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[21 - 25 March]

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FEATURES

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Pages 24 & 25

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Gov. Chris Ngige

Violence rages in Onitsha

The reprisal attack on northerners resident in Onitsha, Anambra State, was yesterday intensified by hoodlums who stormed the Onitsha central prisons and set free all inmates as unconfirmed reports indicated that over 100

From Suleiman Mohammed,
Associate Editor (Lagos), with
agency report

people were killed.

The attack which started Monday followed the movement of dead bodies of vic-

tims of the Maiduguri riots to Onitsha for burial by their relations.

Though efforts to contact the Anambra state government officials proved abortive, the state's police commissioner, Mr. Moses Anegbode, confirmed that

the situation was alarming despite the curfew imposed on the city.

"We are doing our best to curtail the situation. People have taken refuge at police and military barracks and we will ensure that sanity is restored in the city," he said.

He could not however, confirm the exact number of deaths recorded so far.

But a BBC (English) service report monitored in Lagos revealed that several corpses littered the streets of Onitsha, while many were left with serious injuries and taken to the General Hospital for treatment.

Cont. on Pg. 2

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Yobe gov proposes life tenure

Protests marred yesterday's session of the zonal public hearings on the amendment of the constitution held in Maiduguri, Borno State.

Trouble began when Yobe state governor, Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim, pro-

From Isa Umar Gusau,
Correspondent (Maiduguri)

posed a life-long tenure for political office holders and justified his position as that of the government and people of the state.

Governor Ibrahim who

spoke after Danjuma Goje of Gombe State, was severally interrupted and booed by the crowd opposed to his submissions.

"On the basis of continuity, peace and stability, we in Yobe State believe there should be no restrictions whatsoever on the number of

tenure for any public office holder, be it the president or governor to contest elections.

"If you limit the number of tenure, then it is no longer

democratic," Governor Ibrahim said, but the crowd in unison began chanting "no, no, ba ma so; bam u

Cont. on Pg. 2

NIGER DELTA

Militants vow not to release hostages

The Niger Delta militants, holding nine foreign hostages, said yesterday that they have no plans to release their captives soon and described the efforts of the Federal government to secure their release as a waste of time.

The kidnapped oil workers, include three Americans, two Egyptians, two Thais, one Briton and one Filipino, were seized on Saturday by militants belonging to the

By Isa Sanusi,
with Agency Reports

Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

The militants, who are pressing for the release of two of the region's leaders from prison and greater control of oil revenues, accused the federal government of embarking on "time-wasting venture" in setting up a high-level negotiation team.

"We have no immediate intention of setting these guys free," a spokesperson for the group said in an e-mail to *The Associated Press*.

Government officials weren't immediately available for comment.

Recent attacks by the militant group on oil facilities has cut production by nearly 20 percent and sent prices soaring on international markets. Also on Tuesday, the Finance Minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said that the crisis in

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An unidentified woman distributing a document at the venue of the public hearing on the amendment of the constitution in Katsina... yesterday.

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IDB grants N54bn private sector loan

By Hamisu Muhammad,
Business Reporter

government officials to facilitate the disbursement of \$400 million (about N54 billion) loan to the private sector.

The visit is a follow up to

the discussions made last year between the President of the IDB, Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali and the Nigerian government as well as the private sector when the latter paid a visit to the country.

Nigeria joined the IDB as

the 55th member on Wednesday, June 15, 2005 during the bank's annual general meeting in Malaysia, after paying the sum of \$3.4 million to the bank as its initial membership subscription.

Cont. on Pg. 2

News

Public hearings *Cont. from pg. 1*

yarda ba" to the displeasure of the governor.

At this point, Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, visibly angry with the development, tried to restore order, accusing opponents of tenure extension of being sponsored to disrupt the public hearing.

Youths opposed to the zonal hearing in their hundreds gathered outside the venue displaying placards some of which read "No to 3rd term," "Obasanjo must go, public hearing is a shame, we no go gree" while chanting "Bamaso" and pointing accusing fingers at the governors and other top government functionaries who attended the hearing.

Earlier at the opening ceremony of the public hearing, the chairman of the zonal joint committee on the review of the constitution, Senator Dalhatu Tafida, had said the public hearing had no hidden agenda, noting that the members of the committee were men of integrity.

Tafida, apparently trying to douse tension at the venue of the hearing, said people can submit their memorandum without reading them.

Co-chairman of the committee, Hon. Abdul Ningi, assured that the committee is not working to please anyone but Nigerians.

"We are here for a national assignment. We know God is watching us we know we will one day meet God and account to him. We will work with the fear of God and with-

out favour. Tell us your opinions and you will get what you deserve," Ningi said.

Ningi also said that members of the National and State Assemblies will make the final decisions on the entire exercise, noting that governments can only have their say, while legislators will have their way.

The opening ceremony,

had in attendance governors of Borno, Gombe and Yobe states, while governors of Bauchi, Taraba and Adamawa states were absent.

While governors of Borno and Yobe states made submissions, Governor Danjuma Goje said the submission of his government was not ready.

IDB *Cont. from pg. 1*

Daily Trust learnt that the sectors to benefit from the IDB's loan include agriculture, agro allied manufacturing industries, aviation infrastructure, water resources, education, health, import and exports among others.

The Special Adviser to the President on Manufacturing and Private Sector, Alhaji Ahmed Abdulkadir, who received the delegation in Abuja, said with the membership of Nigeria, the bank will give the private sector more opportunity to access its funds.

He said contrary to what some people perceived that only Muslim nations can access the bank's loan, "the reality is that everybody has the privilege to access it, irrespective of his religion or religion."

"IDB is just like every other development bank. The only difference is that they practice the mode of financing in Islamic terms by giving loans without interest.

"Everybody can access the funds Muslims, Christians, or even non-believers,"

he said.

Abdulkadir said Nigeria's private sector is ready to access the funds and already discussions are on.

The IDB is run in accordance with the principles of *sharia*, the Islamic law. The bank was established in 1973 in Saudi Arabia and has its headquarters in Jeddah.

Minister of finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, said at a press conference in Abuja last year, that Nigeria had wanted to join the bank in 1999, but religious controversy derailed the decision, forcing the government to delay the processing of the country's bank membership.

Okonjo-Iweala said government decided to take the membership because "the IDB is a multilateral development financing institution which promotes economic and social development of member states."

She explained that the Islamic bank performs similar functions to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

Niger Delta *Cont. from pg. 1*

Niger Delta may affect the implementation of this year's budget.

The militants say they plan to widen their campaign across the vast region of swamps and creeks in South-south, where the militants said "people remain deeply impoverished despite the great oil riches being pumped from beneath them."

The militants blasted oil and gas pipelines and sabotaged a key oil loading terminal belonging to Shell. That and an earlier attack has forced the company to halt the flow of about 455,000 barrels a day which is about one-fifth of daily crude output.

Last month, the militants held four foreigners for 19 days before releasing them

unharmd.

President Olusegun Obasanjo on Tuesday allayed fears over the safety of the hostage. Obasanjo through his spokesperson, Mrs. Oluremi Oyo expressed the confidence that the committee headed by the Delta state Governor, James Ibori will secure the release of the hostages.

Violence *Cont. from pg. 1*

The report revealed that hoodlums stormed the Onitsha central prisons chanting war songs and forced the gate open while escaping prisoners were said to have also joined the attacks on northerners.

"We are living in perpetual fear of what will happen next as those of us who took refuge in military barracks are not safe enough from attacks," declared Mallam Umar Usman, who told the BBC that he lost three children.

Similarly, the hoodlums reportedly stormed the General Hospital, Onitsha and attacked victims who are receiving treatment and forced medical personnel to abandon the hospital.

According to the state

governor, Chris Ngige, in a broadcast, all efforts would be made to return peace to Onitsha which he described as the commercial nerve centre of the South-East.

He also charged security personnel to live up to expectations by ensuring that the lives of those living in military and police barracks are safe.

Meanwhile, the curfew imposed on Onitsha is expected to commence between 7a.m and 6a.m, while mobile policemen have been directed to arrest any person found within the stipulated period.

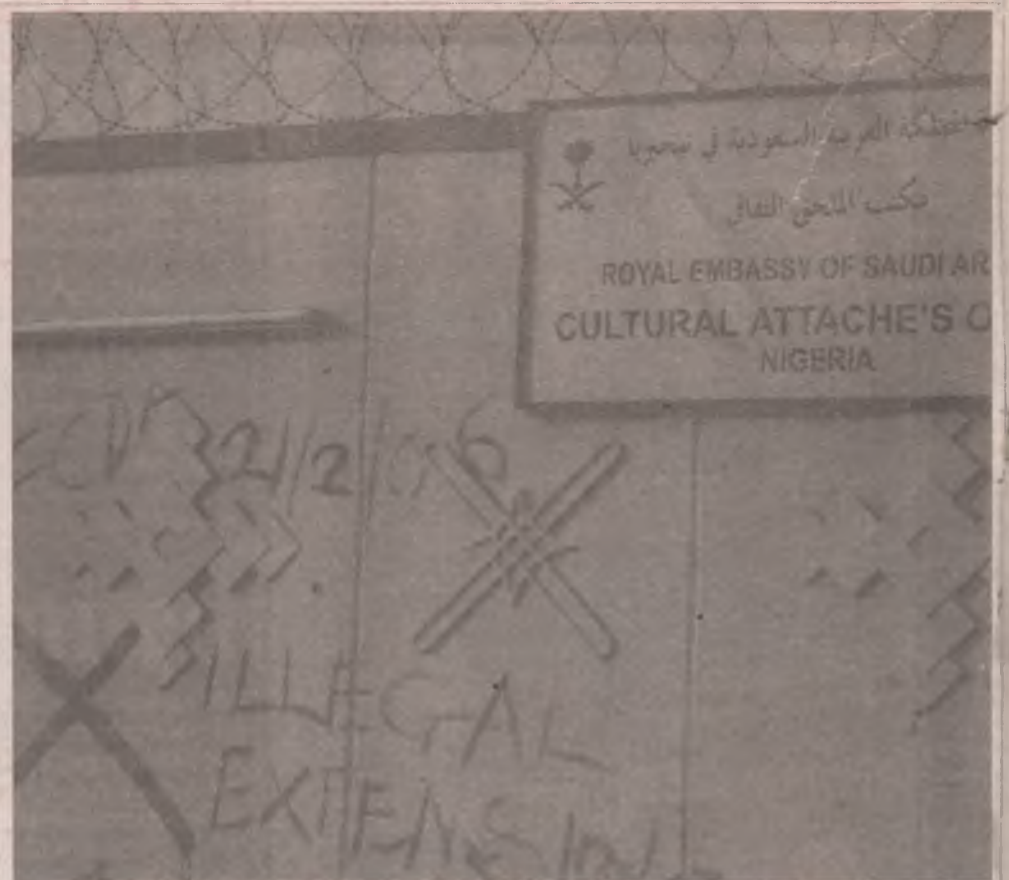
Revenge attacks against Muslims killed at least 20 people in the southeastern Nigerian city of Onitsha on Wednesday after days of anti-Christian violence killed

dozens in the north.

The slaughter raised the death toll from five days of religious riots fueled by political tensions in the country to at least 66 and possibly many more.

"There are thousands of boys with cutlasses and sticks on the rampage. I've counted at least 20 bodies here by the Onitsha bridge. They are Hausas. Some of them are burnt and some have their stomachs cut open," said Reuters photographer, George Esiri.

A doctor at the Onitsha General Hospital said more than 50 newly injured people had been brought in on Wednesday while the Red Cross said 325 people were injured and 2,000 displaced on Tuesday.



Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia marked for demolition at Asokoro, Abuja... yesterday.

Pic: Felix Onigbide.

FCT demolishes Saudi embassy, two mosques

Asokoro Central Mosque and part of the cultural attache's office of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, were yesterday demolished by officials of the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory.

The buildings situated on Julius Nyerere crescent, Asokoro and others were marked for demolition on Tuesday and pulled down 24 hours later.

As at the time of this report, one of the mosques along the street and six other residential buildings have already been demolished.

Armed policemen stood guard as officials of the FCT in three vehicles with registration numbers CT72 A09, CT 223 A09 and CT 184

By Shehu Abubakar, Reporter

A09, directed the pulling down of the structures.

A female occupant of one of the demolished buildings said though the house was marked for demolition the previous day, no notice of demolition was given to them.

She also complained that the 24 hours notice between the time the buildings were marked and when they were demolished was too short for anyone to find alternative accommodation.

She was however only able to remove some of her belongings before the building was pulled down.

A mosque in the area

was pulled down despite pleas by users of the structure to remove valuable building materials and other furnishings.

Though officials of the Saudi cultural attache's office housing the only central mosque in Asokoro could not be reached for comments, the *Azhan* of the mosque, Mallam Saleh Abdulkareem, said no notice of demolition was given to the central mosque management committee.

The Saudi cultural attache's office which has been marked for demolition by the FCT officials may be pulled down today.

Obasanjo signs appropriation bill

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday signed the 2006 Appropriation Bill into law.

Signing the bill, Obasanjo described it as the "speediest bill" to be handled by the National Assembly.

He said the gesture indicated the mutual cooperation between the executive and the legislature adding that the bill was also passed without the usual bickering and rancour that had characterized the passage of other bills.

The president described the bill as "truly the product of a healthy executive legislature interaction."

Speaking at the ceremony

By Joe Oroye


held at the council chambers of the presidential villa, the president noted that dialogue and consultations are the necessary ingredients for the growth and sustenance of democracy and democratic norms.

"We have reasonably carried each other along with a sense of mutuality and cordiality that is adequate to the realization of our common goal of serving the public good," he said.

President Obasanjo commended the hardwork, dedication and commitment of the National Assembly, for their

perseverance and cooperation with the executive to ensure the budget is passed without delay and also thanked the relevant committees of both chambers, and the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, for their sincere and patient moderation of views concerning the money bill.

He assured the legislature and Nigerians of his government's unflinching commitment to the efficient and timely implementation of the budget for the good of Nigerians and for the growth of the nation's economy.

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Governors, officials shun Katsina

Except the Kaduna state governor, Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, none of the seven governors in the North West, their executive members or any government official from the zone attended the zonal public hearing ceremony on the review of the 1999 constitution centre at the Katsina state.

Accompanied by his Speaker, Kaduna State House of Assembly, Hon. M. Dabo Farakwai and members of his entourage, Governor Makarfi

From Lawal Ibrahim, Katsina

sat lonely in a place specially designated for the seven governors from the region until he was called upon to make the first presentation by the session chairman, Senator Isereme Osonbur.

Governor Ahmed Makarfi who summarised their presentation from Kaduna state, principally called for the rotation of powers between the North and South, the six geo-political zones and similar

arrangements entrenched within the senatorial zones amongst states for governorship positions.

Said he, "our submission is principally the rotation of power between the north and south and within that context it can rotate within the six geo-political zones in such a way and manner that every zone can be constitutional assured access to political power and in the same direction, the governorship in states may follow such by following senatorial zones

even in transitional manner."

These, according to the governor, will assuage various interests and make them feel they are stakeholders in what is happening such that it will be immaterial where a particular political office holder comes from because one is assured of his time.

The governor also called for the devolution of power from the states and local government to be followed with the appropriate revenue sharing formula and suggested the new revenue sharing formula be put on hold until after the amendment of the constitution and also called for a separation between the Accountant General of the Federation and the Accountant General for the Federal Government.

Alhaji Makarfi further recommended adequate check and balances between the three arms of government and the power to both states and national legislatures to pass a vote of no confidence against any serving commissioner or minister to debar the president or any governor from providing cover for any erring member of the executive council.

About 50 per cent of the speakers from Kaduna state

spoke against the extension of a four year tenure as enshrined in the 1999 constitution, while others suggested it be put to a referendum for the people to choose how they want to be govern, while only Dr. Bello Haliru, national vice chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party who came from Kebbi state before the panel called for a break to entertain more submissions from other states.

Kabir Mato and Ibrahim Abdullahi from the Muslim Association, Kaduna, were a few of the presenters who received a standing ovation from the crowd in the hall as a result of their unanimous rejection of the third term, the insufficiency of time for the public hearing and the rejection of the exercise as well as the autonomy in the appointment of members of the electoral commissions in states and the federal government.

Among other issues while Ibrahim Abdullahi questioned the legitimacy of the National Assembly to review the 1999 constitution against the wishes and aspirations of Nigerians.

Others issues that featured in the presentations are the removal of immunity clause for executive govern-

ments, gender equality for women, reforms of our electoral laws and a place for the traditional institutions.

Earlier, the chairman of the committee Senator Isereme Osonbur read out guidelines for the hearing where he said the committee will not accept oral presentations but a highlight of a memorandum submitted to the committee evidence of repetition and orderliness during the sessions.

He said his committee came to Katsina with an open mind to complete the task of amending the constitution which must involve all strata of the society and said all the views collated and memorandum would be submitted to the main committee for deliberations and onward submission to the two Houses for consideration.

Members of the committee include Senator Tunde Ogbeha (Kogi), Senator Bode Olowokunoku, (Kogi), Senator T. U. Wada (Gombe) and Senator Isa Maina from FCT.

Others are Hon. Titilayo (Ekiti), Hon. Sidi Ali Adamu (FCT), Hon. Abiodun Alade (Ogun) and Hon. Osinaka Obiosun (Rivers) as well as Hon. Tenguseba from (Benue).

Oshogbo: Uproar as group opposes 3rd term

There was pandemonium yesterday at the Osun State House of Assembly, Oshogbo, venue of the South West public hearing of the constitutional review and amendment of the 1999 constitution as a human rights group opposed the endorsement of a third term agenda by all the five Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) southwest governors.

With the exception of Lagos state government who vehemently opposed three terms of four years for the president and the state governors, all the five PDP governor of the zone rubber stamped a tenure extension of a three term tenure of four years.

Infuriated by the way and manner the PDP governors approval the extension for President Olusegun Obasanjo and state governors terms in office, a human rights activist, Bamidele Aturu, while presenting his position paper, accused the governors of being intimidated to support the third term agenda by the federal government.

However, pandemonium was let loose as Aturu stated, "I sympathize with the five southwest governors who are PDP card carriers hounded by the economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to endorse third term agenda.

"What they are doing here is a charade. They are just deceiving the people and deceiving themselves. The point I wanted to make was to say the truth and that is why I will never apologise. I said that the governors have been hounded by the EFCC. That is why they are supporting the third term. If they are not happy about it, let them go to court."

At this point, the whole arena was charged as the governors openly demanded for apology saying that he lacks respect which he declined to tender.

Defying the governors he was stopped by the chairman of the Southwest zone of the senate committee on the public hearing for further contribution which he instantly described as a

From Samson Ojo, in Oshogbo

violation of his right insisting that he has to spend the time allocated to him. Amidst this confusion, the Senate Deputy Chairman and chairman of the Joint Committee of Public hearing, Senator Ibrahim Mantu arrived the venue apparently surprised he was speechless.

After recovering from the



President Olusegun Obasanjo initial shock, Senator Mantu described the scenario as a good development, stressing that the beauty of democracy is that everybody was allowed to talk.

His words, "I am here at

...Mass turnout in Abakaliki

Government officials, traditional rulers, civil society groups and opinion leaders, yesterday in Abakaliki, turned out in enmasse for the South-East zonal public hearing on the constitutional review.

Enthusiastic people from the five states in the zone arrived the Women Development Centre, venue of the event with banners and placards conveying their core interests on the issue.

Some of the placards that adorned the city read in part, "Support the constitutional amendments"; "participate in the debate";

"Do not sit on the fence"; "create another state for the Igbo"

Others include, "rotational presidency" and "Thank you Gov Sam Egwu and President Olusegun Obasanjo".

Sen. Jonathan Zwingina,

the right time that I saw democracy in action. I am extremely happy to witness what I witnessed. This public hearing is only to listen to all the parties. We have no position. I do not see why this process must generate tension. However, everybody must be allowed to talk but the majority will carry the vote"

Earlier in their presentations, the five Southwest PDP governors of Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, Osun and Ekiti states, submitted their subjects have sent them to endorse three terms of four years tenure for the president and state governors.

However, opposing the position of the five Southwest PDP governors, the Speakers of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Honourable Adeyemi Kuforiji, maintained that Lagosians are against the third term for the president and governors.

According to him, "while we are supporting constitutional amendment, we maintain that there should be no third term for the executive and that the amendment should be effective after 2007 general elections.

By Beatrice Onuchukwu with Agency Reports

the zonal chairman of the Joint National Assembly Committee on the review of the 1999 constitution for the South-East, told the people that the committee will collate all the views before any change can be made.

He said that citizens were free to express themselves on any issue concerning the constitution, and that those who were not able to do so in Abakaliki could do so through their representatives in the National Assembly.

He announced the order of presentation to include the host Ebonyi state, speaking first, to be followed by Enugu, Imo, Abia and Anambra in that order.

Ohaneze, NGOs and other civil society organisations, government agencies and individuals would also be allowed space, he added.



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Signed:

Mallam Yahaya Ozi Sadiq
Chief Information Officer
For: Chief Medical Director

News

PUBLIC HEARING

Three govs absent at North-central hearing

Three governors of the six North-central states, yesterday stayed away from the two-day public hearings on constitution review holding at the Ibrahim

Abacha Youth Nasarawa state.

They are Governors Joshua Dariye (Plateau), Abdulkadir Kure (Niger) and George Akume (Benue).

Also, Speakers of five of the six states in the zone were missing at the event organised by the National Assembly Joint Committee on the Review of the 1999 constitution.

Only the host governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu, Dr. Bukola Saraki of Kwara state and Deputy Governor of Niger

By Habeeb I Pindiga, in Lafia

state, Dr. Shem Nuhu, attended the opening ceremony of the event.

Adamu, arrived the venue at about 11.30 am, two hours behind schedule accompanied by the Nasarawa state House of Assembly Speaker and other government officials.

Daily Trust learnt that the Speakers of Plateau, Niger, Kogi, Kwara and Benue states were also not at the event.

Declaring the hearing open, Gov. Adamu dismissed the alleged third term agenda as speculations created by dissident politicians and fuelled by the media. He, did not, however, say categorically

whether he would support the idea or not.

"The third term agenda was sold by dissidents and former members of the PDP, bought by the press and sustained by those who choose to hitch their political relevance on this lonely wagon. When the time comes, the president will prove that the opponents of the third term agenda have spent their time and energy battling smoke without fire," the governor said.

Adamu said the options on tenure should "be subjected to national discussion so that the majority view be adopted."

In a brief impromptu remark, Saraki canvassed that more attention be paid to agriculture as route to self sustainability

and also called on Nigerians not to shy away from discussing the tenure of public officers.

Adamu also presented what he called, the position of Nasarawa state regarding constitution amendments where he urged roles for traditional rulers, recognition of zones in the constitution, handing over local government matters to states, increased derivation formula and provision of state legislative list in the constitution.

The Ibrahim Abacha Youth Centre was filled largely with Lafia residents.

By the time the opening ceremony began, 21 groups and individuals were registered to present memoranda.

They include the Industrial Court, the Judiciary, Review of the Constitution Forum,

North-central Civil Society Coalition, National Youth Council of Nigeria, Grassroots Women Empowerment, Engr. Abdulahi, Hon. Solomon Omale, Gender and Constitution Reform in Nigeria, Egbara Youth Congress, NULGE, Investment and Security Tribunal and National Grass Roots Association.

Others were Political and Administration Reform in FCT, Prof. Ayo Dunmoye, National Judicial Council, Association of National Accountants of Nigeria, Magistrates Association of Nigeria, Nasarawa state ANPP, Academic Staff Union of

Universities (ASUU) and Nationwide Coalition for Constitutional Amendment.

Students storm venue in PH

From Mohammed Ajah, Correspondent Port Harcourt

Hundreds of thousands of students and youths from the Niger-Delta region who came in over ten buses to the South-South public hearings on the 1999 constitutional amendment, made caricature of supporters of the third term or any extension of time beyond 2007 for the incumbent public office holders.

The youths and students who carried placards in support of the constitutional review, however felt to betrayed when the President of the National Association of Nigerian Student (NANS), who spoke through the National Vice President (External Affairs), Mr. Ogolo Victor and some other groups, spoke in support of tenure extension for the President and the governors.

At different times when the presenters made their contributions, the students booed to them even as some who had the courage to speak from outside said Nigerians needed a change and a visionary president and state leaders come 2007.

The NANS President, Kenneth Orkuma Hembe, in his presentation, proposed three tenures of four years each for elected governors and the president.

Said he, "that tenureship be addressed 135(1) and 180(1)(d) so that it reflects the tenure desired of the Nigerian people here, the NANS proposes a three term of four years for elected governors and the president of Nigeria."

He added that states of origin should be jettisoned for states of residence in determining social, economic or other benefits and rights.

Other proposals of NAN include stiff consequences for breach of the constitution be included in the amended constitution while the ideals of the new constitution be part of the curriculum from primary school level to higher institution.

Gov Adamu stops Niger State position paper

A brief pandemonium ensued at the opening of the public hearing on the constitution review for the North-central zone yesterday in Lafia, Nasarawa state, when Governor Abdullahi Adamu ordered the stopping of the memorandum of Niger state.

The Niger State in the memorandum opposed constitution review, rejected third term agenda and that if the constitution is amended, the present set of public officers must not be the first beneficiaries.

Speaking when he read a part of the paper, he said that Niger state believes the constitution review was rather hasty, suspicious and prone to manipulation and should therefore be "put in abeyance."

At this point Adamu, sitting at the high table signaled security men to stop Garba.

The microphone was wrenched from Garba's hand and handed over to the governor.

An apparently angry Adamu said Garba had no right to present the Niger state's position when the deputy governor, Dr. Shem Nuhu, was around. This he explained, was a breach of protocol.

"A protocol breach has been identified. The deputy governor of Niger state is around and to the best of our knowledge, if the governor is not here, the deputy governor should speak on his behalf," he added.

Adamu said the opening ceremony was not time for presentation of position papers as this was specifically scheduled for the plenary session.

But the governor had few minutes earlier during his opening address, presented the position of Nasarawa state.

The Niger State paper that Garba was interrupted from presenting read in part: "With less than 10 months to the forthcoming elections, it is worrisome to well meaning Nigerians to appreciate and indeed understand the motives of both the executive and the legislature in wishing to carry out this exercise in a hurry, instead of leaving it to the incoming government.

There is just no time to carryout a thorough exercise if the laid down procedure of reviewing the constitution

section by section and with the support and concurrence of the 36 state legislative houses is to be achieved.

"In view of this, Niger state is of the view that rather than pursue a kangaroo public hearing arranged at a zonal level, instead of a more purposeful one at the state level being the federating units constitutently recognized, the exercise is better left in abeyance.

The incoming administration in May, 2007 would be in a better position to carryout a more reasoned and indeed an unbiased exercise that will likely have the full support of the generality of the populace"

It added, however, that since the federal government appeared bent on the exercise, "Niger state is not in support of wholesome amendments and inclusion of new provisions that have not been subjected to wider consultations at the states and local government levels...Niger state supports only piecemeal approach to the proposed amendment to be limited to only those issues or areas which if amended, will further foster unity, progress and stability in the country."

The position paper also suggested that if the constitution is amended despite the opposition, the new provisions must not take effect till after this administration leaves in 2007.

Niger State said also that the four-year renewable term should be maintained because continuity of policies must not be hinged on an individual.

The state warned that any room for third term would lead to life presidency and breed chaos in the country.

It rejected state police, creation of additional local governments, ban on ex-military rulers, recognition of zones in the constitution and electronic voting for 2007 polls. Niger state canvassed the removal of immunity in criminal matters, roles for traditional rulers retention of states as federating units and powers to states over local governments. The Niger position was signed by ex-governor of the state, Dr. Musa Inuwa, Alhaji Abdullahi Ma'aji, Alhaji Adamu Kilishi, retired General Idris Garba, Alhaji A. B. Umar, Alhaji Salawu Agaie, Alhaji Jibrin Bala los, Alhaji A. Bosso and Mr. David Umaru.



Governor Mohammed Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna State, the only Governor at the opening session of the sitting yesterday in Katsina

Low turnout reeorded in Katsina

The zonal public hearing on the Review of the 1999 Constitution in Katsina was marked by low turnout.

Kaduna state governor, Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi, who came with an entourage of about 20 people left after his presentation.

Katsina state governor, Alhaji Musa 'Yar'adua, the host governor, was absent from the morning session as well as members of his state executive council.

The Katsina state House of Assembly Speaker, Kabir Ahmed Kofa, who came three hours into the session also left before the completion of the morning session.

Traditional rulers and civil servants who were given special privileges by the committee to attend and present memorandum were conspicuously absent at the sitting, giving credence to speculations that they are against the review of the constitution.

Most of the seats allocated to chairmen of local governments were empty while the presence of security personnel in and outside the hall was heavy and intimidating.

As at the time of filing this report, Katsina state governor was being expected to present the state's position on the constitution review.

There were however some dissenting voices at the venue despite the security.

From Musa Umar Kazaure, in Katsina

The Katsina Amalgamated Youth Forum distributed pamphlets denouncing constitutional changes in the 1999 constitution as well as condemning Governor Musa 'Yar'adua for allowing the hearings to hold in Katsina.

Although the issue of third

term did not dominate the morning session, some Speakers however referred to it as unconstitutional, immoral and an abuse of democracy.

More presentation are expected today when the committee enters its second day of deliberations.

Rivers people turn out en masse

There was a massive turnout at the South-South zonal public hearings on constitutional amendment in Port Harcourt yesterday.

Women groups, student bodies, youth organizations and ethnic peoples of the six states of the zone thronged the Alfred Diete Spiff Civic Centre, venue of the hearing four hours before its commencement.

Senator. A. D. Sodangi, chairman of the National Assembly Committee on the Constitutional Review in the zone, at the opening, said the exercise became imperative following misgivings that trailed the present constitution.

Sodangi explained that it was also necessary if the nation must remain peaceful and coherent to check the problems threatening her.

Taraba police arrest anti third term campaigner

Police in Taraba State have arrested a former member of the national political reform conference, Mr Tanko Bobbo Andami, as he was making preparations to go to Maiduguri to attend the public hearing on constitutional amendment. Mr Andoni is a well-known anti-Third Term campaigner.

His family in Jalingo, the state capital, told Daily Trust that he was arrested on Tuesday as he was trying to leave for Maiduguri,

From Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar in Yola

Borno State capital, to present his paper at the public hearing on constitutional amendment.

They said since his arrest, he was neither taken to court nor was he explained the reason for the arrest.

They said that although they were allowed to take food to him, they too were not told the reasons for his arrest.

The family said that they suspected that he was arrested to prevent him from going to the public hearing to present his anti-Third Term position.

They said he was arrested shortly after he came back from Abuja where he attended a meeting of the representatives of the North-east zone at the defunct political reform conference, where they expressed their opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Former Bayelsa Speaker docked

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) yesterday arraigned the impeached Speaker of the Bayelsa State House of Assembly, Boyelayefa Bedekeme, before a federal high court sitting in Abuja, for allegedly sponsoring acts of Terrorism of three states in the Niger Delta.

Boyelayefa who was brought to court at about 1: 20 pm yesterday, was not represented by any lawyer.

Attacks on clerics: Robber dies in action

By Rakiya A. Muhammad
Correspondent, in Jos

One armed robbery suspect was shot dead when a gang of 11 hoodlums attacked the Reverend Sisters quarters at Rock Haven area in Jos.

Daily Trust learnt that the armed robbers went to the quarters at about 2.00 am, attacked the police constables on duty and tied them up.

However, another policeman, a Corporal had positioned himself somewhere else within the area unknown to the men of the underworld.

The suspected armed robbers were said to have proceeded to break the main gate to the quarters when the police corporal shot at them leaving one of them dead.

Two others escaped with minor wounds while the rest also took to their heels. Police public relations officer, Plateau State command Isah Adejoh, a deputy superintendent of police, confirmed the incident.

He said tools recovered from the scene included dagger, diggers, cutlasses, a ladder and a hammer. He said investigation is going on.

By Ruby Rabi, Senior Reporter

Boyelayefa Bedekeme who is being tried on a one count charge, was alleged to have promoted and sponsored terrorism

in the Niger Delta.

The accused pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The charge sheet made available to Daily Trust alleged that he provided various sums of money to

“dangerously armed” terrorists who are said to be at large for the purpose of facilitating terrorism in the region.

The Director of Public Prosecution in the Federal

Ministry of Justice, Mr Salihu Aliyu, urged that the accused be remanded in the custody of the State Security Services. (SSS) Aliyu told the court that investigations into the

matter has not yet been completed.

Justice Babs Kuewumi obliged the request of the prosecution and adjourned the case to April 13, for hearing.

Police arrest man for dumping own baby in canal

The police in Lagos have arrested the father of a one month old baby for allegedly dumping his child inside a canal.

Jacob Enelu, the suspect, now being held at Ajegunle police station,

From Bola Ojuola
Correspondent, Lagos

was said to have taken the child from the mother on Monday on the pretext of taking him for medical attention for an undisclosed ailment.

Daily Trust learnt that

the suspect walked to the canal close to their home of Plot 48, Nosamu street, Ajegunle, and allegedly dumped the child there.

Jacob returned home but said nothing until the baby was discovered by a female passerby who

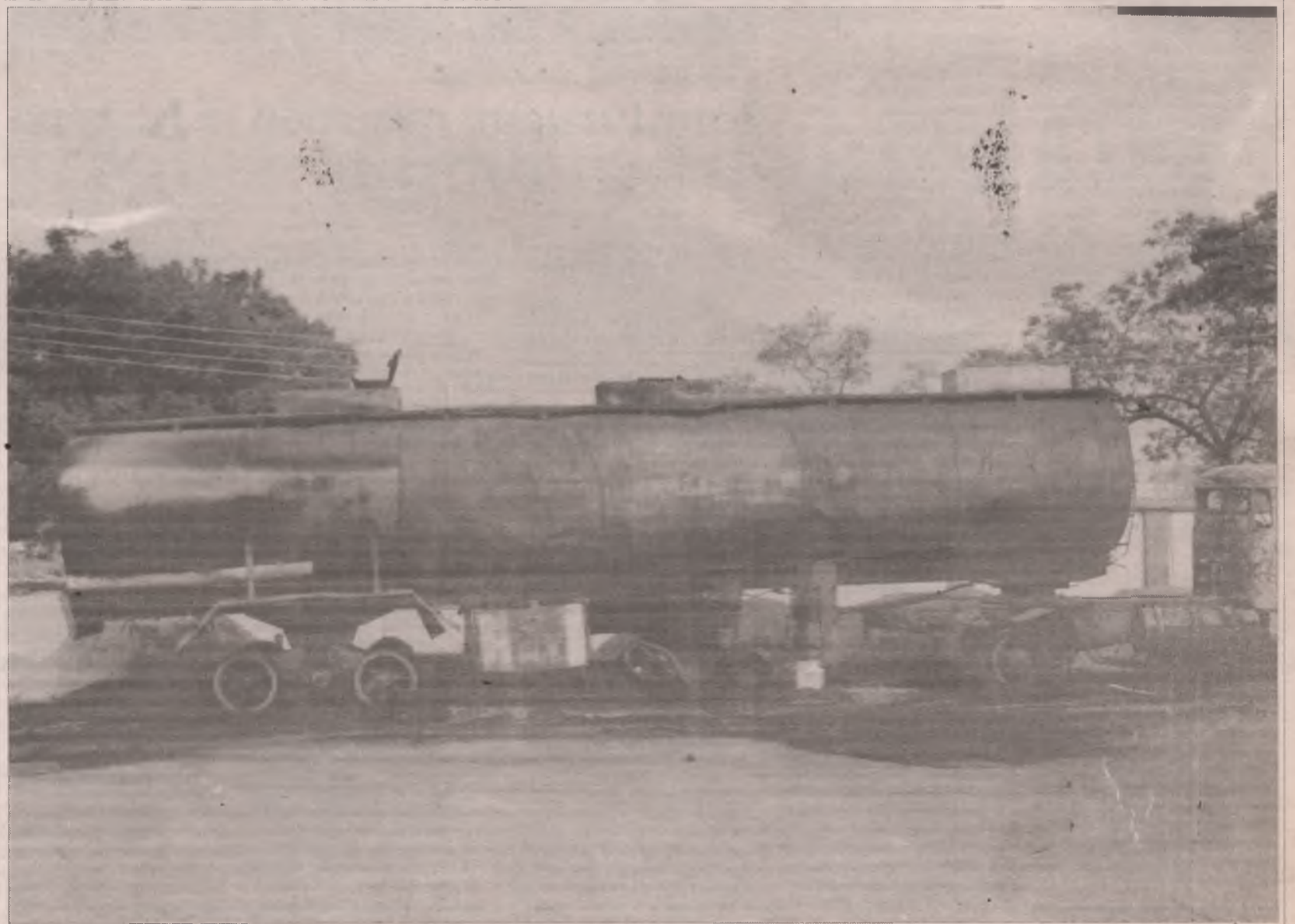
raised alarm.

The baby was taken to Ajegunle police station by the sympathisers while the police later moved him to the Juvenile welfare Centre.

The suspect was ar-

rested by the police as efforts continued to save the life of the baby following his ordeal in the canal.

Also in Festac area same day, three persons were arrested for allegedly killing two people over a hard drug deal.



A truck allegedly loaded with petroleum products gutted by fire along Zuba-Kwali road...recently.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Robbers attack Bwari, rob bank

Armed robbers numbering about 10, Monday attacked and robbed the Inland Bank, Bwari branch, carting away large sums of money.

The robbers took strategic positions around the bank from where they continued to open fire on the bank and other adjoining buildings.

Briefing this reporter in his house, Bwari Area Council chairman, Alhaji Isa Dara Bwari, said the staccato of gun shots which started at about 1.00am, was what woke up the entire town.

"At first, I thought it was the transformers in the town that were blowing up because the sound was terrifying, I phoned the station manager of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) who told me there was nothing wrong with his transformers. When the blast continued, I phoned the DPO who told me there was a robbery going on. At first, he said he didn't know where exactly but that he was making contacts.

"Few minutes later, he



Alhaji Isa Dara Bwari

By Shehu Abubakar, Reporter

called me back and said it was at the Inland Bank near the headquarters of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and the council's secretariat.

The sound of gunfire that went on for over two hours suggested they were using sophisticated guns," he said.

When this reporter visited the bank, it was noticed that the front was extensively damaged by gun shots while other adjoining buildings including the eastern wing of JAMB building also suffered damages.

A securityman working with JAMB office said judging from the cracking sound of the gun fire, he suspected that a sub-machine gun (SMG), AK47, G3 rifles and other automatic guns were used by the robbers.

He said when the robbers came, they first opened fire on the bank from a distance.

He said policemen and other private securitymen guarding the bank fled.

The JAMB security man who pleaded anonymity, said suddenly, they heard a very loud noise presumably, coming from the forceful breaking of either the main gate or the door leading to the banking hall.

He said when the robbers gained entrance into the bank, "we saw them come out and conferred with other members of their gang waiting outside. After a while, they turned their guns on the bank's transformer and security lights of nearby buildings and suddenly darkness enveloped the area. They went back to

the bank. We were helplessly watching them from where we took cover."

This reporter gathered that when the robbers gained entry into the strong room, they were not able to access the safes because they were linked to electrical devices that shock. That might have informed their decision to open fire on the transformer thereby putting the entire area into darkness.

When this reporter visited the banking hall, re-construction work was going on. The doors to the strong room and the rear door of the bank were destroyed by the robbers.

The council chairman, who was one of the early callers at the bank shortly after the robbers left, said, "we were there before the manager arrived around 7.30am. He didn't even know that his bank had been robbed until he got there. Though he heard the sound of the guns, he didn't know it was his bank that was being attacked.

"He took us round the bank. I was there with the DPO and other security chiefs. We discovered that the robbers used a welding machine to cut the door to the strong room. They also used welding machine and guns to destroy most of the cabinets in the bank and were also able to force the safe open and cart away money but I can't tell you how much," he said.

The council boss also said that while the robbery was going on, the divisional police officer (DPO), Mr. Rabi'u Sabi'u, mobilized his men and laid ambush for the armed robbers. "Shortly, the armed robbers drove out in

their vehicles the police gave them a hot chase. They chased them up to Dumez area where they had an exchange of fire.

"The police succeeded in recovering one of the vehicles they used in the operation which had a gun and a GSM handset they abandoned inside. The police showed me the vehicle with the gun and the handset. To the best of my knowledge, no arrest has been made yet," he said.

However, this reporter gathered from a reliable source at the FCT police command that about a million naira was carted from the bank during the robbery. A lady was also said to have been ar-

rested two days after the bank was robbed.

According to the source, the lady rang the GSM line abandoned by the robbers at the scene of the robbery and the police told her that the person she was calling had an accident and was admitted in a hospital.

The lady was said to have shown concern over the news and gave her address to the person who volunteered to take her to the hospital.

The source narrated that when detectives in an unmarked vehicle traced the unsuspecting lady to the address she gave, she joined the vehicle and was said to have volunteered a lot of informa-

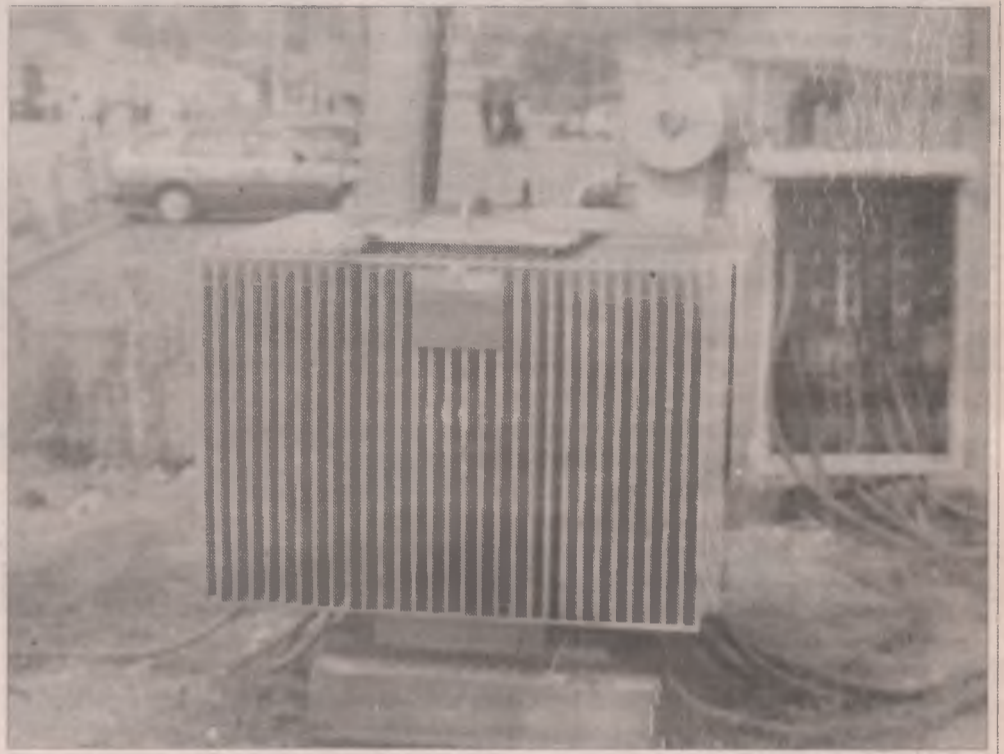
tion to the detectives who posed as friends to the suspect thought to be her lover.

The lady was said to have started sensing trouble when the vehicle drove straight to the FCT police command rather than to a hospital.

Under interrogation, the lady was said to have given the police the Lagos address of the suspect and some of his friends.

Detectives were dispatched to Lagos where they succeeded in arresting the suspects who are currently helping the police in their investigations.

Normal banking service has since resumed at the bank but the bank officials have declined comments.



The PHCN transformer vandalised with gunshots by the suspected armed robbers in Bwari ...recently. Pix: She Abubakar

EFCC arraigns student for duping

American of \$20,700

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), in Lagos on Monday, charged a student to court for fraudulently obtaining over \$20,700 from an American lady.

The suspect, Yekini Labaika (a.k.a Soyemi Anthony), was arraigned before Justice Joseph Olubunmi Oyewole of ikoyi High Court on an eight count charge of conspiracy, obtaining money and goods under false pretences and impersonation.

According to the EFCC, the offence was committed between June and October 2005, when the accused person introduced himself to the victim as an American national, Mr. William Phillips, who works with an oil company in Nigeria.

The court was informed that Miss Thumbeline Hinshaw, a devote Muslim and nurse became ac-

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

quainted with the suspect on a Muslim single website while chatting on the internet.

It was alleged that the first \$5,000 was sent down to the suspect who said he would renovate a mosque in Nigeria.

Subsequently, Miss Hinshaw on being promised marriage by the suspect, sent more money and goods to the suspect, totalling \$20,700.

On the strength of these arrangement, Miss Hinshaw came down to Lagos only to be abandoned.

Having been stranded at the airport, she met Mr. Samaila Dikko from NEXIM Bank, Abuja, who was on the same flight from Amsterdam and assisted her to arrange for her accommodation at the Eko Hotel from where she called the suspect all to no

avail.

She later relocated to the Lagos Sheraton the next day from where she phoned the suspect who then responded and came to meet her at the Lagos Sheraton Hotel and Towers.

It was at this point that the suspect was arrested and

handed over to the EFCC.

When the charge was read out to the accused person who claimed to be a Muslim student from Mowe town, Ogun state, he pleaded not guilty.

Further hearing has been fixed for 4th April this year.

Suspected ritualists kill 12-year-old boy

The 12-year-old son of the chairman of Bauchi State Sharia Commission, Mubarak Ahmed, has been killed by suspected ritualists.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), learnt that Mubarak, who was in primary six, was abducted from his father's house on Sunday by the suspected ritualists.

Mubarak's corpse was later dumped outside his father's compound with vital parts of his body, including his eyes, removed.

NAN learnt that the suspected ritualists also sliced off Mubarak's soles, while some part of his ankles was also removed.

The boy's father, Alhaji Mukhtar Ahmed, confirmed the incident, saying Mubarak has already been buried according to Islamic rites.

He said, he has reported the incident to the police.

"The police have assured me of a thorough investigation into the matter," Ahmed said.

POLICE COMMISSIONERS TELEPHONE NUMBERS

1. Abia State	088-222868, 088-220073
2. Adamawa State	075-674012, 624012
3. Akwa Ibom State	085-200008, 201711
4. Anambra State	048-550022
5. Bauchi State	077-6542621
6. Bayelsa State	089-490060, 490132
7. Benue State	044-532962, 044-553015
8. Borno State	076-232915, 232043 ≤
9. Cross River State	087-231101, 230663
0. Delta State	956-281485, 280441≤
11. Ebonyi State	043-25134, 20325
12. Edo State	052-253798, 253520
13. Ekiti State	030-250000, 250709
14. Enugu State	042-250335, 042-256257
15. Gombe State	072-223135, 221158
16. Imo State	083-233343, 083-2307113
17. Jigawa State	064-721138, 721128
18. Kaduna State	062-249762, 062-245653
19. Ka no State	064-645862, 646469
20. Katsina State	065-431703, 430914
21. Kebbi State	068-321585, 320254
22. Kog i State	058-220999, 250709
23. Kwara State	031-221612
24. Lagos State	01-4960200, 4962157
25. Nasarawa State	047-221349
26. Niger State	066-221496, 066-221903
27. Ogun State	039-241500, 243117
28. Ondo State	034-240109
29. Osun State	035-243363, 240330
30. Oyo State	02-2412824, 2412322
31. Plateau State	073-457969, 073-451968
32. Rivers State	084-23347, 236471
33. Sokoto State	060-232896, 2335375 080-34228561
34. Ta raba State	079-222550, 223124
35. Yobe State	076-522141, 522145
36. Zamfara State	063-202603
37. FCT Abuja	09-2341800

CRIME & PUNISHMENT



Right to left, Attorney General and Kano state commissioner of Justice, Barrister Aliyu Umar, discussing with Barrister A. B. Mahmud (SAN) at the centre during the opening ceremony of the 2005/2006 Legal Year at the Kano State High Court of Justice.

Alamiyeseigha: Tribunal adjourns indefinitely

The code of conduct tribunal has adjourned sitting indefinitely in the trial of former governor of Bayelsa state, Chief D.S.P Alamiyeseigha. The chairman, Justice Muhammad Bashir Sambo, said at the resumed sitting of the tribunal in Kaduna, yesterday, that the tribunal took into consideration the ill-health of the accused as reported by the prosecution counsel, O. T. Olatigbe. Chief Alamiyeseigha was arraigned on an 18-count charge of operating foreign accounts, abuse of office and conflict of interest.

Meanwhile, counsel to Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu, Livy Uzoukwu (SAN), has asked for an adjournment to enable him study and respond to the written address submitted by the prosecution.

The case against Governor Kalu's operation of a foreign account was heard by the tribunal May 2005.

Another case heard at the tribunal was that of the chairman, Owerri Municipal Council, Vincent Ehirim and a supervisory councillor, Mr Cyprian Njoku.

The two are being prosecuted by the Bureau for abuse of office.

The case, which was first

By Ruby Rabi, Senior Reporter mentioned in December 2004, has not gone beyond the preliminaries.

Counsel to the accused,

Valentine Ehirim, had at the last sitting, promised to produce a notice of stay of execution of the case.

He had appealed to the court of appeal over the

tribunal's ruling. His argument was that Owerri Municipal Council does not exist among the local governments listed in the 1999 constitution.

NSCDC steps up fight against vandals

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), has stepped up its fight against the vandalism of public utilities with the commissioning of 24 motorcycles and a pick up van in Kaduna.

Commandant General of the NSCDC, Dr. Ade Abolurin, said in Kaduna yesterday that having been empowered by the federal government to protect government properties against vandalism, the corps has declared war against vandals.

The commissioning of the motorcycles, he said, is the second phase of the war which started with the launching of the anti-vandalism squad.

"Following the launching of the anti vandalism squad trained by the Nigerian Army, 1 Division, 29 Battalion, last November, we are now in the second phase with

From Abdulraheem Aodu, Correspondent Kaduna the commissioning of these vehicles.

We purchased 1000 motorcycles for the country and we would buy more because we want to equip our people to be able to stop

vandalisation and chase out vandals from all nooks and crannies of the country," he said.

Dr Abolurin said the corps has achieved a lot since he assumed office six months ago, adding that apart from preventing vandalism, the

corps engages in search and rescue services during emergencies, crowd control, election monitoring and grassroot security.

"Our efforts are yielding some positive results.

A drug trafficker with 60 bags of marijuana was ar-

rested in 2005 at Kurmin Mashi; money doublers in Kaduna south and a quack doctor in Zaria were also arrested.

They have all been handed over to security agencies for prosecution," he said.

N2.3 million fraud: Court grants chief magistrate bail

An Abuja high court yesterday granted bail to former chief magistrate, Bala Haruna, standing trial for alleged criminal breach of trust and misappropriation of N2.3 million inheritance belonging to some widows.

However, Haruna must fulfill certain conditions before he can be released on bail.

These include a N2million bail bond by two sureties with N1 million each.

Justice Ugochukwu Ogakwu, in his ruling on the bail application, also said that one of the sureties must have landed property within the jurisdiction of the court while the other surety must be a civil servant not below level

14. Haruna was arraigned on February 13, and had been detained in police custody for over three weeks.

When he was arraigned on February 13, the former chief magistrate pleaded not guilty to the three count charge of misappropriating over N2.3million belonging to the family of his late friend, Alhaji Sani Tela Yabo.

At Tuesday's proceedings, the prosecuting counsel from the office of the Attorney General of the Federation told the court that he was not opposed to the bail application of the accused since the offence is bailable.

Consequently, Justice Ogakwu granted bail to the Chief Magistrate and fixed further hearing for February 23.

Apo six: Court orders prosecution to produce witness report

An Abuja high court has ordered the prosecution in the Apo Six killing saga to produce the authentic statement of witness made before the Okiro panel of inquiry.

Justice Ishaq Bello directed yesterday that the original statement made by the prosecution witness, Mr Nimram Nampron, be tendered in court at the next hearing. The statement in question was made by Mr Nampron when he appeared before the Okiro panel which it investigated the killing of the Apo six.

The judge gave the order following a remark by the prosecution, Mamman Usman (SAN), that he was denied the original statement made by the witness during the panel.

The prosecution told the court that only a photocopy of the statement was given to him by the police.

Defense counsel, Ricky Tarfa (SAN) however objected to the submission of the prosecution, stating that proceedings can not continue without the statement

By Benjamin Auta, Reporter made available to the court.

The counsel said that it is tantamount to a delay of justice if the prosecution cannot get the needed materials for cross examination by the defense."

He called on the court, in the alternative, to discharge and acquit the accused persons.

While ruling on the matter, justice Bello said the court has received so many promises from the prosecution to produce the statement of the witness since the commencement of hearing without fulfilling it.

He said that there would be danger in proceeding with the case without providing the statement of the witness as requested by the defence for the purpose of cross examination as it is the constitutional right of the accused persons.

He therefore ordered the prosecution to make use of yesterday to obtain the original statement for presentation to the court today. Hearing however continues today.

Opinion

Education in Shekarau's Kano

Government College, Kano; Government Girls' Arabic Secondary School, Kawaji; Government Girls' Day Secondary School, Kawaji; Government Boys' Secondary School, Kawaji; Government Secondary School, Na'hwawa; Rumfa College, Kano; GGC, Dala; Government Secondary School, Dakata; Government Secondary School, Tarauni; GSS, Sharada; GSS, Gwammaja; GSS, Dala; GSS, Rijiyar Zaki; Army Day Secondary School, Bukavu Barracks; Army Day Secondary School, Janguza; GGC, Kano; GSS, Gwauron Dutse; GG Arabic Secondary School, Gwauron Dutse; GGSS, Sani Mainage; AKCC, Kano; GSS, Shekar Barde; Special Education School, Tudun Maliki; GGSS, Kadawa; Women Arabic Secondary School, Kano; Umma Zariya GG Arabic Secondary School, Koki; GGSS, Kofar Mazugal; GGSS, Shekara; Hasiya Bayero Government Girls' Arabic Secondary School; SAS, Kano; SAS (HIS), Shahuci; GSS, Gwale; Government Arabic College, Gwale; GSS, Warure; GSS, Nasarawa; GGSS, Giginyu; GSS, Zaura Babba; GGSS, Maikwatashi; GSS, Maikwatashi; GSS, Kwakwaci; GSS, Hoto; GSS, Stadium; GSS, Kofar Nasarawa; Girls' Science and Technical College, Kofar Nasarawa; Day Science Secondary School, K/Nasarawa; GSS, Mariri, GSS, Karkasara and Izazazudun Government Girls' Secondary School.

The 50 or so secondary schools listed in the first paragraph are some of the public secondary schools that share certain things in common: they all belong to the Kano State

By Rabo Makeri

government. The government provides and pays the staff of the schools, maintains their premises and infrastructure, supplies their furniture, gives them consumables such as school chalk, attendance registers and other essential accessories required for effective teaching and learning.

They are all within Kano and its environs. The classrooms of each are filled to the brim, if not overcrowded daily. There are dozens more of similar schools in the outlying 44 local government areas. This large number of government secondary schools is evidence of the stride made in providing education to the youths and of the heavy burden responsibly borne by the government.

Due to Kano's huge population, the desire to develop manpower in all the critical areas to service the diverse needs of the people and absorb more of the 130,000 primary school products into secondary schools by late 2003, the government of Kano State renovated 171 classrooms and started 25 new secondary schools within its first six months in office; five more than the 20 constructed by the late Audu Bako government between 1970 and 1974.

Malam Ibrahim Shekarau told the Kano State House of Assembly in his 2006 Budget speech that, "As a follow-up to our earlier interventions in the years 2003 and 2004, we have in this outgoing year committed over 21 per cent of the state expenditure on education, which

is unprecedented in the history of the state. Indeed, over N3.9 billion was expended in support of education this year (2005)."

The huge expenditure on education in 2005 was in line with his personal commitment to boosting education and a recommendation by the Shekarau Team that "Government funding of education should be adequate."

The governor said that the money was variously used to recruit 1,750 additional teachers, in improving the welfare of serving teachers, the construction of 249 new classrooms, the establishment of 11 additional junior secondary schools, as well as the rehabilitation or construction of new science laboratories in secondary schools across the state.

Although the effort helped, the state governor, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, a reputable teacher and administrator of education, remained focused on doing more for education, promising to spend N2.6 billion on capital projects for the sector in 2006.

"Our plan for the upcoming year (2006) is to continue to salvage and once again build up the sector through a comprehensive programme of teacher recruitment, provision of teaching materials, rehabilitation of existing educational infrastructure and establishing new schools to meet increasing demand (for education)," he declared while presenting the 2006 budget estimates to the legislature.

Some post-primary schools in

the state are overcrowded and run shifts (159 students recorded in a classroom at Government Arabic Secondary School, Dawakin Kudu or 65 students in a single class at Government Arabic Secondary School, Fagwalawa are extreme cases) simply because of the large number of primary school pupils joining junior secondary schools.

It was estimated that a total of 246,093 primary school pupils matured to join junior secondary schools in the state in 2005. This was a huge challenge to the planners and administrators of education in Kano State. Part of their problem was solved by the generous allocation to the sector. The administrative acumen, professionalism and patriotism of the Commissioner for Education, Hajiya Balaraba Maitama Sule, the widely-respected 1982 graduate of Bayero University, Kano, is another plus for the sector.

An educationist, she first effectively served as Commissioner for Women Affairs. She was promoted to head the education ministry because of her ability and the commitment she demonstrated in helping Malam Ibrahim Shekarau to achieve his objective of providing good governance to the people of Kano State who trusted him.

However, it is relevant here to remind the reader that in addition to running primary schools with the largest enrolment figures in the country, managing hundreds of government-funded post-primary schools, the Kano State government still has a number of tertiary institutions, comprising a University of Technology, a

highly-rated polytechnic and a state college of education with one of the largest enrolment figures in Nigeria under its wings.

To demonstrate through deeds that the tertiary institutions are receiving attention, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau funded the construction of and opened a well-equipped multi-hall lecture theatre complex worth N45 million at the Malam Aminu Kano School of Islamic Legal Studies on January 3, 2006. It is part of his clear agenda for advancing tertiary education in the state. The head of the school, Dr Sule Musa, said during the ceremony that the Kano State government had spent N100 million in providing additional infrastructures in the school in the previous two years.

This is not surprising, as the Shekarau Team has made a recommendation on the development of tertiary education ahead of his investiture: "All infrastructural facilities required for the purpose of accreditation should be met as urgently as possible."

Malam Ibrahim Shekarau said at the Kano State House of Assembly on December 20, 2005 that, "In keeping with our pledge to reposition these institutions to attain a position of excellence, we expended N600 million on both capital and recurrent services in this (2005) fiscal year. It is remarkable to note that the investment had started yielding dividend judging by the physical transformations of infrastructure, teaching facilities and equipment."

This article on what Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, the teacher now governor of Kano State is

doing for education in the state would be incomplete if his clearly successful attempt to incorporate Qur'anic schools and their pupils (almajirai) into the formal education sector is not mentioned. His novel and serious effort in this direction was acknowledged and applauded by one of the leading educationists in the country, Professor Idris Abdulkadir.

The professor and former Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC) recommended in a recent scholarly paper that discussed the future of education in the North that all states where similar schools exist should emulate what Malam Shekarau did for some of the Qur'anic schools in his state.

The governor has built hostels or classes for almajirai in 32 local government areas and opened pilot exclusive boarding schools at Ajingi, Makoda and Warawa Local Government Areas for 3,500 almajirai.

"I am happy to report that today, the 3,500 almajirai benefiting from the feeding programme are spending more time on their study and feeling dignified, as they are no longer on the streets begging for food," Malam Shekarau said in his 2006 budget speech.

Malam Ibrahim Shekarau and his team made so much impact on the education sector in Kano State within a short time simply because he and his key team running the sector are serious, transparent and truly committed to serving the people selflessly.

Rabo Makeri is a commentator on public affairs.

3rd Term: As the 'flu' spreads

"Life is like a game of cards. The hand that is dealt you represents determinism; the way you play it is free will" - Jawaharal Nehru

I might have heard and read so much about Nigeria's third term flu that I consider any further personal interventions unnecessary. From the point of view of the constitution to that of morality; from that of right to that of agitation, it has become incumbent on President Olusegun Obasanjo to realise that he might be making history by jettisoning the allure of office and bowing out gracefully when his second term as our president expires in May 2007, or he may be remaking his history by simply acting like Mobutu Sese Seko and others. Either option is profitable; it only depends on choice.

R.I. Fitzhenry was therefore right when he averred that "Uncertainty and mystery are energies of life, which keep boredom at bay and spark creativity." Be that as it may, my job here is not to question President Obasanjo's authority to take Nigerians for a ride. No! Rather, it is about some issues that need to be clarified before the advent of a new era.

Many years after the death of Bola Ige, the late former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, questions have been repeatedly asked as regard the

By Abiodun Komolafe

whereabouts of his assailants, but it seems as if the president and those who matter in the corridors of power are simply paying little or no attention.

In all honesty, the triumph of charlatanism in our socio-political space is partly as a result of the failure of elitism. In the very sense of truth, whenever and wherever the elite choose to take the backseat in the affairs of the state, noisemakers, impostors, and stone-swallowers become victorious. Let us take the issue of Lamidi Adedibu and the politics of Oyo State as a case study. Adedibu has so asserted his grip on that erstwhile pacesetter state that now without him, nothing works. He enthrones kings at will and dethrones them at will and no mortal who loves his life has the temerity to question his authority. Not even President Obasanjo who is reported to have more than once deigned before the Goliath of Ibadan as one of the rites of passage to the Presidency. Adedibu brazenly displayed this criminality of commonality in the hurriedly-concocted impeachment of Rashidi Ladoja as governor of the state. The worrying aspect of it is that while the drama lasted, the president deliberately ignored the triumph of justice and simply looked the other side while arson

and anarchy reigned supreme. Even Oyo State indigenes, hitherto renowned for their industry and ingenuity, are hardly paying any attention as the godfather continues to play and prank on the future of the state for individualistic beneficiaries.

From the foregoing, it may be true that though Adedibu may muster neither the clout nor the strength like the Biblical Goliath, but he has the support of the apparatus of state, epitomised by - and encapsulated in - Balogun Owu and those who delight in disfiguring all rules and regulations... and in blocking the entrance against those who are more deserving than they. He may not even command as much respect as Goliath did command when he was expedient, but he enjoys the support of beer-sipping, hemp-smoking and machete-wielding, red-eyed touts backed by "computer squads," mere passengers and self-serving folklorists who "steal votes, and seize the airwaves in order to ensure that stolen votes are normalised by authoritative agencies." So, whatsoever Adedibu pitches his tent against, is in trouble.

Yusuf Olaniyonu got it right when he described President Obasanjo's anti-corruption war as a mere trap dressed in beautiful ornaments by the administration, but whose usefulness is merely to ensnare

political opponents." Nigeria has been reduced to a mere comic stage, a lucrative enterprise and a theatrical enclave where willing collaborators ply their trade and then leave the stage for spectators to make their choice. Those whose whims are thrilled go home satisfied while those whose caprices are impugned would have to wait for their own time for a mission of revenge. We are always told that democracies do not go to war, and as such we should be duty-bound to defend our own democracy despite its imperfections while struggling to tailor its ideals to suit our peculiar collective norms. However, we tend to faint in the days of adversity and get threatened by chronic imperial overlords and paladins of indiscipline who revel in a plethora of corruption to subvert our wishes. In our desperate search for charades that eventually stagger our imagination, we ethnicise anything and everything - from politics to economics. Now, we have succeeded in ethnicising corruption! Yet hope for the living is not only growing slimmer, but also becoming dimmer by the day. And since we have chosen to mismanage our own democracy, we have become a disappointment and a threat to other democracies.

This reminds me of Wole Badmus, one of Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe's assistants in this

fading dispensation. Those who passed through the University of Ilorin as students in the mid-90s would readily remember Badmus or "Wolly B," as he was then fondly called. Badmus was interested in being president of the university's Students Union Government, SUG, but some unpleasant events played out and Badmus, alongside some colleagues, were rusticated. When pleas were made and they were eventually re-admitted, Badmus re-contested and eventually realised his ambition. So "powerful" was he in campus/student politics that he later became a co-president (?) of the National Association of Nigerian Students, NANS. It is the same "Wolly B" that was appointed by Mohammed Lawal, the immediate expired governor of Kwara State as special assistant on government/student relations.

When Lawal was eventually thrown out, Badmus quickly acted the chameleon by becoming one of Senator Ogunlewe's invisible appendages. But, rather than sheathe his sword, Badmus has been growing from strength to strength in the tricks and antics of "home-grown" democratisation. And the elderly yet troublesome minister seems to be catching the fun! Unfortunately, these are the kinds of democrats who sadly occupy positions of authority in

Nigeria's political space.

What has become of Governor Orji Uzor Kalu's allegations of corruption against the president, as well as the ruling PDP? What are the implications of the travails of - and the revelations by - Joshua Dariye? Has the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, paid any attention to Adedibu's reckless remarks about Oyo State's commonweal? If yes, what conscious efforts has it made to at least tutor the Bashorun of Molete on the need to speak in dignifying manner and intelligently? So far, the belief, and rightly too, is that the \$214m national ID card scam case has died with the death of Sunday Afolabi, Nigeria's former Minister of Internal Affairs, and interestingly, President Obasanjo's former political doppelganger. The abduction-expulsion-reinstatement-elevation saga of Anambra State politicking is also as important as the continued shielding by relevant authorities of Ibrahim Babangida and Tony Anenih.

Questions are as many as they are raging and answers should as such be satisfactory. President Obasanjo should therefore be humble enough to at least provide clues if not outright answers.

Abiodun Komolafe wrote in from 020, Okenisa Street, P. O. Box 34, Ijebu-Iesa, Osun State.



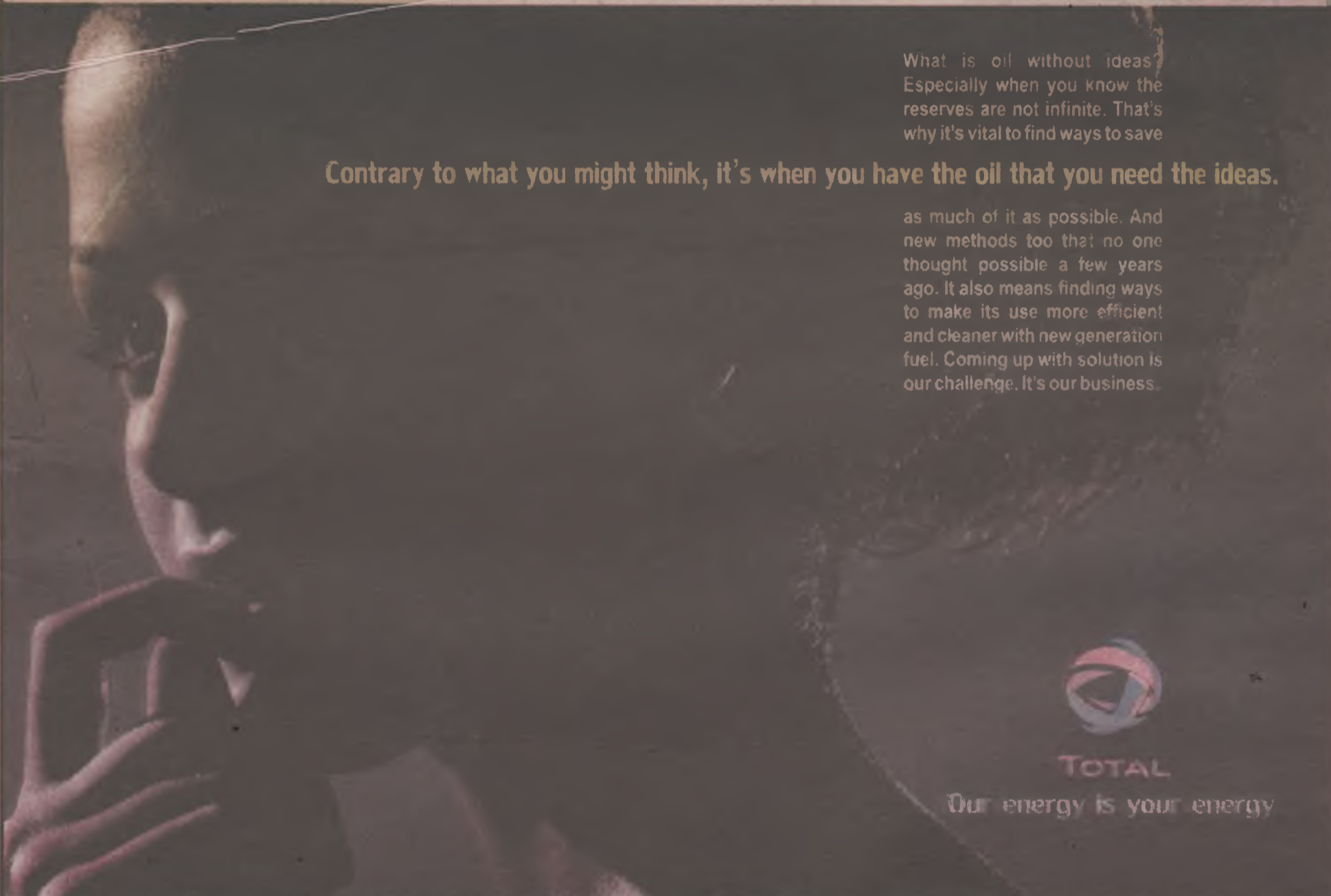
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YOUR LETTERS

Kudos to Abuja self-employed drivers

Please permit me space in your newspaper to comment on the activities of the Self-employed Drivers Association, Abuja chapter.

This comment is particularly imperative against the backdrop of the interesting interview that the association's president, Chief Kenneth Eze, granted Leadership newspaper recently.

In the said interview, he among other things outlined the efforts being made by them to contribute to safety on our roads. He also talked about the effort being made to enlighten drivers in the FCT so that they can be performing better in every sense of the word.

First and foremost, I must commend Chief Eze and members/officials of the union for their laudable efforts. Recently, for example, I lost my travelling bag in a bus while travelling from Masaka in Nasarawa State to Kubwa. Could you believe what happened? Just when I had given up hope, a friend suggested that I should contact the drivers' union. And true to his words, I found my bag there at their office!

As I later learnt, when the

driver and his conductor found my missing bag, they took it to their union's headquarters at Nyanya, Abuja for the owner to go and claim it later.

To my astonishment, I found that everything in the bag was still intact, including my N12,000! Also, I noted that lost items of other commuters such as ID cards, bags, GSM cell phones, etc.,

were duly kept there awaiting the owners.

I must commend Chief Eze

and his association for this unprecedented development. Other road

unions should emulate the Self-employed Drivers Association, Abuja chapter.

They should also remain focused and visionary.

Shola Atinuku, Kubwa Phase II, Abuja, FCT.

Census 2006: Before Kano records massive failure

I am writing this letter to call on the attention of the State government, Kano Emirate Council and other relevant authorities to take appropriate action before the beginning of 2006 census.

This call has become necessary considering the way some enumerators and others are employed, which is not based on merit but favouritism, connection and other selfish interests.

Some of the enumerators in the exercise cannot do the work accordingly; they were employed by their masters just to get the money. In fact, some of them are only after the money they will get, not

the importance of the exercise.

Even though favouritism is deep in our system, nevertheless, in an exercise of utmost importance like this, appropriate authority ought to place merit over anything else; yet that was not so. If the type of EAs that are not equal to the task are employed in the exercise, they will end up doing a great disservice to Kano State by being lazy in the census exercise by making Kano seem less populous, while we all know the position of some prominent Southerners about the population of Kano.

This call is a signal on the imminent danger coming, which the state government, the Emirate Council and others should wade into and offer lasting solution.

Sani Garba Mohammed, Karaye LG, Kano State.

2007 governorship in Kaduna and Senator Isaiah Balat

The aim of this write-up is to enable the good people of Kaduna State to have an insight into the myth and realities of Senator Isaiah Balat. The people of Kaduna State in particular and this country in general are lucky to have a man with vision, mission and foresight like Senator Balat. Judging from the past six years of this present administration, Senator Balat has really been a huge blessing to Kaduna State in the National Assembly. He has distinguished himself as

a worthy ambassador of Kaduna State. He facilitated the employment of several indigenes of the state into the Federal Civil Service, police, armed forces, etc. He empowered countless others by getting contracts for them and job placements in companies and parastatals.

His doors and arms are always open to all, in both Abuja and Kaduna State.

His resident is a centre of refuge to those who need one form of assistance or the other. No one can keep count of the number of indigent

students of Kaduna State on his scholarship list, whom he has been empowering educationally.

In his relationship with people, he builds no ethnic, religious or social barriers around him.

An experience that underpins his cardinal principle is his reaching out to people and bringing succour to the doorsteps of many communities in the state. Countless number of individuals, communities, churches, mosques and organisations have benefited from his generosity. The quantum of Senator Balat's philanthropic acts cannot be recorded here nor is there need to do it as the senator shies away from such publicity. He prefers to stay in the background to positively touch the lives of people. I'm optimistic that the emergence of Chief (Senator) Isaiah Balat as the governor of Kaduna State in

2007 will be the best thing that can ever happen to state's economy and also restore people's faith, hope and confidence in government in the areas of prudent management of resources and the implementation of people-oriented programmes and policies like employment-generation, affordable food production, quality education, vibrant healthcare system, affordable houses, road construction, etc.

I am therefore advising the good people of Kaduna State to support this distinguished senator during the 2007 governorship election.

Kingsley Chijioko, Kawo, Kaduna.

No to third term

This message is from Nigerians United Against Third Term. We are calling on all Nigerians to stay away from the venues of all the public hearings to amend the constitution that will pave way for the present regime to

continue in office. We therefore call on all Nigerian parents not to allow their children to go anywhere close to the venues of the hearings.

Musa Balogun (unatt2006@yahoo.ca)

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Why are they doing this to Obasanjo?

One commentator recently wrote a newspaper piece wondering whether President Olusegun Obasanjo carries what he calls an "unlucky star." In it, he argued that while Nigerians do not seem willing to give Obasanjo credit for the wide-ranging reforms he has carried out to better the lot of the citizens, they appear too eager to blame him for every perceivable problem.

In a sense, I share the sentiment of that writer. In fact, I somehow feel very sorry for Obasanjo. How come that he came back to power at this critical juncture in our nation's history when every tribe and tongue seems to want to express his or her pent-up frustration all at the same time? When I find myself asking myself this question, I turn around and ask: if not Obasanjo, who should have been destined to come on to the scene at this time?

After several long years of military rule, democratic governance was ushered in, in 1999 with Obasanjo as the helmsman. Perhaps, because of the freedom of expression now available to citizens, it looks like everyone with any type of grudge believes that this is the most suitable time to express it.

That is how come that since 1999, Nigeria has witnessed one kind of agitation after another, some of them violent, which have claimed several thousands of lives.

The most serious of these agitations, which is now the cause of national and international concern, is the demand by the people of the Niger Delta region for a better deal in the sharing of the huge oil pie which comes from their region.

The trouble in the Niger Delta region did not begin today. In fact, it dates back to the 50s and reached its peak in the late 50s when oil was struck in Oloibiri in present-day Rivers State. The peoples of this region are minorities in the huge Nigerian federation. They also live in a terrain that is very difficult to develop.

Somehow, every administration in this country, including the former British colonialists, has always acknowledged the special circumstances and the development needs of this region that accounts for much of Nigeria's wealth.

The British colonial

government set up the Willink's Commission in 1958 to recommend strategies for developing the region. In 1961, the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was created as a follow-up to the recommendations of the Willink's Commission.

Sadly, like all the other bodies or agencies such as the Rural Basin Development Authorities of the 1970s, the Presidential Task Force (PTF) of 1981 and the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) of the early 1990s, which were set up to address the special problems of the area, the NDDDB failed to do anything to develop the Niger Delta.

For about 50 years now since that region became the goose that lays Nigeria's golden egg, the place has been neglected. It is that pent-up frustration over the callous neglect of successive administration that has now reached its peak under Obasanjo. The iniquities of past governments are being heaped on the head of Obasanjo.

This is very unfair, because since 1999, the Obasanjo government has begun to take the kind of concrete steps that will surely remove the pains that have unjustly been visited on those people. If credit must be given where it is due, Obasanjo has since 1999 done far more for the people of the Niger Delta than all what previous administrations from 1958 to pre-1999 combined have done for the people.

One fact which clearly underscores Obasanjo's resolve to address the Niger Delta problem is that the second ever bill he took to the National Assembly a few days after he was sworn-in in 1999 was the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Bill which was enacted into an Act that brought the NDDC into existence in 2002.

It is also to the credit of the Obasanjo government that it is under him that the Derivation Fund was increased from 3% to the current 13%. His government also resolved the contentious onshore/offshore dichotomy in favour of the Niger Delta.

That what the NDDC has been able to do since 2002 and the increased revenue to the region since 1999 have not made a dramatic impact on the lives of the Niger Deltans is due largely to the fact that the place has been truly neglected for years.

The question Obasanjo's sympathisers ask is: why the violent agitation now when we have in place a government that has shown a clear determination to right the wrongs done the people of the Niger Delta for decades by successive un-con-sci-ent-able governments?

The answer of course is that the people of the Niger Delta have waited too long for justice. And now that efforts are being made in that direction, the long-frustrated people of that region see them as too little too late.

As a son of the Niger Delta, I make a passionate appeal to both the government and the militants fighting the cause of our region, for a truce. By paralysing the activities of crude extraction and export for some days now, the militant youths have succeeded in making a point and drawing attention to our cause. It is now time to reason at the negotiating table.

On the part of government, the delicate issue of the Niger Delta demands the exercise of great statesmanship by Obasanjo. His government should not make the mistake of regarding the agitators for a better deal for the Niger Delta as terrorists, criminals or hoodlums and thereby seek to contain the agitation through military might. This is because even if his government wins the war now, it would only succeed in building lingering resentment which would seek violent expression one day.

What Obasanjo must do now is to accelerate the implementation of the master-plan drawn by the NDDC for the development of the Niger Delta. Although it is true that some of the corrupt governors of some of the Niger Delta states are partly to blame for the slow pace of development of the area, we the ordinary citizens of the place are not pacified by that.

If Obasanjo shows a greater focus on the sufferings of the Niger Delta, he knows what to do to compel the governors, the local government chairmen and the NDDC to complement federal government intervention to bring convincing change.

And by the way, how many Niger Delta sons and daughters have oil wells and how many lift Nigeria's crude?

Opinion

Military: Nigeria/US

partner against HIV/AIDS

By Joel Oruche

In international relations, countries of the world have various interests and relations. Such relations could be in the area of economy, social, cultural among others. Nigeria today relates with different countries of the world; the United States of America is one of them. The two countries no doubt have so far maintained warm relationship with much benefit for both countries. One of the fallout of this warm relationship worthy of note is the military to military collaborative effort initiated late 2004 and which came into operation in April 2005.

Interestingly, the visit to Nigeria by a US delegation led by Senator Chuck Hagel in 2004 facilitated this collaboration between the two countries for the project.

As a follow-up to the consultations, a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Defence led by Dr Roland Oritsejafor, the Honourable Minister of State for Defence departed for the United States on 16th April, 2005, as part of military to military HIV/AIDS collaboration. Beyond being a follow-up visit, it was also to identify other possible areas of collaboration between the Nigerian Armed Forces and US Department of Defence. The visit, therefore, took them to the U.S. Army Medical Research and Material Command, Fort Detrick, Maryland, National Naval Medical Command and the Walter Reed Army Medical Centre, National Institute of Health, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies and the Pentagon Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and the Division of Retrovirology.

The visit to this particular institute was highly valued as the institute is the largest biomedical research laboratory in the Department of Defence.

Again, the institute is currently running a research leading to advances in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases of military importance. It is also involved in Dengue Vaccine research, target-based drug discovery, a new paradigm, combat casualty care, military operational medicine, and defences against biological and chemical warfare, particularly medical decontamination device.

Today, this partnership has yielded many dividends as four Nigerian military medical facilities have been

refurbished, upgraded and re-equipped. Meanwhile, free Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) under the collaborative emergency plan for 2005 has commenced at Mogadishu Barracks in Abuja; 44 Nigerian Army Reference Hospital, Kaduna; Nigerian Navy Hospital, Ojo, Lagos and 445 Nigerian Air Force Hospital, Ikeja Lagos. A sizeable number of military officers, men and their relations are already accessing services at these centres and it is expected that by the end of March 2006, these sites would have placed a total of 1,200 persons on full treatment. It is noteworthy that capacity building of health workers is a vital component of this collaborative effort between the Nigerian Ministry of Defence and the United States Department of Defence. This is to ensure the sustainability of the project. In this regard, therefore, various categories of health workers — doctors, nurses, social workers and counsellors have received sponsored special training locally and abroad.

To further strengthen this noble partnership, government approved counterpart funds for the Emergency Plan Implementation Committee (EPIC) of the Nigerian Ministry of Defence and the US Department of Defence collaborative initiative in Abuja under the chairmanship of a Brig. General. As at 2005, the United States Department of Defence was to directly spend the sum of 4.7 million US dollars while the sum of 6.1 million US dollars has been budgeted for the year 2006.

The committee is responsible for programme monitoring and evaluation in the sites and regularly update the steering and coordination, which is co-

chaired by the Honourable Minister of State for Defence, Dr Roland Oritsejafor and His Excellency, the United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Honourable John Campbell. Recently, the Minister of State for Defence, Dr Oritsejafor, commissioned the liaison office complex of the Emergency Plan Implementation Committee (EPIC) in Garki, Abuja. The minister also embarked on facility tour of the sites and to officially flag off the distribution of the Anti-Retroviral Therapy to officers, soldiers, their relations and the immediate neighbouring communities. The hallmark of this programme is the free testing and free treatment available to the beneficiaries. Meanwhile, the Country Operating Plan for 2006 (COP 2006) for the programme would maintain existing patients and expand to additional three sites in 2006. The new sites include 82 Division Hospital, Enugu; Navy Medical Centre, Calabar, and 355 Nigerian Air Force Hospital, Jos. It is heart-warming that the Nigerian military has seized the initiative in HIV/AIDS control since 1991 and has made tremendous impact through various programmes and partnerships. No doubt, the current partnership between the Nigerian Ministry of Defence and the U.S. Department of Defence, will boost the Nigerian military's resolve to champion the fight against HIV/AIDS and more fruitful results achieved. As Nigerians, we must continue to support and encourage our political leaders and others all over the globe who are committed to fighting poverty, eradicating conflicts and encouraging peace and security as these issues certainly promote the spread of HIV/AIDS.

J. O. Oruche is the Press Secretary to the Honourable Minister of State for Defence.

"The hallmark of this programme is the free testing and free treatment available to the beneficiaries. Meanwhile, the Country Operating Plan for 2006 (COP 2006) for the programme would maintain existing patients and expand to additional three sites in 2006."

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Cartoon: Freedom of expression or anti Islam hysteria

For long, the so called freedom of press or freedom of expression has led to several legal battles as a result of perceived abuse of the provision whose authors had meant it to foster public education and understanding.

It's misuse and, very often abuse, have however never been so devastating until in recent times when irresponsible use of this right to ridicule, attack or incite the Muslims assumed a disturbing regularity.

From the Salman Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses' to the John Lafia's 'Dagger of Islam' and Nigeria's *Thisday* Newspapers caricature of the Beauty Queens, Islam has become the target of attack in the name of freedom of expression.

But what is even more disturbing in this global terror against Islam is the current stand taken by some western countries in response to the growing protest by Muslims world over.

In many parts of the Western World, instead of joining to condemn the inciting publication of the *Jyllands-Posten* Newspapers some diplomats rather choose to defend the so called freedom of press by condemning what they called violent reaction of the Muslim community.

It would be recalled that on September 30, 2005, the *Jyllands-Posten* Newspaper published 12 different blasphemous cartoons that caricatured the Holy Prophet of Islam Muhammad (SAW) as a terrorist.

In the said irresponsible publication, the Holy Prophet was shown wearing a bomb shaped turban with a burning fuse while other cartoons showed several disrespectful and blasphemous caricature and a war monger who encourage blood shed amongst his followers.

Listening to the author of these blasphemous impressions on the *BBC* Hard talk programme, one is left with the conclusion that the west lacks spiritual respect for religions and what they stand for.

Despite understanding the existence of self censorship in Journalism and the premise of social responsibility theory, all designed to censor irresponsible expressions or use of the so called freedom of expression, both the *Jyllands-Posten* publishers and their collaborators knew the publication was only another way to attack Muslims so that their reaction will again be used to label them 'terrorist'.

Or was it not on this premise that the American government jailed a journalist recently for daring to publish a leaked CIA document that is seen by the

From Hassan A. Karim
in *Dunya*



King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

under report the deliberate massacre of innocent lives in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan etc.

Or even how could anyone explain to the world how racial discrimination continue to grow in Europe and USA, yet no one dare report this deadly anti social attitudes because of their national interest and how such a publication is deep capable of undermining America's foreign policy.

Furthermore, the Danish irresponsibility has brought yet another challenge towards the so called freedom of speech, expression or of the press.

In the United States itself despite being the first amendments of the constitution, it has been proven that it is not an absolute right that should be used with open disrespect and abuse. According to the Christian Liberty Union (CLU), although freedom of speech is a fundamental right that cannot be denied under any pretext, 'at the same time, freedom of speech does not prevent punishing conduct that intimidates, harasses, or threatens another person, even if words are used. Threatening phone calls, for example, are not constitutionally protected. And again if governments despite the fundamental rights of it citizens world over can limit some protected speech by imposing "time, place and manner" restrictions, then how could

attacking someone's right amount to expression of freedom when the right that allows that freedom to express has equally given right of religion, of dignity, of protection from being ridiculed, intimidated or



King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

disrespect, bigoted, biased and violence perpetrated by those individuals in society who would use any means to destroy religious freedom.

For it has been shown that

throughout history, men and women of religion have stood against tyranny and fought for the natural right of all individuals to practice their own faiths and beliefs, free from harassment, suppression and persecution', noted the website.

"This website is supported by men and women; parents, teachers, business leaders, health practitioners, artists, working people from every walk of life. As parishioners of Scientology and other religions,

we expose the intolerance, racial discrimination, bigotry, bias and violence perpetrated by those individuals in society who would use any means to destroy religious freedom.

For it has been shown that



King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

when someone's right amount to expression of freedom when the right that allows that freedom to express has equally given right of religion, of dignity, of protection from being ridiculed, intimidated or

Let the distinction be clear: Any right used by one man to harm another is no right at all, but instead a tool of oppression wielded by those who, left unopposed, would destroy all rights and freedoms until only those remain that favour the tyrant."

It is therefore evident that the Danish publication was just one more incident in the global fight against Islam and Muslims, given the fact that despite Muslims

being the offended, many western leaders have rather chosen to condemn Muslims' reactions to the insult on the Holy Prophet of Islam, that freedom of expression cannot be stopped by government.



King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

The Danish government told the visiting Albanian president, Ibrahim Kazzazi that it cannot tolerate the *Jyllands-Posten* Newspaper because it was exceeding its freedom of speech rights under the Danish constitution, yet when Muslims protested through legitimate rallies and boycott they quickly condemned the act forgetting that rights beget rights.

It is instructive to note that since the alleged terror attack acted self devastation that killed over 3000 Americans, the West's through it propaganda media machines have collaborated with Washington-hawks to unleash an unending onslaught on Islam and Muslims.

First it was Afghanistan that was nearly reduced to rubble. Today, the West has collectively murdered over a million Afghans, and devastated their country, through continuous military raids in the name of so called fight against terrorism which all the world knows is their creation.

From Iraq, Palestine, to Syria and Iran the West has targeted Muslim countries for annihilation.

Today despite legitimately winning an election in Palestine, the Hamas, a Muslim pressure group fighting for the freedom of Palestinians, are being threatened with possible denial of forming government, the same treatment meted to the Islamic Front of Algeria when it became clear they were winning the 1992 elections, the West collaborated with the authoritarian Algerian military to deny this democratic right.

It is the same in Indonesia, when they were forced to recognise East Timor as a state, while Kashmir and Palestine are denied freedom. It is equally right for the Christian Sudanese to be aided and be forced on the Islamic government of Sudan, but it is no right for Philippine Muslims to demand for such right as they were called terrorist and targeted for annihilation.

The French law that bans head dress for Muslims was also another deliberate attack on the rights of Muslims with the world looking the other way, but when some states in Nigeria introduced the Sharia legal system to guide the lives of their citizens, it was described as callous, and a global campaign to ridicule Islam was then orchestrated.

Be that as it may, the recent protest has since send a message to the rest of the world that while the global social, economic and cultural wars against Muslims are slightly being tolerated, any attempt to ridicule any Islamic symbol will be resisted vehemently.

While the West accepts immorality to levels of allowing gay marriages even among church leaders, or for a child to take his parents to court for daring to discipline him, or a woman to marry a woman, or a person to kill and be protected from being killed, or for government to attack weak countries at liberty, then it is time for them to realise that other people have rights too will go to any length to protect them.

Whether the West likes it or not, freedom of expression that does not respect others or ridicules others or exposes their faith, mock or attack them cannot be in anyway legitimised and should therefore be condemned by all people who believe in freedom and respect for others.

"For it has been shown that when mankind takes freedom for granted, or turns a blind eye to even the slightest infringement upon the rights of his fellows, the religious beliefs of any man may then be called into question, and his rights perish. Let the distinction be clear: Any right used by one man to harm another is no right at all, but instead a tool of oppression wielded by those who, left unopposed, would destroy all rights and freedoms until only those remain that favour the tyrant."

Trust International

Middle East & Asia

Hamas: Iran offers financial aid

Iran has offered to help finance the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority governed by the Hamas group.

The offer was announced by senior security official Ali Larijani after a meeting with Hamas politburo Chief Khaled Meshaal, state radio reported.

The decision follows moves by the US and Israel to isolate a Hamas-led government with financial penalties.

Hamas has also held initial talks with Fatah, which lost January's election, to discuss forming a coalition.

On Tuesday, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas formally asked Hamas to form a government.

The new administration will be headed by one of the group's leaders in Gaza, Ismail Haniya.

Fatah had initially ruled out joining its Islamist rival in government, but the two agreed to try to find common ground for a governing partnership.

"There is an agreement in principle and the intention is there, but we must await the programme," the head of Fatah's parliamentary faction, Azzam al-Ahmed, said after the talks in Gaza City.

Mr Ahmed told *Reuters* that Fatah would not join Hamas unless the government adopted President Abbas's vision of negotiating peace with Israel.

But Hamas, though it has been observing an informal truce, refuses to recognise Israel and has ruled out negotiations.

Hamas' refusal led to international condemnation and the withdrawal of US aid to the Palestinian Authority last week.

The Israeli government also froze the transfer of millions of dollars in funds to the authority - a move which the UN has called unhelpful and premature.

But yesterday, Iran said it would help make up the PA's funding shortfall.

"Khaled Meshaal's request for assistance to enable the [Palestinian] Authority to overcome the existing problems is noted by Iran and we shall definitely help them financially," Mr Larijani told reporters.

Mr Larijani criticised the US government's decision to withdraw aid and questioned its commitment to democracy.

"You know very well that Hamas is a genuine popular movement which has always pursued the objective of recovering the rights of the

oppressed Palestinian people; but unfortunately the Americans have never paid any attention to this matter," he said.

"The US decision to stop financial aid shows that they are not seeking to promote democracy in the region,

contrary to their claims on the Middle East [road-map] proposal."

On Monday, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei expressed support for Hamas and called on other Muslim nations to provide financial aid.



Iraqi Shi'ites chant slogans during a protest in reaction to the Samarra explosion in Baghdad yesterday. A dawn bomb attack wrecked a major Shi'ite Muslim shrine in the Iraqi city of Samarra yesterday, sparking protests, some of them violent, and forcing an urgent government appeal to avoid sectarian reprisals.

Iraqi shrine blast sparks protests

Tens of thousands of people have staged protests across Iraq after a bomb attack heavily damaged one of the holiest sites in Shiite Islam yesterday.

Dozens of Sunni mosques are reported to have been targeted in revenge attacks after a gang blew up the golden dome of the al-Askari shrine in Samarra.

Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, has appealed for calm and called for a week of mourning.

It comes a day after 22 people died in a bombing in Shiite district of Baghdad.

No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack on the shrine, although Iraqi television said several people had been arrested in connection with the bombing.

BBC reported the attack was almost certainly designed to raise the existing tensions between the majority Shiite and minority Sunni populations.

Following the attack on the al-Askari shrine, thousands of demonstrators gathered near the site, waving Iraqi flags and calling for justice.

"We demand an investigation so that the criminals who did this will be punished. If the government fails to do so, then we will

take up arms and chase the people behind this attack," one of the protesters, 28-year-old Mahmoud al-Samarie, was quoted by the *Associated Press* news agency as saying.

In Basra, gunmen attack Sunni mosques and exchange fire with guards at an office of the Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party.

In Baghdad, a Sunni mosque in Baladiya district is raked with gunfire, while black-clad militiamen of the Shiite Mehdi Army demonstrate in Sadr City.

Tens of thousands of protesters rally in the southern Shiite city of Karbala, *AFP* news agency reports.

Businesses shut down in Najaf and about 1,000 march through the streets, waving flags and shouting slogans.

Markets, shops and stalls close in Diwaniyah, *AP* says. A Mehdi Army militiaman is killed in clashes after gunmen from the faction attack Sunni houses, *Reuters* news agency reports.

About 3,000 people demonstrate in the Shiite city of Kut, chanting anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans and burning US and Israeli flags, *AP* said.

The al-Askari shrine is one of two tombs in Samarra for revered Shiite imams, which attract pilgrims from around the world.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday met with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak during her five-day visit to the Middle East where she may formally lobby to discourage any financial assistance to Hamas in Palestine.

Their discussions was also expected to include the situation in Iraq and US

...Egypt rebuffs US

concerns over Iran's nuclear programme.

Ms Rice had urged Egypt on Tuesday not to support a Palestinian government headed by Hamas, which the US considers a terrorist organisation.

Egypt rebuffed US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's appeal on Tuesday for Arab states to deny direct aid to Hamas when it forms a government.

In a news conference with lively exchanges Rice and Foreign Minister Ahmed About Gheit also disagreed over Egypt's imprisonment of a leading opposition figure.

Rice began a trip to friendly Arab states in Egypt, which has a strong influence over its Palestinian neighbours. President Mahmoud Abbas asked Hamas on Tuesday to form a new Palestinian government and pursue his agenda of negotiating with Israel, but the militant Islamic group said talks with the Jewish state would be a waste of time.

Gheit agreed Hamas should accept the need for a settlement with Israel based on a two-state solution as the United States wants.

But he would not back

the US position on ending financial support, which Palestinians worry will leave their aid-dependent government in crisis even if humanitarian aid from the United States and others continues.

"We should give Hamas time. I am sure that Hamas will develop, will evolve. We should not prejudice the issue," Gheit said.

Asked if this meant Egypt wanted Arab states to continue funding Hamas once it assumed power, he said. "It is premature to judge the issue right now."

The United States has sought to build an international front against Hamas since it won a shock parliamentary election last month.

Most governments have agreed to insist Hamas renounce violence, but it is unlikely many will support its position on isolating the anti-Israel group diplomatically and denying it aid.

Rice, who has visited the Middle East periodically as America's top diplomat, gave the sharpest public criticism she has made on any trip to a friendly state about democratic reform.



NOTICE

EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting will be held in the Clubhouse at 12:00noon on Saturday, 11th March, 2006, for the transaction of the following business:

* Amendment of the Club Constitution.

NB: copies of the proposed amended Constitution are available at the reception.

Signed:

Hon. Tony Anyanwu

Hon. Secretary

07/02/2006.

Trust International

Africa

Kenyan VP faces corruption probe

Vice-President Moody Awori has blamed civil servants after being grilled by MPs over one of Kenya's biggest ever corruption scandals.

The Public Accounts Committee is following up on a damning report from former corruption tsar John Githongo.

Mr Awori said he was misled over a \$200m contract his department signed with a phantom company called Anglo Leasing to supply hi-tech passports. Three ministers have already resigned, but Mr Awori refuses to step down.

All protest their innocence. It is the first time a Kenyan vice-president has appeared before a parliamentary committee, which examines public spending.

The veteran politician, known as "Uncle Moody", spent two hours before the MPs before emerging from parliament to tell reporters that he had "clarified matters" to the committee.

"I did not at any time engage in any act of cover-up or any wrongdoing... I do not know who the Anglo Leasing Company Ltd is and I have never dealt with this entity or its officers," he said in a statement.

The vice president said that as a government minister he has nothing to do with "technical matters" like contracts which was the responsibility of senior civil servants.

And he blamed his staff for researching and drafting his misleading parliamentary speech.

BBC reported that it is not clear if the vice president has done enough to end the increasingly loud calls for his resignation, but the ongoing investigation still threatens to bring down the entire government.

Pressure has been growing for Mr Awori to resign Kenya's president, who was elected on a policy of zero tolerance for corrup-

tion, has refused to sack his deputy and is seriously damaged - whatever the outcome, he said.

Public Accounts Committee head Uhuru Kenyatta, who leads the opposition Kanu party, said he was "shocked" after parliamentarians travelled to London earlier this month to speak to the

exiled former anti-graft chief John Githongo, whose accusations in the Anglo Leasing case gave rise to the current parliamentary inquiry.

He showed them evidence, including tapes, linking a number of senior politicians with multi-million dollar fraud schemes.

Zimbabwe police have detained 73 women at a protest marking President Robert Mugabe's 82nd birthday on Tuesday.

A lawyer confirmed the women were still in detention in the capital, Harare, on Wednesday afternoon.

They had been calling for changes to the constitution to protect women's rights and other human rights.

Nearly 400 women arrested at two separate protests last week have all now been released.

On Tuesday, more than 200 female members of the National Constitutional Assembly - a group lobbying for law reform - began a march to government buildings hoping to meet the president, NCA chairman Lovemore Madhuku said in a statement.

Zimbabwe detains 73 women activists

"In response the police blocked them and started beating them at the Parliament building," the statement read.

"Seventy three NCA members were eventually arrested and asked to lie down in the streets near the Africa Unity Square and 12 were seriously injured."

The group was still in detention at Harare Central Police Station yesterday, lawyer Alec Muchadehama told BBC.

Last week, 181 women were detained on Monday in Bulawayo and another group of about 200 were arrested on Tuesday in Harare, during

protests in the two cities demanding better living conditions. Both protests were organised by the pressure group Women of Zimbabwe Arise (Woza).

The Bulawayo group was released after being held overnight.

The Harare detainees were released on Friday, and are expected to appear in court next week charged with disturbing the peace, Otto Saki of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights told BBC.

The protests came as inflation hit 61 percent the second highest rate in its history and the current world highest.

KADUNA BUSINESS SCHOOL

Managing ECONOMIC REFORMS:

"Understanding NEEDS/SEEDS"

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is the Government response to the development challenges of Nigeria. The goal is to mobilize the resources (human and material) of the country to achieve economic breakthrough at both the micro and macro levels.

What are the micro and macro economic challenges facing the Federation, your State or Local Government?

NEEDS/SEEDS, as a strategic instrument cannot be divorced from macroeconomic issues. If NEEDS/SEEDS would be properly implemented therefore, the macroeconomic position of Nigeria should be properly understood. "Managing Economic Reforms: Understanding NEEDS/SEEDS" is a programme designed by Kaduna Business School (KBS) to sensitize people, in economic strategic positions (private and public), to the country's macroeconomic concerns as related to the NEEDS/SEEDS programme.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

To enable participants understand how to read Global Economic Dynamics.

To help participants appreciate the potential economic, social, and environmental gains in the NEEDS/SEEDS programme.

To discuss practical approaches to the implementation of the NEEDS/SEEDS programme.

To help participants appreciate the macroeconomic challenges facing the country.

To discuss how to develop the national micro economic base to meet the macro and global economic needs of the country.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Chief Executives, Economic Advisers, Directors, Corporate Planning Executives, CBOs, Top Management Staff, Heads of Government Parastatals, Commissioners, LG Chairmen, etc.

Date: 28th February - 3rd March, 2006.

Venue: Kaduna Business School, 13B Ohikere Street, Off Inuwa Wada Road, U/Rimi, Kaduna.

For further information please call:

Kofi - 0802 853 7111
Mohammed - 0802 501 1200
Kenny - 0802 363 8631
Bukky - 0803 615 8256

Tel/Fax: - 062 246 535
e-mail: - kbs@wwlkd.com
website: - www.kbs-edu.net

Trust International

Odd World

Turning dog waste into power?

San Francisco in the US, a leader in urban recycling, is preparing to enlist its canine population for a first in the United States: converting dog poop into energy.

Norcal Waste Systems Inc., the city's garbage company, plans to test collection carts and biodegradable bags in a city-center park popular with dog walkers.

A city study found that almost 4 percent of all the garbage picked up at San Francisco homes was from animal waste destined for the city's landfill, Norcal Waste spokesman Robert said. San Francisco has an estimated 120,000 dogs.

"The city asked us to start thinking about a pilot program to recycle the dog poop in order to cut back adding more waste in landfills," Reid said.

Dog feces could be scooped into a methane digester, a device that uses bugs and microorganisms to gobble up the material and emit methane, which would be trapped and burnt to power a turbine to make electricity or to heat homes.

Dogs and cats in the United States produce about 10 million tonnes of waste a year, Will Brinton, an environmental scientist and owner-director of Woods End Laboratories in Maine, said.

"As much as we love them, our pets leave a lot of

manure behind them in yards and on the street and that can be a major source of contamination of groundwater," Brinton said.

European cities such as

Zurich, Frankfurt, Munich and Vienna are operating biomass programs to turn waste into gas, he said.

San Francisco runs an aggressive program to recycle bottles, cans, paper and other

trash and now diverts two-thirds of its garbage away from landfills.

The city's goal is a 75 percent diversion by 2010 and zero new waste in landfills by 2020.

A zip could disqualify an athlete

Zip your top up properly, leave the wig and false mustache in your chalet and, whatever you do, do not sip the wrong kind of cola.

Doping aside, there are plenty of weird and wonderful ways to get you disqualified from the Winter Olympics and at times the rules and regulations governing each sport read like a pedants' manifesto.

In ski jumping, for example, a competitor who fails to zip his suit up to the very top risks more than catching a cold.

Presumably to prevent somebody wearing a Michelin Man-style inflatable outfit for extra air buoyancy, the rules state that competitors' suits must cling closely to the body.

The "anterior crotch length" is especially tightly policed with a modest four centimetres the maximum leeway allowed.

Thursday, during the Nordic combined event, the Finnish team protested that one of the German jumpers, Bjoern Kircheisen, had breached the rules governing the

air permeability of his suit because it was slightly unzipped at the neck. The appeal was unanimously rejected by the jury.

In the same event, one of the rules stipulates that a competitor will be penalized if he takes his skis to any official ceremonies. Furthermore, as Japan's Masahiko Harada found out in Normal Hill qualifying, a jumper is disqualified if his skis are longer than his height, multiplied by 1.46.

In the exhausting sport of cross-country skiing, a competitor is disqualified if, in a fit of masochism, he skies more than one leg of the course in a relay or, even more mysteriously, if he takes part in the competition "under false pretences."

The latter charge could arguably have been applied to Costa Rican Arturo Kinch. The mustachioed 49-year-old brought an air of slapstick to Friday's 10-km classical race when he stumbled and almost fell in the first few strides en route to 96th place.

The false pretences rule also covers Alpine skiing where, as in ski jumping, having the wrong-sized skis is ano-

ther cause for disqualification. That was the fate suffered by Briton Chemmy Alcott in the women's combined event Friday. Her skis were found to be a minuscule 0.2mm too narrow.

A freestyle skier can be disqualified for doing a trick they are not qualified to try or for attempting a trick which is more difficult than those they performed in training. Rule-makers have so far resisted the urge to dock them points for appalling choice of music to accompany their run.

Sponsorship enforcement is also a deadly serious matter at all Olympic venues. Woe betide a competitor or spectator who sports or consumes a product that is not made by one of the companies on the list of official sponsors.

In the spectator's case they will have the offending bottle of cola removed from their possession while the athlete cannot display any form of advertising at venues, where even the official sponsors' products are kept hidden. Offending logos get covered up with duct tape.

The wrong kind of spoken word can also be costly.



Didn't know snakes fish too. A snake in action during lunch time

Girl weds dog to ward off evil

Bihar.

Kundan Munda, a coal mine worker, said his daughter married the dog only to "remove the evil eye," a superstitious belief that some misfortune could befall her and the family, and that she would be free to marry a man later.

Friends and family participated in three days of traditional ceremonies and festivities that are part of a Santhal tribal marriage, Munda said, according to the report.

Bomb joke! One way ticket to jail

A business traveller who sparked a major security alert at a Scottish airport by joking that he had a bomb on board a no-frills flight was sentenced to two months behind bars.

Inverness Sheriff Court was told that Peter Aldred, 41, told a flight attendant on his EasyJet flight to Luton airport, outside London, on December 12 that he had a bomb in a carrier bag.

All 124 passengers were

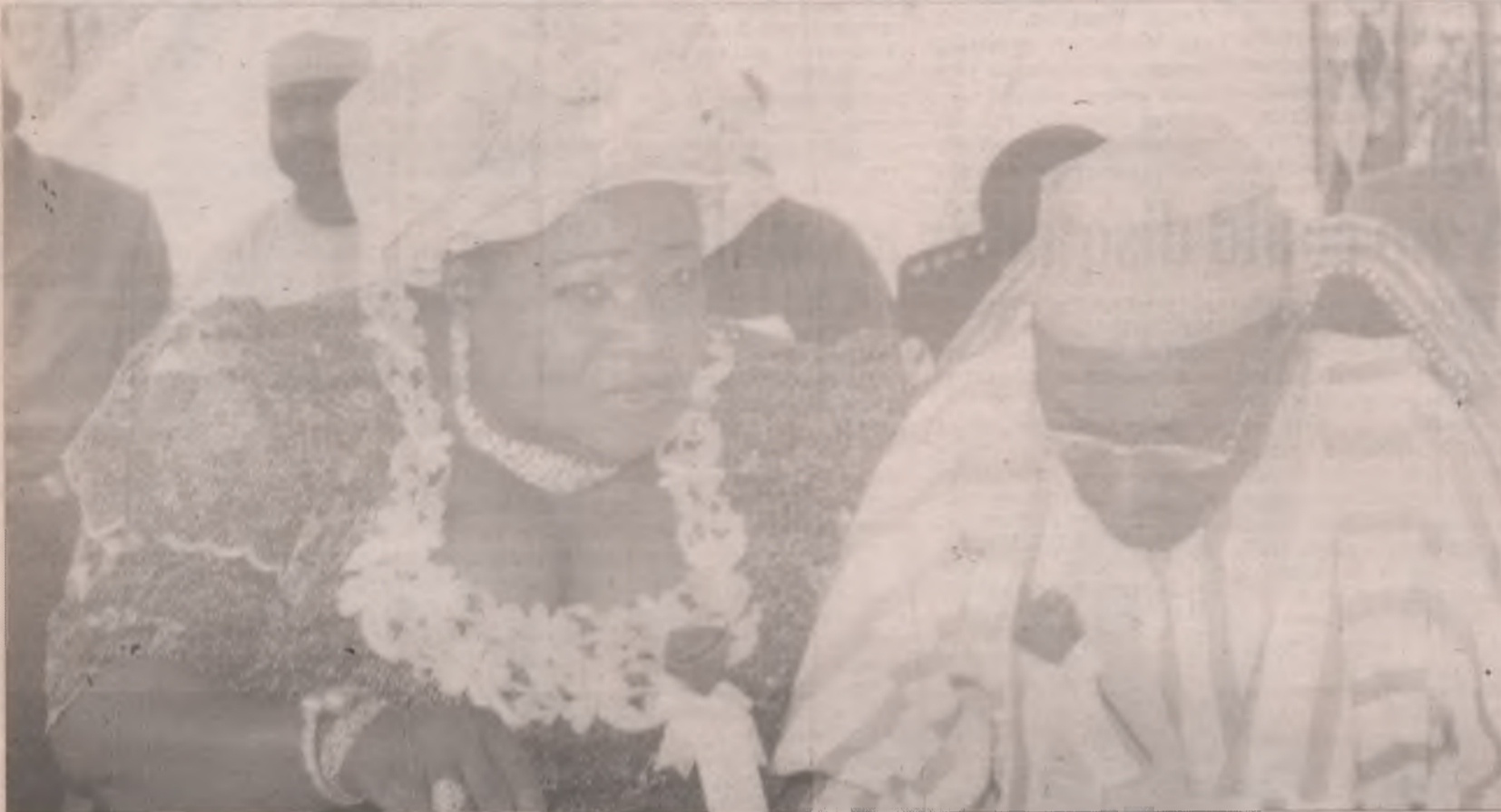
immediately hustled off the plane, as armed police, a negotiating team and other emergency services descended on the airport — only to find two furry Loch Ness monster toys and some candy in the bag.

Sheriff Alastair MacFadyen told the father of one — who had pleaded guilty to breaching the peace — that a stint in jail was appropriate for such "irresponsible and reckless conduct".



A view of the Polish parliament in session. Polish lawmakers tackled their country's tricky language as they vied for the title of "Zero Fault Parliamentary Group" in a dictation competition held to kick off the year of the Polish language

Business Trust



Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna State (right), with the DG/CEO of the Nigerian Stock Exchange, Mrs (Dr) Ndi OOkereke-Onyuike, during the official commissioning of automated training floor of Kaduna branch of the Nigerian Stock Exchange ...recently.

MTN introduces anti-car theft technology

From Abdulraheem Aodu,
Correspondent, Kaduna

The frequent cases of car theft in Nigeria may soon be checked with the introduction of a car tracking system by MTN, the mobile phone operator.

The system was introduced at the ongoing Kaduna International Trade Fair.

The security device according to the GSM operator, allows the owner of a car to keep track of his vehicle when stolen until he is able to mobilize to recover the vehicle.

It uses GSM communication technology, the demonstration of which has been on at the fair and continues till Friday when MTN would have its day at the Fair.

Greg Chukwueme of Hotshoppe Communications, MTN's event managers at the Fair told Business Trust that the system was an answer to the yearnings of Nigerians in the quest to check car thefts.

INSIDE

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8 steps to transform your business

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Flight schedule

Virgin Nigeria

Los - Abj: 7.00am, 10.55, 6.55pm
Abj - Los: 9.00am, 12.55pm, 8.55pm
Los - PHC: 7.15am, 3.00pm
PHC - Los: 9.00am, 4.45pm
Los - Acc: 2.55pm; Acc - Los: 3.35pm
Los - Douala: 6.30pm;
Douala - Los: 8.30pm

Bellview Airlines Monday - Friday

Lagos - Abuja
0650, 0950, 1130, 1400, 1600, 1955
Abj - Los - 0800, 1130, 1320, 1600, 1800
Los - P/H - 0715, 1130, 1320
Los - Kano - 0630

Saturday & Sunday

Los - Abj - 0800, 1130, 1600, 1950
Abj - Los - 0800, 1320, 1600, 1800
Los - P/H - 0800, 1340, 1700
P/H - Los - 0945, 1520, 1830
Los - Kano - 0800
Kano - Los - 1130

IRS Airlines

Los - Abj - 7.15am, 8.15am, 11.00am, 12noon, 3.00pm, 4.15pm,
Abj - Los - 10am, 11am, 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 4.15pm, 5.15pm.
Los - PHC - 11.45am, 12.45am,
PHC - Los - 1.30pm, 2.30pm,
Los - Kan - 5.30pm, 6.45pm,
Kan - Los - 7.45am, 9.00am.

Weekend

Los - Ab - 9.15am, 10.15am, 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 11.00am, 12.00pm, 9.30am, 10.30am,
Abj - Los - 11.00am, 12am, 2.45pm, 3.45pm, 12.45pm, 11.15am, 12.15am,
Los - PHC - 11.5pm, 2.15pm.

NNPC, police battle pipeline vandals in Benue

Officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the police Monday, stormed Zaki-Biam in Benue State and arrested kingpins of pipeline vandalism in the area.

The operation began as early as 6am and ended evening of the day, with no fewer than 10 persons arrested both at Gbeji, a border town with Taraba State, and Zaki-Biam where the suspects were finally detained.

Command Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Samuel Jinadu could not be reac-

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

hed as he was participating in a live broadcast on the state owned *Radio Benue* at press time, just as *Business Trust* was barred from gaining access to the Apir Depot for comments.

However, it was learnt that with the use of NNPC helicopters which combed the area in search of the suspects, both officials of the corporation and the police recorded tremendous success in the operation as they cracked down on vandals.

Research says poverty is Nigeria's biggest problem

The latest 2006 Global research conducted by Globescan, an affiliate of Research International Nigeria shows that most Nigerians see poverty as the major ill bedeviling the country.

According to the findings 27 per cent of the respondents voted poverty as the major problem as against 35 percent in 2005, while 20 per cent said government corruption is at the root of Nigeria's failure compared to 19 per cent in 2005.

Other respondents elected unemployment, economic problems, hunger, crime as the research findings made available to us in Lagos depicted unemployment 11 per cent (9 per cent 2005),

From Bright Ewulu, Deputy
Business Editor (Lagos)

economic problems 9 per cent (9 per cent 2005).

Also, another 9 per cent of the respondents say hunger is the nation's greatest predicament compared to 6 per cent of the previous year, even as 6 per cent of Nigerians felt that crime is now one of the national problems as against one percent in the previous year.

Globescan posited in its statement that the following percentage see the underlisted issues as most important problems facing Nigeria. Access to water (4 per cent), unreliable energy supply (3 per cent), bad road (2 per cent), spread of HIV/AIDS (2 per cent) and others (7 per cent).

It was also gathered that the operatives were acting on a tip-off given them that some highly placed community leaders may have given their blessing to the damaging of the pipelines linking Makurdi to Jalingo through Gbeji, a settlement near Zaki-Biam.

The scooping activity which was discovered lately, according to information available to *Business Trust*, fed the commercial centre of Zaki-Biam with illegally sourced petroleum products,

a development which led the operation on a follow up investigation to the town.

Police sources in Zaki-Biam said the operation was successful as kingpins in that town were also arrested and detained.

It was further gathered that the continuous scarcity of petroleum products in Benue is partly caused by the rising activities of pipeline vandals who for sometime now, have remained a major challenge to security operatives.

Niger Delta crisis 'll not cause total power outage -PHCN

The Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) has assured that the recent disturbances in the Niger Delta which has inhibited gas supply to Afam, Egbin and Delta power stations would not result in total power failure in the country.

Speaking with *Business Trust* in Abuja yesterday, PHCN's general manager, public affairs, Mrs. Efurio Igbo said the disruption in gas supply would mean a reduction in power generation but not total blackout.

The company which earlier last week said it was losing 500mw a day as a result of scarcity of gas, has announced that the crisis in

By Austine Odo, Business Editor

the region which disrupted gas supply to the three stations has reduced power generation by 850mw.

This has caused anxiety in the country but Mrs. Igbo told *Business Trust* that the PHCN was ameliorating the situation by increasing generation from the hydro stations at Kainji and Jebba, where the reservoirs have been well managed.

She however noted that there would still be some load shedding to maintain stability in the system.

She appealed for the understanding of customers over the development which she said had caused difficulty for the company.

Business Trust

Privatisation Update



L-R: Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Professor Charles Soludo in a warm handshake with Cornelius Adabayo, Communications Minister, at the Second Business Round table, held in Abuja ...recently.

NCP approves liquidation of weak public firms

By Anas A. Galadima, Asst. Business Editor

The National Council on Privatisation (NCP) has directed that all non-viable public enterprises where the expected proceeds will not be enough to meet debts and other obligations be slated for guided liquidation.

Consequently, the NCP has instructed its secretariat, the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), to draw up the list of candidates for guided liquidation.

A statement from the BPE said this decision, amongst others, was taken at the 44th meeting of NCP which held at the Presidential Villa on Monday, February 13, 2006.

The NCP also approved that Continental Project Development and Supplies Limited, the reserve bidder for Ikorodu Bricks and Clay Products Company, pay N275 million as a result of the failure of the preferred bidder to meet the payment obligation.

The preferred bidder had offered a bid price of N310 million at the financial bids opening for the enterprise that took place on June 3, 2005.

"NCP also approved the upward review of the bid price from N700 million to N800 million for Steyr Nigeria Limited by the preferred bidder, Kaura Motors Nigeria Limited.

BPE was also directed to work with the Federal Ministry of Industry to ensure that the loan obtained by Steyr from the National Automotive Council (NAC) is liquidated" the statement said.

The Bureau was also tasked to visit Leyland Nigeria Limited in Ibadan to verify the claim by the core investor, that Mahindra Trucks were being assembled at its assembly plant.

At the meeting, the NCP directed the BPE to provide a list of moribund enterprises to the Chairman of Council, Vice President Atiku Abubakar, with a view to discussing with

Mr. President on stepping down the constitution of boards of such enterprises.

The NCP approved the Bureau's Process and Procedures Manual. At this meeting, the BPE was advised to share the information in the manual with state privatization agencies as a means of offering them technical assistance in the reform and privatization programme of government.

The Finance Committee of the NCP was re-constituted with the Minister of Finance who is also the Vice Chairman of NCP, Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala retaining her position as the Chairperson. Other members are: Prof. Charles Soludo, Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, Dr. Mansur Muktar, DG, Debt

gar Levy is to revitalize the sugar industry, adding that the work in Savannah Sugar Company was doing just that".

At the meeting, the NCP directed the BPE to provide a list of moribund enterprises to the Chairman of Council, Vice President Atiku Abubakar, with a view to discussing with

Management contractors will reposition transmission coy-Chigbue

By Anas A. Galadima, Asst. Business Editor

The Bureau of Public Enterprises said the engagement of management contractors for the management of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) Plc is to build the requisite level of confidence in investors who are key to the privatization of the distribution and generation companies unbundled from the former National Electric Power Authority (NEPA).

Mrs Irene Chigbue, Director General of the BPE gave this clarification in her office

when the editorial management of the *BusinessDay* newspapers led by its Editor-in-Chief, Mr. Stanley Egbuchuku called at her office.

The Bureau had last week commenced the process of inviting prospective management contractors/companies with expertise in power transmission to express interest in entering into management contract with the federal government for the management of TCN.

A statement from the bureau said the director general told her visitors that the BPE is doing everything possible to complete transactions on the unbundled companies located in Abuja, Ikeja and Kaduna this year, assuring that the time table for transactions this year as was launched in BPE's VISION 2006 programme would be implemented faithfully.

"Mrs. Chigbue however

upbraided those who resort to offensive media publications on the programme, categorizing them as "bad losers who went through the same process in buying enterprises from the BPE only to shout each time they fail in their bid". She then urged the *BusinessDay* newspaper not to yield itself to such manipulations," the statement said.

The Editor-in-Chief of *BusinessDay* newspapers, Mr. Egbuchuku had earlier told the Director General that the team was in her office to seek ways of partnering with the BPE in order for it to succeed, promising that the paper would soon start a dedicated page to be called "Privatisation Watch" that would serve as an authoritative information pool for all privatization issues.

Other members of the team include the editor of the newspaper, Mr. Okwudili Ojukwu-Elendu and the Abuja Bureau Chief, Mr. Ademuyiwa Badejo.

Govt not happy with NITEL - Minister

From Zakariyya Adaramola, Correspondent (Lagos)

The minister of communications, Chief Cornelius Adabayo, has said that the technical board set up by the Federal Government to proffer solutions to the problems of Nigerian Telecommunication Limited (NITEL) "is not happy with the performance of NITEL" just as he said the board "may do some unpleasant things to clean the rot in the company."

Fielding questions from journalists shortly after he completed the tour of NITEL exchange under the Lagos zone on Monday, Chief Adabayo said he as the head of the technical board, is happy with NITEL and we all can see for ourselves."

According to the minister, the federal government is not happy with the level of performance of NITEL, adding that this may force the government to do some unpleasant things to make the company regain its lost glory.

He said: "It is clear to all of us that NITEL is not moving forward. I am not happy

with this and the government is not happy also. I pray that this visit would be the beginning of good things to come to the company. We welcome criticisms, good ideas, comments and advise which could improve and make NITEL move forward."

On the privatization of NITEL, the minister said the sale of the country's telecom company would be for the good of Nigerians and that it would not be sold and taken away from the country.

"NITEL would not be sold and taken away from the country; no. what government is trying to do is to liberalise and privatize the company. And this would be done for the good of Nigerians. It would be irresponsible of the government to leave the company without privatizing it. We would leave the control of the company to those who will improve it and make it compete with the PTOs and others," said Chief Adabayo."

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ABUJA ZONE/NORTHERN CEDAR FISH FARM behind Cedar Waters (Millionaires Qtrs) Before Biaji Police Station, Biaji - Kubwa, Abuja. Date: 25th Feb. & 4th March, 2006. Time: 09:00am (Choose a Day)	WESTERN/LAGOS ZONE FLOURISHING CENTRE Plots 1-3, Flourish Close, Flourish Estate, Behind Obasanjo Farms Nig. Ltd, Sango Ota, Ogun State. Date: 4th & 11th March, 2006. Time: 09:00am. (Choose a Day)
SOUTHERN ZONE GENESIS CASTLE HOTEL Behind Genesis Fast Foods, 22, Woji Road, Thompson Estate, Rumuru, Port-Harcourt, River State. Date: 11th March 2006. Time: 09:00am	EASTERN ZONE PRECIOUS HOTELS LTD. Behind Living Christ Mission, 6, Hotel Avenue, Onitsha, Anambra State. Date: 18th March 2006. Time: 09:00am

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Business Trust

Platinum Habib launches new brand

In line with its strategic intent to build a model national banking franchise that will create superior value for all stakeholders, Platinum Habib Bank Plc has concluded plans to launch its new brand on March 1, 2006.

According to a release from the company signed by its head of corporate communications, Charles Onyiah, the new corporate identity reflects the bank's new essence and how it wishes to communicate with the banking public as well as the values that it would project to stakeholders. The event will take place at the Eko Le Meridien Hotel in Lagos.

The brand launch is coming after a successful integration of the banking systems of the merging units. This means customers of the former Habib or Platinum Bank are now able to transact business in any PlatinumHabib branch across the country.

First Bank broadens offerings at Kaduna Fair

First Bank of Nigeria Plc has concluded plans to deploy its cutting-edge IT infrastructure to back up its array of financial products at the 27th Kaduna International Trade Fair which kicked off on Friday, February 17, 2006.

The Fair, organised by the Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Mines and Agriculture is titled "Consolidating the Impact of Reforms in Commerce Industry and Agriculture." It is expected to end on February 26, 2006.

In its quest to provide one stop banking solutions for its customers, during the fair, the bank will provide its customers and prospective ones, at first-hand, First Bank's famous financial advisory services, on-line-real-time banking, internet banking, banking on wheels, Automated Teller Machine (ATM), cards products, consumer finance products and Western Union services. Over the years, the Bank has broadened its product and services offerings to include agricultural finance, bills discounting, equipment leasing and mortgage finance.



The Inspector General of Police, Mr Sunday Ehindem exchanging greetings with former Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, Mr Joseph Sanusi and Chief Oba Oluwalanmi during the presentation ceremony of pension benefits to operators at the State House, Abuja, Monday. Pic. by Bruce

Banks battle Lagos govt over taxes

The battle between the Lagos State government and some recently merged banks in the country is threatening to blow open as banks are resisting what some of them describe as illegal extortion by the government.

The misunderstanding, according to a close source in one of the concerned banks, is the bid by the state government to tax some of the properties that exchanged hands as a result of the consolidation process.

Speaking on the matter, Barrister Esumi Ighadulo in a seminar organised last week by G. Hill Advisory services Ltd at the Muson Centre, Lagos said that once a merger was sanctioned by the courts there was no need for the new institution to pay fees on the properties.

He said anything outside this cannot be said to be in

Stories from Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor, Lagos

consonance with the laws of the hand.

However, it remains to be seen whether the state government which according to Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu has in recent times moved its internal revenue generation from N600 million to well over N3 billion will concede on the issue.

Apparently, a lot of bank shareholders see the battle over the property tax issue as unfair and wonder why the Lagos State government should meddle with the banks just when many experts are saying that the integration cost is likely to be unbearable for some of the banks.

Speaking on the matter, Mr. Bolaji Balogun, CEO G. Hills Advisory services Ltd maintained that legal issues

as a result of consolidation will begin to emerge as we go deeper into the year.

He called on insurance practitioners to ensure that

they do not replicate the mistakes made by the banks, saying that even some legal waivers granted the banks may be denied the insurance companies.

UBA to spend N25bn on retail banking transformation

The group managing director of the United Bank for Africa (UBA), Mr Tony Elumelu has said the bank is undergoing an 18 month retail banking transformation process that will gulp about N25 billion.

Speaking at the chief officer's management courses 036 and 037 of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Monday in Abuja, Elumelu said the bank has engaged McCaunty, a consultancy firm to help it undertake the transformation process.

He said 30 Indians have already arrived Nigeria as part of the transformation exercise, adding that over 45 staff of the bank was been sent to India for training.

He stated that already the bank has successfully completed its in-house Information Technology (IT) integration, adding, "On April 1 we'll complete our entire IT integration which will enable all our customers to do business with ease"

He said the bank at the moment has a total number of 428 branches nationwide, online, real time even as he said they will role out more branches very soon.

In his paper titled; Managing Transformation and Change: A Leader's Perspective presented to the chief officers, Elumelu said for any transformation process to succeed it has to

complete it"

By Hamisu Mohammed, Business Reporter

go through a series of phases that usually require a considerable length of time.

"Critical mistakes in any of the phases can have a devastating impact, slowing momentum and negating hard-won gains"

According to him, the most difficult thing in managing a corporate organisation is to embark on a transformation, saying, "You better not start if you cannot

Speaking, the group managing director, NNPC, Engineer Funsho Kupolokun said the main idea behind the chief officers management course is to develop officers toward becoming excellent, highly professional and versatile leaders.

He said the corporation has embarked upon a transformation process called "Project PACE" to improve the performance of the company and make it a global player in the oil and gas industry.

Zenith Bank repairs Lagos Street

Zenith Bank in a display of corporate social responsibility is undertaking the reconstruction of Ajose Adeogun Street in Victoria Island, where its head office is located.

The reconstruction of the 1.3 kilometre road at the cost of N322 million, according to the managing director of the bank, Jim Ovia, is a way of giving back to the society that has provided a conducive operational environment for the bank to succeed.

At a brief ceremony at the bank's headquarters that saw the signing of the contract papers and the presentation

of the cheque covering the cost of the job to the managing director of the contracting firm, Siad Saimua, the Lagos State Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Rauf Aregbesola, lauded the bank's effort as a good response to the state's call for partnership in infrastructure development.

The contract for the multi-million naira project single-handedly bankrolled by Zenith has been awarded to PALMYRO Construction Nigeria Ltd and will involve total reconstruction and beautification of the street and the roundabouts at both ends of it.

First Bank boosts university endowment

The death of Nigeria's academia for urgent but sustained private sector intervention in the provision of infrastructure and research studies has received a major boost with the donation of a Peugeot 406 valued at N3.4 million by FirstBank to the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State.

The facility presented to Professor Bernard Awa Kulu, occupant of the FirstBank professorial chair in Agronomy at the University is to engender and encourage the teacher in his research activities.

According to the release issued by FBN Head of image management, Jide Ogundele while making the presentation at the university recently, Suleiman

Abdelkadir, Acting Area Manager, FirstBank Area Office, Abuja, said the gesture was to strengthen the bank's professorial endowment which had increased to N19 million from an initial value of N7.5 million at the launch in 2000.

BUSINESS TRUST

Management Tips

How to successfully transform your business

The group managing director of the United Bank for Africa/STB Group, Mr Tony Elumelu is one Nigerian with high managerial skills. The successes he recorded as the managing director of the former Standard Trust Bank earned him a great position in the nation's banking industry to become the pioneer group managing director of the new UBA/STB Group. Elumelu has under him, about 428 bank branches, the highest number of branches in the nation's bank-

By Tony Elumelu, GMD,
UBA/STB

ing industry. Recently, he presented a paper titled "Managing Transformation and Change: A Leader's Perspective" to the chief officers of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in Abuja. Business Trust captured eight steps he mentioned in successfully transforming an organization.

1. Establish a sense of urgency

It is important to examine market and competitive realities and to create or exploit existing levels of dissatisfaction as well as identifying and discuss crises, potential crises or major opportunities.

2. Form a powerful coalition for change

In doing this there is need to assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort, encourage the group to work together as a team and grow the coalition over time.

3. Create a vision

In creating new vision, a manager has to help direct the change effort and develop strategies for achieving the vision.

4. Communicate the vision
Communication is essential vehicle in any transformation process, therefore a manager has to use every thing possible to communicate the new vision and teach new behaviours by the example of the coalition for change.

5. Empower others to act on the vision

recognizing and rewarding employees involved in the im-

provements, however, getting rid of obstacles to change, changing systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision is important and also to encourage risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities and actions.

6. Plan for and create short-term wins

Plan for visible performance improvements, create those improvements and use change metrics where ever possible.

7. Consolidate improvements and produce more changes

Use increased credibility to change systems structures and policies that do not fit the vision. Hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision and re-invigorate the process with new projects, themes and change agents.

8. Institutionalize new approaches

Finally, articulate the connections between the new behaviours and corporate success and develop the means to ensure leadership development and succession.



To successfully transform your business into a viable entity, you require among other things, team work, great vision, and room for constant communication

A reflection on top management experts

Charles Handy was recently voted one of the world's most influential managers. In his *Guide To The Gurus Of Management* he offers World Learning listeners a personal and professional reflection on the theories of the world's top management experts.

No one knows how it happened. Twenty or so years ago the leading thinkers in the field of management started to be dubbed 'gurus' by their public.

The uncharitable suggested that the word was a synonym for 'charlatan'. To others it was a sign that management was no art more than a discipline or even a serious profession.

A book called *The One Minute Manager* sold in its millions. You could not imagine The One Minute Doctor having a market at all.

Nonetheless, management

By Charles Handy

has always been the invisible ingredient of success. The pyramids of Egypt and the Great Wall of China could not have been built without good management systems. The great military campaigns of history owed as much to good management as to valour or weaponry.

'Great ideas lie wasted unless someone turns them into a viable activity or a business, through management.'

Bad management

Economies shrivel and countries decay unless they are properly managed. It is strange, therefore, that management has always had such a bad press.

The word itself is demeaning. In everyday usage when we say, "did you manage all right today?" to someone we mean, "did you cope?" not "did you

plan, organize, staff, direct, coordinate, report and budget?" – the traditional definition of the duties of a manager.

No one likes to be managed, and many professions tactfully do not use the word, preferring presidents, principals or partners, heads and directors or even permanent secretaries as the titles in their hierarchies.

Secrets of management

During the last 100 years managers have tried to make their activity more respectable by making it professional. Business schools sprang up, first in the USA, then, much later, in Europe and Asia.

Now every city in the world has a school or institute of management. The MBA degree (Master of Business Administration) is becoming a necessary entrance ticket to career success in many areas.

Irritatingly, however, the secrets of management remain elusive. Unlike the harder sciences there seem to be no immutable laws. Furthermore, unlike the physical sciences, the research laboratories of management are organisations out in the real world, experimenting, adapting, ducking and weaving to stay alive.

Common sense

That's where the gurus come in. Their role is to interpret and promulgate what seems to be working for the rest of the world. They are the honeybees of management.

Unlike more traditional academics they are addressing the troops in the battlefield, not their fellow researchers. Their books have to be readable by busy people, their lectures exciting, even inspiring, their ideas both memorable and immediately relevant.

The faster the world changes

the more necessary become these 'bees', carrying good ideas from one place to another, codifying and reformulating as they go.

'In hindsight, most of management seems common sense. The trick is to glimpse the sense before it is common. That's what gives you the competitive edge. That's what moves the world along, and that's what the gurus try to do.'

Gurus

On my list of most significant gurus is Peter Drucker, now in his nineties but still explaining the world in inimitable prose and a guttural Austrian accent. In fact, mention any management idea that works and the betting is that Peter Drucker was writing about it before you were born.

There is also the likes of Tom Peters whose book, *In Search Of Excellence*, written in 1982 with Robert Waterman first put a management book on the national

best-seller lists and probably started the guru culture.

Sumantra Ghoshal, now Dean of Hyderabad's new business school, was one of the first to herald the arrival of truly global organisations and competition; and Kenichi Ohmae, the Japanese strategist who, among other things, talks about the impact of globalisation of nations.

For cross-cultural issues we turn to Fons Trompenaars from the Netherlands; for other issues from marketing to technology we inevitably look to more Americans – like Philip Kotler and Bill Gates.

And, of course, there's me, an Irishman masquerading as an Englishman, with my ideas on organisations and culture and my socio-philosophical interest in people. An international cast for what is increasingly the major international challenge – management in a turbulent world.

A royal event

On the 13th of January 2006, all roads led to Dutse, the Jigawa state capital, when his Royal Highness, the Emir of Dutse Dr Nuhu Muhammadu Sanusi, celebrated his 10th year on the throne of the Emirate.

Hassan A. Karofi,
Correspondent (Dutse)

On that memorable day, the rich culture and tradition of the people of the emirate was not only displayed, but it expressed itself in radiant colours.

The Emir who was on horseback was saluted with gaiety and style, as people from all nooks and crannies of the emirate, thronged to the state capital, to participate in the festivities, as exhibited by the amiable emir of Dutse, Nuhu Muhammadu Sanusi.

His climb to the throne in 1995, began a new chapter in the history of the emirate, as various changes were recorded, when Dutse rose from its state as an obscure community.

Between 1995 to date, the life of the ordinary Dutse resident changed, not only because of the presence of the seat of government, but also because of the rise to the throne of one industrious blue blooded sons, who used all his connections to improve the wellbeing of his people, and the land as a whole.

As people thronged forward in their thousands to catch a glimpse of their tradition on display, the culture and the rich heritage of the people of the emirate was on that day richly showcased, to

the amusement of the visitors, and even people of the area.

Traditional attires of not only the royals, but of the subjects, combined to manifest one of the best ways of living of the people, as matching colours of blue, white, green and a combination of both, dotted the scenario, bringing out an atmosphere of elegance and beauty.

Dutse because a carnival of sorts, where the best of tradition was showcased. It was reminiscent of the best in the Hausa tradition, as not only attires, but skills, food and drinks of the people were lavishly presented, to the delight of many. That day brought the best out of the Dutse people, as the celebration to mark the anniversary was well attended.

In his speech at the occasion, the emir took time to travel back into history, where he described the long journey to make his people better and more prosperous.

Dr Nuhu Sanusi, was equally philosophical in his wishes for the future, when he told his subjects, about the need to join hands in ensuring the growth of the emirate, in the areas of education, science, religious knowledge



The Emir of Dutse on horseback

and business. All these he said remain a necessity for the people so that they would be able to remain relevant in the scheme of things.

Prominent and not so prominent sons and daughters of the emirate, were present to celebrate with the Emir whom many described as an amiable gentleman.

The palace courtiers in their colourful traditional attire, did not only add colour to the occasion. They stole

the show as their regimented horses, in stylish colours of red, green and yellow, brought out the best of tradition.

From the arrow archers to sword experts, and from traditional palace warriors, to hunters, snake charmers to drummers, the entire atmosphere was filled with memorable tunes of a stirring character.

For the people and those who witnessed the occasion, being the tenth year anniversary

on the throne of Dutse by Dr Nuhu Sanusi, it could be described as the biggest show of tradition, culture and style, in fashion and durbar and in colour, made up of both male and females. The celebration will for long dominate the memory of lovers of culture, many of whom travelled from far and near to witness the rich heritage on display.

Tracing the history of the emirate in an exclusive inter-

view with the *Daily Trust* later that day, the emir described the journey of the emirate as one full of fortune.

He revealed that for over 300 years, the emirate has existed with a fabulous history of legendary and religious knowledge, known even as far as the Middle East.

He said therefore celebrating his 10th year on the throne, was another way of remembering those founding fathers of the emirate, whom he described as committed servants of Allah.

Daily Trust also visited the website of the emirate developed by the emir, as part of his wish to transform the emirate into a world class royal house, which can be reached and understood by anybody, wherever he or she may be.

'That is why we thought of establishing this website at www.dutseemirate.com

According to the website the Legend of the people speaks of an early epoch of a great hunter called Duna-Magu a Kanuri man who first discovered Dutse, nicknamed Gadawur, as a rich hunting ground for gazelles, Gada in Hausa. The settlement of Garu which traditions claim pre-dated the arrival of Bagauda to Kano, in the dying years of the 1st millennium.



Frontview of the emir's palace



Some more horsemen

in Dutse

The earliest written reference to Dutse is reported in the famous Kano chronicle which mentioned its defeat by Sarkin Kano Abdullahi Burja in 1438=1452, who was said to have followed up the defeat, with the marriage of a daughter of the Sarkin Dutse, alongside the daughters of his Galadima.

The earliest written reports indicate that by the opening years of 18th century, Dutse had grown into a very big town, comprising seventy wards within its walled vicinity. The wall, which was built around the rock clusters, enclosing Ambo stream within the central area, had twelve city gates. Kofarin Gari named after the nearest wards:

1. Kofar Maranjuwa
2. Kofar Burtilan
3. Kofar Yina
4. Kofar Kukiya
5. Kofar Bukka
6. Kofar Galamawa
7. Kofar Ma'ai
8. Kofar Tago
9. Kofar Kachi
10. Kofar Gadadin
11. Kofar Galadimawa
12. Kofar Rariya

The years between 1732-1735 in Dutse's annals were dominated by a powerful figure of Fulani descent called Ada, who came to the area as a military envoy of Sarkin Kano Kumbari, sent on a mission in 1732 to put a stop to the slave raiding forays of Sarkin Dutse Makuri into the

Kano area.

However, no sooner had Ada defeated Sarkin Dutse Makuri when events took an unexpected twist, as he not only usurped the rulership of Dutse, but also asserted his independence, and further proceeded with the re-organization of a strong military force to rival Kano. Little wonder that within two years, he not only annexed territories from Aujara, Birnin-Kudu, Kiyawa, and Ringim; but also repulsed several expeditions mounted against him by his erstwhile boss.

The period of Ada marked Dutse's zenith and glory. It is said of Ada that by c. 1735 all Kano warriors were reluctant to answer further Kumbari's call for expedition against him. This development left Kumbari at the mercy of some 99 Kano princes, who only after exacting a heavy concession, agreed to come to his aid. The princes set out on their mission to capture Ada, by dressing eunuchs impressively in royal regalia so as to deceitfully appear as Sarkin Kano Kumbari. In the course of the encounter that ensued, Ada who mistakenly went in pursuit of Sarkin Kano Kumbari found himself facing a decoy surrounded by the prices. Even at that point Ada, rather than surrender, opted

to fight to his last breath.

The gallant combat fighter he was, Ada only gave up the ghost after killing four of the Princes namely:-Dan Buram, Dan Lawan, Dan Maje and Dan Isa. Interestingly however, this victory was not followed up with a march into the walled town with a view to seizing its control for, as the Kano chronicle reports, the ruler of Kano was prevailed upon by his advisers not to dare make the attempt but to return home immediately.

Tsohon Mutum, an erstwhile army commander and great strategist under Sarkin Dutse Makuri filled the vacuum left by Ada's death. The most remarkable achievement of which Dutse tradition best remembers him was the building of Ganuwar Garu, an additional wall surrounding Garu palace town, with its only one gate Kofar Garu.

This wall, which is still visible in many areas around the town was built with a mixture of special mortar and lumps of stones, making the town of Garu in accessible to invaders, except through the only one highly fortified gate.

The additional wall around the hilltop creates a castle like fortification, within an already walled town.

With a history of dynas-



Horsemen added colour to the event

ties spanning several decades, the 10th year celebration highlights yet another rich culture of the people of Dutse, which if judiciously harnessed, could bring to the nation abundant opportunities in foreign earnings.

While the celebration will also remain permanent in the memory of those who witnessed it, the emirate, according to the Emir, is looking into ways of collaborating with the state government, to introduce an annual durbar, which will further showcase the abundant cultural wealth

of the Dutse emirate, and its people.

Several people interviewed described the occasion as a celebration worthy of global interest.

According to Alhaji Kabir Gwaram, the celebration has given people the opportunity to see, understand, appreciate and value their culture. He added that 'I hope this kind of celebration will be utilized as an economic venture, and culture development, that will make both the emirate better, and its people economically viable.

The 10th year anniversary did not only end with the durbar, equally a nationwide golf championship known as the first Emir of Dutse golf championship, is to hold between February 25-27 as the celebration continues.

The purpose of the tournament according to the Emir is to being many other people to see this virgin land, and what it is endowed with. And it is intended to make this event an annual occasion in the quest of imbuing Dutse with a tradition of sporting excellence.

"From the arrow archers to sword experts, and from traditional palace warriors, to hunters, snake charmers to drummers, the entire atmosphere was filled with memorable tunes of a stirring character. For the people and those who witnessed the occasion, being the tenth year anniversary on the throne of Dutse by Dr Nuhu Sanusi, it could be described as the biggest show of tradition in culture and style, in fashion and durbar and in colour made up of both male and females. The celebration will for long dominate the memory of lovers of culture, many of whom travelled from far and near to witness the rich heritage on display. Tracing the history of the emirate in an exclusive interview with the Daily Trust later that day, the Emir described the journey of the emirate as one full of fortune. He revealed that for over 300 years, the emirate has existed with a fabulous history of legendary and religious knowledge, known even as far as the Middle East. He said therefore celebrating his 10th year on the throne, was another way of remembering those founding fathers of the emirate, whom he described as committed servants of Allah. Daily Trust also visited the website of the emirate developed by the Emir, as part of his wish to transform the emirate into a world class royal house, which can be reached and understood by anybody, wherever he or she may be."

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2006

Company Name	No of Deals	Quotation(N)	Quantity Traded	Value of Shares
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	2	1.12	30,000	34,350.00
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	5	0.90	15,620	14,058.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	11	17.50	164,378	2,905,604.00
PRESCO PLC.	11	11.49	203,665	2,266,004.90
Sector Totals	29		413,663	5,220,016.90
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	18	2.46	115,114	277,374.84
R. T. BRISCOE PLC.	22	5.29	297,287	1,584,390.78
Sector Totals	40		412,401	1,861,765.62
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	251	2.67	13,497,097	36,228,472.28
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	15	9.10	589,618	5,365,523.80
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	3	5.11	20,730	105,930.30
FIDELITY BANK PLC	15	2.93	689,777	2,021,046.61
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	785	35.85	3,343,141	119,089,498.91
GTBANK PLC.	381	13.97	7,310,093	101,568,447.84
GUARDIAN EXPRESS BANK PLC	52	1.51	12,725,100	19,214,901.00
INVESTMENT BANKING	5	4.57	105,352	481,458.64
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	302	10.49	26,676,633	276,983,612.74
NAL BANK PLC.	2	2.80	215,654	603,831.20
OCEANIC BANK PLC	129	5.75	27,668,901	160,678,602.72
PLATINUM BANK PLC	1	2.60	800	2,080.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	186	11.74	2,917,467	34,292,056.57
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	201	25.48	604,502	15,402,710.96
WEMA BANK PLC.	30	3.74	631,907	2,363,332.18
ZENITH BANK PLC	19	19.64	70,797	1,390,453.08
Sector Totals	2,377		97,067,569	775,791,958.83
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	97	104.50	1,189,244	123,595,647.09
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	340	37.00	1,568,601	56,012,715.51
Sector Totals	437		2,757,845	179,608,362.60
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	146	34.00	4,357,035	145,813,845.49
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	11	6.50	95,830	622,895.00
CEMENT COMPANY OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	10	6.90	58,600	405,953.25
NIGERIAN ROPES PLC.	1	1.54	1,332	2,051.28
WEST AFRICAN PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	131	18.21	1,103,822	19,906,416.40
Sector Totals	299		5,616,619	166,751,161.42
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	23	3.40	231,978	792,934.17
CAP PLC.	18	8.86	252,183	2,234,481.38
D. N. MEYER PLC.	12	3.56	92,100	320,505.74
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	12	4.10	58,001	240,243.65
Sector Totals	65		634,262	3,588,164.94
COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	4	1.51	17,330	26,106.34
WIGGINS TEAPE NIGERIA PLC.	1	0.99	450	445.50
Sector Totals	5		17,780	26,551.84
CONGLOMERATES				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	4	1.10	102,035	112,638.50
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	8	3.57	276,597	943,149.80
JOHN HOLT PLC.	7	1.40	48,242	67,997.32
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	80	16.20	415,480	6,730,776.00
S C O A NIGERIA PLC.	2	0.97	843	797.83
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	86	16.60	498,543	8,391,445.13
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	127	20.35	406,799	8,226,630.06
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	6	0.71	22,582	15,967.11
Sector Totals	320		1,771,121	24,489,401.75
CONSTRUCTION				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	8	1.04	161,025	167,477.25
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	6	21.51	25,228	541,276.56
Sector Totals	14		186,253	708,753.81
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	44	31.00	481,434	14,642,528.95
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	151	56.01	975,543	53,766,319.54
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	83	27.68	409,700	11,247,713.35
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	56	61.04	96,352	5,885,617.83
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	50	190.50	77,648	14,770,260.63
NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC.	6	14.90	16,879	253,129.70
Sector Totals	390		2,057,556	100,565,570.00
FOOTWEAR				
LENNARDS (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	0.63	700	441.00
Sector Totals	1		700	441.00
HEALTHCARE				
CHRISTIEB PLC.	3	0.56	48,168	26,974.08
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	16	2.27	125,562	285,676.19
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIGERIA PLC	54	9.91	521,847	5,224,436.63
MAR & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	7	5.36	237,089	1,270,797.04
Sector Totals	80		932,666	6,807,883.94
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
ALUMINIUM EXTRUSION INDUSTRIES PLC.	1	2.18	1,459	3,180.62
ALUMACO PLC.	1	0.98	31	30.38
B.O.C. GASES PLC	4	2.40	2,500	6,000.00
NIGERIA ENAMELWARE COMPANY PLC.	1	3.63	1,000	3,630.00
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	5	0.68	107,000	72,760.00
VIAFAM NIGERIA PLC	45	3.19	467,351	1,466,674.57
VONO PRODUCTS PLC.	2	1.15	5,280	6,008.00
Sector Totals	57		584,621	1,558,283.57
INSURANCE				
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	6	0.79	39,300	30,477.00
AICO INSURANCE PLC.	2	2.39	80,780	193,064.20
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	29	1.26	1,811,830	2,372,847.44
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	1	1.38	20,000	27,600.00
LASAS ASSURANCE PLC.	6	0.58	244,911	149,608.38
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	6	3.26	638,964	2,083,022.64
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	4	2.45	608,036	1,489,688.20
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	31	3.09	1,404,426	4,178,174.62
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	10	1.22	946,627	1,102,572.79
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	17	1.18	205,525	245,580.00
WEST AFRICAN PRQV. INS. COY. PLC.	13	3.05	84,254	260,979.60
Sector Totals	125		6,084,653	12,133,614.87
MACHINERY(MARKETING)				
BLACKWOOD HODGE (NIGERIA) PLC	2	0.56	5,100	2,856.00
Sector Totals	2		5,100	2,856.00
MANAGED FUNDS				
CPI LEASING PLC	8	1.13	141,356	159,732.28
Sector Totals	8		141,356	159,732.28
MARITIME				
JAPUL OIL & MARITIME SERVICES PLC	7	1.80	115,900	207,306.30
Sector Totals	7		115,900	207,306.30
PACKAGING				
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	7	1.51	18,549	28,008.99
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC.	2	0.52	30,000	15,600.00
Sector Totals	9		48,549	43,608.99
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	102	38.15	413,328	16,218,456.57
CONOIL PLC	84	85.85	60,595	5,216,948.26
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	19	2.75	174,371	443,560.61
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	47	169.00	45,445	7,516,371.52
OANDO PLC	152	90.00	170,374	15,430,258.05
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	40	104.05	25,662	2,674,971.66
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	37	185.00	28,046	5,154,290.94
Sector Totals	481		917,821	52,654,857.61
PRINTING & PUBLISHING				
LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC.	4	3.84	25,750	98,880.00
Sector Totals	4		25,750	98,880.00
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	31	9.49	2,427,585	22,538,376.24
Sector Totals	31		2,427,585	22,538,376.24
TEXTILES				
ABA TEXTILE MILLS PLC.	1	0.91	1,000	910.00
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	21	1.82	607,103	1,151,600.29
Sector Totals	22		608,103	1,152,510.29
Overall Totals	4,803		122,827,873	1,355,970,058.80

TOP 10 TRADES AS YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
CORNERST	1,811,830.00	2,372,847.44	29
UAC-PROP	2,427,585.00	22,538,376.24	31
UBA	2,917,467.00	34,292,056.57	186
FIRSTBANK	3,343,141.00	119,089,498.91	785
ASHAKACEM	4,357,035.00	145,813,845.49	146
GUARANTY	7,310,093.00	101,568,447.84	381
GUARDIANXP	12,725,100.00	19,214,901.00	52
ACCESS	13,497,097.00	36,228,472.28	251
INTERCONT	26,676,633.00	276,983,612.74	302
OCEANIC	27,668,901.00	160,678,602.72	129

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
MOBIL	163.00	169.00	+6.00
TOTAL	182.50	185.00	+2.50
CADBURY	54.64	56.01	+1.37
NB	35.96	37.00	+1.04
TUP	30.00	31.00	+1.00
FIRSTBANK	35.22	35.85	+0.63
GUINNESS	104.00	104.50	+0.50
NESTLE	190.00	190.50	+0.50
UAC-PROP	9.09	9.49	+0.40
WAPCO	18.00	18.21	+0.21

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
NBC	63.49	61.04	-2.45
AP	40.15	38.15	-2.00
CONOIL	87.00	85.85	-1.15
TEXACO	104.50	104.05	-0.45
UACN	17.00	16.60	-0.40
UBA	11.99	11.74	-0.25
RTBRISCOE	5.51	5.29	-0.22
GLAXOSMITH	10.10	9.91	-0.19
BERGER	3.52	3.40	-0.12
EVANSMED	2.38	2.27	-0.11

High cost of doing business scares investors

The seemingly unabated high cost of doing business in Nigeria, which is exacerbated by the low infrastructure, continue to scare investors from the country unless something is urgently done to salvage the situation.

Managing director of Fampilk Nigeria plc, Mr. Kim Rasmussen made the observation during the opening ceremony of the company's agent's award ceremony for the northern region, held recently in Abuja.

He stated that the year under review was not an easy, "the infrastructure still left much to be desired and this led to high operating cost in terms of maintenance of vehicles, generation of electricity among others."

According to him, the company also realized that the purchasing power did not improve to any significant extent during the year, even as the food and beverages sector still felt the weak purchasing power as well as activities in other sectors competing for the same money, which would otherwise have been available for consumption.

In spite of this situation, Mr Rasmussen noted that there were positive developments in some areas like in the company's agent sales in the north which, he said has shown a significant growth in the last year, leading to the fact that one agent has surpassed the N1million mark average purchase per month, while four agents were above the N500, 000 mark.

He assured customers that there would be improvement on the Tampico products as well because in a few months time, a more attractive packaging with longer shelf life will be introduced.

The MD also reassured that the organization was committed to make the investments not only in terms of equipments, but also in terms of continuously strengthening its brande.

He sued for cooperation from the agents, cleanliness and hygiene at their shops, reminding them of the fact that 2006 has come with its own challenges that must be tackled headlong.

Also speaking, National Sales Manager, Mrs. Vicky Madu, appreciated the steadfastness of all agents who have taken a cue from the South and have remarkable improvement in sales.

Particularly, she was glad that in spite of unfavorable conditions, which include the demolition exercise that affected some persons in the Federal Capital Territory, irregular power supply and the economic downturn, the agents could weather the storm.

KANO TRUST

Customs nets over N865m

Over N865m worth has been collected as revenue by the Nigerian Customs Service, Kano Jigawa Area Command in 2005.

This was contained in the 2005 annual report of the command made available to *Kano Trust* in Kano and signed by the Comptroller Customs, Area Command, Mera I. M.

A breakdown of the revenue indicated that the federation account collection was made up of N397,284,330.33, while non-federation account stood at N467,871,458.83.

The annual report also stated that the contentious Negotiable Duty Credit Cer-

ificate (NDCC) exemption which could not be added to the area's revenue collection stood at N48,500,000.00.

The report noted that the area command had beaten its given target of N245,461,762.61 for the year 2006 by collecting the sum of N307,284,330.33, exceeding the target by N61,822,567.72, representing 25.19%.

The annual report however expressed regret that some factors militated against the realization of more revenue.

The reasons include low air traffic in the area as most

flight jobs now relocated elsewhere, mainly to Abuja and Lagos, while Nigeria Airways, which was Kano's major carrier, has suspended its service.

The ban on textiles, footwear and other items, as well as closure of factories in the area has also affected revenue generation, and negotiable Duty Credit Certificate (NDCC) exemption cost the command a large chunk of N48,500,000.00.

The annual report expressed delight that the area command made seizures valued at N3,065,540,996.06, made up of a total of thirty-five seizures comprising textiles materials, second hand

clothing, new, vegetable oil and four vehicles.

Comptroller Mera I. M. stated that the Customs Processing Centre (CPC) which had four new work stations, out of the five that were installed, in exception, only two were functional while the generator of the centre had also broken down.

Mera I. M. also observed that the inland container, which is a veritable structure for revenue generation, is currently under-utilized.

On report, he stated that there is low volume of activities in this regard, despite government's efforts to encourage non-oil products by making them duty free.

Mera I. M. said that they need communication facilities as the radio communication system in the headquarters is dilapidated.

The comptroller of Customs called on government to solve issues of funding, lack of petrol, vehicles and communication equipment, amongst others.

Forum advises JGSG on census

The Jigawa Youth Initiative Forum has called on the state government to intensify campaign on the importance of the forthcoming national census in the state.

The forum, in a press statement signed by its national coordinator, Alhaji Sadiq Ya'u Kanya, which was made available to *Kano Trust* also charged the campaign team to inform the public on the dangers of shunning the exercise.

As part of its efforts towards a successful conduct of the exercise in the state, the forum resolved to kick off mass mobilization campaign on census in all the twenty-seven local councils of the state.

The statement added that the campaign would serve as complement of governments' efforts towards successful conduct of the 2006 national

census in Jigawa.

The youth forum also disclosed that it will soon embark on a lecture on youth with the title: "the panacea for proper development of the state," which according to the forum, will aim at bringing the youths together in the state.

The statement therefore called on youths in the state to be at the forefront during the exercise with a view to ensuring a hitch-free exercise.

The forum called on the state government to include members of the forum in the activities of the forthcoming national census to enable them to render the services to their fathers' land.



Governor Ibrahim Shekarau and the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Alhaji Balarabe Sani Garba inspecting the recently installed printing press at the assembly complex.

Special adviser reiterates place of agriculture in economy

The need for diversification of the nation's source of revenue to agriculture from oil has again been emphasized.

The Special Adviser to the President on Food Security, Mrs. Oluwatoyin Adetunji who emphasized the need for the change yesterday in Kano, said that Nigeria is agriculturally blessed.

Speaking at the North West zonal planning and sensitization meeting for doubling maize production in Nigeria in Kano, the special adviser said that agriculture was a lifelong resource unlike oil which may be exhausted one day.

Mrs. Oluwatoyin explained that it was better for

the country to look for a better alternative that could sustain the nation, stating that every part of the country has its potentiality of improving agriculture. She therefore urged FG to put more effort to revive the sector.

She said they were in Kano State to encourage farmers in the state to support the programme of doubling the maize production, adding that the programme was aimed at improving the productivity of maize due to its high demand.

She explained that the programme has targeted 14 million tones of maize by 2007 as against the seven million tones now produced by the farmers across the nation.

The special adviser said

that Nigeria had realized the increasing demand of the maize by the neighbouring communities, the situation which she said if care was not been taken, may lead to the migration of such people to Nigeria in search of food, especially maize.

"But by doubling our demands, we may transport the surpluses to support the country to prevent their from trending into our country," she noted.

Speaking also at the occasion, the Kano State Commissioner of Agriculture, Alhaji Ibrahim Garba, disclosed that the state government prior to the doubling programme introduced the Spe-

cial Maize Production Programme (SMFPP) which aims at improving food production in the state.

Alhaji Garba said that the state government also succeeded in supporting over 10,000 farmer groups towards the establishment of about 45,000 hectares of management training plots between 2004-2006.

The commissioner, who said 42% of the hectares were devoted to maize production, said also that the state average of maize production had improved from 1.75 tones over 2.16 tones per hectare in 2004.

He added that the annual production of the state also risen from 103,680 in 2003 to 135,650 tones in 2004.

Workshop tasks Shekarau on maternal mortality

The Kano State government has been asked to map out appropriate modalities to tackle the menace of high rate of maternal mortality in the state.

The plea was contained in a communiqué issued to newsmen after the three-day International Policy Advocacy Training Workshop on Reproductive Policy held in Kano recently.

The communiqué suggested that since Kano State was ranked highest among other states of the country in the issue of maternal mortality, the state government should strive hard to reverse the trend.

The workshop, which also deliberated on the HIV/AIDS pandemic, said that the problem needs serious and immediate attention from the government, especially northern state governments, as according to the communiqué, the HIV/AIDS prevalence is higher among the women in the northern part of the country.

The communiqué jointly signed by the chairman and secretary of the communiqué drafting committee, Alhaji Shehu Makarfi and Hajiya

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, Correspondent (Kano)

Fatima Jallo respectively, said that although there was high level political commitment to the problem, but care and support to the people living with HIV/AIDS is very weak while stigmatization is also high.

The workshop, which targeted at legislatures from Zamfara, Kano, Kebbi, and Sokoto states, called on the state governors to consider the policy advocacy as a strategic instrument for pushing reforms and achieving results in reversing the menace of maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS in their states and the north at large.

Participants at the workshop also identified lack of full autonomy of legislators as a fact that seriously affects legislation on health matters and therefore called for an immediate action in that respect.

The workshop expressed appreciation to the Kano State government for its supports and concern to the cause of women and children in the state, and therefore called on other states to emulate Kano.

EKO TRUST

EFCC trails

LASU officials

Officials of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) may have been on the trail of some past administrators of the Lagos State University, LASU and professors over an alleged fraud to the tune of N6billion stacked in some secret account.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that the bubble burst late last year when a banker walked into the office of the new Vice Chancellor, Professor Lateef Hussien, obviously to see the immediate past VC, but was disappointed to see another person at the helms of affair.

But when asked about his mission, the banker was reported to have informed the VC that the university had a huge sum of money lodged in their bank over a long period of time.

He was said to have informed the VC that the management of the bank wanted to know when the school management would be in need of the money.

Surprised by the sudden revelation, Hussien, was said to have informed the Chairman of the governing council, Mr. Akin Kekere Ekun, who was also surprised at the revelation.

Consequently, the pro-chancellor swung into action by contacting various banks and discovered many banks allegedly operated by the institution and not disclosed to the university management and contained huge sums of money.

The banks, according to sources at the institution, numbered about 60 with at least over N100million. It was also discovered that some lecturers, professors were also involved in the shady deal.

Our correspondent further learnt that a meeting was call by the pro-chancellor where he gave involving lecturers ultimatum to refund whatever money in their possession or risk being arrested, a threat that paid off.

Some of the alleged professor were said to have refunded a total sum of N20million. Further investigations revealed that the management of the institution has instituted a probe panel headed by one Professor Asaju.

Meanwhile, students of the institution have called for the outcome of the probe

panel public and what the school authority intends to do with the money.

The students had last Tuesday staged a minor protest where two students were allegedly shot and have been taken to the institution's hospital.

The school was subsequently closed down until further notice to forestall breakdown of law and order.

The students are asking for N8, 000 for staylites and freshers N15, 000, adding that the current N25, 000 being charged by the authority is on the high side.

When contacted, the pro-chancellor, Akin Kekere Ekun, who neither confirmed the story nor deny it, said the school authority is trying to put everything in shape, and that what is paramount is how to move the school forward.

The state Commissioner for Education, Dr. Kunle Lawal, in his response, denied all the allegations, saying there is no aorta of truth in it.



Retired DIG of police, Alhaji Dan Madami, chairman, Presidential Committee on Police Reforms, exchanges pleasantries with Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State, during a public hearing on police reform in Lagos...Monday
Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

Rep advocates computer literacy for youths

A member House of Representatives, Hon. Joseph Ajatta, has stressed the need to encourage computer literacy and engineering among the

people especially the youths, as a way of alleviating poverty, as well as ensuring self-sustenance.

Hon. Ajatta representing Oshodi/Isolo federal con-

stituency II under the platform of Alliance for Democracy (AD) made the remarks over the weekend during the second Matriculation Ceremony of over 400 students, beneficiaries of his computer Engineering/Desktop Publishing Empowerment Programme.

His words: "My drive to sustain this training in computer stems from the fact that the computer has become part of everyday life. The computer accounts for virtually every thing in life. It then means that person's skill in the usage and control of computer will largely determine his or her value in the labour market.

"So the desire is to train men and women who will be able to perfectly operate, service, repair and can with time build computer with the ultimate aim of creating a credible means of livelihood for a very long time to come".

Speaking on the capital-intensive project, Hon. Ajatta stated that the programme was part of his efforts at giving dividends of democracy to the teeming populace of the constituency and beyond.

He stressed that the only way to be a true representative of the people is to serve through various laudable means such as skills empowerment in which computer knowledge stands out among the rest.

While congratulating the students for choosing a career in computer engineering and usage, he advised the

matriculating students to let their participation in the programme challenge their inner being and essence of their living.

His words: "Remember that you are not here because your mates are here or because you see it as a place to while away time. Some of you may have tried one or two things before now without getting the desired result, but take it that you have re-discovered yourself. Know that today you have chosen for yourself a career that will possibly change your life, your family and the entire society for better.

This is only and if you give yourself, your whole time, energy and total concentration to the programme.

"Be disciplined, courageous and be dedicated, you will find that the sky will be your limit. We have assembled the right caliber of trainers, administrators and support staff all of whom will be readily available to meet your needs."

Hon. Ajatta expressed gratitude to God for giving him the spirit and the enablement to contribute positively to humanity.

He stated that the purpose of establishing the scheme was gradually being achieved, saying that many people in Oshodi/Isolo Federal Constituency II, Lagos would be economically empowered to be self-employed and those who can employ others.

Murder: Jankara youths threaten police

Youths in Jankara area of Ojokoro, a suburb of Lagos, have given a seven-day ultimatum to the authorities of the Nigeria Police, Lagos Command to produce the three policemen allegedly involved in the murder of a hunchback man or no policeman would be allowed to move freely in the area.

The three policemen were alleged to have beaten the hunchback man to death last week while in the custody of the Ebenezer Police Station.

The deceased, identified as Ige, but popularly called Lagata, was said to have been murdered Saturday, February 4 this year at the Ebenezer Police Station, after which his corpse disappeared in controversial circumstances.

Two of the officers, according to police sources, are now being held by the special investigations department of the State Criminal Investigations Department SCID, Panti, Yaba.

The youths armed with various placards and leaves staged a protest at the station on Tuesday, calling on the Inspector General of Police,

Stories by Olumide Bajulaiye, Correspondent, Lagos

Sunday Ehindero, to release the officers to them to enable them carryout their own judgment on them.

"We want to see the duo of Sule and Corporal Emma so that we can do unto them what they did to Ige, the hunchback danfo conductor, murdered mysteriously. We will not agree with any other justice except they are handed over to us", they shouted.

The youths also warned that any policeman seen on the road after the seven-day ultimatum would be summarily dealt with, and have threatened to burn down the police station should justice not prevail.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that the police and some ritualists are connected to the murder because this is not the first time such a thing happened.

According a woman who identified herself as Rukayat, several people have disappeared mysteriously only to see their human parts in the

bush. "This bush was earlier earmarked for a market by the local government council, but was stopped by the state government on the ground that the land belongs to it".

It was gathered that some human parts were found in the bush last week when officials of the state SCID visited the area.

When our correspondent visited the state police command, the Public Relations Officer, Bode Ojajuni, confirmed the story, adding that investigation is on and that two of the policemen are currently been detained at the SCID.

According to him, appropriate measures would be taken against the policemen if found guilty. He however advised the youths in the area to shun any act of violent, adding that any act of vandalism would not solve the problem nor revive the deceased.

Ojajuni further advised that they should allow the police to do their job, saying that anyone that has useful information should come forward with it.



NATIONAL WELDING CAPABILITY DATABASE. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF NIGERIAN WELDERS/FITTERS

In accordance with Government Policy and targets on Nigerian Content Development, Specific guidelines have been issued to all operators in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry for scope of work that must be performed in Nigeria.

As a result, the Nigerian content scope earmarked in current ITTs for upcoming projects indicates that increased work loads will be placed in Nigerian companies supplying goods and services to the Oil and Gas industry.

In collaboration with various key stakeholders in the industry the Nigerian Content Division (NCD) of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) is initiating structured capacity building programs geared towards upgrade of in-country facilities, human resources and institution to participate in the supply of goods and services in the industry.

One of these programs is the training and certification of welders, fitters and other related artisans to fill the widening gaps resulting from the increased

tonnage of work to be placed in local fabrication yards.

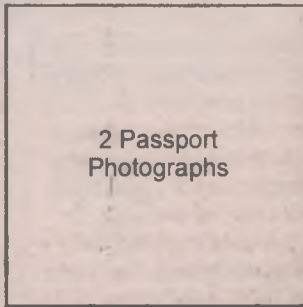
Structured training will be organized with the Nigerian Institute of Welding (NIW) using an International Standard Organisation (ISO) approved curriculum to upgrade the skills of non-coded welders and fitters prior to certification. Subsequently, the various welders and fitters will be tested and certified (using an internationally accredited certification system) to form the core of a National Welding Capability database.

All interested welders and/or fitters in Nigeria (whether members of the Nigerian Welders Association or not) are hereby invited to register in the Nigerian welding capability database by completing and submitting the cut-out form (or photocopy) to any of the under listed NNPC locations three (3) weeks from the date of this publication

Note: THIS IS NOT A JOB APPLICATION FORM.



ALL NIGERIAN WELDERS/FITTERS REGISTRATION FORM (please provide answers where applicable only and attach all relevant supporting documents.)



1. Surname: _____

2. Other Names: _____

3. Sex: Male/Female 4. Age: _____

5. GSM/Tel Number: _____

6. Mailing Address: _____

7. E-mail Address: _____

8. Are you a Welder _____ OR Fitter _____

9. Did you receive any formal training in welding or fitting? Yes/No

10. If yes, give the name(s) and address (es) of training Institute or company

a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____

11. State the certificate(s) obtained from above training institute or company with dates

a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____

12. Are you a registered member of Nigerian Welders Association? Yes/No

13. Are you registered with any other welders or fitters association/society? Yes/No

14. If yes, please state the names of the association/society:

a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____

15. Do you have any welding and/or fitting experience in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria or any other part of the world? Yes/No

16. If yes, please list out the project name, the fabrication yard and the name of the industry serviced:

a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____

Signature & Date

Signature of Immediate Supervisor & Date

ADDRESSES

- NCD Office, Block A, NNPC Towers, Corporate Headquarters, Abuja.
- The Manger, NNPC Lagos Zonal Office, 28, Ademola Street, Ikoyi, Lagos.
- The Depot Manager, PPMC Depots Jos
- The Manager, Kaduna Zonal Office, 24, Gobarau Road, Kaduna.
- The Depot Manager, PPMC Depots Suleija
- The Depot Manager, PPMC Depots Ibadan
- The Depot Manager, PPMC Depots Ilorin

- The Manger, Warri Zonal Office, 19/21, Warri/Sapele Road, Warri.
- The Depot Manager, PPMC Depots Enugu
- The Depot Manager, PPMC Depots Aba
- The Manager, Port-Harcourt Zonal Office,
- The Depot Manager, PPMC Depots Maiduguri
- The Depot Manager, PPMC Depots Gombe

NEWS

First rainfall calms frayed nerves in Bauchi

The heavens opened up on Tuesday to wash away spilled blood, smoke and tears of weekend's mayhem which engulfed Bauchi, as the city records its first rainfall.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the rain, the first this year, started at about 3.50 p.m. and brought calm to the city.

The state capital had witnessed communal violence which the Red Cross said left 18 people dead and 100 injured.

Residents of Bauchi had to endure about a week of

intense heat, which forced many of them to stay outside their homes for fresh air.

"It is a good omen," Malam Usman Jibrin, a

resident of Wunti quarters, said, adding that it was also a sign of blessing which the people must appreciate by giving peace a chance.

FG receives 10,000 applications for 1,000 jobs

The Federal Civil Service Commission says it has received more than 10,000 applications for the 1,000 jobs approved by the president last year.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that President Olusegun Obasanjo had directed the commission to employ 1,000 graduates with first class and second class upper degrees into the civil service.

The commission's Chairman, Ambassador Ahmed Al-Gazali told the NAN today in Abuja that the commission was putting in place neces-

sary mechanism to commence work on the applications.

He debunked claims that a syndicate was selling employment letters meant for the high flyers as directed by the president, stressing that "that employment cannot be faked."

"We have gone a step ahead of forgers and syndicates dealing on employment, we have introduced security measures to employment letters emanating from the commission, it can no longer be forged," he said.

He said that the commission had in the past appre-

The rainfall, which lasted for about 30 minutes, forced people back to their homes and stopped the unending stampede and panic due to a false alarm raised by some unidentified persons about the crisis.

Meanwhile, the city is now calm, as people are resuming their normal businesses.

hended those suspected to be forging documents of the commission, adding that it was at present working with the law enforcement agents to smash the syndicates deceiving innocent Nigerians.

He advised job seekers to exercise restraint by ensuring that they "do not fall into the hands of such syndicates".

He said that the commission had commenced the computerisation of its operations to track down forgers as well as enhance service delivery to Nigerians.

Jibril Aminu lists benefits of constitution review

Senator Jibril Aminu says constitutional amendment will afford Nigerians the opportunity to iron out fundamental issues affecting the polity.

Fielding questions from newsmen in Yola on Monday, Aminu said "it is unfortunate that those, who swore to protect the law have turned to be above the law".

He pointed out that, third-term would not happen if the people obtained the two-third majority against it and those in its favour "can only get it if they can obtain the needed two-third as well".

The senator decried narrowing of the amendment to third-term and "negating

other important issues".

He also dismissed the emphasis on zoning, saying, it had further divided the nation and people had accorded it a fourth tier of government position.

The Senator appealed to the media, the academia, politicians and other stakeholders not to be misled on the review to mean only third-term agenda.

Nigeria's law on basic education, best in Africa

—UNESCO

UNESCO has adjudged Nigeria's Universal Basic Education (UBE) law as one of the best legal documents on basic education in Africa.

Professor Gidado Tahir, UBE Executive Secretary, disclosed this in Abuja yesterday while addressing chairmen of State Universal Basic Education Bureaus (SUBEBs).

He said UNESCO made the commendation in Paris at the just concluded general conference of the organisation.

"Other experts at various international fora have attested to this fact as well," Tahir said.

He said UNESCO had requested UBEC to organise a regional seminar on UBE law for

possible adaptation by other developing countries.

"I wish to remind you that it has unambiguously recognised basic education as an inalienable right that must be free and compulsory.

"With the law clearly delineating roles and responsibility for basic education, we must collectively play our respective and complementary roles so that education for all truly becomes the responsibility of all of us," Tahir stressed.

He said that the chairmen and UBEC workers had a responsibility of steering the full enforcement of the law so that all children, irrespective of their physical and socio-economic conditions, would have unfettered access to basic education.

Bird flu: Yobe govt stops supply of eggs to schools

Yobe government says it has stopped the daily supply of 208,333 eggs to pupils in 514 schools under its home-grown feeding and health programme.

Education commissioner, Goni Umar, explained that the action was informed by fears of bird flu infection.

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday in Damaturu that "since the withdrawal of one egg for each pupil daily, it has been replaced with beef, fish and beans.

"The pupils also receive one orange after each meal."

Umar said the pupils would be weighed on a regular basis to determine if the protein-rich meal had any impact on their health.

According to him, the foodstuff provided to the schools is produced locally, while cash is given to each school feeding management committee.

Meanwhile, the commissioner has begun an inspection of the feeding system in three local government areas within each senatorial district.

"We will explore all avenues to ensure that the rest of the primary school pupils benefit from the programme by September this year," he said.

Umar appealed to stakeholders in the education sector to support government's efforts at sustaining the feeding programme.

"I am encouraged that enrolment has increased by 100 per cent in some places, while 200 per cent was recorded in others," he said.

The commissioner added that both the state and local governments spent N54 million each month on the feeding programme, while the federal government contributed N84 million.



The leader of the Command and Staff College (CSC) Jaji, Course 28 participants, Navy Captain Sylvester Chinwueba (left) presenting souvenir to Governor Muhammad Adamu Aliero of Kebbi State during a courtesy visit on the governor in Birnin Kebbi ...recently.

C'ttee rejects third-term tenure

The committee set up by the Bauchi State government to prepare a position paper on the review of the 1999 Constitution has rejected any third term for political office holders.

The committee, which presented its report yesterday in Bauchi to Governor Ahmadu Mu'azu, said it supported the retention of the present two-term tenure of four years each.

Chairman of the committee Alhaji Sule Katagun vilified the National Assembly for the "hasty and half-hearted manner" it was going about the issue.

He said constitution

making and review were too important to be treated with levity.

He said the National Assembly committee on the review was placing too much emphasis on political and institutional amendments at the expense of economic and social sectors.

Katagun said though the committee had identified more than 88 for amendment and 55 others that should be tinkered with, it however, believed that the review should wait until after the 2007 elections.

Some of the recommendations of the committee, he said, include reducing the

powers of the federal government to empower states and local governments.

It also sought for total independence of SIEC's and INEC, roles for traditional chiefs, reforms in agriculture, education, banking and finance sectors.

The committee also canvassed for a separate office for Attorney-General outside executive powers, and an office of Accountant-General for federation accounts.

It also called for drastic reduction in the number of ministries and political appointees, and pegging recurrent expenditure to less than 60 per cent of annual budgets.

Mu'azu said after receiving the report that its recommendations would serve as a referendum on the opinion of the people of the state.

Bird Flu: C/River govt bans chicken sales

The Cross River Department of Veterinary Resources has prohibited the sale of all forms of chicken to stem the spread of bird flu.

The department explained in a statement that all sales and distribution of birds, including cross-border and intra-state marketing of poultry products, had been banned.

Poultry products covered by the ban include day-old chicks, broilers, cockerels, and local birds.

The statement also directed members of the public and stakeholders in the poultry industry "to report sick or diseased birds to various veterinary services offices across the 18 council areas of the state for prompt action.



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Jacob Gyang Buba
 Comptroller- General of Customs
 President NBBF

News

N/Delta: Gov Saraki calls for resolution

Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara State has described the Niger Delta crisis as a big national issue which must be addressed collectively if there is to be lasting peace and stability in the region.

Fielding questions from newsmen on arrival from America at Ilorin International Airport, Governor Bukola, who delivered a paper at the World Agric Expo in California, said the crisis "has knock-on effects not only within the country, but outside."

"We all have to put heads together and find solution to the problem because as you can see it has knock-on

From Abdulrazaq Adebayo,
Correspondent, Ilorin

effects not only within the country, but outside the country, not just from investment point of view, but also the stability of the zone and oil prizes," he stated.

The governor commended his South-South colleagues for doing their best to contain the crisis, explaining that it was now time to diversify the economy by addressing other sources in view of the concerns from the oil sector.

On the outcome of the just concluded World Agric Expo, Governor Saraki said he was able to hold meetings with the governor of California on agricultural

equipment and support and provision of mechanised farming facilities to farmers.

He said discussions also centred on dairy and food processing of farm produce to boost the income of peasant farmers and create more job opportunities in the agro-allied sector.

Governor Saraki described the on-going exercise on commercial farming a dream come true, saying "I am fulfilled despite the initial opposition which greeted the dream."

He said the state would continue to do its best in such ventures, with emphasis on public-private sector partnership as the best way out.

Areas not demarcated by the National Population Commission (NPC) because of boundary disputes, would be counted during the forth coming national census.

This was disclosed by the federal commissioner in charge of Niger State, Alhaji Ibrahim Dogon Daji.

Speaking yesterday at the inauguration of the Niger State Logistics Committee on the Census, the federal commissioner said that it was not the responsibility of the NPC to settle boundary disputes, but that of the National Boundary

Census: Undemarcated areas will be counted

From Aideloje Ojo,
Correspondent, Minna

Commissioner.

Dogon Daji said the population commission has decided to keep the census results in disputed areas until such cases are settled by the boundary commission.

He said although the commission was not anticipating any problem in Niger state, it had put in place measures to ensure the success of the exercise.

—Commissioner

Inaugurating the state Logistic Committee, the chairman, Niger State Technical Committee on Population, Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu, said census materials would be distributed in the state from March.

He charged the Logistic Committee to ensure that all vehicles for movement of material were adequately maintained.

Why Duke castigates us

—Councilors

Irked by a recent castigation by Cross River State Governor, Donald Duke, alleging inexperience, incompetence and ignorance in governance against council officials, leaders of council legislatures in the state have risen in defence of their role in the third tier administration, claiming that the recent attack on council officials was a play to whip up sentiments that would make them unpopular.

Rising from a meeting in one of the council head quarters in the state, the councilors, who pleaded anonymity, told *Daily Trust* "they want to give a dog a bad name so to hang it," adding that "the councils have been arm-twisted and

From Bassey Ita,
Correspondent, Calabar

seized all their powers and functions, including the rights and privileges to handle and spend funds at will."

"The governor has began the attitude of summersaulting the law to suit his agenda. "He is only interested in putting in place caretaker committee so that he gets all the allocations accruing to councils."

"He did it twice before we came on board and till today all the monies have not been accounted for," the leaders queried after the meeting of all the leaders of council legislature.

According to the councilors, "We are so perplexed that as a tier of government we are not

allowed to carry out our statutory responsibilities. We don't even have bye-laws to make, all our bye-laws are concocted from the state government even including laws on how to run the council, or function as a representative of people."

On allocations disbursed to councils and what has become of the leaders who pleaded anonymity for fear of "terrible circumstances," said so far each council has collected N76 million instead of about N1.3 billion each since their inauguration in May 2004.

The councilors also queried the whopping deduction of N400,000 months ago from each council's allocation for the provision of just two flags only to each council, saying that flags that can be sewn and designed at rates below N10,000 could gulp that much. They described the sum as "outrageous" just as the project was "incredible".

The leaders said although they are not afraid of change, the castigation by the governor was "unnecessary" and further explained the many injustices done the local government system in the state.

They called on the federal government, the National Assembly and other political parties to rise in defence of democracy in Cross River State.

Daily Trust recalls that the governor had recently castigated council officials for incompetence, urging the elites and community leaders to select competent persons for council positions in the next dispensation.



From left: Hajija Maryam Ciroma, Minister of Women Affairs; the Minister, Solid Minerals, Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili and the Minister of Works, Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe, during the FEC meeting held at the State House Abuja... yesterday

Rivers Assembly passes vote of confidence on speaker

Rivers State lawmakers have passed a vote of confidence on the House Speaker, Hon. Chibuikwe Amaechi and have dismissed reports that the House members were in conflict over political ambitions and fund allocations.

The House on Monday described the activities as stable, and expressed loyalty to the leadership and warned those who may want to destabilise it to desist from such thoughts.

The House leader, Hon. Tamunosisi Jaja in a motion resulting from a report from a local tabloid that heavy misunderstanding was brewing in the House over money, had chronicled the profile of the Speaker whom he said the House found

From Muhammad Ajah,
Correspondent, PHC

worthy to have served as a Speaker for six years without interruption.

Jaja, representing Opobo Nkoro constituency, said that Amaechi who had chaired the All Speakers conference for years and served as an officer in the Commonwealth Parliament Association was found worthy by President Obasanjo who appointed him into the council of the National Extracting Industry Initiative.

Supporting the motion, the representative of Port Harcourt city, Hon. Charles Achor Nsiegbe, described those who take pleasure in dragging the image of the Assembly to garbage as thus enemies of progress.

The deputy House leader, Hon. James George Fuyagefika urged members to also utilize the opportunity to reaffirm the total support to the policies of the state governor, even as he advised the people not to fight good leadership at all levels.

In his ruling, the Deputy Speaker of the House, Hon. Tonye Harry, cautioned those with politically selfish interests to keep off attempts to stain the good reputation of the House leadership.

He directed the acting clerk to ensure that the resolution on the vote of confidence were conveyed to appropriate quarters without delay.

However, the 27 lawmakers who were present at the sitting adopted the prayers of the motion and reaffirmed support for the Speaker.

2007 election: Police

pledge support for INEC

The FCT Commissioner of Police, Mr. Lawrence Alobi, has assured the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of police security during the 2007 general election.

Mr. Alobi made the promise while receiving the FCT INEC Commissioner, Alhaji Umar Usman, in his office. The CP said police and the electoral body must partner together to ensure smooth conducts of election in the territory.

He told the INEC boss that the police in the FCT is ready to re-double its efforts to ensure that the forth coming election is conducted hitch free, as according to him, the success of every election is a pride to the police.

"There is no way election can hold when INEC and the police do not partner together. We are set, our men are set to give the required police protection to INEC electoral materials, INEC staff and even the electorates and the contestants themselves. Our interest is to maintain peace at the election. Let everybody come out, vote and go back home safely. And that is what we will try to ensure," Alobi said.

He said they will improve on

By Shehu Abubakar,
Reporter

their previous performance to ensure that innocent and legitimate voters are allowed to vote freely. He said the police will not tolerate thuggery and other form of violence at election centres.

Speaking earlier, the new INEC Commissioner, Mr. Usman, who told Alobi that he was recently transferred from their Kano office, said he was at the command to familiarize himself in the forthcoming elections.

He said the visit which was part of his tour to all stakeholders in the 2007 election was also to enable him sensitise both officials and the electorates on the need to have a very free, fair and violent free election.

He stressed the importance of a free and fair election to the acceptability of government by the electorate which he said is the guiding principles of his commission.

Mr. Umar said he was briefed by the INEC commissioner that handed over to him that the FCT police command has been very co-operative with the commission, and urged Alobi to extend the same gesture to him.

Take your destiny into your hands—Minister advised varsities

Education minister, Mrs. Chinwe Nora Obaji, has advised universities to take their destiny into their hands as the federal government has established the necessary environment for the growth and sustenance of university education in the country.

The minister, who spoke in a post-convocation interactive dinner with senior staff of the University of Nigeria Nsukka

(UNN) over the weekend, disclosed that before 1999, when the present administration came to power, federal universities got about N6 billion as allocation while in 2005, the allocation has increased to N53 billion.

She said in 2006, 11 per cent of the federal budget will go to education, out of which 66 per cent will go to federal universities, adding that apart

from interventions from the Education Tax Fund (ETF), and development partners like the UNESCO, UNICEF, DFID and NNPC, the World Bank has approved the sum of \$300 million for basic education in the country.

She said the inauguration of University Governing Councils and the proper selection of Vice-chancellors will ensure that administration of universities is

effective and efficient. The Post-UME screening prospective undergraduates, capping of enrolment into universities, accreditation of courses will further boost university education in the years to come.

She challenged universities to work hard to attain the previous status of Nigerian Universities when foreign students and teachers were many in Nigerian universities because of the quality of learning and teaching.

NEWS

Omoruyi calls for scrapping of Information Ministry

A former Director-General of the defunct Centre for Democratic Studies (CDS), Professor Omo Omoruyi, has called for the scrapping of the Information Ministry, saying its existence in a democratic government was an aberration.

Speaking in an interview with *Daily Trust* yesterday in Abuja, Omoruyi stated that the nation's Information Ministry had been a propaganda tool in the hands of

By Safiyah Ojeifo
(Special Correspondent)

successive military regimes. "It has always been my view that government has no business with the Ministry of Information, having a government television and having a government radio. What we see today is a shame. It is a disaster that government television and government radio are being used to undermine commun-

ication with the Nigerian people and the Minister of Information is another disaster; he misrepresents facts and he does not know anything about mass communication.

"He jumps on television and begins to tell you things. He did that with the *Newsview* all over and since then whenever I see him on television, I turn it off and when he talks, it is always the opposite of what is going on. "I was surprised that up until now, the *Nigerian Television Authority* (NTA) would not tell us what is happening in Onitsha, but

Channels and *AIT* gave us all that," he said.

Omoruyi said what he was proposing, which he had proposed before was that government had no business running a ministry of information under a democratic order.

According to him, "It could have it under the military because we need somebody to carry on the propaganda. Propaganda that we have under a democratic government is what I see everyday. It is either you tell me how much megawatts of electricity you generate, which does not mean any-

thing to me as what I want to see is light and if there is light, I do not want to be told there is light.

"You tell me that you have tarred road from Abuja to Benin. You do not need to tell me. I do not have to be told. If the road is there, it is there. You do not need to come to air and begin to publicise what the government is doing. Government does not need to publicise what is obvious."

He said that money being spent on government propaganda should be used in providing for the poor in this country, stressing that "the

poor are the ones suffering".

Omoruyi said that there was no ministry of information in the United States or in the United Kingdom, maintaining that "under a democratic order, you do not need propaganda by *NTA* or by *Radio Nigeria*. I have not seen this kind of thing before that the machinery of government is being used to undermine the capacity of the public to know what is going on."

"So, Mr. Frank Nweke (Junior), Information Minister, if I come to power today, you have no job," he declared.

PDP stabilises democracy in Nigeria — Ali

The national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Senator Amadu Ali, has said that PDP is the party that has made democracy survive in Nigeria for six years.

By Alsha Umar,
Reporter Foreign Desk

He disclosed this in a press briefing in Abuja at the visit of assistant secretary of the Syrian Baath Arab Socialist Party, Abdullah Al-Ahmar, during his visit to the Peoples Democratic Institute (PDI), which is part of a three day diplomatic effort aimed at establishing relationship and cooperation with Nigeria.

Ali added that since the inception of the current democratic dispensation, the party has successfully established a true democratic institution in Nigeria, adding that it would continue to work for the sustenance of democracy.

He said part of the PDP's achievements was the setting up of the Ombudsman to look into the alleged abuses of human rights in Nigeria and heal the wounds inflicted by those alleged abuses.

He also described the ongoing constitutional amendment as another contribution of the party, describing it as the largest in Africa.

Responding, the Mr Al-Ahmar said the visit would mark the beginning of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

He declared that the two parties share the same ideologies and objectives.

Also speaking, the acting director general of PDI, Mr Anthony Ubani, said the institute, which was established in November 2000, had been working since then to promote democracy in Nigeria through the provision of strategic training, capacity building and research programmes.

"In this regard, the institute has successfully implemented numerous local and international programmes which have added tremendous values to the growth and sustainability of our nascent democracy," Ubani said.

He further stated that the present government has not only made Africa the centerpiece of its foreign policy, but it has also moved proactively to support the growth of democracy and the restoration of peace in several African countries, like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast and the Sudan.

Poor remuneration threatens morale of public servants — Shonekan

From Allyn S. Machelo, Kano

The poor remuneration system of the public system has been identified as the major factor responsible for the inefficiency of the public service.

The former head of Interim National Government and chairman, Presidential Committee on the Consolidation of Emoluments in the Public Sector, Chief Ernest A. O. Shonekan, disclosed this at the final deliberative forum of the committee recently in Kano.

He said the federal government was desirous of putting in place a mechanism for the effective adjustment of the incomes of its workforce on a regular basis in accordance with the economic realities of the day.

He said the setting up of salary panels or commissions in the past had always triggered wrong signals in the economy, resulting in accentuated increases in price level, thereby making workers worse off from any wage review.

Mr. Shonekan said the objective of his committee was to look into the issue of emoluments in the public sector with the view to consolidate them to ensure stability and industrial harmony in the country.

He added that government was also concerned about the contradictory salaries and allowance regime in the public sector where people with similar education qualifications and experience received different salaries.

He expressed hope that the committee would recommend to the government a salary regime that can be subjected to rational adjustments as may be necessary without having adverse consequences on the average worker.



Lightning hit Chikankwa local government of Kwara State, every raining season claims five - seven lives. The residents recently cried out to the state government for a modern bridge, even the river is fast flowing further down.

Army pledges loyalty to civil authorities

The Nigerian Army has reiterated its absolute loyalty to civil authorities and promised to defend the country's constitution to sustain its nascent democracy.

From AbdulRazaq Adedoyin,
Correspondent (Ilorin)

General Bazani, who was in the state on a three-day tour of military formations under his command, said his priority would be on training and re-training of officers and men of the Nigerian Army to defend the country's territorial integrity.

The army boss expressed appreciation to the state

government for its assistance to the 22 Armoured Brigade, Soba Barracks, Ilorin, in the areas of infrastructural development and provision of potable water.

He also commended Dr. Saraki on the unprecedented achievements recorded by his administration, especially in the areas of road construction, employment generation and agricultural projects, noting that these had earned him various national and

international awards that have brought glory to Kwara State and Nigeria.

Dr. Saraki, who congratulated the GOC on his new appointment, sought cooperation from the military to defend the country's hard-earned democracy.

The governor urged General Bamali to improve on the general welfare of officers and men to ensure commitment and loyalty and assured him of the continuous support of the state government.

In another development, Dr. Saraki has assured the National Population Commission of adequate government support to ensure the success of the forthcoming national headcount in the state.

He gave the assurance in his office Tuesday while receiving the new federal commissioner of the commission, Mr. Belchukwu Okoye Emeh, who paid him a visit.

Governor Saraki, who described the state as very lucky with the past antecedents of the new commissioner, assured him of easy access to his office to ensure the success of the population census.

Collapsed bridge: Residents cry out for help

Residents of Ligari in Chikankwa local government area of Kaduna state have cry out to the state government over the collapse of the only bridge linking the community with outside world.

By Shuaibu Yahaya

who are farmers and cattle rearers, Chief Musa said the construction of Ligari bridge will also link villages like Leyi, Guriko, Masakoro and Jumo to other parts of Kaduna and neighbouring states.

The district head explained that every year the bridge often claims over five to seven people especially at the peak of the rainy season.

He commended the Kaduna state governor, Alhaji Ahmed Makarfi for his developmental efforts in the state and implore him to construct

the bridge for the sake of conveying farm produce to the markets in Kaduna.

In another development, Chief Musa commended the Marafan Nasarawa, Comrade Nuhu Mohammed for his philanthropist gesture aimed at improving the welfare of the people in the community.

Comrade Nuhu said he had constructed three bridges across Nasarawa district worth one million naira each explaining that construction of Ligari bridge is beyond what an individual can undertake because according to the Marafan the project will gulp a lot of millions of Naira.

NEWS

PRP, UNPP members join MRDD

Members of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) and the United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP) have decamped to the Movement for Restoration and Defence of Democracy (MRDD).

The defection, according to a statement by the party yesterday, was effected at the National secretariat of the MRDD in Abuja on Tuesday, and the National Chairman of the MRDD, Alh Gambo Jimeta, was noted to have described the development as positive because it would guarantee the sustenance of democracy in the country.

The statement said the Chairman of the Federal Capital (FCT) branch of the PRP, Alh Yusuf Kue who led

By Hammeed M Bello

his party members to the ceremony was received by MRDD chieftains, including the National coordinator of States, Alh M.M Abdu.

Kue, in a remark, expressed appreciation for the MRDD gesture in opening its doors for new members, and the reception given them. "He said the populace has now found a stable and reliable political party to operate in," the statement said.

In a response, Alh Abdu, according to the statement said, "the gate of the MRDD is open to all Nigerians who want to play politics without bitterness, and urged Nigerian politicians to

discuss issues rather than personalities."

Abdu was also noted to have said "in today's Nigeria, emphasis should be on how to serve the common man and not to loot the treasuries."

Similarly, the leadership of the UNPP and the PRP in Niger State were said to have led thousands of their members to Abuja to join the MRDD.

The Special Assistant on Media to the National Chairman of the MRDD, Mallam A Jayma noted to have said at the occasion that "the influx of party stalwarts from all parts of the country into MRDD, Nigeria's political future is bright."

The federal government has budgeted about N65 million in 2006 for the enlightenment of the principles and programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The Senior Special Adviser to the President on NEPAD (External), Amb. Isaac Aluko-Olokun stated this today in Abuja at a forum with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

Aluko-Olokun, who is also the national coordinator of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), said that the money would be used to do the type of enlightenment that SERVICOM did on good work ethics at the work place.

"When the APRM secretariat was set up last year, it was not easy to get an allocation but this year we are already in the budget," he

FG budgets N65m to enlighten people on NEPAD

said.

He noted, however, that the NEPAD domestic arm, headed by Mrs Chinyere Asika would need a lot more funding "because there are states coordinators and they relate with every ministry."

He further said that anytime the heads of state met housing them usually took about N40 million.

"NEPAD, generally is a facilitating agency, while the implementation is done at each ministry. We really do not need a budget," he said.

To Aluko-Olokun the message of NEPAD needed to be passed to the grass-

roots through the state's coordinators.

He said some of the basic principles of NEPAD were good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development.

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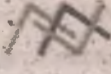
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News

Deposed Garki Chief alleges neglect

By Shehu Abubakar, Reporter

Barely two months after the dethronement of the third-class chief of Garki, Alhaji Usman Nga'kupi, by the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister, Malam Nasir el-Rufa'i, government is yet to release money for the upkeep of the deposed chief and the part of his life in exile.

Speaking with this reporter, the chairman of Abaji area council, Alhaji Mohammed Loko, said though he thought he was given an approval by the minister for the renovation of the official residence of the council's vice chairman for the chief to be moved in, cash backing authorising the flow of funds for the project had not been made available by the minister.

Alhaji Loko said the minister had approved that the equivalent of the deposed chief's salary, while in office, should be used to feed him and his family who had since been forcefully separated from the chief and restricted from visiting him.

The council boss, who confirmed that the deposed chief has been restricted from receiving visitors, said even members of Nga'kupi's immediate family that include his wives and children, would have to apply and obtain approval from the FCT ministry before they could be allowed to visit him.

He said even when approval

was given, family members were subjected to a thorough screening by security personnel and council officials at Abaji before they were allowed to meet with the deposed chief.

The council boss denied reports that the deposed chief is hypertensive and requires immediate medical attention. He said both the chief and the medical director provided by the council to look after him had told him that Nga'kupi has no ailment.

However, when this reporter visited the palace of the deposed chief at Garki and the *Ona's* palace in Abaji where he is being confined, palace aides

confirmed that Alhaji Nga'kupi has been complaining of hypertension since he was sent to exile.

All efforts to see the *Ona* of Abaji and chairman FCT council of chiefs, Alhaji Baba Yunusa, for comments on the state of health of the deposed chief failed. A palace source warned that the *Ona* may not speak to the press on the deposed chief of Garki without the permission of the FCT minister.

It would be recalled that Alhaji Nga'kupi was dethroned as the third class chief of Garki, along with five lesser chiefs who were under him over allegations of 'maintaining a posture of undue opposition and aggression towards the FCT administration'.



Kaduna State Deputy Governor, Mr. Patrick I. Yakowa, left, in handshake with Kaduna State Commissioner of Tourism, Alhaji Hussaini Mohammed Likoro, at the national workshop on Tourism Awareness and Development in Nigeria; organised by National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism, Abuja, held in Kaduna ...recently. Pic: Shehu K. Goro

Niger Delta: 'Legion not involved in kidnap saga'

From Mohammed Ajah, Correspondent (P/Harcourt)

Rivers State Council of Nigerian Legions has denied the involvement of its members in the armed crises rocking the Niger Delta region.

The national deputy commandant-general and chairman, Rivers State Command of the legion, Colonel Diggs Akobo (rd.), who made the rebuttal while addressing newsmen at the weekend, said his men would not work against the nation which they put their lives to build.

He noted that as military men on reserve, the legionnaires were not unmindful that they were still on oath not to only defend the integrity of the nation, but also to ensure the unity and stability of the country.

Akobo said the legion would not be involved in any activity that compromises that sacred duty, knowing the implications and consequences.

"I stand to say that if there is any officer of whatever capacity, rank or position that would say that ex-service men are the ones who empower, recruit or do anything that enhances the crises in the Niger Delta, I challenge the person to give definite information to this nation.

The National Human Rights Commission has been urged to check allegations of abuse of human rights by police officers and men at the Wuse Central Police Station in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The call was made by the executive director of a non-governmental organisation, the Society Against Discrimination and Related Intolerance, Mr. Sunday Orji, in a three-page petition he sent to the commission, the Civil Liberties Organisations (CLO), the Gambian High Commissioner in Nigeria and the Federal Ministry of Justice and a copy made available to *Daily Trust* newspapers.

Mr. Orji said the station was very notorious in detaining suspects on bailable offences beyond two days, as well as prominent in torturing suspects remanded in the station, thereby forcing them to make statements under duress.

By Shehu Abubakar, Reporter

Mr. Orji, who cited example of a Gambian national, Alhaji Dabo, who was allegedly remanded in the station for sixty-five days without trial over an alleged theft of a sewing machine, lamented that even when the matter was finally charged to court and the accused granted bail, the police went ahead to arrest and harass him over the same charge.

He said when he led officials of his group to Wuse Central Police Station to intervene over the re-arrest while the matter was still in court, the divisional crime officer of the station, Mr. Alex Aboh, told them that Alhaji Dabo was re-arrested because the complainant, Hajiya Miryam Sagir, was not happy over his release.

Mr. Orji alleged that the police officer told them that Hajiya Miryam went to the police station to protest against the release of Alhaji Dabo by the court, saying

Against the backdrop of violence witnessed in some states following protest over the recent provocative cartoon and the tension which has mounted on the Plateau, the state government has appealed for calm and reason among the people of the state.

Governor Joshua Dariye, who made the appeal in a state-wide broadcast, urged the people to imbibe the culture of resolving their differences through dialogue, stressing that resorting to violence would have the potential of compounding the already volatile situation in the state.

He pointed out that the prevailing peace on the Plateau had been resting on a delicate balance and urged all hands to be on deck to forestall any breach or attempt at tinkering with the situation.

Governor Dariye noted with satisfaction the statement issued by the Plateau State

Plateau Gov sues for peace

From Rakiya A. Mohammed, in Jos

Inter-Religious Council on Peace and Harmony in which the members condemned the cartoon and the violence in some neighbouring states.

"The cartoon no doubt has offended the religious sensitivity of Muslims all over the world and should be condemned by all right-thinking persons," the governor said.

Chief Dariye however stressed that members of the public should draw a line between the right of expression and any lawless conduct perpetrated under a particular smokescreen to unleash terror on the society.

While assuring that the state

government has put in place adequate security measures to guarantee public safety, the governor advised the people of Plateau State to go about their normal businesses without fear of molestation as the full weight of the law would be brought to bear on any person who takes the law into his/her hands.

He commiserated with states that had experienced violence over the development, and prayed that the situation would not escalate or attract reprisal attacks in other states of the federation.

Census results to be published based on localities - el-Rufa'i

By Benjamin Auta, Reporter

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Malam Nasir el-Rufa'i, has said that the results of the 2006 population and housing census will be published on the basis of localities.

He made the statement during a workshop organised by the National Population Commission (NPC) in the FCT on locality classification and identification in Abuja yesterday.

The minister, who was represented by Mr. Festus Esekhillie, said the exercise would contrast with the 1991 population census where localities were lumped, depriving individual localities their identities in the published population figures.

He called on participants, especially area council chairmen in the FCT, to make the optimum use of the opportunities provided by the workshop.

In his address, the chairman of NPC, Chief Samu'ila Danko Makama, who was represented by the FCT NPC commissioner, Dr. Mrs. Dotun Oduneye, said that the workshop was aimed at forging common understanding, particularly with the leadership of local councils.

He said locality lists compiled by the commission were sent to chairmen of LGAs for confirmation, but time constraint did not lead to a successful conclusion of the process.

The NPC boss said that some major cities which should constitute district localities were fragmented into mushroom localities during the preparatory activities for the 1991 census which resulted in loss of identities of major urban centres, like Ibadan, Kaduna, Onitsha and Enugu.

While giving her opening remarks, the NPC FCT commissioner said the workshop was organised, because the FCT was not adequately represented at the recent North-Central edition.

"The workshop is an opportunity for area council chairmen, traditional rulers and other stakeholders to understand how localities are classified and identified on the base map and also ensure that they are included in the final list," she said.



Malam Nasir el-Rufa'i

Rights commission urged to check police excesses

the accused being a foreigner, may likely jump bail.

"The DCO told us that he will keep Alhaji Dabo in police custody until the next date of the adjournment of his case when they will go to the court and withdraw the police First Information Report (FIR) with which they used to arraign him and return the case to the station. They were clearly not happy that the court had granted him bail," he said.

He lamented that due to lack of proper supervision by senior police officers at the station, "human rights were freely and open abused; a situation where a police officer wants to stick to the orders given to him by a mere complainant at the detriment of the rights and privileges of the accused person is regrettable."

He urged the National Human Rights Commission, the CLO and other human rights groups to ensure that the situation at the Wuse Central Police Station where

he alleged that a lot of suspects charged with bailable offences are being held beyond the mandatory two days, is immediately investigated and addressed.

He called on the Human Rights Commission to wade into the case of Alhaji Dabo to ensure that all the needed protection and assistance a victim of gross human rights abuse deserves, is granted him.

Alhaji Dabo, a professional tailor fell apart with his employer, Hajiya Miryam Sagir, the wife of FCT director of protocol who complained against him to the police, alleging that he stole her sewing machine and a CD radio player.

Alhaji Dabo, who alleged that his Gambian passport, residence permit and several other property valued at over a million naira were seized by Hajiya Miryam, also said she had been threatening his life and forcing him to relocate from Abuja.

News

Kogi 2007: I am under pressure, ex-gov Audu

Two-time former governor of Kogi State, Ah. Abubakar Audu, who returned to the country yesterday after three months holiday overseas, says he is under intense pressure from the people of Kogi State to return to the Government House in 2007.

Audu said if the pressure refuses to die down, he would have no choice than to rise to the occasion to serve his people.

Audu made the statement in Abuja yesterday shortly after he was received by friends and associates at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja.

He said Kogi people had been contacting him while on holiday abroad and that the pressure con-

By Hammond M. Bello

tinued upon his arrival yesterday. "They said I have nurtured the state from infancy, but that it is now orphaned, and I have been called to rescue it," Audu said.

"I will not turn my back against the people if they call me to rescue them, especially if it is within my capacity," he said.

He expressed regrets that structures put in place by his government for the development of the state are in state of decay, adding that this has been a source of worry for the indigenes of the state.

• He listed some of the structures that are suffering neglect or

are not being sustained to include Kogi State University at Ayangba, roads and the general welfare of the people, adding that those who have served their people well do not have anything to fear.

He said he lost the governorship election in 2003 not because he was unpopular, but that it was extremely rigged. "The election was rigged in a sophisticated way never seen in the history of the country," Nigerians, he said, and well aware now and would not tolerate any rigging in future elections.

• But he was not categorical whether he would remain in his party, the ANPP, or he would decamp to another, should he contest for the governorship in 2007.

The Akwa-Ibom State House of Assembly has on Tuesday approved the total budget outlay of N118,675,085,690 for the state's 2006 fiscal year.

The budget also has an increased amount of N3,833,500,000 over the proposed total budget size of N14,841bn with an inbuilt deficit of N286bn presented to it by the state governor, Obang Victor, Attah.

The review budget outlay now stands at N27,807,141,030 for recurrent services (including consolidated revenue fund charges of N6,738,520,680) and N90,867,944,660 for capital expenditure, representing an increase of 8.7 percent of the original provision.

Presenting the budget to the House of Assembly, the chairman, Committee on Appropriation and Finance, Hon. (Elder) Adasi Ubulom, said the increase of the total budget outlay was predicated upon the requests

AKHA approves state's budget of N118.6bn

From Idet Ekwemena, Correspondent (Uyo)

made by ministries and parastatals to enable them to complete ongoing core projects of the government.

Hon. Ubulom stated that the committee however refused to entertain requests for new projects that are not likely to be completed in 2006 and are not captured in AK-SEEDS.

To finance the budget, the committee chairman recommended a corresponding increase in derivation by N3,833,500,000 as against the original N51,900,000.

He however advised that since the size of the budget is not important but the percent-

age of its implemented, the executive should do all things possible to operate within the budget and thank those concerned for their cooperation towards the success of the assignment.

Responding, the Speaker of the Akwa-Ibom State House of Assembly, Chief Nelson Eborig, thanked the committee for operating within the time-frame and advised the executive to make judicious use of the budget to the benefit of the state.

Chief Eborig enjoined the people of the state to cooperate with the state government to ensure the full realization of the objective of the government, namely to bring about both human and infrastructural development before the expiration of the present administration.



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Furthermore, all correspondence on the recruitment process would be conducted on-line. Candidates are, therefore, advised to visit our website regularly.

News

Gombe residents shun poultry meat

Most people patronising food restaurants in Gombe metropolis have developed 'phobia' for fowl meat following the outbreak of the bird flu virus in some states of the country. Investigation by the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) correspondent in Gombe yesterday revealed

that not only do most of them shy away from the meat of all categories of birds, they also reject soups having the "slightest aroma" of such meats.

This development, the investigation further revealed, had forced the management of most restaurants to either drastically reduce or strike out meat of any form of bird

from their menu.

Mrs Lami Akut, the manager of 'Aroma Restaurant, a popular hotel in Gombe, said that prior to the outbreak of the bird flu virus, they were purchasing over thirty fowls, saying that the figure had now reduced to eight.

"Even after rejecting the fowl meat, some customers have gone the extra mile of rejecting stew with the slightest chicken meat aroma," she told NAN.

Mr John Edwards, the manager of Milk-N-Honey Restaurant, Gombe, said the low patronage of chicken pepper soup, a once-upon-a-time favourite dish, had forced a drastic cut on his restaurant's fowl purchase from thirty daily to only three.

"In fact, we have now decided to suspend the purchase of fowls until the situation improves," he revealed.

The proprietress of Meenat Restaurant, Gombe, Mrs Meenat Mohammed, was also forced to "expunge" chicken meat from her menu for the same reason.

She told NAN that her customers had told her that they had been "strongly advised" to avoid chicken meat as it was "harmful" to their health. Operators of "Bukaterias" and road-side food sellers, popularly known as "Mama Put" interviewed by NAN relayed the same story, saying that they had now shifted emphasis to fish and beef.

Meanwhile, the outbreak of the H5N1 Avian Influenza has dealt a big blow to the economic fortunes of local fowl sellers in Gombe State.

The state's chairman of the Fowl Sellers Association, Alhaji Abdulkarim Adamu, told NAN that the patronage of their birds had fallen by eighty per cent.

He said that this development had led to a corresponding fall in price, thus almost pushing his members out of business.

"Over ninety per cent of our major customers are restaurant operators and they had stopped buying because they too are experiencing a near zero patronage," Adamu lamented.



Prof. Babalola Borishade, Hon. minister of Aviation, Capt. Roland Iyayi, MD, Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) and Alhaji Ibrahim Shema, chairman, NAMA Board of Directors. At the Customer Service Forum, Organised by the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), held at the Lagos Sheraton Hotel Ikeja.

NIS conducts promotion interview

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) has started promotion interview in the service geared towards mass promotion of its officers.

The Comptroller-General of NIS, Mr Chukwurah Udeh, had said in an earlier interview that the promotion was delayed to enable those who went on Hajj to return.

According to him, after the interview and the consequent promotion, spaces would be created for em-

ployment in the service.

"Until we complete the promotion, we will not know the available vacancies to employ new hands," he said.

A source told the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) in Abuja that the interview, which started on Monday "is being conducted by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence, Immigration and Prison Service Board".

The *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) learnt that the category of officers being

interviewed included those on the rank of deputy controller of immigration, assistant controller of immigration, deputy chief inspectors, and assistant deputy chief inspectors.

Others are superintendent of immigrations, deputy superintendent of immigration, assistant superintendent of immigration and inspectors. According to the source, interview for other cadres of the service will be conducted in due course.

RMRDRC asks citizens to buy made in Nigeria goods

Mrs Paulen Tallen, the chairperson of the Raw Materials Research and Development Council, has stressed the need for Nigerians to buy made-in-Nigeria goods.

"We should always use our locally produced materials because that will enhance

the nation's industrialisation efforts," she said on Monday in Sokoto. Tallen told newsmen it was unfortunate that Nigeria had become "a dumping ground" for foreign goods. "This constitutes a slap on our faces," said Tallen, a former minister of state for science and technol-

ogy. According to her, "Nigerians should look inwards; such patronage will save the nation's foreign reserves and boost the domestic economy.

"It will reduce unemployment, the biting poverty in the country, as well as the high crime rate and general insecurity."

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Cleric blames police for violence

Abubakar Haruna, Reporter

Leaders of the religious coalition organisers of the protest march in Katsina, Shaikh Yusufu Musa, has blamed security men for igniting the religious crisis which engulfed Katsina State over the weekend.

Shaikh Musa told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa Service monitored in Abuja, yesterday that security men who insisted on collecting the petition of the protesters were responsible for the crisis escalating.

"We didn't abuse anybody. We were marching to the government house to submit our petition to the governor that we don't want third term and we condemned the cartoon blasphemy. On reaching the roundabout, security men insisted that they must be given the petition to convey it to the governor. But people refused, "as a result, the security men started shooting people and tea-gassing them, therefore there was chaos and it spilled into the town which resulted to the death of some people, while many were critically injured."

The cleric, who described the incident as unfortunate, said the security men should concentrate on their primary responsibilities of protecting people's lives and property rather than engage in acts that would compromise their functions.

Ministry organises 3-day seminar on rural infrastructure

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with Allied Bond Consulting, an infrastructure consulting outfit, is organising a three-day seminar on the development of rural infrastructure.

The seminar, which will hold from March 6 to March 8, in Abuja will amongst other things explore avenues for achieving progress in rural infrastructure development, as well as evaluate progress of implementation of the National Policy and Strategy On Integrated Rural Development.

A statement from Allied

Bond Consulting, signed by its managing consultant, Wilhe Tawo, said the seminar will seek to explore new ideas on how rural infrastructure can be provided and maintained to facilitate agricultural development.

"It would be attempt to increase the interest emphases of local government officials in rural infrastructure maintenance and development," the statement said.

It added that "The seminar would create private sector awareness and interest for rural infrastructure development and maintenance by utilising local resource per-

sons."

The consultants are currently working with the organising committee to be constituted by the ministry to ensure that the seminar is properly organised.

Minister of agriculture and rural development is to deliver a keynote address in the three-day seminar which will be declared open by Vice-President Atiku Abubakar.

Some of the resource persons expected to make presentations at the seminar are Oyeniyi Akande, Director, Infrastructure, National Planning



Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna State, Hajiya Amina Ibrahim of Millennium Development Goals and the Minister of Special Duties, Col. Musa Mohammed, during their visit to the Presidential Villa, Abuja...recently
Pix Joe Oroye

Tobi tasks judiciary on human rights

Chairman of the just concluded National Political Reform Conference, Justice Niki Tobi, has challenged the Nigerian judiciary to protect the dignity and sanctity of human life as contained in the 1999 Constitution.

Speaking at a seminar in Lagos, Justice Tobi said the judiciary should be liberal in the interpretation of the constitutional provision on the dignity of the human person.

According to him, the judiciary should expand the frontiers and content of section 34 of the constitution to include cases of arrest and detention without reasonable cause.

From Mohammed Shosanya, Correspondent (Lagos)

"Although the letter is taken care of in section 35 of the constitution, it dovetails into section 34 on human dignity. One way of doing this is to give a liberal interpretation to section 46 of the constitution," he added.

He further stressed that to protect human dignity, the courts should also interpret locus standi on a wider spectrum.

This, he explained will vindicate public justice litigation by recognising the right of public interest groups or individuals to enforce fundamental rights of members of

the public, as an aggrieved person."

Justice Tobi also declared that access to justice is meaningless unless it is matched with speedy hearing of cases of human right abuses before the courts.

"The reverse position is a very big dent in our legal system, more particularly in our judicial system. Cases, including those involving hu-

man rights violation take the speed of a snail, so much so that at the end of the litigation, the decision in some cases does not mean much to the plaintiff if he wins," he lamented.

He however suggested that the constitution should provide for a specific period within which human rights cases should be completed. He said that the present trend

in which the African charter on human and people's rights is invoked on the nation's municipal litigations is a step in the right direction.

"In the light of our domestic provision for the law, Nigerian courts have the right to enforce the provisions of the charter. That is one very sure way of enforcing chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution," he said.

Court orders Bamaiyi to be given medical attention

Lagos High Court on Monday ordered that the former Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. General Ishaya Bamaiyi should be moved from the Kirikiri Maximum Prisons and given urgent medical attention.

Justice Joseph Olunmi Oyewole who gave the order, said the Lagos State Ministry of Justice must liaise with the prisons authority and take Bamaiyi, said to be unconscious at the Kirikiri Maximum Prisons for medical treatment at a competent hospital.

The judge further ordered both the prosecution and the prison authorities to submit the medical report to the court on the next adjourn date, March 20, 2006.

At the resumed hearing on Monday, Bamaiyi was absent.

From Adelawan Bamgboye, Correspondent (Lagos)

His counsel, Yakubu Mai Chus, informed the court that Bamaiyi was unconscious and that he had been taken to the military hospital.

He said Bamaiyi had, since been returned to prison, observing however the prison lacks any medical facility to cater for his client.

Bamaiyi, he said had to be moved back to the prison, not because he had recovered, but due to order from above.

The lawyer told the court that the defence had written letters on the health condition of Bamaiyi to the State Attorney General and the prosecution.

Lead prosecutor, Mrs. Adebisi Odugbesan, also told the court that the prosecution was alarmed when it received

the said letter on the health condition of Bamaiyi February 15, 2006.

She said that she met the Lagos State director of public prosecution to discuss the situation.

Lt. Gen. Ishaya Bamaiyi is facing trial along with four others over the attempted murder of Mr. Alex Ibru, publisher of the *Guardian* newspaper.

Daily Trust had exclusively reported on February 1, 2006 that Bamaiyi was ill with an undiagnosed ailment.

Bamaiyi, James Danbaba, a former commissioner of police, Lagos State, Col. Jibrin Bala Yakubu, former military administrator, Zamfara State, Major Hamza Al-Mustapha and Mohammed Rabo Lawal are alleged to be involved in the attempted murder of Mr. Alex Ibru sometimes in 1996.

News

Bird flu: Kano residents call for removal of poultry farm

The issue of Avian Influenza has taken another dimension in Kano as residents in Gaida town, Kumbotso local government of Kano State, are asking for the removal of Rahama Poultry Farm from the area.

The prayer was contained in a suit filed at the Kano State High Court, Miller Road, Bompai, between Alhaji Nura Abdullahi and others who are plaintiff/applicant and Alhaji Sadi Muhammed Mustapha and five others as defendants/respondents.

Other prayers of the plaintiffs include the directing by the court of the first defendants to obtain or produce Certificate of Clean Bill of Health in regards to Avian Influenza for the birds and poultry maintained at the Rahama Poultry Farm at Gaida town.

And any further orders as the court may deem fit to make in the circumstance of the case.

When the case came up for hearing, counsel to the plaintiffs, Sa'idu Muhammed Alkah, said that his submissions were based on public interest as it has been confirmed that Avian Influenza has been reported in Kano State.

He also submitted that government had announced the ban on poultry in residential areas for health reasons.

And that plaintiffs were entitled to the right of life therefore the court should exercise the right vested in it and provided in the constitution of Nigeria Section 6, to

From Jamilah Nuhu Musa, in Kano

protect the rights of the plaintiffs by ordering removal of poultry temporarily pending the provision of Clean Health Bill by defendants.

In his submissions, counsel to the defendants, Mr. A.T. Jibrin, opposed the application of the counsel to applicants, stating that the Rahama Poultry Farm does not pose any danger to the health or life of the applicants.

Mr. A.T. Jibrin stated further that no one is disputing outbreak of bird flu, but the issue is whether the bird flu

affected all poultry in Nigeria.

He further submitted that contrary to submission of applicants counsel, only birds affected have been destroyed and compensated for.

He contended that the suit predicted the outbreak of the disease and was only based on malice.

A.T. Jibrin therefore urged the court to refute the application as the facts were only speculative and there are no proof by the applicant counsel on the so-called danger that the Rahama Poultry Farm poses to the residents.

Kaduna constructs 250 housing units for workers

Kaduna State government is currently constructing 250 housing units in seven locations to alleviate the housing problem faced by the low income earners working with the state government.

From AbdulRaheem Aodu, Correspondent (Kaduna)

Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, who disclosed this yesterday while declaring open a two-day national workshop on the practice of building, surveying, organised by the Nigerian Institute of Building at State House in Kaduna, said the low cost housing scheme is meant to cater for the state government workers and alleviate the problem of inadequate shelter in the state.

"We take building very important in the state. There are seven sites where about 250 housing units are undergoing construction. Some of them are completed and some are nearing completion. When finished, the low cost housing scheme will be given to the state workers who will pay for them over 10 years. The state government has also undertaken the completion of abandoned buildings in the state," Deputy Governor Patrick Yakowa, who represented the governor, said.

The President of the Institute, Honourable Bala Bawa Ka'oje, said in his welcome address that building surveying is a division of building which takes care of maintenance and conservation of existing buildings.

He added that it is a technical service which involves undertaking site visits for inspection, identifying building defects, detects diagnosis, determining causes and proposing appropriate remedies to improve on existing building.

"In some commonwealth countries such as Britain, Canada and South Africa, builders have developed considerable expert knowledge in building surveying which is the first step in maintenance, repairs, alterations, conversions, refurbishment and renovation of existing building. With the spate of incidences of collapsed building in Nigeria, government at all levels must inculcate the spirit of dilapidation surveys and maintenance in its people," he urged.



Governor Ahmed Makarfi

Police calms rising tension in Benue

Benue State Police Command yesterday rose up to calm the rising tension in Makurdi, the Benue State capital, over the spreading violent demonstrations in some parts of the country.

Tension picked up in Makurdi and its environs, yesterday when it was reported that mob went on rampage in the commercial town of Onitsha in what was feared to be a reprisal attacks of the violent protests which is spreading in some parts of the North.

The development which ensued following the suspected groupings of youths in various sections of the metropolis compelled shop owners and other business to lock up.

But the police, through a statement signed by the Command's Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Samuel Jinadu, said the escalating protest would not spread to Benue State.

The statement quoted the commissioner, Mr. Ibezimako

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

Aghanya, as saying that the command was in talks with religious leaders who have promised to maintain peace among their members.

The statement therefore warned any group of persons that may wish to initiate any protest of any kind to first seek approvals from the commission before embarking on such a procession.

The statement also advised law-abiding citizens within the state to go about their lawful duties as it assured them of adequate protection.

Meanwhile, the leader of Muslims in the state, Alhaji Garba Baba, spoke against the backdrop of the recent violent demonstrations in some parts of the country.

Alhaji Garba Baba said Islam symbolises peace, adding that the recent mayhem is totally unacceptable.



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All completed application forms are to be returned to the centre from where they were purchased on or before Monday, 13th March, 2006.

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DATE: Saturday, 18th March, 2006.
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Inside Politics

Public hearing: Third timers last lap?

As the public hearings hopefully comes to an end today in the six-geopolitical zones, pundits are wondering if this would be the final chance of believers in the extension theory first hatched at the national confab. Will they get the opportunity to amend the constitution to accommodate a tenure arrangement that will foster the continuity of the Obasanjo's government? Or is this the beginning of a more formidable battle? Even more disturbing is, what will be the next more of those opposed to the extension project. Are they going to face the battle head on or is it time to sheath swords and wait for divine interventions, the Abacha's type?

Public hearing against all odds

In a reverse psychology sort of way, Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu must be given kudos for sticking to the fight amidst various agitations to stop the hearings. He surmounted great odds. First, there was the financial hurdle that he claimed faced him. Senator Mantu had complained that the hearing would gulp N600 million, but that he has only a handful of the sum needed for a viable exercise.

His claims of lack of fund were received with a level of cynicism considering that, where the federal government was involved, money is not often a problem. Those who hold this view said that the defunct national conference was faced with a similar hurdle, but was easily solved when the president promised to fund the event personally.

In the case of the public hearing, the fund came after a hitch and vast amount was expended on advertorials and payment for the legislators billed to lead the events. The amount needed, according to Mantu, was N600 million to cover the event to be held in six hearing venues which include: Lafia, Oshogbo, Port Harcourt, Katsina, Maiduguri and Abakaliki. What most critics believe is that there could be more money than the budget reveals, especially considering that delegates to the event would be paid. The source for such funds should not be a problem with governors in the hearing venues ready to sponsor such overheads.

Apart from funds, the other river which Mantu crossed

By Emmanuel Bello,
Political Editor

was the widespread opposition to his proposed constitution. In a deft move, the joint committee on the constitution review jettisoned the tenure clause that gave birth to all the hoopla. The committee convinced Nigerians that the third term issue has been dropped, and the vibrant media buying into the hoax reported that the contentions material has been dropped altogether.

The committee said they would only use the 1999 constitution and that it would be the basis for any amendment. With this addressed, Mantu got a reprieve from those who had hassled him endlessly on the tenure clause.

Then came the riots with whole towns blackened out in the smoke of protests and anti-public hearing agitators. It was tough in cities like Maiduguri and Katsina where the picketers took to the streets with placards announcing their anger.

But it was an undaunted Mantu who came out to announce that the public hearing will continue as planned. Making his resolve clear in a BBC programme, the legislator from Plateau State told Munir Dan Ali, the presenter that he was willing to lay down his life in a bid to change the constitution. Why is Mantu so obsessed with the need to change the constitution? Is his a patriotic engagement or an attempt to force his name into the history books? Is this radical (having achieved prominence through bashing the incumbent president) doing penance for withstanding the powers that be?

Whatever is driving Mantu, he has finally achieved that which he set out to do. The public hearing are sitting and receiving wide range television coverage as he promised in an ostentatious show of transparency. In Maiduguri, it is a surprise that some Northeastern leaders who opposed the event are in attendance. They had on Tuesday gathered journalists in Abuja to protest the hearing and advocated boycott, but only for some of them (such as former governor Mohammed Goni) to attend the event. While they may be there to contribute their quota, they are also probably there to derail the event

by throwing, as they say, a wrench in the works.

Holding in the entire pro-

year of debates to be formed. Like Dikko, he said that the exercise would be a futile one

more like it with Nigerians agreeing on whether they need a new constitution or not. The current hearings, they fear, will only make official what the president wants.

According to them, the 1999 constitution, with its perceived defects, is still a viable document holding the country together, giving power to the executive and thus, still competent to be an official handbook to the end of this government.

They also express the fear that a new constitution (which the whole exercise was about) will fetch the president an opportunity to start all over again, arguing that the president will build on the precedence afforded by the governors of Yobe, Kogi and Taraba State who got fresh mandates on the basis of a new constitution.

Professor Ibrahim Tahir, a former delegate to the national confab raised similar fears in a recent interview. According to him, if Nigerians allow the constitution to be amended, President Obasanjo and by extension the governors will be there forever (life presidency: not altogether a new concept on the continent, but relatively

6 x 3col B/W Press Daily Trust



Senator Ibrahim Mantu

posed venue, the public hearings are an elitist event with traditional rulers given priority in the sitting arrangement, even as the real (or critical) section of the society for whom the event was meant are literally absent from the hearings. Like the confab, the event is only featuring the learned and debates on issues too high for commoners.

Is this a referendum?

The philosophy behind the hearings is to collate views of Nigerians on the advertised issues, especially the thorny ones such as the tenure of the executive. In their thinking the Mantu commission planned to reach the man on the street with issues like the third term, and asked the valid question: "Do you think President Obasanjo should continue or not?"

But as Dr. Umaru Dikko observed, how would ordinary Nigerians fully discuss the over three hundred sections of the 1999 constitution. The hearings unlike referendums are not limited a couple of issues needing amendments, rather, a sweeping analysis of events is said to be its focus.

"It is impossible," opined frontline politician, Isyaku Ibrahim who told *Daily Trust* in an interview that it would be impossible to change a document which took a whole

and a waste of resources and valuable time.

A referendum, they all contend, would have been

unknown to Nigerians).

Tahir, who is also the Talban Bauchi, painted an even more ominous picture when he asked Nigerians to imagine a country in which the present crop of state governors will be in power for the next twelve years. He called upon Nigerians to rise in resistance to the amendment of constitution which will allow such a scheme to become a reality.

Too late!

It is perhaps too late to stop the president because all that the Mantu committee people wanted was the "mandate" of Nigerians. This, from all indication, has been provided by the public hearings. The next thing for the third term canvassers is to come and present their position, and as Senator Jonathan Zwingina told *Daily Trust*, "whatever Nigerians want, we shall do. If they want third term, they will get it."

But the president may get what he wants because, irrespective of the outcome of these hearings, the constitution would be changed to make way for a new one, and the third term crusaders might have crossed the last lap to their dream.

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Inside Politics

Leadership question in PDM: From Yar'Adua to Atiku

Is the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM), the political machine of the late General Musa Shehu Yar'Adua, the Tafida Katsina, still intact? The answer to this question depends on who is providing it and from the angle from which one is looking at it. This report takes a look at the political movement that was given strength of character and verve by Yar'Adua's leadership and how the myth around the movement has been broken by the "crisis" of succession that threw up a compromise leader in the person of Alhaji Lawal Kaita from Katsina and behind-the-scene deft maneuvers by Vice President Atiku Abubakar to appropriate the movement for the advancement of his politics and presidential ambition.

Recent developments have shown that the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM), a political group that developed around the late Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua (retd.), who was second in command to the Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo (retd.) (1976-1979), is no longer intact. A member of the group, Professor Ango Abdullahi has become a loose canon in the media, making critical statements that confirmed irredeemable cracks within the group. In a recent interview in one of the Sunday newspapers, Abdullahi, who was Special Adviser (Agriculture) to President Olusegun Obasanjo in the first term (1999 to 2003) took Obasanjo and his administration to the cleaners and slammed the President's man-Friday and Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Board of Trustees, Chief Tony Anenih, who was also a close associate of the late Yar'Adua.

Analysts were quick to appreciate Abdullahi's outburst within the context of the battle for supremacy and control of the PDP machinery, which pitched his friend and leader, Vice President Atiku Abubakar against President Obasanjo. The attacks on Obasanjo and Anenih, who is believed to have coordinated his (Obasanjo's) strategic battle-plans to wrest the PDP machinery from the hands of Atiku and his men, are manifestations or expressions of the internal frustration and angst in the new PDM, which developed shortly after the demise of Yar'Adua in prison. The old PDM built around his (Yar'Adua) leadership had been rendered bare by his eternal departure and there was need to continue to rev the engine of the group and forcefully position it to play active role in the nation's power politics. This was why a new PDM had to be built. The question, as learned, then arose as to who should lead the group. It was gathered that the leadership hierarchy of the old PDM had Yar'Adua, Anenih, the late Chief Sunday Afolabi and M.S. Buhari in that order as the leading lights of the group. Their pedigree was rooted in the vibrant politics of the Second Republic. For instance, while Anenih was Chairman of the old Bendel State Chapter of the defunct National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the late Afolabi was Deputy Governor to Bola Ige (now late) on the platform of the defunct Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) before he left for the NPN.

Yar'Adua was said to have rallied these political associates

**By Sufuyan Ojeifo,
Special Correspondent**

with whom he had been friends while in the military and in government for his eventual participation in national politics. In the clan of the PDM leadership, but at a lower level, were people like the late Dr. Chuba Okadigbo who was Political Adviser to former



Yar'Adua: The strategist leaves behind a big shoe

President, Alhaji Shehu Usman Shagari; Ambassador Dele Cole and a host of other members of the think-tank that gave the group the cutting edge over other groups in terms of strategic organisation and mobilisation for achievement of defined political objectives and/or goals. But the leadership question, which was thrown up by Yar'Adua's fatal, yet eternal exit, was said to have been answered by a painstaking decision to give honour to him by retaining the group's leadership in Katsina. The problem the decision created was that there was no leader of the PDM from Katsina, who could easily step into Yar'Adua's shoes. This was why, as gathered, leaders of the group had to conduct a search, which produced former Governor of old Kaduna State, Alhaji Lawal Kaita (an indigene of Katsina) as the new national leader. Kaita was said to be a compromise candidate, an alien to the PDM, who reports said told the delegation that reached out to him that he was not a member of the PDM and therefore was not interested in leading it. But the group would not give up on kaita. He was, as learned, persuaded to join and lead the group.

But because of how he became leader, it was easy, according to feelers, for Atiku, Yar'Adua's political son, who did not join politics until the late 1980s when he was retired from the Nigeria Customs as Deputy Comptroller General by the General Ibrahim Babangida administration, to insert his little, yet strategic political wedge, thus becoming the heir apparent to Yar'Adua's political dynasty. His political fortunes had soared

by virtue of the strategic push given to him by Yar'Adua in the ill-fated Third Republic presidential politics played on the platforms of both the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Congress (NRC). Yar'Adua had launched out for the presidency on the SDP platform; but because of the blanket disqualification that he and other presidential

aspirants suffered in the hands of the Babangida regime for allegedly monetising the presidential nomination process, the consummate politician decided to push his political son for the presidency in a field dominated by the late Chief M.K.O. Abiola and the inimitable former National Chairman of the SDP, Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe.

Atiku was a trump card for Yar'Adua, a passionate power player. With him, Yar'Adua negotiated for space in the then emerging power scenario. When Abiola eventually picked the party ticket after a gritty and grueling contest, Yar'Adua who ensured the withdrawal of Atiku from the presidential primaries in the run-off in order to ensure the defeat of Kingibe had pushed him (Atiku) for the running mate position. But when Abiola finally settled for Kingibe against expectations by the group, it was apparent that Yar'Adua was not going to be keen on the actualisation or realisation of the Abiola/Kingibe presidential ticket. The whole thing has become history with the annulment of the election and the impasse that followed. It was learned that it was that experience that had enamored Atiku to fix his eyes perpetually on the presidential power ball. His emergence as Vice President in 1999, after having been elected as governor of Adamwa State was a product of the subtle jostle for power, which characteristic streak ran through the politics and temperament of Yar'Adua and his followers.

The process of building the new PDM, available pieces of information say, had been full of political intrigues. Whereas, some circle of leaders in the old

PDM wanted the late Afolabi from Osun State or M.S. Buhari from Borno State to lead the group in order to entrench a clearly-defined leadership succession that was rooted in seniority and long-standing political association with Yar'Adua, but because the leading lights were reluctant in taking on the mantle of leadership, it was decided that a Katsina man should



Atiku: Can he hold the fort?

be sought for to take the place of Yar'Adua in the PDM. This was how Kaita emerged. But kaita ended up becoming a figure-head as Atiku, a good student of power politics taught him by Yar'Adua and with a financial war-chest allegedly put at his disposal by his godfather, made his moves and took charge of the running of the group, apparently propelled by personal ambition. But unlike Yar'Adua who started from the scratch by putting together the group and therefore did not have problem assembling and managing his foot soldiers, Atiku ran into an early storm as he had to contend with forces that had been entrenched in the old PDM under the leadership of Yar'Adua.

In 1999, after he had successfully bludgeoned his way into the Presidency by a combination of subtle politics and the desire by Obasanjo for a pliant Vice President, Atiku's leadership of the new PDM was put to serious test. There were unconfirmed feelers that Anenih was partly instrumental to the choice of Atiku as Obasanjo's running mate. Perhaps, for political and strategic reasons best known to him, Atiku, as learned, decided to whittle down the influence of many of the leaders of the old PDM. Apart from Anenih and Afolabi who clinched the position of Works and Housing Minister and Internal Affairs Minister respectively courtesy of Obasanjo, where they were able to dispense political patronages to their followers, others were not that favoured. Analysts contend that Atiku might have done that to transform himself into the undisputed PDM leader dressed in the garb of Yar'Adua and set

on his path. Many members of the old PDM were left in the cold, devoid of the kind of all-inclusive, interest protective leadership they were used to under Yar'Adua.

A new bloc of members and loyalists was created by Atiku, who was eminently positioned in the PDP to dispense patronages in the first term of the Obasanjo administration. He was

Obasanjo's man-Friday, has become legendary, the best thing was, perhaps, to stay above the intrigues being perpetrated by many of the leaders and members of Atiku's new PDM who could be his children by aligning with and remaining unrepentantly loyal to Obasanjo's presidency. This he did in the first term, a decision that earned him the wrath of the PDM as one of its meetings, which he (Anenih) as learned had stopped attending before the group's maneuver to stop Obasanjo's second term bid.

Investigations showed that it took the strategic and tactical interventions of Anenih, who understands the operations of the PDM machine, to save Obasanjo, a sitting president, from being ridiculed with a defeat in his own party. This was why, as learned, the entire leadership of the new PDM, sees Anenih as a traitor. But to Obasanjo, he (Anenih) is a dependable loyalist and trustworthy ally. Today, Atiku's PDM is confronted with a scary political future within the PDP. The presidential ambition of Atiku is perceived to be hanging in the balance as Obasanjo appears resolute to ensure that he does not succeed him. The president's speculated third term bid has been made an issue by the vice president and his loyalists within and outside the PDP. The ranks of the PDM believe that Obasanjo has hijacked the party and instigated crises within it in a bid to achieve a personal political agenda. Professor Ango Abdullahi, who has emerged the spokesperson of the PDM leadership, said last weekend in Owerri that the PDM regretted supporting Obasanjo to be president, although he stated that the organization did not regret consenting to shifting the presidency to the southwest.

Hear him, "What I find most regrettable is the person who is exercising the presidential power today." He said that the problem facing the PDP was unfortunate. "It is not a good testimonial that from the ward to the national level, nobody can rightly boast of properly arranged congresses. This is most intriguing because we now pride ourselves as a people who are practising democratic principles", he stated. He was quoted as saying, "We should think about the country and where this crisis will lead us. We are saying that democracy must be allowed to reign in Nigeria. Things are not really going well with Nigeria and Nigerians". Not done, Abdullahi said the PDM was again galvanizing the conscience of Nigerians, stressing that it was speculative whether the group would succeed or not. To him, "PDM is not fighting an individual, but a system. PDP is a system. If anybody wants to lead or leave things that would endure, the fellow must be patriotic, listen to the heartbeat of the people, learn to equally endure, make sincere sacrifices and wait for sometime". This, no doubt, is the disposition of the new PDM under the suzerainty of Vice President Atiku Abubakar, whose leadership question has been raised. The old PDM and its leadership are no longer intact. The new PDM reality is a result of an intense desire to see Atiku as president in 2007.

SPORTS

Respected football analyst Barrister Godwin Dudu Orumen says FIFA's decision to uphold the Kano elections did not come to him as a surprise.

"I am not in anyway surprised by the decision of FIFA. I saw it coming. I believe the ministry should have

Galadima to talk to stakeholders

NFA chairman, Ibrahim Galadima has said that his priority for now is to talk with Football Stakeholders "and others who may be aggrieved in the course of the dispute that followed my re-election as the chairman of the Association."

Galadima whose election was contested by the Stakeholders before FIFA's ultimate verdict upholding the polls told our man on telephone on Thursday. "I have made it clear that dialogue and consultation will be our priority. I am not taking on anybody on this issue so as not to over-heat the polity."

The country's football chief assured in an interview that he will "carry everybody along so that together we will develop Nigerian football. There is enough space for all of us."

Galadima therefore appealed to the aggrieved group and individuals "to show maturity so that the interest of Nigeria will prevail at the end of the day."

On the FIFA's verdict that upheld his election, the NFA chairman said: "We give God thanks, for football is the winner not just Galadima as an individual."

Odegbami faults FIFA verdict

Former captain of the national team, Segun Odegbami has faulted the FIFA verdict which upheld the December 29 elections into the Board of the NFA in which Ibrahim Galadima was returned as the chairman of the Association.

Odegbami who is a frontline chairmanship aspirant to the board of the NFA however told KICK OFF in an interview that although he will attend the Football Stakeholders meeting scheduled for Wednesday in Abuja, he will essentially canvass for their grievances "to be taken to the Court of Arbitration instead of going for a fresh election now."

Odegbami stated to our

Respect FIFA decision - Orumen

done their homework," he said.

The Kano election he noted is a huge statement on Nigerian football.

Orumen is of the view that FIFA'S ruling should be respected.

The soccer enthusiast called on all the aggrieved parties to sheath their swords pointing out the need to seriously monitor Galadima's second term.

While pointing out that Galadima worked under difficult situations in his first term, he told Brillafm.net that he and his team of elected members must put programmes in place to change the face of Nigerian football.

The crisis rocking Nigerian football is definitely yet to abate even with FIFA'S recognition of the NFA elections held in Kano last year.

Meanwhile, chairman of the stakeholder's forum Amanze Ucheagbulam has explained that the meeting slated for Abuja today to address the issue is to formally present FIFA's verdict to the stakeholders.

The former Imo state football association boss expressed disappointment with insinuations in certain

quarters that the stakeholders are being used by the sports ministry to settle a personal

score with Alhaji Galadima.

He argued that the men are respectable and cannot be

pushed around by anybody.

Amanze however slammed FIFA for not inviting the

complainants the stakeholders to the Zurich meeting where the decisions



The outgoing captain of Ikoyi Golf Club, Alhaji Mohammed Damulak, left, presents the Captain's Day trophy to Mr. Linus Gitahi, Managing Director of GlaxoSmithKline, who won the Vmobile-sponsored tournament at the weekend.

Stranded supporters club rent a ship

Patience is running out among some members of the Nigeria Football Supporters Club, now stranded in the Egyptian capital 12 days after the 25th edition of

the Africa Cup of Nations ended.

The 170 members of the club have been held up in Cairo following contractual disagreement between the

club on one hand and the airline and its agent. Tension is running high in the hotel and slightest provocation leads to hot exchange of words and, in some cases, resulting in blows.

The President-General of the club, Dr. Rafiu Ladipo, nipped a planned demonstration by some members to go to the Nigerian Embassy to vent their anger and frustration in the bud.

It was also gathered that the anger of the members stems from the fact that several promises made by the club's leadership since the end of the competition on a daily basis on the departure date have been broken. Hunger has set in as those lucky to be issued with breakfast tickets have just one meal a day while others not so fortunate, are given 10 Egyptian pounds (about N250) barely enough for a small plate of rice without meat.

Apart from hunger and a lack of money, the rooms are overcrowded as between six



Ladipo

and eight persons share a room meant for two.

There is no cheering news from home as there are reports of those whose relations are sick and hospitalized and others who have been fired in their places of work, having exceeded their periods of grace.

One of the members has

taken up temporary job at a small cafe (restaurant), where he assists the owner and is assured of meals. The Egyptian owner of the cafe proudly said that he has a Nigerian chef.

The leadership of the club is under pressure to make alternative travel arrangements to return if they cannot secure airline tickets for them.

One option being canvassed is to return to Port Said, where the Super Eagles played their group matches to hire a ship to take members back home. Although the Nigerian mission has offered some assistance, it is unable to provide funds to buy tickets for the return journey as it is cash-strapped.

Among those trapped are some journalists, who paid as much as \$600 dollars to the supporters club on Jan. 22 to be on time in Egypt for the Eagles' opening game against Ghana's Black Stars on Jan. 23.

Sports



Egyptian side Al Ahli will face the Royal Armed Forces of Morocco in the African Super Cup in Cairo on Friday.

Egypt's Al Ahli seek another major title

Nine members of Egypt's victorious squad at the African Nations Cup have a chance to pick up another major medal when Al Ahli meet Royal Armed Forces of Morocco in the African Super Cup in Cairo on Friday.

Al Ahli, winners of the African Champions League last year, provided the bulk of the national squad that won a record fifth Nations Cup title on Feb. 10.

Players like Essam Al Hadari, Mohamed Barakat, Wael Gomaa, Emad Moteab and Mohamed Aboutrika all played major roles in Egypt's success and now have a chance for a third continental title inside four months.

Al Ahli will start as

SUPER CUP

overwhelming favourites against the winner of last year's African Confederations Cup, although their players have had little rest after their excursions in the Nations Cup.

Al Ahli returned to league action on Saturday with a 3-0 away win over Koroum in Alexandria, two goals coming from Aboutrika and the other from fullback Mohamed Abdelwahab, another member of the Nations Cup-winning team.

The other Cup heroes in action were Ahmed El Sayed, Hassan Mostafa and defensive midfielder Mohamed Shawi

But the club's performance at the weekend did attract criticism from coach Manuel Jose, who told the Egyptian press he was concerned about the team's focus in the wake of Nations Cup celebrations.

Al Ahli seek to win the Super Cup for the second time. Their previous success was in 2002.

For the Moroccans, it will be the first time they have played in the one-off match, traditionally hosted by the Champions League winners.

Armed Forces coach Mohamed Fakhir returns to the city where he led Morocco's national team at the Nations Cup in January.

Morocco failed to get past the first round and did not score either, playing out two goalless draws, including one against Egypt, and losing controversially to the Ivory Coast.

Fakhir, who has won three Moroccan championships in the last four seasons, accepted the national team job after the surprise resignation of the Frenchman Philippe Troussier at the end of December and brought three players from Royal Armed Forces into a hastily assembled Morocco squad.

But only goalkeeper Tarek Jarmouni saw any action for Morocco at the Nations Cup finals.

In the Moroccan league, the military team remain five points behind leaders Wydad Casablanca after a 2-0 home win over Difaa El Jadida on Saturday - their last game before departing for Cairo.

Friday's game marks the 14th Super Cup match since it was first introduced by the Confederation of African Football in 1993.

SUPER CUP WINNERS

African Super Cup results since the trophy was introduced in 1993:

1993 (Abidjan) Africa Sports beat Wydad Casablanca 5-3 on penalties after a 2-2 draw

1994 (Johannesburg) Zamalek beat Al Ahli 1-0

1995 (Alexandria) Esperance beat Daring Club Motema Pembe 3-0

1996 (Johannesburg) Orlando Pirates beat JS Kabylie 1-0

1997 (Cairo) Zamalek beat Arab Contractors 4-2 on penalties after a 0-0 draw

1998 (Casablanca) Etoile Sahel beat Raja Casablanca 4-2 on penalties after a 2-2 draw

1999 (Abidjan) ASEC Abidjan beat Esperance 3-1 (after extra time)

2000 (Casablanca) Raja Casablanca beat Africa Sports 2-0

2001 (Kumasi) Hearts of Oak beat Zamalek 2-0

2002 (Cairo) Al Ahli beat Kaizer Chiefs 4-1

2003 (Cairo) Zamalek beat Wydad Casablanca 3-1

2004 (Aba) Enyimba (Nigeria) beat Etoile Sahel 1-0

2005 (Aba) Enyimba beat Hearts of Oak 2-0 (after extra time).

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2.	Lecturer I	Applicants must possess a good honours degree in Law not below a Lower Second Class from a recognized University; must make a good grade at the Law School and have been called to the Nigerian Bar with a minimum of seven (7) years post Call experience in Legal Practice and or teaching in a University or appropriate comparable or tertiary professional institution. A higher degree or recognized publications will be an added advantage.	UASS 4 (N338,323 P.A)
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Method of Application:

Applicants for post other than number 5 should submit (2) typewritten copies of their applications including their curriculum vitae and photocopies of educational certificates, while applicants for post number 5 are to submit six (6) type written copies, of their application accompanied by their curriculum vitae stating: Name, Age, State of origin, Marital status, Qualification and Experience together with photocopies of education certificates.

Applications and supporting materials for post number 1 should be forwarded to the Director-General, while applications for the remaining posts should be forwarded to the Secretary/Director of Administration, Council of Legal Education, Nigerian Law School, Bwari, P.M.B. 170, Garki-Abuja.

Closing Date:

All applications should reach the Management not later than two (2) weeks from the date of this publication. Applicants that fail to comply with the above instructions will not be considered, and only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

SIGNED:
SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL AND
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION.

February 16, 2006.

Sports

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE REVIEW

Real tie still in the balance

... despite Henry magic

The pre-match talk was all about Real Madrid's revival and Arsenal's slump, but it was the London side who set the Bernabeu alight on Tuesday with a superb performance that left them on the brink of the Champions League quarter-

finals. A wonderful individual goal from skipper Thierry Henry gave Arsenal a 1-0 win that ended Real's unbeaten home record since October 2002 and made his team the first English side to win at the Bernabeu.

A pacy, well-organised Arsenal threatened to tear Real apart in the opening 15

minutes, with the hosts being kept in the knockout round first leg match by some top-class goalkeeping from Iker Casillas.

But two minutes into the second half, Henry began a magical weaving run that took him past three players and ended with a cool finish to give Arsenal a deserved victory.

Real may have improved against lowly opponents from the lower reaches of the Primera Liga, but it soon became clear that they still struggle against quality opposition.

Real's much-vaunted attack of Ronaldo, Robinho, Zinedine Zidane and David Beckham was brilliantly shackled by Arsenal's injury-

depleted defence with Emmanuel Eboue giving an immense display at right back.

But for all Arsenal's domination, Real are still in with a chance of turning the tie around when they visit Highbury on March 8.

"I'm happy in every department, but the only regret I have is that we could have scored one or two more goals and that means the game is still wide open," said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

Henry also struck a note of caution, saying his side would need to be ready for a Real Madrid backlash in the second leg.

"We need to keep our feet on the ground and not get carried away with this result," he said. "It's a great result to take to Highbury but we must be careful."

"We all know they are a great team that can turn things around. I've seen a lot of things happen in my career so we must stay calm and focused."

The tie remains delicately balanced as Real are confident they can go to Highbury and score. "I'm sure the second leg will be a different story and that our players will respond much better," said coach Juan Ramon Lopez Caro.

Real will look for a piece of individual brilliance from the unsettled Ronaldo or one of their other Galacticos to turn the tie around and prevent Arsenal from earning a place in the quarter-finals for only the third time.

"The good thing is that they only won 1-0," Beckham told reporters. "It's going to be very difficult now, but we have the players to go there and win."

However, the fact that Real will have to come forward and take the game to Arsenal is likely to play into the hands of Wenger's side whose primary strength lies in their rapier-like counter-attacks.

With attacking fullbacks like Roberto Carlos and Cicinho, Real are vulnerable to such tactics, while they lack the physical presence in midfield to bully Arsenal off the ball as several English sides have done this season.

"Real will have to come out and attack (at Highbury), they can't just defend and that will make it a very interesting game," said Wenger.

Despite exiting both domestic cup competitions and languishing in fifth place in the league, a victory over Real at Highbury could yet make Arsenal's season.



Henry...the Arsenal striker scored a dream goal against Real at the Bernabeu.

Magath incredulous as Milan take upper hand

Bayern Munich coach Felix Magath was aghast at the penalty decision that gave AC Milan the equaliser in Tuesday's 1-1 draw in the Champions League.

Belgian referee Frank De Bleckere adjudged Valerien Ismael to have deliberately handled the ball in his attempt to clear a cross-shot from Serginho in the round of 16 match.

Andriy Shevchenko

stroked the spot-kick past Michael Rensing, standing in for the injured Oliver Kahn, and Bayern, who had been leading thanks to a fantastic Michael Ballack goal, had to settle for a draw at the Allianz Arena.

"I've never seen anything like that in the

Champions League," Magath told Premiere TV after the opening leg of the first knockout round tie.

"I can't understand how a match can be decided by a penalty like that. It threw us out of our rhythm and we were too passive in the second half. The penalty hurt the players' psyche."

Magath could at least take heart for the second leg on March 8 at the San Siro, after seeing the way his Bayern team overran Milan in the first half. "We've shown that we can control them," Magath said. "It's up to the players to get a better result in Milan."

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said he understood Magath's frustration.

"Of course, I understand it," the Italian told reporters. "There was definitely a hand, but whether it was deliberate or not I don't know. He did have time to remove his hand."

Milan open their doors to Ronaldo

AC Milan president Adriano Galliani says his club would welcome Ronaldo with open arms should the Brazil striker leave Real Madrid at the end of this season.

"Ronaldo is a great player and if he decides to leave Real he will find teams all over the world ready to welcome him," Galliani was quoted as saying in La Gazzetta dello Sport on Wednesday.

"Even the door at AC Milan is open."

Galliani's comments follow complaints by Ronaldo

earlier this week that he had never felt loved by Real's fickle fans and a warning that he would decide his future after the World Cup. His contract expires in 2008.

The three times World Player of the Year would face a mixed reception in the Italian city if he took up Galliani's offer.

Ronaldo played for Milan's city rivals Inter between 1997 and 2002 and was branded a traitor when he transferred to Real after winning the World Cup with Brazil.

Bayern's Ballack finally ends slump

Michael Ballack put four years of Champions League frustration behind him with a spectacular goal and an inspired performance in Bayern Munich's 1-1 draw against Milan on Tuesday, but it was still not enough.

In the Bundesliga, Ballack's match-winning scoring and leadership have put Bayern eight points clear at the top of the table, but the 29-year-old midfielder has been missing in action in most of Bayern's Champions League matches.

Before Tuesday's blast from 25 metres beat Brazil's Dida and put Bayern in front, Ballack had not scored in the Champions League this season. He had only three

goals in four years for Bayern, including one penalty, in European competition.

His virtual disappearance in the Champions League this season also reflects Bayern's less than convincing performances whenever they face teams outside the Bundesliga.

Ballack has disappointed in the Champions League since joining Bayern four years ago, when he led a modest Bayer Leverkusen side to the Champions League final with six goals in that one campaign, along with 17 in the Bundesliga.

"It's not surprising to us that he played well," said Bayern coach Felix Magath,

rejecting the suggestion Ballack was overdue a good match.

"There's no pressure on him. This was the sort of match he excels in. He's played well in recent weeks and scored many important goals."

But only in the Bundesliga, where he has scored 10 goals this season.

"Ballack last played a really strong Champions League match in the 2001/02 season for Bayer Leverkusen," wrote Bild newspaper before the Milan match. "At Bayern Munich, he has yet to put in a truly noteworthy performance."

Ballack did not speak to reporters after the 1-1 draw,

but was visibly moved by the goal, pounding his chest as he ran down the sideline in celebration.

"It was a beautiful goal from Michael," said Germany coach Jurgen Klinsmann, who was in Munich to watch his captain.

Ballack's lack of punch on the European stage has certainly not helped his chances of finding a new job outside Germany.

He has turned down a lucrative contract extension from Bayern and says he has not yet made up his mind what he will do after his contract expires at the end of the season.

"Until recently, I was convinced that Michael

Ballack had not had any offer from another club, but his goals will make some people interested in him again," said Bayern's sporting director Uli Hoernes.



Ballack

Sports

Special Sports, t-tennis tune up for Melbourne

Special Sports athletes and their table tennis players currently in camp in Ibadan, Oyo State have intensified training preparatory to next month's Commonwealth Games scheduled for Melbourne, Australia.

Sports Ministry's deputy director of the sports development, Dr Ahmed Tijjani Yusuf, expressed profound satisfaction with the flurry of activities in the camp in Ibadan stressing

that the level of preparations and the commitment of the athletes was so high that he was confident they would fulfilled the aspirations of the nation to win medals at the games.

Dr Yusuf, who was in the camp to assess their readiness for the games, said

he was not only satisfied with what he saw but also happy that four foreign-based professional tennis players have joined the camp to align forces with their home-based counterparts to prepare for the games.

The director said competition for places in the final list

of the contingent is so intense that it is obvious the best would surely bear the banner of the country.

Meanwhile, arrangements are in top gear for the basketball team to begin the final phase of camping in Abuja ahead of the games. Trustsports noted that all relevant officials have relocated to Abuja to ensure that logistics needed are in place.

New bosses for Gombe United

John Kumanda is the new chairman to head the new management board that will steer the affairs of

Dolphins kick off camping

Having settled for a low profile coach, Ifeanyi Onyedika after the sudden departure of coach Lawrence Akpokona, Dolphins have commenced preparations for this year's league season.

The Port Harcourt Fishes who relocated to Calabar, Cross Rivers State for a pre-season camping with a crowd of 58 players, began pruning down the large number with over 17 decamped after a series of pre-season matches.

In one of such games, Confederation Cup campaigners, Lobi Stars of Makurdi held them to a score draw at U. J. Esuene Stadium in Calabar. Lobi had gone ahead after a barren first half before Dolphins equalized through Victor Babayaro.

In other games, Dolphins defeated Calabar Selected 3-2 and piped another amateur side, Anantigha FC 1-0 to set for a final showdown against Akwa United in Uyo today, Wednesday.

They return to their new base in Port Harcourt on Friday.

Dolphins' preparations for the new season kicked off late when they had to scavenge for a replacement for Rangers' coach, Lawrence Akpokona who abandoned his N15 million contract barely a month into it for fear of his life.

The Benin-born coach fled Port Harcourt when his huge earning was divulged to the press; preferring a return to his last season's base in Rangers, where he earned his pay quietly.

Premier League club Gombe United in the new season following the dissolution of the Inuwa Lamido-led board by Governor Ibrahim Goje.

The new boss, who is also a special assistant to the governor, is making a comeback to where he was as sole administrator in 2004 before he handed over to the dissolved board.

KICK OFF learnt that the

governor was not happy that the Scorpions could not pick a continental ticket last season in spite of the financial backing, hence, the decision to have a new board with the mandate to secure a continental slot next year.

"The governor is not hiding his displeasure as the team were unable to pick a continental slot. So he has mandated the new board to make sure that this is

achieved at the end of the season because Gombe United has the wherewithal to play in Africa," John Kumanda the new chairman informed KICK OFF.

Members of the new board are Bala Mohammed Kaltungo, Namanu Commander, Mustapha Ibrahim, Auwal Umar (Chasin), former player; Adamu Abdullahi is the team manager while Ibrahim Sakairu is to serve as the secretary.



Saeta Ukpomo trying to putt during the Vmobile sponsored Ikoji Captain's Day Golf tourney.

Premier League: Only Heartland FC beat registration deadline

Barely three days to the initial commencement date for the Premier League season, only Heartland FC, formerly Iwuanyanwu Nationale of Owerri, has completed registration formalities for the season.

The continental cup chasers submitted their completed forms early in the week and are thus the only premier league side to have beaten the deadline for the return of completed documents for consideration for the season.

By Patrick Andrew, Assist. Head Sports Desk

Trustsports learnt that the officials of the club handed in their forms in addition to payment of various sanctions imposed on them by the Nigeria Football League disciplinary committee for assault on referees, cards and such other fines which payments were mandatory before registration.

The 20 clubs which are to trade tackles in the Premier

League but they must meet redeem their debts to the NFL and players before securing registration for the new season.

Executive Secretary, Mallam Salihu bubakar, had insisted on redemption of all debts before the process of registration would begin noting that this conforms to international standard of conducting business as well as establishes true professionalism.

Though all the clubs have

collected forms to register for the season, they have however being reluctant to return the forms because of the delay in the release of the budgets of the respective states. This is because virtually all the clubs are owned by state governments and they cannot register unless funds are made available.

Only penultimate day, Chairman of the NFL board, Chief Oyiki Obaseki disclosed the shift forward of the date

for the kick off of the season on the grounds that the NFA board that is to supervise the conduct of elections into a new league board is not in place stressing that it would be unthinkable for his board whose tenure expired last December to conduct the elections.

The chairman had said that the February 25th date for the kick off of the league has been postponed till next month when it is hoped that the NFA impasse has been resolved.

Stakeholders Congress: Which way for Nigeria football?

Nigerian football is at a cataclysmic threshold. The descend to this insalubrious vestige was expedited by the December 29 elections in Kano that returned the incumbent, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima as the chairman of the NFA.

The problem is said to have been further aggravated by FIFA's decision on Friday, February 17 upholding the elections in Kano to the chagrin of the stakeholders who had thought that their perceived injustice would be addressed by the world soccer ruling organ.

Perhaps piqued by the verdict, the Stake holders who had initiated the complaint against the Kano mandate called for the General Congress to deliberate on the decision of FIFA and to review their position in the struggle to have what they called "a more democratic approach to the

By Patrick Andrew, Asst. Head, Sports Desk

elections into the Executive Committee of the NFA"

While there is furore over the decision, the Galadima led-board held its maiden meeting in Lagos ahead of the congress where it reiterated its inclination to cling on to the mandate as sanctioned by FIFA.

Essentially, the grouse of the aggrieved is hinged on the perceived injustice in the conduct of the elections in Kano and the "deliberate ploy to disenfranchise some by insisting on holding elections in Kano against their wish".

Even then, they are aghast that FIFA that should be dispassionate in the adjudicating the case betrayed partiality by ruling in favour of the defendant without extending the privilege of fair hearing to the complainant

whose document was the basis for passing verdict.

The leadership of the stakeholders had complained that they were not invited to present their case while the chairman of the electoral panel, Nduka Irabor, Alhaji Galadima



Galadima

and Fanny Amun, the acting NFA secretary general. Who as the complaint is was not privy to the events leading to the impasse nor originated the complaint against the elections in Kano, were all invited.

The other argument is that the NFA Secretariat neither originated the document nor was directed by FIFA to present evidence in defence of its complaint against the Kano elections as to warrant the choice of Amun as the spokesman of the stakeholders.

Nonetheless, it would seem that the splinter group have been determined to have their way irrespective of the verdict from Zurich on the Kano mandate. They would however have to grapple with the issue of quorum as demanded by the statute. Would they be able to galvanize sustained interest in the pursuit of their ambition to use football operational

instrument to counter FIFA position? Again, is there a provision that allows the federations to set aside the decision of FIFA in pursuit of assumed national aspiration?

If as the argument goes that decision of 89 delegates that constituted the last congress was not respected by FIFA what gives the impression that the outcome would meet the fancy of the world ruling body? Unless the aim is to adopt a radical position in disdain to whatever ruling FIFA has made. Thus the congress today would be historic because the aftermath would affect the complexion of Nigerian football. It would however be sad and posterity may not forgive this generation of administrators if for selfish reasons they destroy the only visible binding string of all Nigerians.

Daily Trust Hotlines

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EDITORIAL

Registration of new parties good but...

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Thursday, February 16, 2006 announced the registration of another new political party, the Movement for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy (MRDD). This came two weeks after the registration on January 31, 2006 of three new parties: Action Congress of Democrats (ACD); Action Alliance (AA) and Action People's Congress (APC). These registrations have now swelled the population of political parties battling for relevance and space in the country to 34 while there is every prospect of this figure going up as Professor Maurice Iwu, the INEC chairman, revealed that the electoral body is still processing applications for three more parties.

We are glad with this development as it presupposes the expansion of the frontiers for choice and freedom of association, which are the hallmarks of democracy. Implicit in this is the indication that INEC is being prodded by the Supreme Court's unanimous decision of Friday, November 8, 2002. This landmark decision was the outcome of a suit initiated by the National Conscience Party (NCP) and four other political parties. Obviously, it has enabled all shades of political leanings to be expressed as it reopened the doors to all political platforms that would have been subdued by INEC's guidelines.

Although we uphold the fundamental principles of political parties which exist as the marketplace of views, ideology, policies and philosophy of those who seek to lead in a democratic setting, we however wish to caution that the rights of association guaranteed by our constitution should not be an avenue for money-making, political appointments and personal aggrandisement as are often the case in our experience in party politics.

While we maintain our opposition to any form of censorship or muzzling of legitimate and well-intentioned political organisations that have the tendency to enrich and deepen our democratic experience, we wish to emphasise that it would be misplaced to assume that all our political parties must attain national colouration. Our position is informed by the practice in advanced democracies.

For instance, in the United Kingdom, there exists a plethora of political parties but only a few of these receive national recognition such as the Labour and the Conservative parties. The same scenario exists in the United States of America where the major national players are the Republican and the Democratic parties. In these two democracies, there are several other political parties with strong roots at other levels of government outside the centre where parties of lesser status willingly enter into alliance with their mega counterparts contesting for positions at the local and national levels as the case may be.

Our democracy is of course a young one but we urge our political parties, whatever the number may eventually be, to begin to emulate this culture. The earlier our politicians noted that the essence of politicking is beyond money-making and appointments but that of service through the improvement of the living conditions of Nigerians, the better for even the very rich. It is through this that our politicians are likely to enter their names in the book of history by positively touching the lives of commoners rather than their macabre endeavours to attract national attention. This feat could be achieved at any level of leadership. It would therefore be more dignifying if at this early stage of our journey in democratic governance we have parties that are close to the people and in essence ensure the fulfilment of their manifestoes at localities other than aiming at leadership at the federal level, which most of our politicians crave as the ultimate achievement.

DAILY TRUST

THURSDAY COLUMN

Thursday, February 23, 2006

No matter what, Obasanjo must go

By Is'haq Modibbo Kawu
kawumodibbo@yahoo.com

The last time that I wrote on this page was on January 19th, 2006. The column, which was titled: Paving The Road To Hell, had analysed the game plan of the Obasanjo clique, as they push our country ever closer to the road to perdition; the perdition of the third term agenda for the absolutely incompetent President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Soon after that week, I took a part of my accumulated leave for 2005 in order to rest for a while, take my mind off the pressure cooker atmosphere that the Nigerian public space has been turned into, as the Obasanjo clique digs in, in its determination to subvert the constitutional order of Nigeria. I spent a week in a very cold London, most of the time visiting bookshops and record stores. I had a truly engaging time making a choice of books to purchase while also reflecting on the death of the books culture in our country. It was Babangida's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) that killed the famous Ife Book Fair; it also destroyed the publishing tradition that had become quite vibrant by the late 1970s.

Imposed at the behest of imperialism, SAP was in fact a systematic war against the intellectual fabric of our country. The university system was gradually asphyxiated, because the IMF and the World Bank had decided that tertiary education was not really necessary in a developing country. We don't need scientists and technicians, sociologists or economists; after all, the economy here is not supposed to be an industrial one.

What is earmarked for us is a society of shopkeepers, to sell the mass-produced goods of the industries of Europe and America. A shopkeeper economy can make do with only primary education in order to be barely literate enough to sum up the day's sale. There is no space for history. That has given way to social studies; the radio stations now have announcers with fake American accents, not the cultured Nigerian speakers of the English Language that was the hallmark of Nigerian broadcasting years ago.

What Babangida's SAP laid out in the anti-patriotic content of its various policies, Olusegun Obasanjo has taken even further. What makes the Obasanjo period such a disaster is that there is a greater consciousness of the intentions to ruin our country almost irreversibly by the man and his pro-imperialist economic team, and the cabal of private sector operatives who have made so much killings from the asset-stripping, dubious import licence waivers, the criminal privatisation project and sundry crimes that have become the hallmarks of the Obasanjo years in Nigerian history. It is often argued that Obasanjo takes decisions with an eye for what the future will say about him.

We are lucky in a sense that the verdicts of the future are already taking shape, if in an outline, even in the present. Obasanjo will enter history as the most lawless ruler of Nigeria in a democratic dispensation; a very incompetent yet arrogant ruler who frittered away the goodwill of the Nigerian people. So desperate has this incompetent dictator become towards the end of his disastrous rule of our country that he is even prepared to sacrifice the continued unity of our country for his consuming ambition to remain the president against the wishes of the Nigerian people.

But why is this dictator so desperate to remain in power? The nonsense being bandied about by presidential hangers-on is that the so-called reform programme of the regime can only be guaranteed if Obasanjo remains forever in power. The reforms of death, of the loss of the nation's sovereignty, theft of our national assets, have favoured a few of Obasanjo's cronies and they are desperate to ensure that the crimes they have committed against the Nigerian people are not reversed by a patriotic Nigerian government after we might have been rid of the hopelessly incompetent Obasanjo: the serial rapist of Nigeria's constitutional order.

The Obasanjo clique is aware of the depth of contempt it is held in by the Nigerian people. After all, Obasanjo has today become a byword for retrenchment of workers, theft of national assets, massive electoral rigging, hike in the prices of petroleum products, dysfunctional national infrastructure, and general sorrow and alienation in the land. Whatever the man touches, he destroys! Give Obasanjo gold to touch, and you run the danger that it can become dust. So deep is the ill-luck that this dictator has brought to our national life that even when he congratulated our national football team, the next match they played, they lost!

Obasanjo knows he is bad news, but he is determined to risk everything in his pursuit of the third term agenda. After so

much manoeuvrings, the gloves have finally been pulled off to reveal the bare knuckles that the agenda has culminated in this week, with the highly-doctored and very controversial public hearings that have been orchestrated with the intention to achieve the elongation of Obasanjo's tenure.

It's also part of the footwork of the Obasanjo clique to attempt to blame other segments of the Nigerian society but themselves for the crisis that the third term project has engendered in Nigeria. This much was the thrust of the article which former journalist, Onyema Ugochukwu, circulated last week. Ugochukwu lambasted the Nigerian press for being responsible for "creating a successful bogey" ... and has used it to whip, the Nigerian polity is now being whipped into almost uncontrolled frenzy." Onyema, who apparently lives in Cloud Cuckoo land, then added that "it does not really matter that no one seems to have any credible evidence of the plot for a third term." Left to this court jester, we are to ignore all the evidence around us that have been coming together like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle over the past two years or so that all point to the fact of the existence of a third term agenda.

Ugochukwu apparently enjoys talking from both sides of his mouth; because while denying the presence of such a thing as a third term agenda, which he described as a media-created bogey, he nevertheless went on a ride on the tiring hobby horse of those who believe "that President Obasanjo should stay on to complete the reforms he has started;" reforms whose benefits, according to him, "have become so obvious that only the most uncharitable critics can continue to pretend not to see them," and which in his court jester's logic "vested interests want to prevent ... from becoming irreversible." This platform of a so-called reform programme has in fact become the reason why they want our constitutional order to be violated, manipulated and doctored to achieve a third term for President Olusegun Obasanjo.

What should be clear to members of the Obasanjo clique, the coterie of court jesters, jobbers, fixers and hangers-on, the so-called private sector mandarins who have profited from the seven years of this regime is that NO MATTER WHAT, our social contract with the Obasanjo Presidency ends at midnight on May 28th, 2007. Let them manipulate the constitution as they want, it will not give Obasanjo any legitimacy in Nigeria.

From midnight May 28th, 2007, Obasanjo will cease to be the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. If he enters the creeks the day after parading himself as the Nigerian president, we shall fish him out with the mass action of a united Nigerian people who refuse to be slaves in our fatherland. If he appears in the Savannah, we will smoke him out as part of our democratic right to be rid of an impostor and an illegal president.

At midnight on May 28th, 2007, we shall be rid of the sick joke of the incompetent Presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo.

What Nigeria needs is a united national platform of the political elite, the mass of the Nigerian people, to sweep away this truly unpatriotic regime come midnight of May 28th, 2007. We must implement a minimum national programme that will precisely target the reform programme upon which they are attempting to manipulate our constitution. The neo-liberal programme that has led to illegal and unconstitutional sale of our national assets must be reversed; all those cronies of Obasanjo who profited from his years of unconstitutional asset-stripping must be made to cough them out and the Nigerian people should reclaim what is rightly ours.

The greatest fear that Obasanjo harbours, which is why he would prefer to die in Aso Villa as a life-long dictator, is the possibility of judicial inquiries that might explode the myth of an 'incorruptible' dictator. We will certainly explode that myth by the time a patriotic government combs through the records of eight years of a monumentally-incompetent and arrogant President Olusegun Obasanjo. The desperate manoeuvrings to steal our constitutional order cannot save Obasanjo from the justified wrath of the Nigerian people.

It is therefore heart-warming to note the determination of the coalition of members of the National Assembly, led by Senator Uche Chukwumerije, to use the platform of the legislature to put together a programme to stop Obasanjo and his henchmen in their track. The parliamentary struggle must be dialectically-streamed with the extra-parliamentary activities of the political elite and the political parties; the working class and mass democratic movements. We must use the platform of the anti-third term agenda to strengthen the mass democratic movement in Nigeria. Historical accidents like President Obasanjo must never be allowed to take us for a ride in the future.