and the nuisance which the trucks and buses posed to motorists.

Apart from the relocation, Banire also directed owners of trucks, articulated vehicles and tankers operating in the state to refurbish them within the two weeks or keep them off the roads.

He warned that law enforcement agents had been directed to impound vehicles parked at unauthorised places.

The commissioner also urged the Nigerian Ports Authority to ensure that trucks conveying containers from the ports latched the containers properly to the

board of their trucks before being allowed to move out.

Banire, who recalled the removal of 66 fuel tankers from Lagos roads and on the bridges in August 2003 by the state government, said the government had not lost the "will to repeat the exercise."

He regretted that oil marketers and stakeholders had not honoured the agreement they reached with the government to develop the site allocated for them to park their tankers at Orile-Igname.

Banire said at least 35 accidents involving trucks and tankers were recorded on highways in the metropolis in the last quarter of 2004, some of which claimed many lives.

V-Mobile donates materials to three widows

Three widows whose husbands died within the last 12 months were among the 30 beneficiaries of materials required for setting up call centres donated by V-Mobile Nigeria to Ikoyi-Obalende local government in support of its poverty alleviation programmes on Thursday.

The materials that were distributed to the beneficiaries at the council secretariat in Ikoyi include customised beach umbrellas, plastic chairs, plastic tables, V-Mobile starter packs, mobile phones and hand-held fans.

Speaking on the occasion, the council Chairman, Dr. Folarin Gbadebo-Smith, said the materials would help the less privileged members of the area set up a call centre within their neighbourhood and earn a living without much stress.

Gbadebo-Smith said an interesting thing about the programme was that the materials were being distributed to the people at no cost because they were actually donated free by V-Mobile.

He pledged that his

administration would fight poverty in the area as the phenomenon was taking a dangerous dimension in Nigeria.

According to him, most of the criminal activities and diseases in the society were actually caused by poverty, adding that past governments in the country treated the all important issue with levity.

He said, "All tiers of government need to rededicate themselves to their various poverty alleviation programmes either inherited or put in place by them and implement them faithfully."

The chairman also urged other multinational firms operating in the country to emulate the good gesture of V-Mobile by extending their hands of friendship to all the programmes of government aimed at eradicating poverty.

He said it was by so doing that people could be empowered financially to patronise their products and services.

Also speaking on the occasion, the head of Lagos region office of V-Mobile, Mr. Imeh James, said his firm

was committed to fighting poverty by assisting all tiers of government with provision of income generating materials.

Already, he said the company had empowered millions of Nigerians and created employments since it was established in the country. And that the donation of the materials to Ikoyi-

Obalende was part of V-Mobile's contribution to the society.

Two of the widows, Mrs. Joy Osaenwenileli and Mrs. Queen Mamasseh, who spoke on behalf of other recipients, thanked V-Mobile and the council for their good gestures and pledged to make good use of the materials given to them.

LASG assures on disaster management

Lagos State government has reiterated its commitment to effective disaster management a month and a day after the Tsunami disaster and three years after the Ikeja bomb blast that claimed over 1000 lives.

Representing the governor at the third memorial anniversary of the Ikeja bomb blast disaster at Oke Afa burial, the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Mr. Joko Pelumi, said though a man made catastrophe, as opposed to the Tsunami, the loss of lives and property was so monumental, requiring

prompt action.

He said, "As a government, we have not been content simply to relive this sad experience year after year. While we are duty bound to honour the dead, it will become only an empty ritual if we do not learn and apply the necessary lessons".

He further said as part of the lessons, "we have strengthened our institutional and administrative capacity to respond to emergency situation".

He further called on the federal government to enhance the capacity of state to provide such services through the enthronement of a true federal structure.



Gov. Tinubu

News

Gen. Azazi is now GOC 1 Div.

A new General Officer Commanding (GOC) has been appointed for the First Division of the Nigerian Army, he is Major-General Owoye Andrew Azazi.

A statement by the Assistant Director, Army Public Relations in Kaduna, Colonel Ayo Olaniyun, said Major General Stephen Asemota who is now Commander of training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

Based on February 1 1952, Major-General Azazi hails from Ekeremor local Government Area of Bayelsa State. He started his cadet training at the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) on July 3 1972 and Commissioned Second Lieutenant on December 15, 1974.

Until his appointment,

From Sani Babadoko, Bureau Chief Kaduna
Azazi was Director of Military Intelligence (DMI).

He has since assumed duties with a promise to improve on General Asemota's achievements at the division.

WINGOV makes case for women representation in National confab

A non-governmental organisation known as Women in Nigeria for Good-Governance (WINGOV) has advocated for 30 per cent women representation in the Federal government's proposed national dialogue.

A statement signed by the president of the organisation, Barrister Olivia Agbajoh, said that the 30 per cent women representation was necessary in order to give Women the opportunity to contribute on how best to move the nation forward.

The organisation therefore

From Abdullahi M Gulloma, Labour Reporter (Abuja)

called on the federal government to as a matter of necessity, nominate 133 women to the proposed national dialogue to enable them protect the interest of Nigerian women.

"We want to note that out of eight members of the committee inaugurated by President Olusegun Obasanjo to produce an agenda for the conference only one is a woman. This is a gross under-representation. We strongly advise Mr. President to increase the membership to three more women".

"Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple social justice of democracy, it is an essential for achieving transparent and a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society.

"It is the women who have a more alert sense and a more profound respect for the individual person and for her characteristics she is the educator of the men of the future", the organisation said.

Group blames civil society over failure of census

The president, African Foundation for Population and Development (AFPODEV) Bar. Ikechukwu Ezekwe, has blamed the failure of previous census on the lack of active participation by civil society and private sector in Nigeria.

He made this remark while addressing a press conference last week in Abuja.

Bar. Ezekwe said that previous census lacked

From Benjamin Asta, Reporter Crime

required representatives health (malaria mortality morbidity, infant mortality) and other socio-economic indicators/information.

He said the most disturbing when the National Population Commission is is only given relevance each census year, only to be forgotten and despised till the next census is not only deplorable but disastrous.



PUBLIC NOTICE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT (FMENV)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) OF THE PROPOSED QUARRY PROJECT FOR THE OBJAJANA CEMENT COMPLEX BY DANGOTE NIGERIA LIMITED

In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act No. 86 of 1992, which makes it Mandatory for proponents of all new major development activities to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment of proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces a twenty-one (21) working days Public Notice for information and comments on the draft EIA Report submitted by Dangote Nigeria Limited.

Project Description/Location
The proposed project, located near Oyo-Iwa Village, will involve exploitation of abundant limestone deposit required for the Obajana Cement Factory located about 9 kilometres from the quarry.

VENUES OF DISPLAY

- i) Kogi State Ministry of Environment, Lokoja, Kogi
- ii) Lokoja Local Government Area Headquarters, Lokoja, Kogi State
- iii) Federal Ministry of Environment Office, Lokoja, Kogi State
- iv) FMENV Liaison Office, Games Village, Surulere, Lagos.
- v) FMENV Office, Plot 444, Aguiyi-Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja

DURATION OF DISPLAY

Date: 12th January-10th February, 2005
Time: 8:00a.m. - 4:00p.m

ALL COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT ON OR BEFORE 10TH FEBRUARY, 2005.

SIGNED
PERMANENT SECRETARY
FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER.

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LOSS OF CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

This is to inform the general public that Certificate of Occupancy, No. FCT/ABU/MISC.4269 belonging to WEMA BANK PLC, Wema Towers, Marina Lagos is hereby declared missing and all efforts to trace it proved abortive. If found, please forward to MESSRS. FEMI OYEKOLA & CO. Suite 16, Landmark Plaza, Plot 3124, IBB Way, Maitama Abuja.

Loss of Documents

This is to notify members of the public that the land documents comprises of offer of terms of grant and acceptance of offer of Grant of Right of occupancy within FCT Abuja, with Reference No MFCT/LA/91/JG.87 in respect of a plot No 890, sized 1200, M2. situated at Gwagwalada/Giri Layout issued by the MFCT Abuja to MRS. AISHA UMAR IBRAHIM of SBRS/ABU ZARIA are declared missing. Authorities concerned should please note accordingly. Any objection as to the issuance of the same should be forwarded to the MFCT before 21 days of this publication.

Missing Document

A Certificate of Occupancy No FCT/ABU/A/C/434 belonging to Mrs. Nkese N. Eduok is reported missing. Anybody who comes across it should kindly return to the undersigned.
Mrs. N.E. Eduok,
Plot 1618B, Maitama Yusuf Road,
Asokoro Cadastral Zone A4,
Abuja.

EDHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION

This is to inform the general public that the above named Organisation is applying to the Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja for amendment of the Organisation's Constitution under the Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 1990.

Any objection to this publication should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Zone 5, Wuse, Abuja, within 28 days of this publication.

Signed
Clifford I. Omosighian Esq.
Eze Ighoko & Co.
Suits 101/103 Ansoke Plaza
Wuse Zone 5, Abuja
08037942025, 09-5242258
01-2220158

FOOTBALL REFEREES ASSOCIATION IN NIGERIA

The general public is hereby informed that the above named Association has applied for registration to the Corporate Affairs Commission, under Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Decree of 1990.

The Trustees are:

1. Hon. Barrister Ray A. Nnaji
2. Deacon A. A. Iremwah
3. Barrister Aidi Bala
4. Chief (Eng.) Chris Egbunochi
5. Mr. O. O. Olaniyun (FFA)
6. Barrister Joseph Isi (JP)
7. Hajia Bahari Jamila
8. Alhaji Hamud Muzuru (FFA)
9. Chief Ayo Osoyelu
10. Alhaji Ibrahim Ahmed

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
Hon. Barrister Ray A. Nnaji
(Protem President)

CHANGE OF NAMES

I, formerly known as HAUWA MALJIDDA BASHIR, now wish to be identified as HAUWA IBRAHIM DUHU, Bureau of Public Enterprises and the general public to note.

I, formerly known as SARAH JONAH, now wish to be addressed as SARAH SHEKONUZHIBO DANLAMI MAGBA. Former documents remain valid. General Hospital Toto and the general public to note.

I, formerly known as JOSEPH ENEHIZENA, now wish to be known as JOSEPH ENEHIZENA FALUYI. All former documents remain valid. Public to note.

Inside Politics

Gov Kalu congratulates Sen Obi on petition victory

Abia State governor, Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu has congratulated Senator Ben Obi on his landmark victory at the senatorial election petition tribunal which ruled that he was the rightful person to represent the Anambra central senatorial district.

In a release signed by his chief press secretary, Mr. Onuoha Udeala, governor Kalu described Senator Obi's

victory as a triumph for the democratic system of governance and urged all true democrats to learn a lesson from Senator Obi's dogged pursuit of his cause through democratic and constitutional means.

Commending the judiciary for remaining steadfast "even in the light of obvious distractions" the Abia State chief executive noted that their consistency

in strengthening the confidence of the people in the effectiveness of the judiciary as an arbiter in disputes.

He urged Senator Obi to bring his wealth of experience garnered as a major player in both the private and public sector of the nation to bear on the senate and to put the travails of his electoral battles behind him and focus on the task ahead.

It would be recalled that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), had on Wednesday, January 26, 2005 finally issued a sealed certificate of return to Senator Obi affirming him as the duly elected senator representing the Anambra central senatorial district a dogged legal tussle that lasted nearby town years.



Governor Kalu

NGO kicks against political reform conference

A non-governmental organisation, Network for Justice (NFJ) has kicked against the forthcoming national political reform conference describing it as "another jimboree, a conduit pipe for wasting national resources and an avenue for the imposition of pre-planned agenda by the Ohasanjo junta."

In a press released signed by its chairman, Malam Saifu Isah Radda, the Network for Justice said that the national dialogue committee led by governor Ahmed Muhammad Makarfi of Kaduna State was lame incompetent and illegitimate to fashion out an acceptable formula for a sovereign national conference.

According to the group, "the problems bedeviling Nigeria go beyond mere dialogue" noting that "the problems of monumental corruption, electoral fraud, and economic break down, general insecurity to life and property, sharing of national resource ethnic and religious intolerance, political banditry cannot be addressed on the current arrangement proposed by the government."

Rejecting the government's "initiated, monitored and tele-guided national dialogue" Malam Radda argued that Nigeria required

From Ahmed Abubakar, Reporter (Kano)

a sovereign national conference of freely elected representatives from all the geo-political zones, civil society organisations and recognised political movements and not the federal government's nominated committee.

He pledged the network's solidarity with all pro-SNC organisations and political parties throughout Nigeria and called on all stakeholders, including traditional rulers and religious groups to dissociate themselves from the government's organised political reform conference asserting that it will take Nigeria nowhere.

2007: Atiku group to organise 30 million man-match

A group canvassing support for Vice President Atiku Abubakar's presidential ambition in 2007, the Atiku Consensus Movement (ACM) has announced its plans to hold a 30 million-man match in the six geopolitical zones of the country, to shore up support for their candidate.

Already the group said it has commenced mobilisation for the March in all the zones and Abuja.

It also called on Obasanjo to support his Vice President to succeed him, by ensuring that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) adopts him as a consensus candidate for the post.

The group further urged the PDP national officers and elected public office holders to rally behind Atiku for continuity.

Urging for power shift to the North, the movement advised presidential hopefuls from the south to suspend their ambitions till 2015.

ACM then called on Nigerians to reject any "anti-democrat" contesting for the presidency; as such persons "had the opportunity of promoting democracy during their time of leading Nigeria as dictators."

By Habeeb I. Findiga, (Political Reporter)

A communiqué signed by the national coordinator and secretary of the movement, Tony Nwachukwu and Ibrahim Meki respectively, made available to Daily Trust in Abuja at the weekend, said the Vice President was the most suitable candidate to protect and sustain President Obasanjo's legacies beyond 2007.

The communiqué was released at the end of the movement's meeting in Abuja Tuesday last week.

It also called on Obasanjo to support his Vice President to succeed him, by ensuring that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) adopts him as a consensus candidate for the post.

The group further urged the PDP national officers and elected public office holders to rally behind Atiku for continuity.

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Member House committee on education, Hon. Dahiru Boroma (right) presenting some books to chairman ANPP, Yola South local government, Alhaji Abubakar Raji during his constituency tour to some local governments in Adamawa State.

Rep inaugurates constituency political structure

A member of the House of Representatives, Hon. Atai Aidoko Ali has put together a political structure in his constituency for repositioning ahead of 2007.

Inaugurated on December 26 in Ayangba, Kogi State and named 'Olamaboro, Omala and Aukpa political main group' the structure is to be the umbrella body to chart the political course of the legislator and his caucus, according to Hin. Aidoko.

Hon. Aidoko, representing Olamabor, Omala and Aukpa federal constituency in the House of Representatives, who disclosed this at the weekend in Abuja said the new development was a child of the desire to draw various interest groups in the constituency so as to consolidate and engender the unity and progress of the constituents ahead of 2007.

The member, who was honoured with the Igala Merit Award by the Igala Development Association

By Hamed M. Bello, (Senior Political Reporter)

during the Annual Italo festival held recently in Ayangba, said the need for the Igala people to work in harmony and speak with one voice on political issues was necessary to consolidate the gains of democracy in the state.

Aidoko, who was guest speaker at the Italo festival, enjoined all Igala people to close their rank politically and appealed to leaders in the state not to back down in their efforts to place Kogi

State in a strategic position in the political arrangements in the country.

Reacting on the honour bestowed on him, the lawmaker said, among others, that: "I felt pleasantly surprised that I will be singled out for such an award. It has increased my resolve to contribute more to the development of Igala land politically, economically and socially."

"I thank the awardees, the Attah of Igala, Alhaji Aliyu Obaje and the governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris for their efforts in the overall development of Igala land and the success of the Italo festival."

Ogbeh's successor: Dabo denies nominating candidates

The Assistant National Auditor (North Central) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr. Godwin Daba Adzuana has denied reports that the zonal office of the party had submitted two names from which it wants President Obasanjo to choose as Chief Audu Ogbeh's replacement.

Dr. Dabo, who spoke to newsmen in Makurdi over the

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

weekend, reputed the allegation saying that the "story is completely false."

"It is true we met after which we paid a courtesy call on Chief Ogbeh. But we did not consider any name to replace, Ogbeh as reported," said Dr. Dabo who added that the issue of selecting names for replacement of Ogbeh was not under discussion.

"I am therefore assuring members and leaders of PDP in North Central that the report is false and baseless and should therefore be disregarded," he added, assuring that nomination would be made based on the procedure for the replacement as stipulated in the constitution of the party.

The PDP chieftain said that until the November convention of the party, the present term belonged to "Boroma and that it would be injustice if somebody from outside is brought in to replace outgoing chairman and complete his tenure insisting a successor to Ogbeh must be found from the state.

No factions in Plateau

PDP, insists party chieftain

Despite the existence of two secretariats of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Jos, Plateau State capital, the chairman of the Shendam local government area chapter of the party, Mr. Sunday Marabe has asserted that there were no factions in the party.

Addressing a meeting of the central working committee (CWC) of the party in the area over the weekend in Shendam, Mr. Marabe maintained that PDP in the state was one, under the leadership of Mr. Maichibi Uwajui.

He accused the decampers from ANPP and AD of trying to cause confusion in the party

From Bakiya A. Muhammad, Correspondent (Jos)

describing them as opportunists, who thought they could get political offices if the present governor is not returned to his seat after the emergency rule.

Mr. Marabe also expressed the confidence of the party in the speaker of Plateau State House of Assembly, Barrister Simeon Lalong saying the people of Shendam, his constituency, are solidly behind him.

According to the chairman, any attempt from any quarters to recall the Speaker will be met with stiff resistance.

Anambra Assembly relocates to Govt House

Anambra State House of Assembly has temporarily relocated to the conference hall of the Government House in Awka with the members holding their first sitting after resumption from the Christmas and new year break in the new venue last week.

The speaker of the House, Mr. Mike Balonwa said that the relocation of the House of Assembly became necessary following its destruction by thugs during the November mayhem last year adding that the lawmakers will continue in

From Beatrice Onuchukwu, in Awka

the temporary venue pending the constitution of a new assembly building.

According to him, the lawmakers will be staying in the new venue until "when the government reconstructs the destroyed legislative chamber."

During the session, the House resolved to forward its petition on the November mayhem in the state to the acting Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero for further investigation and necessary action.

News

Gov Idris tasks Vcs on self employment courses

The Kogi State Governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, has charged the committee of vice-chancellors of state universities to introduce courses that would equip university graduate to be self-employed.

Ahmed Tahir Ajobe,
(Correspondent Lokoja)

The governor who made the call while declaring open a two-day meeting of the vice-chancellors at the Kogi State University Ayigba, Kogi State, said the call had become necessary in view of

the increasing rate of graduate employment the nation is currently facing.

Governor Idris also urged the committee to also deliberate on ways of promoting the development of local industries through research.

The governor who reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the provision of quality education, also appealed to the vice-chancellors to find solution to the problem of cultism in the nation's tertiary institutions and that of examination malpractices.

On the problem of power facing the university, the governor said plans are under way to connect the university to the national grid.

Earlier, the Chairman of the committee of vice-chancellors who is also the vice-chancellor of Ambrose Alli University, Professor Uvie Igun, said the meeting would discuss issues such as cultism and examination malpractices, as well as that of structural development in campuses and that of welfare of teachers among others.

FG commences dredging of River Niger

The federal government is to commence dredging of the River Niger this year.

The Minister of Transport, Dr. Abiye Sekibo, who dropped the hint Friday in Lokoja, the Kogi State capi-



Abiye Sekibo, Transport Min

tal, said the gesture may be extended to the Benue River because of the economic benefits that were abound on the nation's waters.

The minister who reaffirmed the commitment of President Olusegun Obasanjo to the dredging of the river because of its benefit, noted that the natural endowment of the country especially in the surface water is capable of turning around the nation's economy if fully harnessed.

Dr. Sekibo also noted that the dredging of the river would provide opportunity for job creation.

The dredging, he further noted, is also expected to reduce the over dependence on the nation's roads.

For keeping a filthy environment, five persons including a bread baker, Musa Omo Oloyin Bread, at Oloje area of Ilorin in Kwara State, have been referred to Upper Area Court II Oloje for proper investigation.

An Environmental Health Officer, Alhaji Omowumi Gambar, who arrested them last Saturday during the state monthly environmental sanitation exercise complained that the bread baker was operating in a filthy environment surrounded by human waste product; thereby constituting health hazard to consumers of the commodity.

Although the bread baker did not show up before the mobile court presided over by Alhaji Abdullahi Umar, Principal Area Court Judge, Oke-Oyi, his pregnant wife represented him.

Alhaja Gambar told the mobile court that the three storey building housing the bakery industry had no sound toilet facilities, hence faeces from the building runs through a pipe into a stream close to the bakery industry.

The health officer told the mobile court that rather than fine the offenders, she preferred them being charged to court for further investigation because several appeals to the landlord to provide sound toilet facilities for the

Five environmental offenders referred to court

By Abdulrazaq Adebayo
(Correspondent Ilorin)

story building fell on deaf ears

Consequently, Alhaji Umar who had earlier con-

victed eight other offenders, to fines ranging from N500 to N1,000 referred the case to the Upper Area Court II Oloje for proper investigation in public interest.

30 corpers punished for indiscipline

By Edet Ekanem
(Stringer Uyo)

Not less than 30 youth corpers out of the present 824 members earmarked to be passed out in Akwa Ibom State on the 3rd of February this year will have to repeat one year NYSC compulsory service for committing various offences against the scheme.

Also a good number of the corp members will have their services extended by four months for absenteeism.

On the other hand, 30 of the total number of 824 will receive various awards in appreciation of their meaningful contributions in rural development in the state.

The Akwa Ibom State Coordinator of the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), Chief Ebenezer Akinola, who unfolded the package last weekend during press briefing in the NYSC conference room in Uyo said the measures was in keeping with the recent national reforms of the scheme, which according to him is aimed at

assisting the scheme for greater productivity and national development.

The state coordinator also announced that henceforth, any corper who absents himself for two months without genuine reasons will have his/her service extended by 4 months and beyond the two months, the corper will have to repeat the year.

For effective utilisation of corpers, Chief Akinola said each corper will from now have to sign daily attendance register opened by their employers to check the appearance and disappearances of the corpers at their various places of work.

Chief Akinola also disclosed that as part of the reform, corpers will now be admitted into the camp only if he/she has been able to produce well certified call-up letters and their results.

Inside January '05 Edition



COVER

The nation is fighting a mountain of crises following the sudden eruption of political, economic and social problems.

INTERVIEW

Governor AHMAD SANI of Zamfara State speaks on his speculated presidential ambition and the achievements of his administration in the last five years.

POLITICS

The proposed National Dialogue can only succeed if genuine grievances of all Nigerians are critically looked into.

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NATIONAL ANNUAL SURVEY ON AGRICULTURAL EXPORT COMMODITIES IN NIGERIA

The Consultative Committee on Agricultural Export Commodity Statistics (CCAECs) under the auspices of the Central Bank of Nigeria; Federal Ministry of Commerce; and Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will be conducting a nation wide annual establishment-based survey on production, processing and marketing of fourteen agricultural export commodities in Nigeria.

This exercise would involve visits to some Government Ministries, Agencies, Private farms, Individual farmers, Commodity Associations, Research Institutes and Agro/processing companies in all the States of the Federation.

The 2004/2005 survey will commence in February 2005 and last for a period of 10 weeks.

We use this medium to seek the co-operation of members of the public, community heads, State Governments and the general public on this national assignment.

Signed
Director, Development Finance Dept.
Central Bank of Nigeria
Chairman, Consultative Committee
On Agricultural Export Commodity
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FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AREA II, GARKI-ABUJA



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The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development intends to complete the abandoned Central Seed Testing Laboratory at the National Seed Services (NSS), Sheda.

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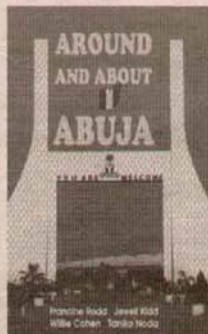
The pre-qualification documents should be submitted to the office of Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development not later than two (2) weeks from the date of this publication. The sealed envelope containing the documents should be marked with appropriate title "Pre-qualification for the completion of NSS Central Seed Laboratory, Sheda" at the top right hand corner and addressed to:

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Sports

NIGERIA FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Breath of life at last

The struggle has been long and arduous. It started way back in the 1980's when clubs started agitating for independence from the NFA. This gave rise to the introduction of a semi-autonomous professional league in 1990.

Our joys were short lived as the enabling law that created the league was quickly repealed and the league moved to the NFA under the infamous Decree 101. The arrangement never favoured clubs as all decisions concerning the league and its management were taken by the NFA council and forced down our throats. Fifteen years since the introduction of pro-league, we only operate it in name," president of the Nigeria Football League Board (NFLB) Chief Oyinko Obaseki said while pointing into memory lane when the league board was inaugurated by the NFA chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima.

Barely a week later and after crossing the Ts and dotting the Is, the NFL council laid bare some of its programmes and policies for the forth coming season. It was expectedly seething, reflecting a sense of liberation from an excruciating enslavement. It was indeed a liberation Day as was termed by president of Pro-league Club Owners, Davidson Owumi.

Firing the maiden salvo, Chief Obaseki intoned: "We

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sports Reporter

are not here to confront anybody, whether the ministry, NFA even the sporting press. Our focus will be the league and we are determined to give it our best shot, nothing no matter how tactfully presented, will distract us from our set objective.

"We will never move the goal post. The standards and format agreed upon at the beginning of each season shall remain binding. We shall take definite decisions and stand by them irrespective of circumstances and no matter whose club is involved."

Highly promising words these, more so when one considers the inconsistency and apparent lack of focus exhibited so shamelessly by the Galadima-led NFA Board. Of course, fresh in the mind is the on-going playoffs instituted to favour clubs chips which could not beat the relegation mark. Suddenly, the NFA council moved the goal post several metres outward by introducing a 20-team format



Ibrahim Galadima, NFA Chairman

devoid of double standard, deceit and hypocrisy which characterized the glorified amateur league of yore.

A major departure from the past league is the decision to assume payment of match officials directly by the NFL. This responsibility, which yours sincerely canvassed for since 1996 when Alhaji Ahmed Sani Toro was scribe of the pro-league, will gulp N43m.

The argument is that payment of indemnity to match commissioners and later referees will eliminate incidences of inducement of these officials and gives them confidence to do a fair work of officiating without being compromised with lucre.

"We shall embark on conscious enlightenment of players, coaches, referees, and especially our supporters. They must work to avert hooliganism. Football is a game which in most cases there must be winner and loser, both should be gallant in victory or defeat since there is always another day."

"We will introduce strident rules to checkmate the vagaries of those who want

to breach the rules. We shall ban venues and once any place is so banned, it will remain so. Again we have increased the indemnity of match commissioners and have taken over the payment of such indemnity. Modalities for that of the referees are being worked out. Henceforth match commissioners will earn N20,000 up from N6,500. Referees-centre and assistants will earn N15,000 N12,000 while the reserve will receive N10,000 up from N6,000, N5,000 and N2,000.

"We shall arrange and be responsible for their accommodation and transportation to and fro. All this is to ensure that the ugly act of inducement is eliminated. This will allow us to discipline erring referees and guarantee fair officiating which will ensure and sustain the beauty of the league."

So confident of a television-friendly league in the making was he that he vowed to continue with the league even if five stadia are found worthy for use on February 12 when the semi-autonomous league is scheduled to begin. Inspectors sent out to critically consider venues were to turn in their reports last weekend.

Chief Obaseki, who allowed maximum interjections from members and even the press, said club managers have resolved to give free rein to the NFL to implement its policies and take measures to eliminate anything uncharitable to the objectives of the league body including favouritism in any form.

"It is our vowed decision to market the league. We are yet to receive hand over note from the NFA though in respect of contracts entered on behalf of the league.

"Nonetheless, we have begun negotiations with various corporate outfits. Specifically, we are talking with NTA, DSTV, AIT etc on life broadcast of the league.

However, Globacom is yet to come forward."

This singular comment sparked off controversy between it and the NFA. Galadima was to react on the matter of handing over contract documents thus, "the Nigeria Football league is not a legal entity. The new law establishing it has not been passed. It is therefore not proper to discuss things, which are legalistic with the NFL. We are waiting for the legal status of the NFL to be sorted out first. As at today, I don't know what the legal standing of the NFL is."

The charge of illegality has expectedly engendered sharp reaction against Galadima, who many say has implicated himself for perpetrating illegality since it was he who inaugurated the NFL board.

President of the parallel referees body Barrister Ray Nnaji, accused Galadima of double standard, "we heaved a sigh of relief when the NFL was established. Unfortunately Galadima, who inaugurated the body, says it's illegal and one wonders whether he was not perpetrating illegality when he inaugurated the body and even charged it to perform maximally in the organisation of the league."

"Even then if Galadima charge the NFL of being an illegal body because its statute is yet to be ratified, how come the Galadima-led NFA board has had serious romance with the NFL which title is neither registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission nor established by any law of the land.

Galadima has even gone to the extent of abdicating the NFA's statutory responsibility, badging of referees, to an illegal body—the NRA. What a classic case of double standard. Nonetheless, the implementing body should ignore the ranting of Galadima, who craves freedom but wants to hinder others from escaping from the tyrannical rule of the NFA.

AFRICAN YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP

Siasia promises improvement

Samson Siasia has promised to make improvements in the Flying Eagles squad that won the African Youth trophy on Saturday.

"This team will definitely go places but I will continue to improve on them until they become unbeatable," he told KickOff Nigeria soon after the stirring triumph and showered praises on his lads.

"These boys have made me proud, they are wonderful kids. Now I have been vindicated. I am happy my God has not forsaken me despite the hue and cry about Siasia not being a good coach."

Siasia also expressed gratitude to the people of Benin for their support throughout the competition. "I thank the Benin fans for throwing their support to my team when they enjoyed the

game. I was once a striker so you expect my team to score goals," Siasia said.

Flying Eagles skipper Promise Isaac saved his best performance for last, plundering a brace as the Nigerian starlets cruised to an emphatic 2-0 win to dethrone champions Egypt as African cadet kings.

Promise, who has had a mixed tournament, claimed his first goal in first half stoppage time. Hertha Berlin's marksman-in-waiting Solomon Okoronkwo left two defenders in his wake before Isaac pounced on the rebound to give Nigeria the lead.

Isaac was on hand again to double the score in the second half with another assist from Okoronkwo. Iyie Taiwo started an attacking move down the left side, then

found the Germany-based Peter "the Nigerian nightmare" Duva for his skipper to make it two.

Siasia's wards completely dominated what turned out to be a disappointingly one-sided encounter, with Egypt

'Nigerian nightmare' touted as heavyweight saviour

Promoter of Samuel Peter "the Nigerian nightmare" Duva boxing has said that "Samuel's puncher-brawler style has given a buzz to a fighter that the heavyweight division hasn't seen since a young Mike Tyson burst onto the scene," said Duva.

"Peter is on a mission, on a quest. He is getting better and better with every fight, and is the complete package. He will fight anybody, anywhere on his mission to prove that he is the best

content to absorb pressure and come forward on the break.

Nigeria have now won a record five African junior titles after four consecutive triumphs in 1983, 85, 87 and 89.

"He can be the savior of the heavyweight division," wrapped up Duva with the prediction.

"The future of heavyweight boxing has arrived," said his manager, Iyayko Gotzev.

"He got his second explosive win on cable television, and his potential has come to fruition.

Fracas mar Premier League play-off

Violence disrupted the premier league play-off between Wikki Tourists and Mighty Jet at the Kaduna centre, yesterday, even as Kwara United secured a place in the premier league.

Fans had enacted upon the match thereby forcing its officials to it call-off abruptly.

The two sides also played barren draw when they met last Friday.

Executive Secretary of the NFL, Malam Salihu Abubakar said the league

board would decide on the matter tomorrow. He did not, however, state what the nature of the decision would be.

Meanwhile Kwara United secured consecutive victory to achieve 100 percent record and a place in the new 20 team format premier league.

The Kadiri Ikhamatov Squad had earlier piped Plateau United 1-0 on Friday and repeated same feat against Ebonvi Angels.

Ebonyi fell by the way side in spite of beating Plateau United 2-1 penultimate day.

Amokachi plans reception for Siasia

Former Super Eagles skipper Daniel Amokachi has congratulated ex-team mate Samson Siasia and plans a reception for the victorious Flying Eagles coach.

"Siasia has done very well," Amokachi told KickOffNigeria.com.

"In spite of all the difficulties he faced, he has still achieved what we have not done for a long time by

getting us to the World Cup, and winning the African Cup.

I have spoken with him and with the proprietor of The Dome in Abuja, and we shall host a party for him when he comes back," Amokachi said.

Siasia, who won the Cup as a player in 1985, has made history by becoming the first man to win the cup as a player and a coach after guiding the Flying Eagles to their fifth triumph on Saturday.

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Sports

Adamawa United petitions FIFA, minister over promotion

The Adamawa State government has sought redress from FIFA and the Sports Ministry over the failure of the NFA to ratify the promotion of Adamawa United to the premier league.

In the petition, the State Commissioner of Youth and Sports, Alhaji Jubrin Gurem alleged that the leadership of

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sports Reporter

the NFA board, David Suleiman and Sabo Jumba conspired with some football associations chairmen to deny Adamawa United promotion last season.

Specifically, the petitioner alleged that the board was compromised to close its eyes

on the petition written to high light unfair decisions taken by the Organising and Disiplinary Committee of the NFA.

Trustsports scooped that the petition consigned to the sports minister, Col. Musa Mohammed, had alleged that

Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima, Jumba and Suleiman and the chairman of football

associations chairmen Mr. Manu Mannock conspired against the interest of Adamawa United and stoutly prevented officials of the club from presenting their position at the NFA annual general meeting, in Port Harcourt.

The Commissioner therefore prayed FIFA and the ministry to prevail on the NFA to ratify the promotion

of Adamawa United to the premier league, beginning on February 12.

Trustsports recalls that Adamawa United had placed third behind Zamfara United and Nasarawa United. But it had capitalized on the hiccup between Zamfara United and Ranch Bees over board-room points to lay claim to the second slot ahead of Zamfara United.

But the NFA conference decided to stick to the decision of the Appeal Committee headed by Alhaji Galadima to award Zamfara United maximum points to place second and ensure

promotion for elite action.

Consequently upon the petition, the Adamawa United which were listed for the play-offs at Kaduna center failed to participate.

The play-offs were arranged to allow two slots in the new 20-team format for the premier league. All four teams which could not beat relegation mark and two third-placed teams from the pro-league were to trade tackles for the slots.

Adamawa United, however, failed to take its turn against Mighty Jets and Wikki Tourists at the weekend for the sole ticket.



Midfield action between Ibadan Vmobile and Ibadan Wanderers polo teams during the just concluded Ibadan Polo Tournament. The Vmobile team clinched the Ibadan Cup, the most coveted trophy of the tournament.

Ibadan Vmobile lifts Ibadan Cup

Ibadan Vmobile team has emerged the winner of this year's most prestigious Cup, the Ibadan Cup, at the just concluded Vmobile Ibadan Polo tournament, as the four teams that represented Lagos and Port Harcourt in the tournament, Lagos H.S.T, Lagos Ikoyi, PH Ggamac, and PH Crushed Rock, share glory.

Captained by Hussein Moon Jammal, who is also the Captain of Ibadan Polo, Ibadan Vmobile paraded hard fighting Jibo Garba +3, Saidu Umar, and tireless Ade Adesina +1. The team defeated Ibadan Wanderers twice by 3 goals to 2 in each of the two matches played on days two and four of the tournament.

The two Lagos teams that featured in the tournament, Lagos H.S.T. and Lagos Ikoyi proved their mettle when they share victory in the Brigadier Okwale Rotimi Cup. While the latter won the trophy having posted an aggregate goal of 9 against the former's 7, Ibadan Challenge could only gather 6 goals to trail behind them.

The contest for Rotimi Cup was very intense and at the same time interesting. The three matches played for the Cup ended in all draws. The first match between Ibadan Challenge and Lagos HST ended 4 goals apiece, while that between the two Lagos teams also ended in all 5. The

last match recorded 2 goals on each side between Ibadan Challenge and Lagos Ikoyi. The aggregate score of 9 goals recorded by Lagos H.S.T gave the team the coveted Cup, while Lagos Ikoyi, with an aggregate of 7 goals got the runner-up position.

The first Cup to be decided during the tournament was The of Arthurday Cup, which PH Ggamac won after posting an aggregate score of 14 goals against another Port Harcourt team, PH Crushed Rock's 10 and Ibadan Cowboy's 1.

Other trophies contested for on the selected sides are Vmobile Cup, The Safieddine Cup, Nigerian Foundries Cup, and The Burges Cup. Teams V. Business and V. 500 competed for Vmobile Cup. The latter won the Cup, having walloped the former by 4 goals to 1. Also, team NICHEM defeated team Black Horse by 5 goals to 2 to lift the Safieddine Cup, while team Wayne mercilessly thrashed team NFL by 5 goals to 0 to win the Cup donated by the latter, N.F.L. Cup. Team Wayne and team V. 500 tackled each other for The Burges Cup. Although the latter drew with the former, the latter was awarded the Cup after toying of a coin to determine the lucky team among the two, since their game ended in 6 goals aside.

A total of sixteen teams competed for seven trophies in this year's tournament, two of the teams came from Lagos while another two came from Port Harcourt. Polo players came from different clubs across the federation to participate in the annual event.

Among the dignitaries who graced the event were Senator Rasheed Ladoja, Executive Governor of Oyo State, Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, Chairman, Nigerian Polo Association, Alhaji Suleib Mchibibly Safieddine, Myriwa Ige, son of the late Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Bola Ige, etc.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Safin fightback ends Hewitt dream

Marat Safin fought back from a set down to win the Australian Open final and end Lleyton Hewitt's dream of winning his home Grand Slam title.

Safin made a dreadful start and quickly lost the first set as he made 13 unforced errors to Hewitt's one.

The Russian levelled but was in trouble at 4-1 down in the third before reeling off seven magnificent games.

One break was enough in the fourth and Safin served out confidently for a stunning 1-6-6-3-6-4-6-4 win.

Hewitt had been aiming to become the first home player to win the Australian singles since Mark Edmondson in 1926.

In the tournament's centenary year, the Melbourne crowd was vociferous in its support of the Adelaide-born player.

And Hewitt gave them plenty to cheer with an almost faultless opening set as Safin

appeared gripped by nerves, dropping his first and third service games.

An early break in the second changed the momentum but Safin was still making too many errors.

The Russian wasted a break point in the opening game of the third set and Hewitt took advantage, despite being warned for unsportsmanlike conduct, in the following game.

After holding his temper in check for so long Safin smashed his first racket of the night, and that seemed to galvanise him.

Finally he found the form that saw off Roger Federer in the semi-finals and managed to use his power to dominate Hewitt, especially on serve.

Seven straight games ripped the initiative away from the Australian.

Hewitt's best chance now seemed to be a trademark Safin breakdown but this time he remained calm, giving the home favourite no chance as he served out for victory.

After twice being a runner-up in Melbourne, Safin adds the Australian title to the US Open crown he won in 2000, and Hewitt paid tribute in particular to his win over Federer.

"I'd like to congratulate Marat on a hell of a tournament, you knocked off the guy who's been virtually

impossible to beat so you definitely deserve it."

He added: "I didn't feel like I played that badly out there, he was just too good. I gave it everything I had."

Safin replied: "You are such a great fighter and you have an amazing talent that God gave you to fight until the end."

Hewitt tribute to 'awesome' Safin

Lleyton Hewitt insisted he could do nothing to prevent Marat Safin fighting back to win the Australian Open final.

"I didn't lose the match, he had to win it," said Hewitt after the four-set defeat. "I got out of the blocks well but he hadn't hit his stride."

"He's an awesome player and at no stage did I think it was going to carry on like that."

"Some of his hitting from the back of the court at the end of the third set and all of the fourth was incredible."

Hewitt went down 1-6-6-3-6-4-6-4 in two hours 45 minutes, and he added: "I didn't feel like I played that badly out there, he was just too good."

"I gave it everything I had." Despite paying tribute to Safin, the Australian could not hide his disappointment at failing to become the first home winner since 1976.

"I'm sure in a couple of days I will think it's a great achievement and have no regrets but right at the moment I'm human and I'm disappointed," he said.

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EDITORIAL

Iraqi Elections: A charade amidst violence

In early December 2004, Russian President Vladimir Putin said to Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi who was visiting the Kremlin in Moscow at the time, "I cannot imagine how elections can be organised in conditions of total occupation of the country [Iraq] by foreign troops." To this, *Daily Trust* now adds: neither can we. Yet, in what may be probably the strangest and most violent circumstances under which elections have ever been conducted, Iraqis went to the polls yesterday Sunday the 30th of January, 2005.

Although the country remains effectively under occupation by more than 150,000 American forces and a scattering of their allies, the level of violence perpetrated largely by those opposed to the American occupation and the electoral process, had grown significantly in the run up to the elections. Numerous violent deaths, including that of eight electoral workers, the governor of Baghdad and the city's deputy police chief, were recorded. When the commander of American ground forces in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, was asked about security concerns during the polls, he said, "I just can't guarantee that everyone will be able to go to a poll in total safety." And just a few days to the elections, Prime Minister Allawi told the world there were "pockets" of the country where voting would be too unsafe. In the end, though both men were proved right, paradoxically, they were also proved wrong by millions of Iraqis who defied the odds to vote in a poll that witnessed no less than nine major suicide attacks and about 44 deaths on election day.

While we applaud the people of Iraq for their matchless courage, we note with concern that though the Iraqi authorities may have defied the atmosphere of protest violence to hold the elections, there are no guarantees that the exercise would ease the searing tension in that country. We are particularly apprehensive because too many variables may well make the sacrifices Iraqis made yesterday less meaningful than they should be.

Primarily, under the spectre of American occupation that Iraqis live in, and the deadly danger that surrounds them daily, we wonder how Sunday's exercise can rightly be termed 'elections'. By no stretch of the imagination can the polls be described as 'free'. And they were anything but 'fair'. Yet what is at stake is nothing other than the existence of Iraq as a nation. Regardless of these incongruities, the authorities in Baghdad, no doubt spurred on by their masters in Washington DC, went ahead with a most glibly and costly charade.

Furthermore, as we noted earlier, the elections were of a remarkably strange nature. Indeed, some of the strangeness seemed designed to create confusion if nothing else. To begin with, the ballot paper, nicknamed "the mother of all ballot papers," had a measurement of three feet by two feet. On it, there were more than 250 boxes to choose from. Also, although the Iraqi Electoral Commission said voter turnout was about 72 percent of an estimated 14 million adults who are eligible to vote, the commission also admitted that lower than average turn out was recorded in various areas where protest violence was rampant.

Notwithstanding this, 19,000 candidates vied for seats to a 275-member national assembly. Tallying the votes is expected to take about 8,000 Iraqi electoral staff perhaps 10 days at the very least. In addition to all this, for once, virtually all international election observers understandably did their observing from the relative safety of neighbouring countries.

We note with dismay that beyond heightening the tone of 'fear' in the entire exercise, these are hardly conditions that would produce broadly acceptable results in any election, let alone Sunday's Iraqi exercise that has the vision of American imperialist ambitions hanging over it. More so, we are concerned by a calculated attempt by the occupation forces to polarise Iraq along religious lines in order to entrench their hegemony. Whereas change in every society is not necessarily an anathema to peace, if the process through which this change is achieved in Iraq is seen as contrived or unfair, it could well spell trouble for Iraqi unity. This is precisely why we are concerned about the inappropriate atmosphere under which these elections were conducted. As things stand, no one can say exactly what the aftermath of the election would bring. Yet calls for a postponement had inevitably brought the retort from Baghdad and Washington that deferring the polls would only empower the resistance.

One thing is however clear: Iraq's survival as a nation—indeed the survival of any nation for that matter—depends on the guarantee of the rights of all constituent parts and their ability to contribute meaningfully to significant resolutions that affect them. Anything short of this can only elongate the trend of violence and perhaps lead to all-out civil war. Nevertheless, even as we bemoan the unfair and restrictive circumstances under which the Iraqi elections were conducted, this newspaper once again extols the Iraqi people for their valour and wishes them the best possible outcome in this unbecoming enterprise.

Politician, Reform thyself!

By Kabiru A. Yusuf
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President Obasanjo

There are many good things to be said about a conference where the representatives of the people go over the delicate issues of living together. We congratulate the government for its effort in bringing this about, both as a response to those who have demanded for a sovereign national conference and because it is good to reform not just the economy, but the polity. The N900 million or so that will be spent on the 400 delegates is well worth it, considering that billions are being expended on lesser ventures. It is also to the credit of the government that one emotive issue has been put beyond debate: the continued existence of Nigeria as a Federation, though of course this could be challenged at the conference by determined irredentists. Finally, the fact that the outcome of the conference will be subject to the endorsement of the National Assembly also makes sense, considering that this is a conference of nominated rather than elected representatives.

That said, the way the conference is being organised confirms the fear that it may not be representative and therefore credible. Obasanjo does not disappoint his critics, who say that what he gives with one hand, he takes away with another. He clearly has a nationalist political agenda, but within it is highly personal one, which obscures and may yet destroy the first. Where the balance tilts or is forced to tilt, between the nationalist and the egotist, will determine the success or failure of the Obasanjo's reforms.

Most reformers want to recreate a system in their own image. So to understand their reform it helps to understand them, warts and all. Genuine reformers first reform themselves before they try to tackle others. They are sincere before God and man, and do not seek through the changes they bring to settle scores or seek power. The best example of this in our context is Murtala Mohammed, who first made peace with God before he attempted to wrestle with the problems of Nigeria. Murtala made many mistakes, but no one could doubt his sincerity and self-sacrifice and the valiant if precipitate efforts he made (with Obasanjo by his side) to rid Nigeria of corruption and return it to civilian rule.

I think there is something that stops Obasanjo from going the whole hog for Nigeria. May be it is the trauma of seeing his friend cut down in broad daylight at Awolowo road, Kofe. Or may be, while he could write and talk eloquently about this animal called man, he himself could not tame the monster. Whatever it is, he seems to lack the purity of intention and purpose to turn Nigeria around, in spite of the unique chance God has given him the second time around.

The National Political Reform Conference could be a good opportunity to soberly examine and address some of the problems holding back Nigeria. But this can only be done if the various groups, political tendencies and rich intellectual heritage of the country are brought together for this task. An outgoing President who wants to leave an enduring legacy should not feel threatened by this outpouring of the voices of genuine sons and daughters of Nigeria. There will be much material from this to reform and refocus the polity. This sort of representation is achieved either through election, or by a transparent process of nomination that ensures that all shades of opinion are not only represented, but the balance of forces approximate to what actually exists in the country.

From what we know of the nomination process for the conference, states have been asked to nominate six members each, which will bring the total to 216. The Federal Government is in theory to nominate 50 members, but in practice this could be more, because apart from ex-Heads of State who are automatic members, nominations from professional bodies, civic groups and Nigerians in the diaspora (whatever that means) will be determined by the Federal Government.

In other words President Obasanjo and his close advisers will have a huge say in who attends the conference, and as its financiers, what emerges as its final outcome. If the Federal Government nominates quality people whose views reflect that of their constituencies, then a genuine debate may take place. If, however, the aim is to push through a certain predetermined agenda, then the Federal Government will choose people it is comfortable with, who, however will not

enrich the proceedings. If so, the conference may achieve some narrow objectives, but it will have no impact on reforming Nigeria and will keep alive agitations for a genuine sovereign national conference.

On the Federal representation, there are two key issues that will be keenly watched, especially in the north. The first is, who will chair the conference? Speculations in the media suggest Obasanjo is considering a southerner as Chairman. If so, this goes against an established national tradition that when a northerner is the leader, he Chairmanship of all such previous constitutional conferences, has gone to a southerner, from Romiti Williams to Karibe-whyte. This is simply because it amounts to an excessive regional advantage to have the President of the country and the Chairmanship of the conference come from the same region, when you take into account the factors of not just ethnicity, but religion.

The second point is representation from professional bodies and civic groups. Again unless care is taken nominations from these quarters may be skewed in favour of the south, specifically Lagos, where every other lawyer has an NGO operating from his chamber. The conference should not be about who can make the most noise, or who is most practiced in the art of agitation, but to give equal weight to fears and aspirations of all Nigerians.

So far, from what one can see of the nominations made by state governments, there is little cause for cheer. The Katsina list, for example, is made up of an array of ex-this, ex-that, rich in experience and probably hankering for more experience in government. But the team could have been enriched with one or two academics from either Ahmadu Bello University or Bayero University, Kano, from which Katsina has many excellent dons who have spent a life-time studying the problems of national integration. There should at least have been one woman, and one or two younger activists with a different political orientation from the older members.

The Kaduna list, which has Umaru Dikko as its leader is not much different. There is much to be said about the experience of the people like Prof. Ango Abdullahi and Dr. Chris Abashiya, but surely younger nominees (and again, at least one woman) whose generation will have much longer to live with whatever constitutional arrangement is fashioned out, deserve a seat on the table. In this regard the list from Adamawa is the best I have seen so far. Some sort of election was held in Yola which produced Mallam AbdulKarim Albashir, Professor Musa Yakubu, Mr. Boss Mustapha, Alhaji Aminu Gurin and two others I do not know. But from the little I know of the four men above (again no woman!) I bet they are in tune not so much with Nigeria of the past, but that of the future we are dreaming to build.

It is strange that our politicians, even young and decent governors, who may well have a national political future, are uncomfortable with diversity, put loyalty above competence and their ambition ahead of the interest of their people. But you cannot have good governance without good people and you cannot build a future while glued to the past.